

Imagined States:
Opera and Identity in the Kingdom of Naples, 1707–1747

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
(Music)

at the
University of Wisconsin, Madison

2016

Date of final oral examination: 07/28/2016

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the role of music in the mythologization of Naples in the early eighteenth century. The city's origin myth, centered on the Greek siren Parthenope, not only emphasized music, its symbolic power also lured tourists and connoisseurs alike to Naples for its musical delights. This was especially so in the eighteenth century when music lovers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau encouraged anyone who would listen to "Run, fly to Naples." Underneath this golden veneer, however, lay a city-state fraught with many social and political ills: bloated immigration, rampant poverty, and corruption. The dissertation studies—through four prominent symbols associated with the Neapolitan city-state (Parthenope, the Pleb, the King, and the Prince)—some of the ways cultural elites imagined their city and its many identities through opera.

Drawing on siren lore and eighteenth-century gender theory, Chapter One examines the appropriation of the city's civic muse Parthenope in Domenico Sarro's *La Partenope* (1722), as a musical response to the ongoing debate on women and leadership. Chapter Two explores musical representations of plebeians in comic opera, demonstrating how such depictions served to minimize elites' anxieties of the poor. Chapter Three examines the representation of King Carlo III, Naples's first monarch in two centuries, as negotiated in the inauguration of the Teatro San Carlo in 1737, in which Carlo leveraged the gentry's love of opera to sway political skeptics in his favor. Finally, Chapter Four considers the musical festivities celebrating the birth in 1747 of Carlo's son Filippo to understand opera's role in the rhetoric of royal succession. Opera did not merely reflect these broader debates about identity and sovereignty, but rather was an active participant in them.

Acknowledgements

Many people and institutions have contributed to the completion of this project. I would like to first thank the University of Wisconsin–Madison Graduate School, Harvard University’s Houghton Library, the U.S. Foreign Language and Area Studies program, and the Mellon Foundation for their gracious financial support. My appreciation also goes to the British Library, the Conservatorio di San Pietro a Majella, Bibliothèque nationale de France, and the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli for providing me use of their many treasures. This dissertation could not have been written without generous access to manuscripts, books, microfilm, and digital copies at these institutions. A special thanks goes to the musicology and theory faculty at UW–Madison, who challenged my ideas every step of the way. Dr. Jeanne Swack, my advisor, is not only a model of the scholar-musician, she encouraged me to think deeper about the music manuscripts with which I communed these many years. Though not a Neapolitanist herself, she showed an earnest interest in the research. Lawrence Earp, David Crook, Lee Blasius all encouraged me to think about my arguments in new ways, while Brian Hyer helped to advance my writing to new places. His ideas about good writing and style will stay with me for the rest of my life.

A number of colleagues outside of Madison also deserve my appreciation. I would like to thank Martha Feldman (University of Chicago), whose brilliant scholarship and generosity inspired much of this project. Dr. Roberto Scoccimarro (Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Dresden) merits my gratitude for assisting me with some of the thornier examples of eighteenth-century Italian and Neapolitan. Moreover, our many conversations have deepened my own thoughts about the *commedia per musica* in Naples, and in the process, we have become close friends.

Drs. Stephen Crist and Kevin Karnes at Emory University read early drafts of Chapters One and Two and provided me opportunities to hone my teaching. Among my Charleston colleagues and friends, Dr. William Gudger has given me many years of warm conversation, debate, and more than a few witty retorts. While teaching at the College of Charleston, Dr. Blake Stevens acted as a kind yet rigorous sounding board for many of the theoretical ideas voiced in this dissertation. He has also been an exemplary teacher and friend. Dr. Erica Buchberger always offered good cheer and company during our writing sessions at a Charleston Starbucks. Our weekly appointments kept us both on track. Additionally, Drs. Robert Gant, Charles Lippy, Edmund Leroy, as well as Douglas Ludlum (the “Rue crew”) gave their love, support, and not a little bit of good humor. In the process, they have become close family.

It is also appropriate to thank those teachers who inspired me early on. I would not be the researcher I am today without Jennifer Ottervik, who was the University of South Carolina School of Music’s Head Librarian during my teenage and undergraduate years. She noticed early on that I spent more time in the library than in the practice room. Throughout college, she nurtured my love for libraries, music research, and writing, while always challenging me to re-think ideas and dig deeper. Moreover, Dr. Dorothy Payne, who is no longer with us, instilled in me the tools for thinking critically about counterpoint, harmony, performance practice, and the many ways of interpreting these subjects. The joy she brought to music theory was infectious. I think of these two often.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. Without them, I would not be in music. My grandfather, Tony Torre, Sr., led the path as a prominent Jazz musician in 1940’s New York City. He instilled in me an early love for music and travel. I someday hope to

match his level of musicianship. Likewise, my father, a blues musician, spent countless hours carrying me to violin lessons and this or that rehearsal. Though I took a different musical path from them, I know I am carrying on the family business. Likewise, my grandmothers, Cornelia Torre and Patricia Hammond, have given me nothing but love and encouragement over the years. I am glad they both get to see this achievement. My uncle, Greg Torre, too, has been like a second father to me. He is amazingly perceptive, kind, generous, and optimistic. I thank him for everything he has done for me. Last, but not least, I owe so much to my wife. Merri has given me nothing but love and patience. She has followed me around the world to pursue my passion for music, and done so with great humor. Her love sustains me in ways I cannot even say. I could not have completed this dissertation without her.

Prologue

Introduction

In the eighteenth century, Naples—for centuries the political and cultural capital of southern Italy—was a city fixed in the European imagination. With an estimated population of 294,000 inhabitants in 1743, Naples was Europe’s third largest city and for many travelers the endpoint for many travelers on the Grand Tour.¹ Then as now, the city was famous for its natural beauty, but also rampant poverty, corruption, and crime—conflicting representations that led to the branding of Naples and its immediate environs as a “paradise inhabited by devils.”² Not surprisingly, the results of such imaginings ran the gamut. For example, Johann Winckelmann, in his *History of Ancient Art* (1762), drew on climate-based theories as a rationale for the beauty he imagined as natural to the Neapolitans:

Finding itself near that part of the sky under which Greece too is located, brings forth men of superb and vigorously designed forms, who appear to have been made, as it were, for the purposes of sculpture.... The Neapolitans are more refined and clever than the Romans.³

¹ The figure is based on numbers given in Giovanni Muto, “Urban Structures and Population,” in *The Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill Press, 2013), 45.

² On the origins of this phrase, which dates back centuries, see Benedetto Croce, *Uomini e cose della vecchia Italia* (Bari: Laterza, 1956), 1:69–87

³ Johann Winckelmann, *Anmerkungen über die Baukunst der Alten* (Leipzig, 1762), 55–56; trans. in Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 43.

Others, of course, marveled at the city's beauty, particularly Mount Vesuvius, which not only provided a natural geographical focal point across the bay, but also enabled many travelers to imagine themselves in a ostensibly simpler time and place.

But more than any anything, it was music, particularly opera, that lured tourists to Naples. Rousseau famously urged: "Go, my heart, fly to Naples to hear the masterpieces of Leo, Durante, Jommelli, and Pergolesi."⁴ Charles Burney's experience in the 1770s in many ways typifies those of other grand tourists, whose dreams of Naples sometimes collided with the city's harsh realities. On the city's musical delights, he speculated:

What lover of music could be in the place which had produced the two Scarlattis, Vinci, Leo, Pergolesi, Porpora, Farinelli, Jommelli, Traetta, Sacchini, and innumerable others of the first eminence among composers and performers, both vocal and instrumental, without the most sanguine expectations?⁵

Contrast this statement with his first morning at the St. Onofrio Conservatory:

On the first flight of stairs was a trumpeter, screaming upon his instrument till he was ready to bust; on the second was a french-horn, bellowing in the same manner.... But in the midst of such jargon, and continued dissonance, it is wholly impossible to give any kind of polish or finishing to their performance; hence the slovenly coarseness so remarkable in their public exhibitions; and the total want of taste, neatness, and expression in all these musicians, till they have acquired them elsewhere.⁶

Where imagination and reality intersected depended on the individual frame of reference.

These accounts attest to the importance of imagination as an interpretive tool for thinking about cities, not only how they are constituted (buildings, parks, piazzas, markets,

⁴ Cours, vole à Naples, écouter les chef-d'ouvres de Léo, de Durante, de Jommelli, de Pergolèse." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris, 1768), 227; trans. in Moe, *Vesuvius*, 61.

⁵ Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (London, 1771), 301.

⁶ Burney, *Present State*, 336.

monuments, and other landmarks), perceived, and even heard, but also our necessarily limited experience of them.

While urban studies and history have more recently appealed to the imagination and dreams inspired by cities, they have simultaneously, yet unintentionally, neglected the presence of the many urban sounds and musics that aid in the overall construction of cultural meaning and identity.⁷ No doubt the greatest challenge to such enquiries remains the ephemeral nature of sound and the musicologist's effort to understand it in localities more temporally distant.⁸ And yet, the sounds one hears daily can be formative to one's local identity. The early modern city is a fine example. An urbanite of the early eighteenth century would have encountered a whole host of sounds on an average walk: shouts from street vendors, clips of conversations from passers by, as well as boisterous carriages quickly shuffling persons of means around. Music was the most prominent of these sounds. The catchy tune of a street performer mingled distantly with the ringing of church bells, while a chapel choir sang vespers. A brush past a theater meant the prospect of hearing a few measures of the latest aria by Scarlatti, Vinci, Hasse, or Pergolesi. Civic and religious processions often included music, especially trumpets and drums. Later in the evening, perhaps a charming melody would emanate from an outdoor performance of a serenata, honoring local authorities, deities, or other events of religious or political

⁷ See *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*, ed. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), especially 5–99, which examines imagining cities in depth. Although their volume is primarily concerned with the analysis of the contemporary city, their insights are also instructive for more historical contexts.

⁸ For a historiographical survey of interpretations of music in urban contexts, see Tim Carter, "The Sounds of Silence: Models for an Urban Musicology," *Urban History* 29:1 (2002): 8–18.

importance. Such performances frequently carved out sonic boundaries between those who *could* listen and those who merely heard, a distinction based on rank.⁹

In considering music's place within this rich pallet of sounds, a number of questions emerge. How did music intersect with how inhabitants marked out identity in relation to the city? In what ways did the educated elite construct/collapse (musical) boundaries through musical signification? How did imagination, both individual and collective, assist in the interpretation of these processes? And finally, what were some of the implications for those constructing/imagining various facets of socio-political identity?

Early eighteenth-century Naples presents a particularly interesting case study for such questions. Indeed, the city was a locus for a plethora of cultural and political discourses, often with competing ideas about who and what constituted the civic polity, at the same time that it was experiencing great musical activity. Such musical flourishing was fueled by exchanges between foreign courts and cities, as well as by Naples's increasingly celebrated music conservatories (Santa Maria della Pietà dei Turchini, Santa Maria di Loreto, Sant'Onofrio a Capuana, and the Poveri di Gesù Cristo) which trained the famous castrato Farinelli and composers Leonardo Vinci and Giovanni Pergolesi. This cultural exchange helped to promulgate in northern Europe the reputation of the city as musically superior. Not surprisingly, then, issues of cultural and social identity were on the minds of Neapolitans. As arguably the most important and prominent media form for the creation of imaginary places in the eighteenth century, opera and its subgenres

⁹ For a Roman case study of this phenomenon, see Stefanie Tcharos, "Beyond the Boundaries of Opera: Conceptions of Musical Drama in Rome, 1676–1710" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2002).

provided some of the most distinctive and conspicuous forms for interpreting these issues.¹⁰

This study thus explores some of the ways opera mediated constructions of socio-political identity in Naples from 1707–1747, a forty-year period encompassing both the Austrian vice-regency (1707–1734) and the reign of Charles Bourbon III, the Kingdom’s first ruler in over two centuries. By thinking of the city as “imagined,” I am also drawing on a growing body of research, pioneered by Benedict Anderson, that attempts to understand how individuals and polities self-identify through cultural and political means.¹¹ As cultural geographers Pamela Shurmer-Smith and Kevin Hannam have famously argued, we can think of “all places [as] imaginary, in the sense that they cannot exist for us beyond the image we are capable of forming of them in our minds.”¹² Such “imaginary places,” as they term them, warrant consideration, for they inform how a society is organized politically, socially, and culturally; that is, “it is in imagination and

¹⁰ Media forms are, of course, pivotal to how we interpret the world around us: “The public imaginary about cities is itself in part constituted by media representations as much as by lived practices. Ideas about cities are not simply formed at a conscious level; they are also a product of unconscious desires and imaginaries.” Watson and Bridge, “City Imaginaries,” 7.

¹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Press, 1983). See also Pamela Shurmer-Smith and Kevin Hannam, *Worlds of Desire, Realms of Power: A Cultural Geography* (London: Edward Arnold, 1994); *Imagined States: Nationalism, Utopia, and Longing in Oral Cultures*, ed. Luisa Del Giudice and Gerald Porter (Logan, Utah: Utah State University, 2001). On musical constructions of place, see also *Music, Ethnicity, and Identity: The Musical Construction of Place*, ed. Martin Stokes (Oxford: Berg Press, 1994); and *Identity and Locality in Early European Music, 1028–1740*, ed. Jason Stoessel (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).

¹² Shurmer-Smith and Hannam, *Worlds*, 59. On “imaginary places,” see Shurmer-Smith and Hannam, *Worlds*, 59–73.

artistic creation that it becomes possible to think the unthinkable, to challenge codes and to deconstruct categories.”¹³

Imagining the Past, Informing the Present

Whereas eighteenth-century and contemporary observers alike have acknowledged *settecento* Naples as one of Europe’s most vibrant cultural and intellectual centers, it remains on the periphery of Anglo-American scholarship in music and the humanities.¹⁴ There are numerous reasons for this, most of which relate to how Naples

¹³ Shurmer-Smith and Hannam, *Worlds*, 73.

¹⁴ Outside musicology, the fields of history, philosophy, and to a lesser extent art history, have more recently made important contributions to our understanding of eighteenth-century Naples as an intellectual center. See Tomasso Astarita, *Village Justice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); and idem, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water: A History of Southern Italy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005); John Marino, *Pastoral Economics in the Kingdom of Naples* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1988); Barbara Naddeo, “Science for the Cosmopolitan: The Culture of Urbanity and the Emergence of Anthropology in the Kingdom of Naples, 1629–1800” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2001). On Spain’s rule in Naples to 1707, see Anthony Pagden, “*Fede Pubblica* and *Fede Privata*: Trust and Honor in Spanish Naples,” in *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 65–89; Gabriel Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour: Communication and Reception of Symbolic Forms of Power in Viceregal Naples* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); and John Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan: Citizen Culture in Baroque Naples* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010). For an excellent collection of political, philosophical, and literary texts, some of which are translated into English for the first time, see *Naples in the Eighteenth Century: The Birth and Death of a Nation State*, ed. Girolamo Imbuglia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). For a set of recent and insightful discussions on the Neapolitan Enlightenment vis-à-vis the intellectual work produced in France and Scotland later in the century, consult John Robertson’s work, especially “The Enlightenment above National Context: Political Economy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland and Naples,” *Historical Journal* 40 (1997): 667–697; and idem, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples, 1680–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). In art history, see *The Golden Age of Naples—Art and Civilization under the Bourbons, 1734–1805* (Detroit: The Detroit Institute of Arts, 1981); and

and southern Italy have been represented historically and historiographically. Historians cite as the primary cause enduring stereotypes of the Neapolitan and southern Italian as poor and culturally inferior. We can trace the emergence of these assumptions back to the late eighteenth century and the many travelogues of Grand Tourists who, as Melissa Calaresu has demonstrated, relied heavily on these stereotypes for those they encountered in the south, despite their acknowledged ethnographic interest in the city's popular culture.¹⁵ Moreover, many travelers came to Italy with pre-fashioned frames of reference, influenced in part by tourist guidebooks like Domenico Parrino's *Napoli, città nobilissima, antica e fedelissima* (1700), as well as many others in the travelers' native language.¹⁶ These materials advised the tourist both on what to see and the proper aesthetic response.¹⁷ For historian Ronald Muston, it is specifically American impressions of Italy, constructed through a convergence of nineteenth-century Grand Tour itineraries and what was by

Robin Thomas, "Charles of Bourbon's Naples: Architecture and Urbanism" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2006).

¹⁵ Melissa Calaresu, "From the Street to Stereotype: Urban Space, Travel, and the Picturesque in Late Eighteenth-Century Naples," *Italian Studies* 62:2 (2007): 189–203. The scholarship on the efficacy of this myth is extensive and growing. The key texts include John Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860–1900* (London: Macmillan, 1999); and *The New History of the Italian South*, ed. Robert Lumley and Jonathan Morris (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997).

¹⁶ Domenico Parrino, *Napoli, città nobilissima, antica e fedelissima* (Naples: Parrino, 1700); and Carlo Celano, *Delle notizie del bello, dell'antico, e del curioso della città di Napoli* (Naples: Francesco Paci, 1692) are two cases in the Italian travel literature specifically representing Naples and the south. For surveys on this literature, see Atansio Mozzillo, *Viaggiatori stranieri nel Sud* (Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1964); idem, *Passaggio a Mezzogiorno: Napoli e il Sud nell'immaginario barocco e illuminista europeo* (Milan: Leonardo, 1993); and Cesare De Seta, *L'Italia del Grand Tour* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1992).

¹⁷ For more on this aspect of the Grand Tour, see Barbara Naddeo, "Cultural Capitals and Cosmopolitanism in Eighteenth-Century Italy: The Historiography and Italy on the Grand Tour," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 10:2 (2005): 183–199, but especially 185–186.

then a solid discursive tradition of negative representation, that contributed most to the historiographical neglect of Naples in the English-speaking world:

With the end of the Grand Tour in the late nineteenth century, Rome, Florence, and Venice became the points of an ironclad triangle of travel, both for the obvious attractions and beauties of these cities and their environs, and for the cultural framework with which Americans have come to view Italy. This attitude, moreover, belies another American outlook, one that is, unfortunately, still shared by a great many Italians and Europeans themselves: that the *Mezzogiorno*, the “south” of Italy, is a land of poverty and cultural deprivation: a region—and a capital city—beset by corruption, crime, and the stereotype of the “*far niente*” southern Italian.¹⁸

Anglo-American musicology, taking its cues from other branches of the humanities, had until recently little to say about early eighteenth-century Naples, allowing it to remain the purview of German and Italian musicology. For much of the twentieth century, when musicologists did engage Naples, they considered issues relevant to the broader field, such as the appropriateness of the phrase “Neapolitan school” as a terminological descriptor for the musical language of galant opera¹⁹ and Naples’s

¹⁸ Ronald Muston, “Introduction,” in *Baroque Naples: A Documentary History, 1600–1800*, ed. Jeanne Chenault Porter (New York: Italica Press, 2000), xvii–xviii.

¹⁹ The historiography of the term has a long and complex history. Francesco Florimo, *La scuola musicale di Napoli e i suoi conservatori*, 4 vols. (Naples, 1880–3) marks one of the earliest uses in post-eighteenth-century writing. The notion of a “school” derives its epistemological thrust from Raphael Georg Kisezewetter’s *Die Verdienste der Niederländer um die Tonkunst* (1829). In the 1960s, the phrase was reexamined. See especially Helmut Hücke and Edward O.D. Downes, “Die neapolitanische Tradition in der Oper,” in *IMS 8th Congress Report, New York, 1961*, ed. Jan LaRue (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1961), 1: 253–84 and 2: 132–4; Hellmuth Wolff, “The Fairy Tale of the Neapolitan Opera,” in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Music: A Tribute to Karl Geiringer on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. H.C. Robbins Landon and Roger Chapman (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970), 401–406. In late 1960s and early 1970s, Daniel Hertz and Reinhard Strohm offered more nuanced approaches. Hertz argued in favor of a Neapolitan-led renewal of Italian music between 1720–1740. Strohm concurred, but added that such regional characteristics were valid only until around 1730–1740, when a more globalized musical language emerged. See Daniel Hertz, “Opera and the Periodization of Eighteenth-Century Music,” in *International Musicological Society: Report of the Tenth Congress, Ljubljana, 1967*, ed. Dragotin Cvetko (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), 160–168; and Reinhard Strohm, *Italienische Opernarien des frühen*

contribution to *opera buffa* and the *intermezzo*, which they claimed explicated the origins of the “classical” style.²⁰ While early studies of the *commedia per musica* and its sub-genres have revealed much about the musical and literary aspects of the genre, we glean less regarding its place in Neapolitan society or how Neapolitans interpreted what they saw. Scholars have continued to promote the idea that Neapolitan poets intentionally incorporated aspects of local dialect, familiar city locations, and plebeian characters in comedies as a way of juxtaposing the stylization of opera seria with the ostensible realism of *buffa*.²¹ The validity of this historiographical claim has yet to be fully examined.

It was not until 1972 that English readers received a book-length examination of musical life in eighteenth-century Naples. Although Michael Robinson’s *Naples and Neapolitan Opera* accomplished little more than the consolidation of previously known scholarship, a critique he himself acknowledges, it remains an indispensable reference on

Settecento (Cologne: Arno Volk Verlag, 1972). More recently, Robert Lang has sought to revitalize and take seriously the notion of a “Neapolitanische Schule” in Robert Lang, “*Neapolitanische Schule: Lokalstilistische Ausprägungen in der Oper des Settecento* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001).

²⁰ The major works on early Italian comic opera include: Michele Scherillo, *L’opera buffa napoletana durante il Settecento: storia letteraria* (Naples: Remo Sandron, 1917); Benedetto Croce, *I teatri di Napoli, Secolo XV–XVIII* (Naples: Pierro, 1891); Charles Troy, *The Comic Intermezzo: A Study in the History of Eighteenth-Century Italian Opera* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979); Michael Robinson, *Naples and Neapolitan Opera* (Oxford, 1972); Piero Weiss, “Ancora sulle origini dell’opera comica: il linguaggio,” *Studi Pergolesiani* 1 (1983): 124–48. Barbara Mackenzie, “Neapolitan Comic Opera in Naples and in Rome: Pergolesi’s *Lo frate ‘nnamorato* and Latilla’s *La finta cameriera*,” *Studi Pergolesiani* 3 (1999): 183–200; Robert Lang, “Il ‘caro sassone’ napoletano: Zu Hasses früher Opernkomödie *La sorella amante* (1729),” *Hasse-Studien* 5 (2005): 5–17. More recently, Barbara Naddeo convincingly proffered the claim that “the local language was a prop not of regional but of social identity for Naples’ urban elites by the end of the eighteenth century.” See “Urban Arcadia: Representations of the “Dialect” of Naples in Linguistic Theory and Comic Theater, 1696–1780,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35:1 (2001), 59.

²¹ See, in part, Piero Weiss, “Ancora sulle origini dell’opera comica: Il Linguaggio,” *Pergolesi Studies* 1 (2001): 124–148.

Naples and its musical institutions.²² Robinson primarily pursues the reign of Charles Bourbon III (1734–1759), which coincided with an apex in the city’s cultural history. Much of what he points to as artistic flowering and innovation occurred during the Austrian vice-regency (1707–1734), yet this period remains a lacuna in the musical historiography. What information we glean Robinson limits to fewer than five pages of a lengthy introductory chapter summarizing political and cultural events to 1734. Daniel Hertz attempted to cover these gaps in Robinson’s research with a chapter dedicated to early eighteenth-century Naples in his 2003 tome, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style (1720–1780)*.²³ The volume’s lack of reference to scholarship post-1980s may be interpreted as its principal weakness, and yet the book constitutes a major step forward in understanding those localities active in the production and consumption of music in the galant style, especially Naples.

Scholars like Daniel Hertz and Reinhard Strohm may be credited with drawing further attention to eighteenth-century Naples’s important and abundant musical life.²⁴ And while their pioneering work has not instigated a flood of new dissertations, articles, and monographs on the subject, some recent contributions warrant attention. More than just a biography of the important late seventeenth-century Neapolitan composer

²² Robinson, *Naples*, v–vi.

²³ Daniel Hertz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 67–170.

²⁴ See Reinhard Strohm, *Italienische Opernarien des frühen Settecento*, 2 vols. (Cologne: Arno-Volk Verlag, 1976); and idem, “The Neapolitans in Venice,” in *Con che soavità: Studies in Italian Opera, Song and Dance, 1580–1740*, ed. Ian Fenlon and Tim Carter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 249–74. For a reconsideration of instrumental music’s role in early eighteenth-century Naples, see Guido Olivieri, “The ‘Fiery Genius’: The Contribution of Neapolitan Virtuosi to the Spread of the String Sonata (1684–1736)” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2005).

Francesco Provenzale (1624–1704), *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples: Francesco Provenzale (1624–1704)*, by Dinko Fabris, compellingly invokes current theories from anthropology and sociology to contextualize the composer’s place in a complicated web of politics and cultural influences.²⁵ Chapter One, entitled “La città della festa,” presents a comprehensive overview and analysis of the city’s many civic and religious festivals, in which music was a frequent participant. By contrast, Kurt Markstrom’s recent biography of composer Leonardo Vinci (c.1696–1730), whom eighteenth-century British historian Charles Burney claimed as the founder of the “classical” style, is also groundbreaking, in that it marks the first comprehensive study in English of a major composer associated with early eighteenth-century Naples.²⁶ He is currently at work on a similar biography on Nicola Porpora, Farinelli’s teacher.

Even on the question of music and the construction of socio-political identity, musicologists, save for Martha Feldman’s work on opera, luxury, and the Naples Famine of 1764, have remained largely silent.²⁷ Social historians, such as John Marino and

²⁵ Dinko Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples: Francesco Provenzale (1624–1704)* (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2007), 1–2.

²⁶ Kurt Markstrom, *The Operas of Leonardo Vinci, Napoletano* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2007). Burney claimed that, “Vinci seems to have been the first opera composer who...without degrading his art, rendered it the friend, though not the slave to poetry, by simplifying and polishing melody, and calling the attention of the audience chiefly to the voice-part, by disintangling [sic] it from fugue, complication, and laboured contrivance.” Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period II* (London, 1776–1789), 917. For more on Burney’s views of Vinci, see Kurt Markstrom, “Burney’s Assessment of Leonardo Vinci,” *Acta Musicologica* 67:2 (1993): 142–163. Though he did not associate long with Naples, Johann Adolf Hasse and his musical style were clearly influenced by the time he spent in Naples between 1722 and 1729. Raffaele Mellace, *Johann Adolf Hasse* (Palermo: L’Epos, 2004) demands attention in this regard.

²⁷ Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty: Transforming Myths in Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 188–225.

Gabriel Guarino have provided more insights into this process, especially the seventeenth century.²⁸ Though their research touches on the performative, music's role is generally left out.

Two points emerge from this glance at the literature on Naples: First, with few exceptions, musicologists working on Naples have concentrated their energies largely on the traditional, yet important arenas of musician/composer biography, source studies, and institutional history. Second, there is to date no extended examination of how composers, librettist, impresarios, and politicians all drew on opera and state institutions to imagine and interpret their world, even as eighteenth-century travelogues and other documents suggest that imagination played a prominent role in how tourists and inhabitants alike engaged with this city. In short, in a city-state regarded for its self-conscious cultural identity, what was music's role in the imagination, comprehension, and frequent renegotiation of its socio-political identities? It is in the investigation of these identities, I believe, that we gain deeper insights into how Neapolitans viewed music and its prominent relationship to the city.

On Imagination and Metaphor

To begin addressing this question, I turn to Reinhard Strohm's recent theoretical work on music and socio-political identity, which is compulsory for anyone wishing to study music's role in the hermeneutics of baroque ideology. He develops these ideas in

²⁸ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*; and Guarino, *King's Splendour*.

two related essays. In the first piece, entitled “*Costanza e Fortezza*: Investigation of the Baroque Ideology” (2002), he examines the events surrounding Fux’s *Costanza e Fortezza* (1722) to critique recent methodological claims about “revealing” or offering a “straight, denotative reflection between reality and symbol.”²⁹ Informed by Paul Ricoeur’s *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (1986), which advances a tripartite historical model of ideological discourse based on the writers Marx, Weber, and Geertz, Strohm concludes that “What has...been said to describe the functioning of the baroque work-event within the ideology concepts of Weber and Geertz [“legitimation of power” and hyperbolic discourse respectively] can be matched by a description of it as a metaphor.”³⁰ In short, he endeavors to analyze such moments within a broader manifestation of poetic expression.

For Strohm, the use of this form of heightened discourse in the expression of baroque ideology potentially frees the artwork/spectacle from the task of having spectators accept or reject claims to power while also advancing notions of a common identity.³¹ This framing of the baroque spectacle in terms of a metaphor is reasonable, since early modern writers of opera adopted this terminology in their analyses. Take, for example, the seventeenth-century Aristotelian philosopher Emanuele Tesauro, who argued that “musical tragedies” are “metaphors representing heroic actions in costume,

²⁹ Reinhard Strohm, “*Costanza e Fortezza*: Investigation of the Baroque Ideology,” in *I Bibiena una famiglia in scena: da Bologna all’Europa*, ed. Daniela Galligani (Florence: Alinea, 2002), 85.

³⁰ See Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, ed. George H. Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). Strohm, “Baroque Ideology,” 90.

³¹ Strohm, “Baroque Ideology,” 89.

with singing, gesture and musical accompaniment.”³² Here, Aristotelian concepts of drama and metaphor converge. The question of the repetitiveness of baroque dramas (in other words, the many settings of a particular libretto by Stampiglia, Zeno, or Metastasio) also arises with regard to the perceived credibility of their statements. By integrating the spectacle into a broader context, Strohm argues, such actions also couch these works within a “temporally longer practice of events,” providing an easier path between the facts of an event and its hyperbolic expression.³³ In sum, Strohm urges us to readjust the critical lens we have applied to interpretation of baroque ideology:

The unfolded concept of metaphor supplements the unfolded concept of ideology because it explains better why and how art can be efficient precisely when it is used ideologically.... The weakness of straight statements of political interest...is their inevitable repetitiveness—there is only one thing to say, always the same—whereas art can individualize and refresh ideological statements.³⁴

It is this notion of refreshment that enlivens a given socio-political metaphor, affording it a deeper resonance, texture, and relevance.

In the second essay, “Eighteenth-Century Music as a Socio-Political Metaphor?” (2009), Strohm tackles the issue of music as socio-political metaphor head on. This time, he focuses more on metaphor’s place in classical rhetoric, a subject in which most eighteenth-century composers and musicians received instruction.³⁵ In doing so, he

³² “Metafore rappresentanti Attioni Heroiche con Habiti, e Voce, e Gesto, et Harmonia.” Quoted in Florian Mehlretter, *Die unmögliche Tragödie: Karnevalisierung und Gattungsmischung im venezianischen Opernlibretto des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1993), 201; trans. in Strohm, “Baroque Ideology,” 91.

³³ Strohm, “Baroque Ideology,” 89.

³⁴ Strohm, “Baroque Ideology,” 91.

³⁵ Reinhard Strohm, “Eighteenth-Century Music as a Socio-Political Metaphor?,” in *The Century of Bach and Mozart: Perspectives on Historiography, Composition, Theory, and Performance*,

“considers the relationship between eighteenth-century music and its possible socio-political references from the viewpoint of metaphor.”³⁶ He draws a distinction between metaphor as an aspect of creation and metaphorical readings as “strategies of interpretation” so as to re-situate the concept of metaphor in “an appropriate place within the music-historical discourse.”³⁷ By musical metaphors, Strohm refers not to musical topicality, but rather to works as metaphors. Topics, he believes, function more appropriately as forms of mimesis or, in rhetorical terms, *imitatio naturae*.³⁸ He leaves the rest up to the critic “to make a case for musical metaphors by positing music as an ordinary discourse—with ordinary references provided by its topics and signs and then showing how these signs are used metaphorically in order to defer or suspend reference.”³⁹ What he advocates, in other words, is a liberation of “metaphorical intention” from an enforced manifestation through the frame of the work. That is, a more fruitful approach might involve the interpretation of musical metaphors through the intentions and actions of musicians alike, as opposed to their compositions alone.⁴⁰

ed. Sean Gallagher and Thomas Forrest Kelly (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 279–296.

³⁶ Strohm, “Metaphor,” 279.

³⁷ Strohm, “Metaphor,” 279.

³⁸ Strohm, “Metaphor,” 287.

³⁹ Strohm, “Metaphor,” 281.

⁴⁰ Strohm, “Metaphor,” 295.

This approach, informed by Ricoeur’s ideas on metaphor and ideology, theoretically presents musical hermeneutics with a “larger frame of reference” as a precondition for metaphorical comprehension, while simultaneously inviting in variant significations.⁴¹

One way to enhance Strohm’s methodology, I argue, is with the concept of imagination. The word “imagination” derives from the Latin *imaginare*, or “to form internal images or ideas of concepts.”⁴² Modern definitions emphasize the creative faculty of forming new ideas or images, but in the early modern era, the concept had another meaning. By imagination, a speaker referred to the faculty of forming in the mind a replica of a thing—how it tasted, sounded, etc. It was in the late eighteenth century that the former connotation became the definition (bound up with Romantic notions of creativity) we know today.⁴³ This dissertation will not seek to understand how elite Neapolitans “imagined” opera and socio-political identity, at least in terms of how they understood the concept. Rather, I employ “imagination” more as a theoretical construct based in part on Ricoeur’s theory of imagination.

Although much of Ricoeur’s work on ideology and metaphor sidetracks the issue of imagination, George Taylor has uncovered a set of unpublished lectures, known today as the *Lectures on Imagination*, which Ricoeur delivered at the University of Chicago in

⁴¹ Strohm, “Metaphor,” 295.

⁴² “Imagination, n.” OED Online. May 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/91643?redirectedFrom=imagination> (accessed May 26, 2016).

⁴³ Fundamental here is John Lyons, *Before Imagination: Embodied Thought from Montaigne to Rousseau* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); and John M. Cocking, *Imagination: A Study in the History of Ideas*, ed. Penelope Murray (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), vii–xvi.

1975.⁴⁴ They were given the same year as the *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, which scholars now regard as one of his seminal works, and one to which Strohm has turned to ground his own ideas on the nexus between baroque art and ideology.⁴⁵ In particular, Ricoeur develops a theory of “productive imagination,” which he posits as an antithesis to “reproductive imagination.” In doing so, he demonstrates that imagination pervades all aspects of perception and comprehension, arguing that direct or unadorned impressions of the world rarely, if ever, exist.⁴⁶ Rather, our concept of the world hinges on physiological and imaginative processes that mediate what we encounter. Or, as he later frames it: “Imagination is not at all an alternative to perception but [rather] an ingredient of perception. It’s encapsulated within the framework of perception.”⁴⁷ For Ricoeur, “we can no longer oppose ... imagining to seeing, if seeing is itself a way of imagining,

⁴⁴ Paul Ricoeur, “Lectures on Imagination” (1975) (unpublished lecture transcripts). My appreciation goes to Dr. Taylor for providing me a list of Ricoeur’s writings on imagination, as well as English translations of other relevant essays by Ricoeur. Taylor is currently editing these lectures for publication; the portions most relevant to this discussion appear in George Taylor, “Ricoeur’s Philosophy of Imagination,” *Journal of French Philosophy* 16:1/2 (2006): 93–104.

⁴⁵ Here is a partial list of Ricoeur’s work on imagination: Paul Ricoeur, “Imagination productive et imagination reproductive selon Kant,” in *Recherches phénoménologiques sur l’imaginaire I* (Paris: Centre de Recherches Phénoménologiques, 1974), 9–13; idem, “Imagination in Discourse and in Action,” in *From Text to Action. Essays in Hermeneutics, II*, trans. K. Blamey and J. B. Thompson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 168–87; idem, “The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination and Feeling,” *Critical Inquiry* 5:1 (1978): 143–59; idem, “The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality,” *Man and World*, 12/2 (1979): 123–41; and idem, “The Bible and the Imagination,” in *The Bible as a Document of the University*, ed. H. D. Betz (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 49–75. My thanks go to George Taylor for supplying me with this bibliography.

⁴⁶ Ricoeur, “Lectures,” 2:6.

⁴⁷ Taylor, “Imagination,” 94.

interpreting, or thinking.”⁴⁸ This resonates well with Pamela Shurmer-Smith and Kevin Hannam’s observations, cited earlier, regarding the interrelationship between perception and imagination.

The core of Ricoeur’s philosophy distinguishes between “productive imagination” and “reproductive imagination.” He favors the latter over the former. “Reproductive imagination” denotes the distinction between the original object and its copy. We often view the copy as lesser in quality. For Ricoeur, this type of aesthetic thinking pervades much of the discourse historically on imagination. With “productive imagination,” Ricoeur seeks an aesthetic position that is not determined by, nor reproductive of, the original. The two examples he provides are utopia and Greek tragedy: each one intended to redefine our conceptions of, or at least rethink, reality. In defining “productive imagination,” Ricoeur draws on Aristotelian theories of tragedy, particularly the notion that tragedy represents not so much a copy of human life but what Ricoeur terms as “the power of disclosure concerning reality.”⁴⁹

Fiction is where to look, he argues, for examples of entities without ties to an original. “Because fictions don’t reproduce a previous reality,” Ricoeur states, “they may produce a new reality. They are not bound by an original that precedes them.”⁵⁰ He posits four areas of “productive imagination”: social and cultural, epistemological, poetic, and religious.⁵¹ The first three concern fiction. Category one focuses on utopian ideals,

⁴⁸ Taylor, “Imagination,” 94.

⁴⁹ Taylor, “Imagination,” 96.

⁵⁰ Taylor, “Imagination,” 97.

⁵¹ For a contextual discussion, see Taylor, “Imagination,” 94.

and can be potentially useful in considering how individual and localities frame themselves and others. The second, epistemological, encapsulates scientific discourse. By “poetic imagination,” Ricoeur means discourse that opens up new dimensions of reality, allowing us to travel beyond the world of objects and in so doing alter our sense of reality. He makes clear that in order for this theoretical dynamic to operate effectively, it must refashion preexisting categories: “we start with an image without an original, then we may discover a kind of second ontology which is not the ontology of the original but...the ontology displayed by the image itself, because it is no original.”⁵²

On the relationship between productive imagination and metaphor, Ricoeur says less. We, however, find clues in some of his related writings. For example, in *The Rule of Metaphor* (1975), Ricoeur characterizes similitude across difference (essentially metaphor) as an act of imagination.⁵³ Imagination, as he defines it in his essay on the “Metaphorical Process,” can be described as “this ability to produce new kinds of assimilation and to produce them not above the differences, as in the concept, but in spite of and through the differences.”⁵⁴ The concept of imagination, in short, is compulsory for metaphorical resemblance to be fully realized, and it is this concept of poetic imagination that I believe best informs the interpretation of Naples, its imagined states, and the construction of its various socio-political identities.

⁵² Taylor, “Imagination,” 98.

⁵³ See Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 196; and Taylor, “Imagination,” 99.

⁵⁴ Ricoeur, “Metaphorical Process,” 154–55. Cited in Taylor, “Imagination,” 99.

Imagining Naples

With these theories in mind, this dissertation seeks to explore some of the ways Neapolitan cultural elites imagined their city and its inhabitants through opera. I bring together opera scores, libretti, gala books, letters, early eighteenth-century social treatises, among other material, to argue that opera—an important mythologizing force in Naples—allowed its producers and spectators to experiment with alternate realities, some of them utopian in character. That this occurred matters less, I believe, than how it occurred, and with what implications for the shaping of cultural meaning. Interpreting Naples’s “imagined states” sheds further light on what made this city so prominent in eighteenth-century musical discourse and travelogues, especially since this period was—at least until 1734—one of much social and political instability.⁵⁵ Theoretically, this dissertation attempts to show some of the ways the “imagined states” model, grounded in Ricoeurian theory, may help us explicate music’s role in imagining eighteenth-century Naples. In this regard, opera bridged the real, the imaginary, and the desired.

To consider these themes further, I organize this study around four chapters, each one focused on a prominent figure in early eighteenth-century Neapolitan discourse: the civic muse Parthenope, the pleb, the king (after 1734), and the prince. In so doing, I reinterpret some important cultural and musical artifacts of eighteenth-century Naples—

⁵⁵ The title and approach to this dissertation are inspired in part by *Imagined States: Nationalism, Utopia, and Longing in Oral Cultures*, ed. Luisa Del Giudice and Gerald Porter (Logan: Utah State University, 2001). Conceived as an extension of Anderson’s groundbreaking *Imagined Communities* (1983), the volume of essays seeks to understand ways of imagining the other in the process of self-identification, be it individually or collectively. Their work focuses less on elite cultures and the kind of identity construction associated with cities. Music plays only an occasional role in this collection, and yet our aesthetic ideas about music represent an important component of self-identification and the so-called “other.”

many of them still unpublished in modern critical editions (for example, Domenico Sarro's *La Partenope* (1722) and *Achille in Sciro* (1737), Leonardo Vinci's *Li zite 'ngalera* (1722), and the gala book *Narrazione delle solenni delle feste...Napoli* (1749)), among others—with an eye towards what these archival materials can tell us about how cultural elites created realms or completely reimagined old ones in the process of engaging their environment. The operas under examination posit intriguing and highly nuanced answers to contemporary questions of socio-political identity, gender, and—after 1734—the nature of kingship and royal succession in the new Kingdom of Naples. In other words, by demonstrating these imagined states on the opera stage, producers and spectators alike could consider or ponder their world anew, the symbols of Neapolitan socio-political identity, potentially stale forms of propaganda (as Strohm suggested), could be refreshed each time, with the content of these productions offering interpretations that seem to at once flatter and critique. Thus, I demonstrate in each case how producers drew upon music, rhetoric, politics, myth, and history to reinterpret the city and its inhabitants—each time creating a new “imagined state.”

Chapter One discusses the early modern fascination with Naples's mythical founder and protector, the ancient Greek muse Parthenope. In 1722, poet Silvio Stampiglia and composer Domenico Sarro resurrected Stampiglia's 1699 libretto *La Partenope* at Naples's Teatro San Bartolomeo, during which time the symbolic identity of the opera's heroine and the city's *fondatrice* was anything but secure in the Neapolitan historical awareness.⁵⁶ Naples's mythical founding began with the story of Parthenope's

⁵⁶ For a detailed analysis of the first twenty settings of Stampiglia, see Robert Freeman, “The Travels of *Partenope*,” in *Studies in Music History: Essays for Oliver Strunk*, ed. Harold S. Powers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 356–85. Dinko Fabris has charted the pervasiveness of this myth in both seventeenth and eighteenth-century spectacles in

inability to entrap Odysseus. Distraught, she threw herself into the sea, washing ashore near Naples. By the eighteenth century, there existed as many competing narratives of the siren as poets to pen them. And while opera seria embodied this idea of overwriting the past through adaptation and borrowing, Stampiglia and Sarro's setting of Neapolitan mythology was particularly effective at appealing to a collective sense of civic identity, drawing on such popular historical narratives as Giovanni Antonio Summonte's *Historia della città ... di Napoli* (1601).

Concurrently, social elites in Naples, and indeed throughout Italy, were embroiled in an ongoing debate over the increasing presence of women in intellectual circles. Initially posited as an academic exercise, participants in the so-called *Querelle des Femmes* sought an understanding of the nature, worth, and educability of women. What distinguished the early eighteenth-century debate from that of the seventeenth century was the degree to which its very epistemological underpinnings had shifted from queries of ontological worth to considerations of the social benefits of female education. Despite gains, women's educational achievements and scholarly work continued to be defined by men, whereupon the female intellectual presence paradoxically assumed a sense of absence, what Natalie Davis and Arlette Farge have described as "a kind of walled garden."⁵⁷ Drawing on siren lore, early modern histories of Naples, and tracts on women,

"La città della sirena: Le origini del mito musicale di Napoli nell'età spagnola," in *Napoli vicereigno spagnolo: Una capitale della cultura alle origini dell'Europa moderna (Sec. XVI–XVII) II*, ed. Monika Bosse and Andre Stoll (Naples: Vivarium, 2001), 473–501; and idem, "Partenope da sirena a regina: Il mito musicale di Napoli," in *Mediterranean Myths from Classical Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Metoda Kokole and Kos Sasel (Ljubljana: Slovenska Akademija Znanosti in Umetnosti 2006), 163–185.

⁵⁷ Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge, "Women as Historical Actors," in *A History of Women: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, ed. Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 1.

this chapter examines the multiple layers of historical and symbolic awareness in Stampiglia and Sarro's *La Partenope*, demonstrating how Parthenope herself embodied the debate's many anxieties. The use of Naples's female embodiment of civic purity marked a rare instance of opera specifically invoking civic identity to advance debate. Although emblematic of the eighteenth-century exceptional woman, Parthenope consents in the end to marriage, effectively neutralizing her political authority. Her domestication offered striking parallels to claims repeatedly espoused by eighteenth-century intellectuals—that to educate women was to enhance the domestic sphere.

Turning to the figure of the pleb, Chapter Two reconsiders opera seria's generic antithesis, comic opera, by arguing against the common claim that early eighteenth-century comic opera in Naples was essentially realistic in its depiction of the city, its inhabitants, and dialect. Juxtaposing comic opera over and against the more stylized opera seria, musicologists have privileged comic opera as an early expression of realism in opera. However, as historian Barbara Naddeo has shown, comic opera's penchant for representing plebeian characters in dialect coincided with a vigorous debate in early eighteenth-century Naples about the relationship between language and its speakers.⁵⁸ No doubt, this debate occurred in reaction to the increased cultivation of Tuscan over Neapolitan as the language of the civic (*civiltà*) and patrician classes. Although the Neapolitan dialect provided a means for representing the plebeians onstage, evidence from the comedies themselves suggests a more complex view, one in which rhetorical *topoi* relied for their efficacy on a complex interplay of dichotomies (comic vs. serious, *innamorati* vs. ensemble, high vs. low poetic and musical levels, and by the 1720s, the juxtaposition of Tuscan with Neapolitan).

⁵⁸ Naddeo, "Arcadia," 44.

To flesh out these issues, I draw on the sociological writings of Gravina, Vico, and Doria, ritual, narrative theory, and musicology to explore the phenomenal canzona in the early eighteenth-century *commedia per musica*. Given the pervasiveness of this form and negative conceptions of the plebs, the metaphorical transformation of the plebs into musical pastorals (concerned primarily with the intrigues of love, music, and comedy) in the comic opera intentionally disarmed the negatively charged symbol for the Kingdom's professional elite.

Chapter Three considers the representation of the king by examining Domenico Sarro's setting of *Achille in Sciro* (1737) as the central event at the inauguration of the Teatro San Carlo. Though Sarro's score evinced near fidelity to Metastasio's original *scrittura*, the socio-political context and underlying motivations for its choice differed from those at Vienna. With local politics in mind, this chapter seeks to situate Sarro's opera and the inauguration within a broader political frame. Given Carlo's initial political challenges and the theater's massive construction effort, the inauguration sought to cement Carlo's image centrally within the kingdom's political and cultural imagination. As I demonstrate, the narrative of Achilles on Scyros and the Teatro San Carlo's inaugural events propagated a rhetoric of inevitability around Carlo's ascension to the throne. The court advanced this notion as a way of ironing out the transition from the Austrian vice-regency and of addressing a longstanding mistrust among the landed gentry, a naturally skeptical group, from whom Carlo sought good will and loyalty.

Focusing lastly on the prince, Chapter Four explores the theme of music and place in the festivities documented in the gala volume *Narrazione delle solenni reali feste fatte celebrare in Napoli da Sua Maesta il Re delle Due Sicilie, Carlo Infante di Spagna* (1749), describing in vivid detail the events honoring the birth on November 11, 1747, of Filippo, Naples's

first male heir in over two centuries.⁵⁹ The festival itself included fifteen days of processions, dancing, music, five performances of Ranieri De' Calzabigi and Giuseppe De Majo's serenata *Il sogno di Olimpia*, feasts, and a celebration of the civic abundance rite known as *Cuccagna*. The festival culminated with fireworks at the Castel d'Ovo. Accompanying this description of events were fifteen illustrations of spatial modifications by stage designer and architect Vincenzo Re (1700–1762), depicting perspectives of the Teatro San Carlo no longer visible, scenes from the serenata, the *Cuccagna*, and fireworks. Though of primary importance to theater and art historians, the *Narrazione* has ironically attracted less attention from musicologists, save for those interested in its performance-practice details.⁶⁰ This chapter seeks to redress this scholarly imbalance by asking how the Carolinian regime musically imagined their collective future around the *primogenitor* Filippo.

The narrative that emerges from this examination of how elite Neapolitans imagined their city through opera points to a locality whose reputation for chaos, both socially and politically, strove to view itself as stable, prosperous, and viable. Opera presented itself not just as a mere mirror of Neapolitan political rhetoric, but as an important voice in a series of broader debates. In doing so, cultural elites experimented with refashioned (somewhat utopian) conceptions of their city, while refreshing the most prominent symbols of the city-state. Only by parsing some of the ways the city's prominent symbols and axes of power were idealized, manipulated, and denigrated onstage, can we begin to understand the intersections between art, class, and politics in

⁵⁹ *Narrazione delle solenni reali feste fatte celebrare in Napoli da Sua Maesta il Re delle Due Sicilie, Carlo Infante di Spagna* (Naples, 1749).

⁶⁰ See, for example, John Spitzer and Neal Zaslaw, *The Birth of the Orchestra: History of an Institution, 1650–1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 152.

Naples; only then do some of its imagined states emerge. As Italo Calvino reminds us in

Invisible Cities (1972):

The city...does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, and scrolls.⁶¹

⁶¹ Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 11.

Chapter One

**The Siren Reconstituted: Silvio Stampiglia's *La Partenope*
and the Walled Garden of Knowledge in Early Eighteenth-Century Naples**

On December 15, 1722, the *Gazzetta di Napoli* reported that Silvio Stampiglia's 1699 libretto *La Partenope* had returned to Naples's Teatro S. Bartolomeo¹ with new music by popular Neapolitan composer Domenico Sarro (1679–1744).² The libretto featured an adaptation of the city's origin myth, in which the lifeless body of the Homeric siren Parthenope washed ashore after failing to lure Odysseus to his doom.³ The libretto quickly became one of the most popular dramas of the early eighteenth century, with settings by Antonio Caldara (1708), Domenico

¹ “Mercordì a sera si die principio alla recita della nuova Opera in Musica al Teatro di S. Bartolomeo, intitolata: *La Partenope*, Parto dell'eruditissima penna del già rinomato Silvio Stampiglia [...] posta in note dal celebre Maestro di Cappella Domenico Sarro [...] facendo a gara li Virtuosi, che la rappresentano [...] tra gli altri della prima Parte di Rosmira Principessa di Cipro in Abito di Armeno sotto nome di Eurimene la rinomata Faustina Bordoni.” *Gazzetta di Napoli* (December 15, 1722); cited in Thomas Griffen, *Musical References in the ‘Gazzetta di Napoli,’ 1681–1725* (Berkeley: Fallen Leaf Press, 1993), 51.

² For general biographical information on Sarro, see Ulisse Prota-Giurleo, “Domenico Sarro,” *Archivi* 26 (1959): 73–85; Helmut Hucke, “Die neapolitanische Tradition in der Oper,” in *Report of the Eighth Congress of the International Musicological Society New York 1961*, ed. Jan LaRue (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1961), 253–76; Michael F. Robinson, *Naples and Neapolitan Opera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). On specific works, see Hucke, “La *Didone abbandonata* di Domenico Sarri nella stesura del 1724 e nella revisione del 1730,” *Gazzetta musicale di Napoli* 2 (1956): 180–89; and idem, “*L’Achille in Sciro* di Domenico Sarri e l’inaugurazione del Teatro di San Carlo,” in *Il Teatro di San Carlo, 1737–1987*, ed. Bruno Cagli, Agostino Ziino, and Franco Mancini (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1987), 2:21–32; Andrea Sommer-Mathis, “*Achille in Sciro*: Eine europäische Oper? Drei Aufführungen von Metastasio's *dramma per musica* in Wien, Neapel und Madrid,” in *Pietro Metastasio: Uomo universale (1698–1782)—Festgabe der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zum 300. Geburtstag von Pietro Metastasio*, ed. Andrea Sommer-Mathis and Elisabeth Hilscher (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 221–250.

³ Throughout this chapter, I refer interchangeably to Parthenope and Partenope. The former is the generally accepted English spelling for the Greek siren, while the latter designates both the libretto's title and main character.

Sarro (1722), Leonardo Vinci (1725), George Frederic Handel (1730), and Antonio Vivaldi (1738).⁴

Despite its popularity, Stampiglia and Sarro's *La Partenope* has received little scholarly attention. Kurt Markstrom has interpreted its narrative as an allegory of the War of the Spanish Succession, with Partenope (alias Naples) the victor.⁵ David Vickers reads it as a farce on the tradition of courtly love.⁶ Winton Dean, noting the heroic roles afforded Partenope and Rosmira, favors a feminist reading.⁷ If we consider the drama within its immediate social and cultural contexts, however, *La Partenope* emerges as neither a feminist nor anti-feminist poem. Rather, drawing on early-modern siren lore, Neapolitan representations of Parthenope, and eighteenth-century tracts on women, I will highlight the opera's ambivalence on the themes of gender and governance. Stampiglia's libretto stands out as not merely a tale of civic origins, but one where the very persona of Partenope came to embody the issue of gender as Neapolitans and Italians alike debated it. If Italians viewed women of talent as civic monuments, as Paula Findlen claims, then what were the implications of such perspectives when those monuments came to life in the

⁴ For information on the earliest settings of Stampiglia's libretto, see Robert Freeman, "The Travels of *Partenope*," in *Studies in Music History: Essays for Oliver Strunk*, ed. Harold Powers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 356–385.

⁵ Kurt Markstrom, *The Operas of Leonardo Vinci, Neapolitano* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2007), 107–114.

⁶ David Vickers, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Amorous Behaviour at the Court of Queen Parthenope," *Händel-Jahrbuch* 49 (2003): 59–68.

⁷ Winton Dean, *Handel's Operas, 1726–1741* (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2006), 156.

theater:⁸ This chapter explores this question in relation to the historiography and symbology of Parthenope, the siren and symbolic embodiment of Naples.

**“The sweet voice from our lips”:
The Siren Topos in Early Modern Musical Discourse**

Mythologists have posited three strands of siren lore as being influential for early modern European understandings of the siren: the Homeric, the Platonic, and a variant Homeric. The Homeric view derives from Homer’s narrative of Odysseus’s encounter with the sirens, and stands as the oldest siren narrative in Western mythology. Recall that Odysseus desired to hear their song after the enchantress Circe recounted both its beauty and danger:

Whoever in ignorance draws near to them and hears the Sirens’ voice, his wife and little children never stand beside him and rejoice at his homecoming; instead, the Sirens beguile him with their clear-toned song, as they sit in a meadow, and about them is a great heap of bones of moldering men, and round the bones the skin is shriveling.⁹

She then offers Odysseus a way to hear them and survive:

But row past them, and anoint the ears of your comrades with sweet wax, which you have kneaded, for fear any of the rest may hear. But if you yourself have a will to listen, let them bind you in the swift ship hand and foot upright in the step of the mast, and let the ropes be made fast at the ends to the mast itself, that with delight you may listen to the voice of the two Sirens. And if you shall implore and command your comrades to free you, then let them bind you with yet more bonds.¹⁰

⁸ Paula Findlen, “Gender and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Italy,” in *Italy’s Eighteenth-Century: Gender and Culture in the Age of the Grand Tour*, ed. Paula Findlen, Wendy Wassyng Roworth, and Catherine M. Sama (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 21.

⁹ Homer, *The Odyssey* 12.39–46, trans. A.T. Murray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), 451.

¹⁰ Homer, *The Odyssey* 12.46–54, trans. Murray, *The Odyssey*, 451–453.

Odysseus follows her instructions: he has his men bind him to the ship's mast and stop their own ears with wax. He hears the siren's song, with its promise of knowledge and prophecy, without succumbing to its beauty.

Although Homer treated his listeners to many evocative details of evading the sirens, he tells us little about them or their song. Searching for such details often reveals little consensus. As early as the seventh century BCE, Greek renderings of the Homeric sirens often depicted them as birds with human heads. Some fly, others perch nearby.¹¹ There is little congruence on their gender (sometimes they appear as males) and number. Homer's narrative posited two sirens who sing upon a seaside meadow. *The Catalogue of Women* (c. sixth century BCE), a poem of female deeds attributed to Hesiod, suggests that there are three.¹² It also chronicles how the daughters of the Aetolian river-god Achelous and Sterope offended Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, with their declarations of celibacy. Through Aphrodite's powers, the three sisters grew wings and flew to the Tyrrhenian island of Anthemoessa (modern-day Ischia or Capri), where Zeus sheltered them. Regarding their number, iconography of the fifth and six centuries BCE generally presents three. Perhaps the best known classical image of the sirens, that of the Attic Stammos (Fig. 1.1) from Vulci, Italy (c. 470 BCE) depicts three sirens. In this representation, two perch on the rocks above Odysseus's ship, peering down at Odysseus: one unfolds her wings; the other enfolds hers. The third dives into the sea.

¹¹ John R.T. Pollard, *Seers, Shrines and Sirens: The Greek Religious Revolution in the Sixth Century B.C.* (London: Urwin University Books, 1965), 137–145.

¹² *Fragmenta Hesiodica*, ed. Reinhold Merkelbach and Martin L. West (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), frags. 27–28. Discussed in Leofranc Holford-Strevens, "Sirens in Antiquity and the Middle Ages," in *Music of the Sirens*, ed. Linda Phyllis Austern and Inna Naroditskaya (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 18.

Figure 1.1: Greek Urn with Odysseus and the Sirens, c. 5th Century BCE¹³



These early depictions also differed on the nature and location of the sirens' performance. Homer's narration makes no mention of instruments, just their "clear-toned" song. Around the eighth century BCE, siren iconographers provided them with human upper bodies; instruments soon followed. When performing in pairs, one blew an aulos, the other plucked a kithara; trios meant the addition of a voice.¹⁴ As for the location of such performances, poets frequently described the sirens as dwelling near Italy's western coast, specifically near the Straits of Messina, Cape Peloron, Paestrum, or Anthemoessa. Anthemoessa, cited in Aphrodite's contestation with the three daughters, also appeared in Apollonius Rhodius's third-century epic poem *Argonautica*, which tells the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece. In it we learn about one of Jason's companions, Boutes, who was so charmed by the sound of their singing that he leapt from the

¹³ The Siren Vase, Red-figured Stamnos, British Museum. Photograph courtesy of the British Museum; used with permission.

¹⁴ Holford-Strevens, "Sirens," 18.

boat to reach them on nearby Anthemoessa. But before he could land on shore, the goddess Aphrodite appeared and transported him to the western Sicilian seaport of Marsala.¹⁵ In another version, Aphrodite and Boutes conceived a son, whom they named Eryx. Once grown, he dedicated a temple to the goddess on Mount Eryx. According to the account in Pseudo-Aristotle's *De mirabilibus auditionibus*, the Greek colonies of *Magna Graecia* were also responsible for the names we now attribute to the three sirens: Parthenope (Maiden-Voice), Leukosia (White), and Ligeia (Soprano).¹⁶ Leukosia and Ligeia washed ashore not far from Parthenope: Leukosia at Punta Licosa, Ligeia near Sant'Eufemia Lamezia.

Although the earliest narratives presented multiple and occasionally conflicting depictions of the sirens, few if any described them in explicitly erotic terms. It was Ovid, in his *The Art of Love* (2 AD), who apparently first accentuated the encounter's intrinsic eroticism, invoking the siren's song as morally corruptive to male listeners.¹⁷ By the early modern era, Ovid's lesson resonated widely among poets, musicians, and readers, particularly in warnings against Roman and Venetian courtesans who were themselves represented with siren discourse.¹⁸ Pietro Aretino

¹⁵ Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.2; cited in Holford-Strevens, "Sirens," 20.

¹⁶ Pseudo-Aristotle, *De mirabilibus auditionibus* 103; cited in Holford-Strevens, "Sirens," 20.

¹⁷ Ovid, *The Art of Love, and Other Poems*, trans. J.H. Morley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 141.

¹⁸ The theme of female musical performance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has been taken up by many writers, but most importantly by Anthony Newcomb, "Courtesans, Muses, or Musicians? Professional Women Musicians in Sixteenth-Century Italy," in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150–1950*, ed. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 90–115; Linda Phyllis Austern, "'Sing Againe Syren': The Female Musician and Sexual Enchantment in Elizabethan Life and Literature," *Renaissance Quarterly* 42 (1989): 420–48; and *Women and Music: A History*, ed. Karin Pendle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 31–93. Some key works on the early-modern courtesan include Rita Casagrande Villaviera, *La Cortigiana Veneziana del Cinquecinto* (Milan: Longanesi, 1968); Georgina Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975); and more recently *The*

(1492–1556) could therefore claim that courtesans used their musical abilities not just to entertain, but to captivate their lovers.¹⁹ Invoking Homeric allusions, Thomas Coryat (1577–1617) likewise warned fellow English travelers of courtesans.²⁰

If female singing inflamed love, it could also ennoble it. For this view, poets turned to Plato's sirens, as described in *The Republic*.²¹ Plato claimed that there were eight sirens and perched each one upon eight concentric whorls, around which spun the constellations. Early modern Italian poets tethered Plato's sirens to Christian symbology, framing these representations in terms of neo-Platonic ideas of music, especially the notion that female performance could inspire love in male listeners—first by sight, then by sound.²² Prominent Neapolitan poet Giambattista Marino pondered, for example, in an ode: “Is this little angel a

Courtesan's Art: Cross-Cultural Perspectives, ed. Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁹ Pietro Aretino, *La Talanta* 2.2. Pietro Aretino, *Poesie varie*, ed. Giovanni Aquilecchia and Angelo Romano (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1992), 1:230; contextualized in Calogero, “Harmony,” 150.

²⁰ “Also the ornaments of her body are so rich, that except thou dost even geld thy affections (a thing hardly to be done) or carry with thee Ulysses hearbe called Moly which is mentioned by Homer, that is, some antidote against those Venereous titillations, shee wil very neare benumme and captivate thy senses, and Costly gems, make reason vale bonnet to affection.” Thomas Coryat, *Coryat's Crudities* (1611) (Glasgow: J. MacLehose Press, 1905), 1:404. On the association between early modern English travelogues and ideas of musical exoticism, see Linda Phyllis Austern, “‘Forreine Conceits and Wandering Devises’: The Exotic, the Erotic and the Feminine,” in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 26–42.

²¹ Plato, *The Republic* 10.617a–b; trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1969.

²² Gretchen Finney's is crucial on this aspect of Neo-Platonic thought. See Gretchen Finney, “Music and Neoplatonic Love,” in *Musical Backgrounds for English Literature: 1580–1650* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1962), 76–101.

heavenly or an earthly Siren?”²³ Finally, Dinko Fabris’s recent work on the siren topos has demonstrated a prevalence in Neapolitan musical discourse for drawing a connection between the Platonic sirens and such exceptional seventeenth-century singers as Giovannella Sancia, known as “La serena de Napule.”²⁴ When conflated, the Homeric and Platonic traditions provided both women and their audiences with a powerful set of moral claims about the prescribed boundaries and characteristics of female performance, claims with which Marino seems to ambivalently play in writing: “This heavenly sorceress, this new siren of our seas heals with song, even as she wounds with a gaze.”²⁵

Folklorists have posited a third, less well known tradition of siren lore, which describes the Homeric sirens as bearers of knowledge and prophecy. This strand derives from their song to Odysseus: “For never yet has any man rowed past this isle in his black ship until he has heard the sweet voice from our lips. Nay, he has joy of it, and goes his way a wiser man We know all things that come to pass upon the fruitful earth.”²⁶ Explicit in this claim was the sirens’ profession of a double knowledge—that of a sexual knowledge, but also the temptations of worldly knowledge. Cicero picked up on this theme when he observed in his *De finibus bonorum et malorum* (45 BC) that “apparently it was not the sweetness of their voices . . . but their professions of

²³ The full phrase reads: “Piacciavi a me di dir quest’Angeletta, / E Sirena del Ciel, ò de la terra, Che sì col canto, e co’begli occhi alletta? Alle intelligenze in lode d’una bella Cantatrice,” Giambattista Marino, *La Lira: Rime del Cavalier Marino . . . Parte Prima* (Venice: Presso Gio. Pietro Brigonci, 1667), 15; trans. in Calogero, “Harmony,” 147.

²⁴ Dinko Fabris, “Partenope da sirena a regina: Il mito musicale di Napoli,” in *Mediterranean Myths from Classical Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Metoda Kokole, Barbara Murovec, Marjeta Kos, and Michael Talbot (Ljubljana: Slovenska Akademija Znanosti in Umetnosti, 2006), 163–185.

²⁵ “Sì direm poi, questa celeste Maga, / Questa del nostro mar noua Sirena / Sana col canto, se col quardo impiaga.” Marino, *La Lira*, 15; trans. in Calogero, “Harmony,” 166.

²⁶ *The Odyssey* 12.186–191 [the last citation to *The Odyssey* included page numbers in the translation.]

knowledge that used to attract the passing voyager; it was the passion for learning that kept men rooted to the sirens' rocky shores."²⁷ George Sandys, the early modern poet and translator of Ovid's *The Metamorphoses*, noted in 1632 that the Homeric sirens' connection to philosophy and education was "intimated by Homer, who attributes unto them the endowments of the Muses as harmony and absolute knowledge, both in philosophy and history."²⁸

Concurrently, siren lore, concerning Parthenope in particular, attracted renewed interest in Naples. By the seventeenth century, both visual and musical depictions of the siren were nearly omnipresent among the city's stratified classes. The reinvigoration of Parthenope as a civic emblem can be credited, in part, to sixteenth-century Neapolitan court historian Giovanni Antonio Summonte, whose *Dell'Historia della Città e Regno di Napoli* (1601) directly influenced Stampiglia's libretto.²⁹ His history, like Giulio Capaccio's (1604), appeared as part of an intentional effort by Neapolitan elites to assert power over their Spanish viceroys, who ruled Naples from 1504 to 1707. Summonte's description of the city's origins in Book I Chapter Two transformed Parthenope into a Greek virgin princess, the daughter of Eumelo of Thessaly in

²⁷ "Neque enim vocum suavitate videntur aut novitiate quadam et varietate / cantandi revocare eos solitae qui praetervehebantur, sed quia multa se scire / profitebantur, ut hominess ad earum saxa discendi cupidate adhaerescerent." Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 5.18; trans. and discussed in Buhler, "Sirens," 179.

²⁸ See George Sandys, *Ovid's Metamorphosis: Englished, Mythologized, and Represented in Figures*, ed. Karl K. Hulley and Stanley T. Vandersall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), 257; quoted in Buhler, "Sirens," 150.

²⁹ See Giovanni Antonio Summonte, *Historia della Città e Regno di Napoli* (Naples, 1601; repr. Naples: Domenico Vivencio, 1748). For a perspective on the socio-political motives behind Summonte's *Historia*, see Barbara Ann Naddeo, "Neapolitan Itineraries: Re-collecting the City in Topographical Studies of Naples, 1650–1800" (paper presented at "Exoticizing Vesuvius" at The Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, Cambridge University, September 18, 2009), especially 11–13. I would like to thank the author for a copy of her paper.

Upper Greece. Instead of washing ashore, as the myth held, she follows a white dove to southern Italy.

Augmenting the reconstitution of Parthenope in the Neapolitan consciousness was the early modern recovery of several ancient *simulacra*. Some time in the late sixteenth century, a small statue in the shape of a siren-bird with breasts spilling milk was excavated. Today, it sits atop the *Fontana delle zizze* near the University of Naples.

Figure 1.2: Fontana delle zizze (Naples)³⁰



³⁰ Antonio Cangiano, “La fontana Spinacorona, chiamata dai napoletani ‘delle zizze,’” undated photograph, *Corriere del Mezzogiorno*, accessed June 2, 2015, <http://corrieredelmezzogiorno.corriere.it/fotogallery/campania/2010/12/fontanazizze/fontana-zizze-foto-1804290737871.shtml>; used with permission.

It is not clear whether this image directly influenced the one in sixteenth-century historian Giulio Capaccio's *Trattato delle imprese* (1592).³¹ In 1594, workers also found a bust of a woman, believed to be that of Parthenope, which is likely the one represented in Summonte's *Historia*.

Figure 1.3: Image of Parthenope, from Giulio Capacci's *Delle imprese tratto* (1592)³²



Summonte's history evinced early modern associations between Parthenope as Greek virgin, Apollo, Virgil (known as "Parthenias"), and even the Virgin Mary.³³ All but the virgin seemed to draw on the Homeric sirens and the pursuit of, or at least the identification with, knowledge and prophecy. Finally, as the list of musical spectacles from 1620 to 1722 below indicates, the topos of Parthenope and the sirens remained pervasive in the Neapolitan consciousness. The ability to

³¹ Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Neapolitanae historiae a Julio Caesare Capacio [sic] ejus urbis a secretis et cive conscriptae Tomus en quo antiquitas, aedificio civibus, Republica ... continetur* (Naples: J.J. Caslinum, 1607). See Dinko Fabris, "La città della sirena: Le origine del mito musicale di Napoli nell'età spagnola," in *Napoli vicereame spagnolo: Una capitale della cultura alle origine dell'Europa moderna (sec. XVI–XVII)*, ed. Monika Bosse and André Stoll (Naples: Vivarium, 2001), 473–501.

³² Giulio Capaccio, *Delle imprese trattato di Giulio Cesare Capaccio* (Napoli: ex officina Horatij Saluiani, Gio. Giacomo Carlino, & Antonio Pace, 1592), 23v. Image reproduced from the Emblem Collection of the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, PQ4617.C29 D4 1592er; used with permission.

³³ For an analysis of these associations, see Roberto De Simone, *Il Segno di Vergilio* (Pozzuoli: Azienda Autonoma di cura, soggiorno e turismo di Pozzuoli 1982), 84–99.

recast this symbol to suit new socio-political and musical contexts remained the real strength of this myth.

Figure 1.4: Image of Parthenope, from Giovanni Summonte, *Historia dell' Città e Regno di Napoli* (1601)³⁴



The following is a list operas, serenatas, and other musical spectacles featuring Partenope and the sirens staged in Naples between 1620 and 1722:³⁵

1620 *Delitie di Posillipo Marittime e Boscarecce*, which includes an “aria di 3 Sirene” by Giovanmaria Trabaci

1648 *Partenope restaurata dal serenissimo ed invittissimo principe d. Giovanni d’Austria*

³⁴ Giovanni Summonte, *Historia dell’ Città e Regno di Napoli* (Naples, 1601; rep. 1675), 23. Image reproduced from the digital archives of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma, RM0267, 7.3.I.40.1/1; used with permission.

³⁵ The list derives in part from events mentioned in the *Gazzetta di Napoli* and those compiled by Dinko Fabris in “Partenope da sirena a regina.” It is by no means exhaustive. For a listing of musical references in the *Gazzetta*, see *Musical References in the Gazzetta di Napoli 1681–1725*, ed. Thomas Griffin (Berkeley: Fallen Leaf Press, 1992).

- 1658 *Feste per la nascita dell'infante Prospero Felice*, which features a game between Partenope and the Cavaliers
- 1680 *Eteocle e Polinice*, opera with a Prologue featuring an image of Partenope
- 1692 *La Sirena Consolata*, Serenata celebrating the healthy recovery of Marianna di Neoborgo, with music by Cataldo Amodei
- 1696 *Il Genio di Partenope, la Gloria del Sebeto, il Piacere di Mergellina*, with music by Alessandro Scarlatti
- 1699 *La Partenope*, opera by Silvio Stampiglia with music by Luigi Mancia
- 1708 *Amore nel cuore di Partenope*, serenata by Giuseppe Papis with music by Francesco Mancini, for the inauguration of the first Austrian Viceroy to Naples
- 1713 *Il Genio Austriaco*, serenata by Giuseppe Papis and Alessandro Scarlatti
- 1720 *Scherzo festivo tra le Ninfe di Partenope*, serenata by Domenico Gentile with music by Domenico Sarro
- 1722 *La Partenope*, Stampiglia's revision of his 1699 libretto, with music by Domenico Sarro

The Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century *Querelle des Femmes* in Italy³⁶

In the early eighteenth century, social elites in Naples and throughout Italy were embroiled in a debate over the increasing presence of women in public and intellectual spheres dating back to the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century, Italian intellectuals hotly debated the question of women, their perceived virtues and vices, and education. Bolstering

³⁶ The phrase “*Querelle des Femmes*” is a common umbrella term for the early modern debates on women and education. Some prominent uses of the term in Italian studies include Paola Malpezzi Price and Christine Ristaino, *Lucrezia Marinella and the “Querelle des Femmes” in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008); and Monique Frize, *Laura Bassi and Science in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2013), especially Chapter Two, entitled “‘*Querelle des femmes*’ and Debates on the ‘Woman Question,’” 9–23.

positions on either side were a series of compendia of famous heroines from history and myth, the most important of which was Giovanni Boccaccio's fourteenth-century *De mulieribus claris*,³⁷ in which Boccaccio provided an extended history of each heroine, ascribing various individual vices and virtues. Some of the exceptional women included Semiramide, Dido, Penelope, Cornelia, Agrippina, and Andromache. As Wendy Heller has shown, these catalogues—especially Boccaccio's—were important sources for understanding the representation of exceptional women in seventeenth-century Venetian opera. By the mid-eighteenth century, however, such characters were harder to find.³⁸

It was to such catalogues that seventeenth-century Italian intellectuals turned to for fodder in the debate over women. With four editions printed in Venice between 1598 and 1618, Giuseppe Passi's *I donneschi difetti* (Women's Defects) constituted one of the more disparaging tracts.³⁹ His central premise posited that women should not be given social or political power, since their very nature compromised their trustworthiness. To bolster his claim, he organized each chapter around a particular facet or perceived fault, thoroughly citing both classical and early modern authors. Among his chapter titles are those "On Curious Women," "On Ambitious Women," and "On Vainglorious Women."⁴⁰ In Naples, court historian Giulio Cesare Capaccio

³⁷ Giovanni Boccaccio, *De mulieribus claris* (1374), trans. Virginia Brown (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003). For a broad consideration of these debates as part of the development of feminism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

³⁸ Wendy Heller, "Queen as King: Refashioning 'Semiramide' for Seicento Venice," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5:2 (1993), 96.

³⁹ Giuseppe Passi, *I donneschi difetti* (Venice, 1599). My ideas on Passi and the early debates on women are based in part on Wendy Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence: Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 33.

⁴⁰ "Delle Donne curiose," "Delle Donne ambiziose," "Delle Donne iloriose." Passi, *Donneschi*, [vii].

made similar claims in his *Il Principe ... tratto de gli [sic] emblemi delle Aliciato, con duecento e più avvertimenti politici e morale* (1592, rev. 1620).⁴¹ He focused, however, on the institution of marriage, cautioning the male reader to maintain happiness in his relationship.

For the most part, these debates were not one sided. In Rebecca Messbarger and Paula Findlen's work on the broadening space for women in the Italian debates, Venice emerges as an important center where intellectuals like Moderata Fonte (1555–1592), Lucrezia Marinella (1571–1653), and Arcangela Tarabotti (1604–1652) forcefully spoke out against conventional gender stereotypes.⁴² In a famous example, Lucrezia Marinella (1571–1653) took on Passi's claims, offering in thirty-five chapters a direct refutation of his interpretation of women as jealous, ambitious, lustful, inconstant, and tyrannical.⁴³ By contrast, the same discourse in the eighteenth century suggests a paradigm shift from such sentiments.⁴⁴ The fervor with which intellectuals considered the issue did not wane. Renewed interest in the fields of rational civil law and secular moral philosophy may be credited for this reevaluation. It also spurred Giambattista Vico to write his *Scienza Nuovo* (New Science) (1725), which affirmed the place of history in the

⁴¹ Giulio Cesare Cappaccio, *Il principe ... tratto de gli emblemi delle Aliciato, con duecento e piu avvertimenti politici e morale* (Naples, 1592; repr. Venice, 1620).

⁴² *The Contest for Knowledge: Debates Over Women's Learning in Eighteenth-Century Italy*, ed. and trans. Rebecca Messbarger and Paula Findlen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 2–3.

⁴³ For a modern translation, see *The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men (Nobilità et l'eccellenza delle donne, co' difetti et mancamenti degli uomini, 1600)*, ed. and trans. Anne Dunhill (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). On her debate with Passi, see Price and Ristaino, *Marinella*, 105–115, and Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 2–3.

⁴⁴ For more on this paradigm shift and the increasing authority of women in eighteenth-century Italian circles, see Rebecca Messbarger, *The Century of Women: Representations of Women in Eighteenth-Century Italian Public Discourse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 3–19.

long-term social development of humanity.⁴⁵ This new thinking afforded women, at least theoretically, a greater presence in society.

Italy, unlike much of northern Europe, demonstrated a more progressive streak on the question of women's education. Indeed, Italians had been granting university degrees to a few exceptional women since 1678, a pivotal moment Messbarger and Findlen describe as “achiev[ing] true institutional authority” for women.⁴⁶ In that year, Elena Cornaro Piscopia, a Paduan aristocrat, was the first woman to graduate from the University of Padua.⁴⁷ Her notoriety resonated throughout Italy, with twenty thousand people apparently witnessing her successful thesis defense.⁴⁸ Either because of or in spite of awarding a degree to Piscopia in 1678, the University of Padua closed its doors to women just a year later in 1679. Not until 1732 did another woman—Laura Bassi (1711–1778), a philosophy student at the University of Bologna—

⁴⁵ Giambattista Vico, *New Science* (1725), trans. Leon Pompa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and idem, *Scienza nuova seconda (1730/1744)*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1948). For a contextual analysis of Vico's ideas vis-à-vis the intellectual life of eighteenth-century Naples, see Harold Samuel Stone, *Vico's Cultural History: The Production and Transmission of Ideas in Naples, 1685–1750* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1997); Leon Pompa, *Vico: A Study of the New Science*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Donald Phillip Verene's work remains key to our general understanding of Vico's broader philosophical claims. See his *Vico's Science of Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); idem, *The New Art of Biography: An Essay on the "Life of Giambattista Vico Written by Himself"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); and idem, *Philosophy and the Return to Self-Knowledge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

⁴⁶ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 7.

⁴⁷ For a recent biography, see Francesco Maschietto, *Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia (1616–1684): The First Woman in the World to Earn a University Degree* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2007).

⁴⁸ Based on the figure cited in Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 7.

earn a degree.⁴⁹ Women's participation in intellectual circles and salons, by contrast, was becoming commonplace.

The Accademia degli Arcadi was an early yet important instance of female participation in organized intellectual academies. Set up to foster literary reform and to honor Queen Christina of Sweden (1626–1689), its original fourteen members, which included poet Silvio Stampiglia and intellectuals like Giovanni Crescimbeni (1663–1728), first met in Rome in 1690.⁵⁰ Unlike similar intellectual academies, the Arcadians permitted participation by exceptional women. Susan M. Dixon has estimated that between 1690 and 1728 around seventy-four women were inducted as members, a number accounting for about three percent of the academy's overall participation.⁵¹ Although a male candidate gained membership through multiple paths, only one existed for women: the academy's admissions committee, the *Collegio*, which nominated promising female intellectuals for admission. With at least six positions available per year to women, elections were decided by secret ballot. Once admitted, these women gained, at least theoretically, equal status to men.

⁴⁹ For more on Bassi, see Monique Frize, *Laura Bassi and Science in Eighteenth-Century Europe: The Extraordinary Life and Role of Italy's Pioneering Female Professor* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2013), 1–7.

⁵⁰ Some key works of this vast literature include Walter Binni, “La letteratura nell'epoca arcadica razionali,” in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, ed. Emilio Cecchi and Natalino Spegno (Milan: Garzanti, 1968), 6:326–460; Amedeo Quondam, “L'istituzione arcadia sociologia e ideologia di un'accademia,” *Quaderni storici* 23 (1973): 389–438; Cesare d'Onofrio, *Roma val bene un'abiura: storie romane tra Cristina di Svezia, Piazza del Popolo e l'Accademia dell'Arcadia* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1976), 263–90; Anna Vichi, *Gli Arcadi dal 1690 al 1800: Onomasticon* (Rome: Editrice Romana, 1977); Robert Freeman, *Opera Without Drama: Currents of Change in Italian Opera, 1675–1725* (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1981); Paolo Fabbri, *Il secolo cantante: Per una storia del libretto d'opera nel Seicento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990); and Susan M. Dixon, *Between the Real and the Ideal: The Accademia degli Arcadi and Its Garden* (Cranbury: Associated University Publishing, 2006).

⁵¹ Susan M. Dixon, “Women and the Academy,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32:3 (1999), 372.

The Academy's interest in and inclusion of talented women writers and philosophers suggested a progressive view of gender, yet several tensions complicate this perspective. First, as Dixon's research has revealed, the women (described as *pastorelle* in the Academy literature) could undertake only specific genres: short poems, sonnets, and madrigals, and the limited subjects to which they could devote themselves centered on romantic love, melancholy, and paeans.⁵² The men (*pastori*), by contrast, permitted themselves a variety of subjects, including but not limited to politics, science, famous art works, and recent archaeological discoveries, and could organize their compositions in myriad styles, including prose, eclogues, sonnets, and epigrams. The women sometimes pushed back, as in the case of the *Giuche Olimpici* of 1708, one of Academy's many outdoor intellectual competitions. Crescimbeni reported that twice that year the *pastorelle* disrupted the proceedings by attempting to initiate their own competition, "much to the surprise of the men."⁵³ If we can read this narrative as an allegory of the academy's operations, then they offered women, ostensibly, equitable participation. In truth, however, the rituals of engagement between genders exhibited more ambivalence: the academicians at once flirted with reform and enforced the the status quo, all within a prescribed intellectual space. Though female intellectuals entered the Academy with serious intent, its official literature framed them in metaphors like "elegance" and "simplicity," poetic qualities to which the Arcadians themselves aspired.⁵⁴ Thus, much like the symbolic power embodied in the civic muse Parthenope, the women of the Arcadian Academy had ascribed to them the guise of an Arcadian muse.

⁵² Dixon, "Women," 373.

⁵³ See Giovanni Crescimbeni, *Arcadia* (Rome, 1708), 144–156; and Biblioteca Angelica, Rome, Arcadia mss. 11, c. 73; trans. Dixon in "Women," 373.

⁵⁴ Dixon, "Women," 374.

Unlike the *pastorelle* of the Arcadian Academy, Neapolitan poet and intellectual Giuseppa Eleonora Barbapiccola's (c. 1700–1740) work as a translator afforded her a louder voice in the eighteenth-century *querelle* as it unfolded in Naples. The year 1722, then, was noteworthy for two reasons: (1) Stampiglia's revival of *La Partenope*, and (2) the publication of Barbapiccola's translation of René Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy*, both in Naples.⁵⁵ Although the “path to modernity” for women in early eighteenth-century Naples has been described by Elisa Novi Chavarria as “still slow and hesitant,” Barbapiccola's translation provides some insights into how she negotiated this environment.⁵⁶

Her translation represented a culmination of Neapolitan interest in Cartesian philosophy, during which time prominent Neapolitan intellectuals like Giambattista Vico and Paolo Doria initiated their own move away from Cartesian philosophy's near ubiquity in the city's intellectual community, which dated back thirty years.⁵⁷ In the preface to her translation, Barbapiccola set forth a powerful argument in defense of the intellectual abilities of women and their right to education. A brief consideration of the claims and structure of this work provides insight into how one Neapolitan intellectual engaged the issue of women's learning in Naples, as well as its implications for social discourse in general.

⁵⁵ The most comprehensive biography of Barbapiccola in English appears in *The Contest for Knowledge*, a collection of critical editions of writings by prominent eighteenth-century Italian women. It also includes a translation and analysis of Barbapiccola's “Preface” to Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy*. I base my own analysis on Messbarger's critical edition, which is found on pp. 47–66. For a brief biographical sketch, see “Barbapiccola, Giuseppa,” in *The Feminist Encyclopedia of Italian Literature*, ed. Rinaldina Russell (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), 27–28.

⁵⁶ Elisa Novi Chavarria, “The Space for Women,” in *The Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill Press, 2013), 193.

⁵⁷ In his *Autobiography*, Vico notes that the 1690s represented a time when “Cartesian physics was most in vogue.” Giambattista Vico, *The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1944), 130.

Barbapiccola's contributions to the Neapolitan Enlightenment were significant, yet few biographical details survive. We know nothing, for instance, of her parentage, though she likely grew up without aristocratic privilege. Messbarger has suggested that Barbapiccola may have been from Salerno, owing to her knowledge of medieval women there.⁵⁸ There is some information on her uncle, Tommaso Maria Alfani (1679–1742), a respected Dominican preacher and official theologian to the city of Naples. While corresponding with Vico, Alfani founded the Accademia degli Inquieti in 1709, a society devoted to the study of mathematics. Alfani's association with Vico may have marked Barbapiccola's own entrée into Vico's intellectual circle. Whatever the circumstances, Vico's philosophical outlook was foundational to her own pursuits as a poet and scholar. From Antonio Cirillo's work on Vico's family, we know that she concurrently cultivated a friendship with Vico's daughter Luisa, a well-regarded thinker in her own right.⁵⁹

The publication of Barbapiccola's translation both launched her career in philosophy and marked its conclusion. The positive response accorded the work earned her admission to the Accademia degli Arcadi in 1728. She took the pseudonym *Mirista*, meaning "fragrant." Despite the prospect of a remarkable career, Barbapiccola seems to have done little intellectual labor following her translation. Only a few poems survive from after the 1720s. Vico urged her to contribute a poem in 1729 to a dedicatory book, celebrating Michelangelo da Reggio, a theologian at the Naples's Cathedral. In collaboration with Luisa Vico, she penned a poem in

⁵⁸ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 40.

⁵⁹ On their friendship, see Manuela Sanna, "Un'amicizia alla luce del cartesianesimo: Giuseppe Eleonora Barbapiccola e Luisa Vico," in *Donne, filosofia e cultura nel seicento*, ed. Pina Totaro (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1999), 173–178; and Antonio Cirillo, *Napoli ai tempi di Giambattista Vico* (Naples: Edizioni Tempo Lungo, 2000), 233 and 244.

praise of women's heroic virtue.⁶⁰ Her final poem, completed in 1738, celebrated the marriage of King Carlo Borbone III to Maria Amalia of Saxony.⁶¹ She died sometime around 1740.

Although Barbapiccola's translation of Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy* marked an important milestone in the dissemination of Descartes's thought in Italy, it was her own Preface which attracted most of the attention. In it, she argued against the traditional claim that women "are not capable of learning because their minds are of a distinctly different and lesser quality than those of men."⁶² Rather, she urged women to consider her translation seriously, since it was the female sex, "who, in the words of that same René [Descartes] ... are more suited for philosophy than men."⁶³ To advance this claim, she grounded her argument with a now familiar rhetorical strategy: the recitation of a long list of famous female philosophers from classical Greece to the seventeenth century. This tactic, though arguably well worn by the early eighteenth century, was justified, as it allowed her to at once assert her historical knowledge and rhetorical erudition.

She begins her critique by engaging the duties traditionally ascribed to women: "At first glance it seems that womanly occupations should be nothing more than learning the catechism, sewing, and other small tasks, singing, dancing, doing one's hair up in the latest fashion, curtsying

⁶⁰ For a reprint of this poem and additional examples of her work, see Giambattista Vico, *Scritti vari e pagine sparse*, ed. Fausto Nicolini (Bari: Laterza, 1940), 254 and 327.

⁶¹ Stone, *Vico's Cultural History*, 309; Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 45.

⁶² "Non sian capaci de' Studj per essere gli animi loro da quei degli Uomini di qualità affatto diversa e da meno." Giuseppa Eleonora Barbapiccola, "La traduttrice a' lettori," in *I principi della filosofia di Renato Des-Cartes tradotto da Giuseppa Eleonora Barbapiccola* (Turin [likely Naples]: Francesco Mairesse, 1722), 3r; quoted in Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 15.

⁶³ "Io m'invogliai di tradurla in Italiano per farla ad altri molti partecipe, in particolare alle Donne, le quali, al dire dello stesso Renato ... meglio che gli Uomini alla Filosofia atte sono." Barbapiccola, "Traduttrice," 6v; quoted in Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 16.

finely, and conversing politely.”⁶⁴ Rather, “Women should not be excluded from the study of science, since their spirits are more elevated and”—now quoting Paolo Doria’s *Ragionamenti* (1716)—“are not inferior to men in terms of the greatest virtues.”⁶⁵ The next section offers a short recitation of biographies and virtues of exceptional women from history. Citing Boccaccio’s *De claris mulieribus*, Barbapiccola notes that he and other writers on famous and exceptional women had in no way produced an exhaustive catalog of important creative women. Speaking directly to contemporary criticism of women’s physical and by extension mental capacity for the abstract sciences and poetry, she posited each personage, many cited in the repertoire for the first time, as either more competitive than, just as competitive as, or of invaluable support to prominent male poets and philosophers. Hence “When poetry flourished among the Greeks, famous woman Corinna of Thebes who five times beat the prince of lyric poets, Pindar; Corinna of Lesbos and Erinna of Telos, a girl whose verse, when she was only thirteen years old, is said to have attained Homer’s majesty. [The Roman poet] Properitus praised all of them.”⁶⁶

If female poets could attain the abilities of their male counterparts, then male authors could also build on the poetry of women. For this claim, Barbapiccola turned to Diodorus Siculus, who claimed that Homer used verse composed by Daphne. Women could also be credited with the creation of a series of metric forms on which all poets depended, citing specifically Sappho of Lesbos, credited with the invention of Sapphic verses. It was also Iambe,

⁶⁴ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 44.

⁶⁵ Doria espoused this view, but with qualification. It was, for him, not a question of gender but rather of ability. As he told one exceptional female student: “I am not in agreement with the sentiment that many attribute to René Descartes, that is, that God gave everyone an equal ability to understand science.” Eleven pages later he even admits that “women are by nature weaker.” Doria, *Ragionamenti*, 344 and 355; see Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 44.

⁶⁶ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 48.

she noted, who conceived of iambic verse. Finally, the Latin poet Lucan depended on his wife, Polla Argentaria, to assist him in amending the first three books of the *Pharsalia*.⁶⁷ Barbapiccola then considers exceptional women closer to her own era, citing Vittoria Colonna (1492–1547), Marchesa of Pescara, and Veronica Gamba (1485–1533), who were “mentioned with honors by Ariosto.”⁶⁸ They were some of the most praised women poets of the Italian Renaissance.

Concluding the section on poets, she singled out the Accademia degli Arcadi, since it contained “quite a few [women] who play a distinguished role in the renowned Academy of Arcadia.”⁶⁹

By the early eighteenth century there was little doubt that women could create fine poetry and other forms of literature. What about the more abstract realm of philosophy? On this question, too, Barbapiccola invoked a compelling cast of women philosophers, both ancient and modern, many of whom commanded the attention and praise of their male counterparts. Chief among the ancient Greeks were Themistoclea and Damo (sometimes called Damone), the sister and daughter, respectively, to Pythagoras. Each one was “so well versed in the philosophical disciplines that the first [Themistoclea] helped her brother a great deal, while the second succeeded her father as head of his school.”⁷⁰ Socrates also depended on exceptional women. Citing Plato’s *Dialogues*, she explained that Diotima and Aspasia were so well versed in the sciences that Plato considered them his teachers, especially Diotima.⁷¹ Charting a similar rhetorical trajectory as the section on poets, Barbapiccola jumped quickly from prominent

⁶⁷ Contemporary scholarship suggests, however, that she actually aided in the writing of the first three books; see Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 49.

⁶⁸ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 50.

⁶⁹ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 50.

⁷⁰ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 50.

⁷¹ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 51.

classical female philosophers to one “closer to our own age.”⁷² Of the many exceptional women from the medieval period to her own, she cited Abella, Mercuriadis, Rebecca, Sentia Guarna, and Costanza Calenda, and Queen Christina of Sweden. She included them because “they taught publicly and because they brought forth many works.”⁷³ Queen Christina was clearly important to Barbapiccola, since Christina, too, devoted herself to Descartes, whom she brought to her court.⁷⁴ More contemporaneous to Barbapiccola was the German intellectual Anna Maria van Schurman of Maastricht. In addition to exhibiting a natural inclination toward the sciences, Anna Maria also “knew Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, French, Spanish, and German as if they were her native tongue.”⁷⁵ Her translations attracted attention from scholars, and, according to Barbapiccola, “made herself as famous as Madame Dacier, who is praised above for her many beautiful translations of Latin authors into French and for the learned and erudite notes that she has added to them.”⁷⁶ Given their aptitude for translation, we may assume that Barbapiccola emulated them in translating. Moreover, by aligning herself and her translation of Descartes’s *Principles of Philosophy* with such figures, she no doubt sought to quell doubts on women’s ability to engage philosophical subjects. “I have been greatly inspired by the example of these famous

⁷² Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 52.

⁷³ For more on these women and Barbapiccola’s engagement with their work, see Findlen, “Contest,” note 55.

⁷⁴ Christina permitted Descartes a place at her court in Stockholm in 1649. He died just four months later on February 11, 1650. On their relationship and her eager cultivation of his philosophical ideas, see Susan Åkerman, *Queen Christina of Sweden and Her Circle: The Transformation of a Seventeenth-Century Philosophical Libertine* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), especially 44–69.

⁷⁵ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 55.

⁷⁶ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 55. Anne Le Fèvre Dacier (1651–1720) was known widely throughout European intellectual circles as one of the most celebrated women intellectuals in early eighteenth-century France, particularly her fluid translations into French of *The Odyssey* (1699) and *The Iliad* (1711).

women. They have led me to believe that I could one day overcome the weakness of my sex, which only studies in order to know how to play games and to speak knowledgeably of fashionable clothes and hair ribbons.”⁷⁷ In other words, “*Bad education, not nature* [italics mine] encourages this defect.”⁷⁸ The issues with which she dealt were comparable to those found elsewhere in Italy, yet in Naples, spectators saw their civic muse, Parthenope, come to life onstage embodying many of the clichés and contradictions surveyed above.

La Partenope in Naples

The siren Parthenope first appeared as the subject of a full-length opera in librettist Silvio Stampiglia’s *La Partenope* (1699), presented at Naples’s Teatro San Bartolomeo with a score by Brescian composer Luigi Mancina.⁷⁹ The poet was not a native Neapolitan. Stampiglia was born in Civita Lavinia (near Rome) on March 14, 1664. Between 1696 and 1702, he composed some of his finest *drammi*, all of them premiering in Naples: *Il trionfo di Camilla* (1696), which received thirty-eight productions during the next seventy years, and *La caduta de’ Decemviri* (1699), with produced over ten times in thirty years. *La Partenope* was his most popular work, with forty-one different musical settings in fifty-seven years. The libretto even traveled to colonial Mexico, where Manuel de Zumaya set it to music for the Viceroy of Mexico in 1711, in all likelihood the

⁷⁷ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 55.

⁷⁸ Messbarger and Findlen, *Contest*, 55.

⁷⁹ For more on Mancina, see Claudio Sartori, “Una nuova schedina anagrafica: il dilettante Luigi Mancina, dignitario dell’imperatore,” *Rivista Musicale Italiana* 4 (1953): 404–25.

first Italian opera composed in the new world.⁸⁰ Building on the success of *Partenope*, Antonio Ricchi bragged as early as 1721 that Stampiglia's operas "have been represented not only in the theaters of Italy, but in Germany and England."⁸¹ To cast him as one of the most significant Italian poets of the pre-Metastasian era—along with Apostolo Zeno—would not have been hyperbole.

During a period of political turmoil (with Naples a pawn in the War of the Spanish Succession) and a renewed interest in Neapolitan civic history and iconography, Parthenope's appeal as an operatic subject should come as no surprise.⁸² Stampiglia's *drammi* reveal a fascination with the notion of the virtuous female ruler, as evidenced by his choice of dramatic subjects between 1696 and 1700: the first three of four operas included *Il trionfo di Camilla* (1696), *La Partenope* (1699), and *Eraclea* (1700).⁸³ No doubt these leaders also appealed to Italian audiences' clamor for novel subjects.

⁸⁰ See Craig H. Russell, "Manuel de Sumaya: Re-Examining the *a cappella* Choral Music of a Mexican Master," in *Encomium Musicae: A Festschrift in Honor of Robert J. Snow*, ed. David Crawford and G. Grayson Wagstaff (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 2002), 91–106.

⁸¹ "Non solo in tutti i Teatri d'Italia sono state rappresentate le sue opere, ma in Germania, e in Inghilterra ancora." Antonio Ricchi, *Teatro degli uomini illustri ... de Volsci* (Rome: per Dom. Ant. Ercole, 1721), 150.

⁸² The *Gazzetta di Napoli* made note of the 1722 premiere: "Avendo conosciuto detto Eminentissimo Principe, che la nuova opera, che si cominciò a recitare nel Teatro di S.B., quantunque fosse buona, null adimeno rendeasi tediosa, essendo alquanto tragica e lunga, ha ordinato perciò, che in questo Carnevale si replicasse in detto Teatro l'opera antecedente, intitolata *La Partenope*, onde Sabato a sera si ricominciò la recita di detta Opera con aggiunta di nuove arie e di nuovi ancora graziosissimi Intermezzi e vi si portò ad ascoltarlo detto Eminentissimo Signore, e riuscì di piena soddisfazione del Medesimo, come di tutta la Nobiltà, e degli altri ordini persone, che in gran numero vi conoscerò." *Gazzetta di Napoli* (January 26, 1723). During the next season, Romans heard the opera for the first time. The *Gazzetta* reported that, "nel Teatro antico della Pace incontrata il genio universale l'opera della Partenope, posta in Musica dal celebre Maestro di Capella Domenico Sarro." *Gazzetta di Napoli* (February 29, 1724).

⁸³ Pier-Caterino Zeno, Apostolo Zeno's brother, wrote a biographical sketch and "works list" for Stampiglia in 1733. The "Elogio," as Zeno titled it, remains an important source of information

Instead of recounting the supernatural aspects of the Parthenope myth, Stampiglia drew on Summonte's *Historia* (1607), which represented the siren as a historical figure, complete with a genealogy. This turn towards the fictional elaboration of historical figures followed late seventeenth-century Italian opera's paradigm shift from the exploration of largely mythical characters and narratives—such as Jason and Hercules—to the representation of historical subjects like Cato and Julius Caesar.⁸⁴ That Stampiglia read Parthenope as a historical actor is implicit in his original *argomento*, which he and Sarro recycled in 1722:

Partenope was the daughter of Eumelo, King of Pira in Thessaly. She left from Calcis on the Island of Euboa, today called Negroponte, following the Augury of a white dove, and made a city on the shore of the Tyrrhenian Sea, which was called Partenope, and later Naples. This will be found in the Eleventh Chapter of the First book of *The History of the City and Kingdom of Naples*, by Gio.[vanni] Antonio Sumonte [sic]. The rest is fictitious.⁸⁵

Whereas most early modern narratives concentrated on the Queen's virginity, Stampiglia focused instead on her vulnerability to love and her intense appeal to the men around her—likely a vestige of the Homeric version. In this setting, Partenope is devoted to Arsace, but Emilio (Prince of neighboring Cuma) and Armino (Prince of Rhodes) each harbor intense feelings for her. Her vulnerability to love and Stampiglia's discursive strategy of ambivalence regarding the

on Stampiglia's career and early reception. Pier-Caterino Zeno, "Elogio di Silvio Stampiglia romano," *Giornale de' letterati d'Italia* 38:2 (1733): 117–34.

⁸⁴ For more on the transition from "myth" to "history" in early opera, see Wendy Heller, "Tacitus Incognito: Opera as History in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52:1 (1999): 39–96.

⁸⁵ "Fu Partenope figlia d'Eumelo Re di Pire in Tessaglia, la qua' e partissi da Calcide dell'Isola d'Euboa oggi Negroponte seguendo l'augurio d'una bianca Colomba, e fece edificare una Città presso le sponde del Mar Tirreno, che fa detta Partenope, e poi fu chiamata Napoli. Ciò troverai nel. Chap. II del Primo Libro dell'*Istoria della Città, e Regno di Napoli* di Gio: Annio Summonte. Il resto si finge." Silvio Stampiglia, *La Partenope* (Naples: Dom. Ant. Parrino, 1699), [vi] (translation mine). The libretto is found in I-Nc.

representation of female governance vis-à-vis traditional forms of patriarchic rule govern the libretto.

In revising *La Partenope* for Sarro, Stampiglia not only modernized the drama, most conspicuously rearranging the *scene buffe* into discreet intermezzi, but clarified and even augmented the moments where the theme of ambivalence paralleled contemporary writings on gender, thereby reinforcing a sense of discursive interdependence. Just as importantly, this comparative study of Stampiglia's two versions of *La Partenope* affords a more substantive view of the librettist's process of revision, though the basic narrative outline remains essentially the same. Where differences occur, they include shifting the tone and climax of acts, character enhancements, and minor textual alterations.

The synopsis is as follows: The opera opens with a ceremony in which Partenope, surrounded by Arsace (Prince of Rhodes), Armino (Prince of Corinth), and the court, invokes Apollo to bless her new city. Following the ritual, Rosmira, dressed as an Armenian prince, enters and introduces herself as Prince Eurimene, a foreign prince and lone survivor of a shipwreck. Rosmira and Arsace instantly recognize each other, but word of Prince Emilio's threat to Naples postpones further dialogue. In the meantime, Rosmira learns of Armino's feelings for Partenope. He will not admit them to the Queen, since she has sworn herself to Arsace. Rosmira and Arsace finally meet. He admits that he still loves her, despite his relationship with Partenope. Though she cannot forgive his abandonment, she insists that he not reveal her true identity. A second narrative involves Parthenope and Emilio. In order to learn the reasoning behind Emilio's threat to Naples, Partenope bids him to court. On meeting the Queen, he discloses his love for her, and demands marriage. In the face of a humiliating rebuke from the Partenope, he vows war. Act I of Sarro's version concludes with Naples's victory over Emilio and his Cumian forces. Emilio is taken prisoner. Partenope claims triumph, but Rosmira quickly

interjects to remind the Queen of Armindo's hand in her deliverance. Emilio contradicts Rosmira. Rosmira then challenges Arsace to a duel. Emilio attempts to neutralize the tension. Partenope assigns a guard to the temperamental Eurimene (Rosmira in disguise). Meanwhile, Rosmira sends Armindo with a message to the Queen. In Partenope's presence, Armindo proclaims his own love. As Prince Eurimene, Rosmira admits to the Queen that she seeks vengeance for Arsace's abandonment of Princess Rosmira of Cyprus. Partenope quickly turns from Arsace to Armindo, whom she initially considered after he rescued her during the attack by Emilio and the Cumians. A duel between Eurimene and Arsace can now go forward. Ormonte reads the terms of contact as Eurimene and Arsace prepare to fight. Arsace suddenly suggests that the two fight bare-chested. Attendants agree, thus causing Rosmira great stress. She finally reveals her true identity. Arsace has proven his love to Rosmira by maintaining her secret identity. Partenope pledges to marry Armindo, Arsace and Rosmira embrace, and Partenope frees Emilio to lead Cuma not as an adversary but as an ally.

From Claims of Knowledge to Claims of Love

As Act 1 begins, the stage directions leave little doubt about the opera's theme—the interrelationship between gender, power, and knowledge. The curtain opens to reveal “part of the city close to the sea, solemnly adorned; twelve statues with the signs of the zodiac in hand, in the middle, an altar with the image of the sun.”⁸⁶ Partenope sits downstage on her throne,

⁸⁶ “Parte della Città vicino al Mare, solennemente apparata; con i Segni del Zodiaco intorno sostenuti da dodici Statue, che figurano i Mesi; [...] In mezzo un Altare con l'immagine del Sole” (translation mine).

attended by crowds, as well as her current suitor Arsace, and Armino, whom she later marries. Whereas the 1699 libretto cites the statue of Apollo, Stampiglia's stage directions for Sarro lack the reference. Regardless, the first three lines of the supplication imply that the figure of Apollo remains: "You, who oversee the sublime wall / of this great city which I built, / o luminous god, show your care."⁸⁷

Born to Zeus and Leto, Apollo was the Greek god of light, literature, music, and philosophy. To literature, he represented harmony, order, reason, and poetry, while musicians marveled at his ability to direct the choir of celestial muses.⁸⁸ Greeks also worshipped him as the oracular god, the one to whom the hopeful at the Delphic temple made offerings for knowledge of the future. Perhaps less well known, yet pertinent here, was his role as protector of the Greek colonies, which flourished throughout southern Italy between 700 and 550 BCE. The opening scene also features eagles and swans, "turning inside the altar."⁸⁹ Though eagles bore less of an association with Apollo, swans had significant meaning. According to myth, seven swans surrounded the island of Delos where Leto birthed Apollo on the seventh day of the month.

Stampiglia excised a total of seven lines from the original invocation in the 1722 version. Sarro moreover transformed the opening benediction into an accompanied recitative, thereby enhancing the sense of the sacred. Absent are the stage directions describing eagles. Also missing

⁸⁷ "Tu dell'eccelse Mura / di questa, che innalzai Cittade altera, / o luminoso Dio prendi la cura" (translation mine).

⁸⁸ The god Apollo appears prominently in many classical narratives and histories, but most importantly: *Illiad* 2.595–600; Apollodorus *Library* 1.3.3; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10; Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 3.1.3 and 3.19.4; Lucian, *Dialogues of the Gods* 14. The canonical literature on Apollo includes Karl Kerényi, *Apollon: Studien über antiken Religion und Humanität* (Vienna: Verlag Franz Leo, 1937); and idem, *The Gods of the Greeks* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1951); Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1955); and Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); *Apollo: Origins and Influences*, ed. Jon Solomon (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994).

⁸⁹ "Si vedono girare intorno all'Altare Aquile e Cigni" (translation mine).

are the entreaties for the sacrificial victims of Apollo. Stampiglia instead cut all but three lines, replacing the symbolic eagles with swans and sirens. In general, these alterations simplified a benediction thick in mythological signifiers, while also serving as a reminder of the symbolic interrelationship between Parthenope, Apollo, and knowledge.

Even as Parthenope and her attendants beseech Apollo's care, Emilio, Prince of neighboring Cuma, approaches the city and threatens to sack it. The tension culminates in Act 1.10 in Mancía's score, Act 1.11 in Sarro's. Rather than segueing to Emilio's meeting with the Queen, Stampiglia and Sarro insert a new recitative (f. 37r), as well as a ten-measure orchestral fanfare on the subsequent folio. The extra scene is particularly noteworthy, as it grants us a deeper sense of her interiority before Emilio's arrival. Following the announcement of Emilio's imminent arrival, Parthenope appears more anxious than in Mancía's setting. She orders Ormonte to intercept Emilio on his approach to the antechamber, where the Queen waits. Once alone, she reveals both her determination for peace and willingness to wage war if necessary.⁹⁰ As the "sinfonia" sounds, the 1722 libretto states that, "a door opens, and a suite of rooms with numerous courtiers is seen. Ormonte returns, and Emilio goes with him and the others. The door closes immediately away after their entrance."⁹¹

The dramatic tension climaxes in Sarro's Act 1.11 and 1.12, as Parthenope grants Emilio an audience. The two scenes, which juxtapose male and female rulers, offer important clues about the libretto's representation of gender as well as the possible implications for governance. Emilio enters, declaring "To your annoyance, Queen, / it looks like I come as an enemy, and not

⁹⁰ "Guerra avrà se vuol Guerra, / e se stringer gli piace / meco amicizia, ed amicizia, e pace" (translation mine).

⁹¹ "S'apre la portera, e si vede una fuga di stanze con numeroso corteggio. Torna Ormonte, e vengono con lui Emilio, e gli altri, e subito entrati si richiude la portiera" (translation mine).

a lover.”⁹² She responds: “A lover would not come to me already flanked by squadrons and armies.”⁹³ Although they have never met, Emilio claims to have loved Partenope since her arrival in the bay, and unknown to his angry legions secretly beseeches her hand in marriage. Finally, enflamed with love, but meeting only with rejection, he threatens war for her heart.

In contrast to the lovesick prince is the cool, determined Queen. She does not fear war but in fact welcomes it: “Arm, even if you want, I fear nothing.”⁹⁴ As his obsession for her draws him farther from the decorum befitting his station, the Queen chastises him: “Emilio rise, such vile courtesy renders you worthy of nothing; go, arm, and defend the people of your land.”⁹⁵ His behavior suggests an appeal to the carnivalesque, especially the adoption of opposite gender attributes by the two rulers. Yet the lessons gleaned from early modern poetry offer a more nuanced view. Given the importance of the Homeric tradition underpinning the city’s origin myth, Stampiglia recalls the Homeric sirens’ ability to stoke irrational love, with Emilio’s behavior serving as a reminder of the possible outcome of female governance.

Emilio sings the aria “Anch’io pugnar saprò” in response to the Queen’s rebuke. Angrily, he exclaims:

Anch’io pugnar saprò,
Armato di valor, ma non di sdegno,
E vincer tenterò
Sol del tuo regio amor per farmi degno.

I also know how to fight,
Armed of valor, but not rage,

⁹² “Regina a le tue piante / par ch’io venga nemico, e vengo amante” (translation mine).

⁹³ “Amante già non parmi / chi viene a me cinto di squadre, d’armi” (translation mine).

⁹⁴ “Prendile pur se vuoi, nulla pavento” (translation mine).

⁹⁵ “Emilio sorgi, nulla / con sì vil cortesia degno ti rendi. / Vanne, e i popoli tuoi reggi, e defendi” (translation mine).

And I alone will try to win
Your royal love to become worthy of you.⁹⁶

Strikingly, the latter part of this pronouncement—“but not rage”—contradicts the sentiments expressed in Mancia’s score. Following Emilio’s opening motive, the orchestra bursts forth in *stile concitato*, a texture associated with rage and pain. The opening gesture is repeated. He rests briefly on “valor” in m. 6 as the ensemble flares up. The violins ascend from G to C. Emilio takes up this theme and develops it through a melisma on “armato” in mm. 7 and 8. As Emilio attempts to complete the phrase “Ma non di sdegno,” the violins interrupt him. His final effort in mm. 9–10 yields some frustration, repeating the word “ma” three times. Each endeavor carries increased rhythmic urgency, as if to suggest that Emilio must convince himself of his own valor.

Whereas he claimed in the A section to lack rage, thoughts of military and amorous conquest in the B section further complicate this idea.⁹⁷ He sings: “And I alone will try to win / your royal love to become worthy of you.”⁹⁸ At best, all he can offer her is a relationship through force. *Stile concitato* yields to brief scalar interjections by the violins. The B section’s primary motive echoes that of the A section. Emilio’s placement of melismas focuses our attention on “E vincer tentarò” (“And I will try to win”) and “amor” (“love”). In this case, the brief melismas on “tentarò” (mm. 16 and 18 respectively) not only assist in providing a textually centered musical arch, but also in belying Emilio’s earlier claim that he is armed of valor, not rage. We hear this

⁹⁶ “Anch’io pugnar saprò,” *La Partenope* 1.11 (translation mine).

⁹⁷ The manuscript’s binding unfortunately obscures a clear reading of m. 22 in “Anch’io pugnar saprò,” which is found on f. 54v. The copyist extends the stave into the margin, wherein the phrase “Da capo” appears, as does an A on the first beat, followed by what appears to be two eighth notes in the vocal part. Probably a copyist’s mistake, it does not yield the clearest path for how the performer returns to m.1. Cesare Corsi, Head Librarian of the Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro a Majella, Naples, confirmed in an email dated April 4, 2016, that no other music is found in the binding. My rendering therefore concludes on beat 2.

⁹⁸ “E Vincer tentarò / sol del tuo regio amor/ per farmi degno” (translation mine).

short melisma on “tentarò” twice—first, as Emilio’s opening phrase, and second, in mm. 17–20, as part of the first full presentation of the text. Just as he attempts to triumph both amorously and militarily, this half and then full declamation of the text is suggestive of Emilio’s attempt to complete his task, perhaps mirroring his “ma, ma, ma” gesture earlier in the A section. Mancia represents Emilio here as not just excited emotionally, but driven by rage. When juxtaposed against the confident Partenope, we experience King Emilio as the weaker character.

Ex. 1.1: Mancia, “Anch’io pugnar saprò,” *La Partenope* 1.11, mm. 1–18⁹⁹

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with three staves: Violin I/II, Emilio (with Viola), and Continuo. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). Measure numbers 4, 8, and 12 are indicated at the beginning of their respective systems. The lyrics are written below the Emilio staff.

System 1 (measures 1-3):

- Violin I/II: Rests.
- Emilio: *An-ch'io pu-gnar sa - prò,*
- Continuo: Bass line.

System 2 (measures 4-7):

- Violin I/II: *ar-ma-to di va - lor,*
- Emilio: *ma non di sde - gno, ar - ma -*
- Continuo: Bass line.

System 3 (measures 8-11):

- Violin I/II: *to di va - lor,*
- Emilio: *ma, ma, ma non di sde - gno, ma,*
- Continuo: Bass line.

System 4 (measures 12-18):

- Violin I/II: *ma, ma non di sde - gno, E vin-cer ten-ta-*
- Emilio: *ma, ma non di sde - gno, E vin-cer ten-ta-*
- Continuo: Bass line.

⁹⁹ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 32.2.3, 53v–54v.

16

Vln. I/II

E.

Cont.

rò, e vin-cer ten-ta - rò, sol del tuo re-gio

19

Vln. I/II

E.

Cont.

a - mor far-mi de - gno, sol del tuo re-gio a - mor far-mi de - gno.

D.C.

On revising the libretto for Sarro, Stampiglia amplified these emotions, imbuing Emilio with a greater sense of ambivalence at the prospect of fighting Partenope. He also added two new quatrains:

Quest'anima accesa
 Da lumi sì belli
 Ritorna all'impresa,
 E vincer saprà.

Ma il core nel seno
 Dal dardo di quelli
 Ferito vien meno,
 E chiede pietà.

This excited soul
 Returns to the challenge
 From such beautiful eyes,
 And will know victory.

But the heart in my breast fails [vien meno]
 Wounded from the
 Dart of those eyes,
 And requests pity.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ "Quest'anima accesa," *La Partenope* 1.11 (translation mine).

Ex. 1.2: Sarro, "Quest'anima accesa," *La Partenope* 1.11, mm. 1–21¹⁰¹

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Emilio

Continuo

Que - st'a - ni - ma ac

p

p

Detailed description: This system contains the first five staves of the musical score. The top staff is Violin I, followed by Violin II, Viola, Emilio (soprano), and Continuo. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The score shows the beginning of the piece with various instrumental and vocal entries. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present in the first and fifth staves. The vocal line for Emilio begins with the lyrics "Que - st'a - ni - ma ac".

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

E.

Cont.

-ce - sa da lu - mi si bel - li ri - torn - na all' - im - pre - sa, e vin - cer sa - prà

6

Detailed description: This system contains the next five staves of the musical score, starting at measure 8. The staves are labeled Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., E. (Violoncello), and Cont. (Continuo). The key signature remains one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "-ce - sa da lu - mi si bel - li ri - torn - na all' - im - pre - sa, e vin - cer sa - prà". A dynamic marking of # 6 is indicated at the end of the system.

¹⁰¹ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.13, 40r–40v.

15

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

E.

Cont.

6

que - st'a-ni - ma ac - ce - sa ri -

tr

The first quatrain follows the 1699 setting in sentiment. Emilio reveals that his thoughts now turn to war, and that he will win Partenope through conquest. Though he attempts to convince himself that he “returns to the challenge” and “will know victory,” Partenope’s “beautiful eyes” clearly distract him, all serving to underpin this idea of inner conflict. Emilio’s updated aria lacks the *concitato* style of the 1699 version.

Characterized by syncopation, quick text declamation, and rapid-fire melismas, this thoroughly galant aria highlights Emilio’s determined battle focus most vividly in the melismas. Take, for example, Emilio’s initial melisma on the verb “saprà” (will know), which begins in m. 14. The passage ascends stepwise a span of a fifth, from F# to C#, with brief respites on A and B respectively. The intensity he expresses in tackling this melisma (complete with sequences of repeated notes from F# to B) cleverly (and somewhat physically) depicts his resolve, as well as showing off Pacini’s ability to perform intricate coloratura. What about Emilio’s determination? Does he merely hope to win? Or rather, should we read the A section as his attempt to gain victory not just over the Queen, but also himself? Sarro intentionally focuses our attention on her eyes in m. 9 by arcing the phrase in such a way as to send Emilio up to a D, his highest note yet,

and the top of his range. Given such athletic attempts to suppress the thoughts of Partenope, one could perhaps believe that Emilio has rendered himself stronger in the face of the siren.

What courage he has mustered recedes in the B section (ex. 1.3). As if firmly entangled in “such beautiful eyes,” his thoughts turn not to war, but to Partenope. The B section opens in m. 54 with a variation on the A section’s initial riposte, wherein Emilio admits, “The heart in my breast fails/ wounded from the / dart of those eyes” As he sings the phrase, the continuo line imitates a heartbeat-like pedal point on B, beginning in m. 59. Each time, the rhythmic gesture consists of an eighth-note/quarter-note, short/long configuration. Sounding more anxious than ever, Emilio’s syncopated line twists downward over the pedal point. Rather than re-employ the pedal gesture in the restatement of the aria’s last two lines, the continuo—again imitating the rhythm of a heartbeat—ascends, this time chromatically from C# to E in mm. 66–69. Emilio follows suit, but the line sounds more subdued this time.

Once at “pietà,” the melisma provides a striking contrast to the nearly identical sequence heard previously on the transitive verb “saprà,” which he articulated more confidently in the A section. As Pacini returned to the A section in the 1722 performance, one wonders if his audience must have been struck by the sense of contradiction and indecisiveness such a return to confidence engendered. In sum, the scene reinforces Emilio’s status as an anti-hero. His love for Partenope, true to siren lore, has undermined his ability at war, and by extension, his presumed masculinity.

Ex. 1.3: Sarro, "Quest'anima accesa," *La Partenope*, mm. 54–75¹⁰²

54

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II

Vla.

E.

Cont. *p*

Ma il co-re nel se-no dal dar-do di quel-li fe-ri-to vien

60

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

E.

Cont.

me-no, e chie-de pie-tà e chie-de pie-tà fe-ri-to vien

¹⁰² Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.13, 41v–42r.

67

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

E.

Cont.

me - no e chie - de pie - tà.

71

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

E.

Cont.

e chie - de pie - tà.

tr

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for five parts: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Soprano (Soprano), and Contralto (Contralto). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 67-70, and the second system covers measures 71-74. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Soprano part has lyrics: "me - no e chie - de pie - tà." in measure 69. The Contralto part has lyrics: "e chie - de pie - tà." in measure 73. A trill (tr) is marked above the Soprano part in measure 73. The Viola part has a fermata in measure 74. The Violin parts have various melodic lines throughout.

**“Hai l’Impero del mio core”:
Partenope, Arsace, and the Vulnerability of Love**

If the previous scene offered a warning about the possible implications of female governance through the ostensible feminization of men, then the subsequent scene, with its focus on Partenope herself, explores the vulnerability of the female monarch to love vis-à-vis the

possible implications for statecraft. That she embraces love is less important than how her affections towards Arsace appear to compromise her role as a monarch.

With Emilio's blustery exit, Partenope forms her ranks. Act 1.8 opens with her announcement to Arsace, Rosmira, Armindo, and Ormonte, "Arsace, you will be the general of my armies."¹⁰³ Rather than comply with this order, Armindo and Rosmira—still in the guise of Prince Eurimene—bicker with Partenope and Arsace. Armindo asks, in open defiance. "Do I not equal him?"¹⁰⁴ Rosmira echoes him: "Perhaps my heart is not equal to his?"¹⁰⁵ How Eurimene frames the question is ironic but also comic, given her transvestitism.¹⁰⁶ Arsace attempts to redirect the interrogation of his martial abilities by accepting Partenope's directive and promising to execute it faithfully.¹⁰⁷ Rosmira, aware that Arsace knows her true identity, escalates Arsace's collective undermining, while simultaneously exposing Partenope's blatant emotional attachment to him. "What Faith? / You know, I see signs of little faith written on your face," Rosmira chides.¹⁰⁸ Given their previous relationship and shared knowledge of his infidelity, the remark salts a deep wound. That Rosmira's judgment resonates among those assembled is clear, and all respond in kind. Partenope, appearing the most shocked, exclaims, "Eurimene is too daring."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ "Arsace, tu sarai / degli Esserciti miei duce primiero" (translation mine).

¹⁰⁴ "Non è in me pari al suo?" (translation mine).

¹⁰⁵ "Non è in me forse un cor eguale al suo?" (translation mine).

¹⁰⁶ Rosmira's transvestitism was made more credible through the lens of the "one-sex" model. Still prominent in the early eighteenth century, it held that each gender's sex organs represented the inverse of the other's, thereby allowing momentary shifts in gender easier to traverse. See Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), especially 64–113.

¹⁰⁷ "Giuro all'Impresa invita Fè" (translation mine).

¹⁰⁸ "Che fede? / sai pur che tì ravviso / segni di poca fe scolpiti in viso" (translation mine).

Armando and Ormonte utter similar sentiments in respective asides. Armando wonders whether Arsace will endure this affront;¹¹⁰ Ormonte asks how Arsace can accept such provocation with silence. Partenope, still in shock, expresses her disbelief that a guest at court would demonstrate such disrespect, but Arsace quickly intercedes, excusing Eurimene's boldness as that of "youth."¹¹¹ Partenope reasserts her authority, insisting that Arsace lead her forces, a strategy that yields only further disagreement. Frustrated, she says:

Basta.
 Con generosa lite
 Cessate mai di gareggiare, e udite.
 Amazzone guerriera
 D'ogni armata mia schiera,
 Perchè uniti a pagnar l'onor vi sproni,
 Io la scrota sarò, voi miei Campioni.

Enough.
 Stop competing
 In this generous argument, and listen.
 I am the Amazon warrior
 Over every rank of my army,
 So honor urges you to fight united,
 I will be the leader, you my champions.¹¹²

One expects such rousing words to yield a war cry, yet the sentiment turns tender. All but Ormonte remain onstage. Stampiglia slows the pace of the drama, opening up an intimate space in which the Queen reassures Arsace of her love.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ "Troppo ardisce Eurimene" (translation mine).

¹¹⁰ "E l'soffre Arsace?" (translation mine).

¹¹¹ "Di giovinetta età scolpa l'ardire." Later versions, including those by Sarro and Vivaldi, use the verb "scusa" instead of "scolpa," which appears in the original.

¹¹² "Basta," *La Partenope* 1.8 (translation mine).

¹¹³ This moment must have struck Vivaldi as equally odd when he developed the libretto into a pasticcio in 1738, for he rewrote the scene's conclusion. Rather than departing, for example, General Ormonte contemplates the feelings of honor Partenope's military accession inspires in

More intriguing is the contradiction Stampiglia implies between Partenope's self-declaration as an "Amazon warrior" and her subservience to Arsace in the aria, sentiments Stampiglia and Sarro augment in their rendering. In doing so, Stampiglia poses the question: can a warrior queen love and remain a strong monarch? Understanding this scene in terms of the trope of the Amazon/warrior queen, which was well rehearsed in *seicento* and early *settecento* opera, demonstrates how Stampiglia further complicated the idea (or fantasy?) of the queen as an image of reasonable governance.

The myth of the Amazon warrior stretches back to ancient Greece.¹¹⁴ Although there is little evidence to suggest they existed outside legend, the narrative of a powerful warrior class of women proffered Greek paternalistic culture an ostensible view of a society ruled by women. These fantasies represented less an erotic foray and more a tactical warning in support of the status quo. In early modern Italy, it was on the opera stage where Amazonian narratives attracted frequent attention. Not only did this appeal to the exotic expand opera's nascent repertoire of character types, it provided discursive content to the ongoing *querelle des femmes*, addressed earlier in this chapter.¹¹⁵ Of particular interest to librettists was the necessary celibacy

him. Arguably, this yielded a more compelling conclusion by implying a temporary resumption of masculinity over femininity.

¹¹⁴ The literature on the Amazons is vast. Representative works include Dietrich von Bothmer, *Amazons in Greek Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957); Helen Diner, *Mothers and Amazons: The First Feminine History of Culture*, trans. John Philip Lundin (New York: Julian Press, 1965); Donald J. Sobol, *The Amazons of Greek Mythology* (South Brunswick: A.S. Barnes, 1972); Abby Wettan Kleinbaum, *The War Against the Amazons* (New York: New Press, 1983); William Blake Tyrrell, *Amazons: A Study in Athenian Mythmaking* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984); and Josine H. Blok, *The Early Amazons: Modern and Ancient Perspectives on a Persistent Myth* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995). Antonia Fraser's *The Warrior Queens* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989) remains indispensable in this connection.

¹¹⁵ On *musical* Amazons, see Daniel E. Freeman, "La guerriera amante': Representations of Amazons and Warrior Queens in Venetian Baroque Opera," *The Musical Quarterly* 80:3 (1996): 431–460.

or virginity of these women, a discursive strategy suggested by ancient Greek writers themselves. If a woman bore a male child, for example, the Amazons gave it away to the father's tribe. Early opera was, of course, filled with exemplars of celibate warrior women, including Bradamante, Camilla, Clorinda, and Partenope's rival for Arsace, and Rosmira. As Queen Alvilda claimed in Act 2 of Giulio Corradi's opera *L'amazzone corsana* (1686), "A thousand times I have told you, I am a warrior and detest love."¹¹⁶

These operatic warrior queens gained power in specific ways. In his work on amazons in opera, Daniel Freeman notes that they ascend the throne or accrue power through widowhood, the death of a father, usurpation (e.g., Cleopatra usurping the power of Ptolemy VIII), or shame, wherein a male's inability or disinterest in governing forces a woman to assume authority (Semiramide).¹¹⁷ Mimicking ancient Greek mythographers, Venetian librettists (and later Italian librettists generally) represented celibate or virginal warrior women as objects to be conquered through love, be it through persuasion, coercion, or capture. In other words, engaging in conjugal love required the necessary diminution of power.¹¹⁸ Given the symbolic potency of these associations in seventeenth and eighteenth-century opera, audiences would have grasped their meaning. Thus, even as Partenope demonstrates her strength in the face of Emilio and the Cumians, the suggestion of her vulnerability towards love in the aria "Io ti levo l'impero dell'Armi" sets her on a path to power diminution.

¹¹⁶ "Mille volte tel dissi, / che son guerriera, e che l'amor detesto"; translation adapted from Freeman, "Amazons," 439.

¹¹⁷ Heller, "King," 93–114.

¹¹⁸ This tension between female love and power arises also in Stampiglia's *Camilla, regina de' Volsci* (1698). See Giampiera Arrigoni, *Camilla: amazzone e sacerdotessa di Diana* (Milan: Cisalpina-Goliardica, 1982).

The aria itself brings a noticeable solitude to what has been a tense set of interactions between Emilio and the Neapolitan court. Gazing at Arsace, Partenope sings:

Io ti levo l'Impero dell'Armi,
Non l'Impero dell'anima mia.

Perchè amor non ingiusta può farmi,
Benchè faccia ch'il cor ti dia.

I remove from you the rule of arms,
Not the rule of my soul.

For love cannot make me unjust,
Though it makes me give you my heart.¹¹⁹

Scored for “violone e liuto,” Mancina sets this intimate scene in triple meter. In a repetitive four-note pattern, which she and the continuo pass back and forth, Partenope seeks to allay the anger and doubt her decision has engendered. Rhetorically, the A section’s two melismas help clue us in to her sentiments and goals. Whereas the first one (mm. 17–18) presents a two-measure elaboration of the word “arms” (*armi*), the second one spins out a four-measure melisma (mm. 22–25) on “soul” (*anima*). As an *Amazzone*, Partenope should show, as legend suggests, a cold shoulder to love, especially when war calls. Rather, she takes time out to express her concern and reassurance of love to Arsace, with the extended melisma on “anima” serving to reinforce her emotional state, which is clear to all present. Her aria, in other words, helps to undermine the perception of the queen even as she reveals her courage and readiness to fight.

¹¹⁹ “Io ti levo l'Impero dell'Armi,” *La Partenope* 1.12 (translation mine).

Ex. 1.4: Mancina, "Io ti levo l'Impero," *La Partenope* 1.12, mm. 1–57¹²⁰

[Partenope]

Violone e liuto

6

P

Io ti le - vo__ l'im - pe - ro dell'__ ar - - - -

V/L

11

P

- mi, Io ti le - vo__ l'im -

2

V/L

16

P

- pe - ro dell'__ ar - - - - - mi, Non__ l'im -

V/L

21

P

pe - ro__ dell'__ a - - - - -

V/L

26

P

- ni - ma mi - a. Non l'im - pe - ro__ dell'__ a - -

V/L

¹²⁰ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 32.2.3, 56v–57r.

31

P

V/L

ni - ma mi - a.

36

P

V/L

Per - chè

41

P

V/L

a - mor_ no' in - gius - sta_ può_ far - mi, Ben - chè fac - cia,

46

P

V/L

Ben - chè fac - cia ch'il co - re_ ti_ di - a, Ben - chè

52

P

V/L

fac - cia, Ben - chè fac - cia ch'il co - re_ ti_ di - a.

In the 1722 setting, Stampiglia and Sarro amplified Partenope's appeal to Arsace. In so doing, they heightened the contrast between Partenope as Amazon and Partenope as lover, roles that, as previously noted, are incompatible. After assuming control of the army, she turns to Arsace and sings:

In veder che so cangiarmi
 No' temere di vedere
 Che si cangi la mia fè.

Se no' hai questo dell'armi,
 Hai l'Impero del mio core,
 L'hai d'amore,
 E l'hai di me.

In seeing that I know how to change
 Do not worry about
 Seeing my faith change.

Although you do not have these arms,
 You rule my heart,
 You rule love,
 And you rule me.¹²¹

Whereas the 1699 version underscores the Queen's reassurances of love, the revision casts her more in the role of the pleading lover. The aria is set in 6/8 and A minor. Sarro followed convention in placing melismas toward the end of quatrains. In the case of "In veder che so cangiarmi," the melisma provides rhetorical weight at two moments in the aria: "si cangi" (change) and "di me" (over me), the latter of which occurs in the B section. Moreover, in contrast to Mancina's setting, in which she assures him love would never make her unjust, Stampiglia stretches the poetic phrasing in the 1722 version: a triple iteration of the verb "avere" attached to the words "core," "amore," and "me," a strategy that yields the possibility of both an emotional and musical climax on "me." Juxtaposing these two melismatic passages, Stampiglia and Sarro

¹²¹ "In veder, che so cangiarmi," *La Partenope* 1.12 (translation mine).

not only stress her constancy to Arsace, but also demonstrate the degree to which (less apparent in the original) his love affects her.

Ex. 1.5: Sarro, “In veder che so cangiarmi,” *La Partenope* 1.12, mm. 8–16¹²²

[Violin I] *p*

[Violin II] *p*

[Viola]

[Partenope] In ve - der che so can - giar-mi no' te - me-re di ve - de re che si can -
Senza cembali

[Continuo]

Vln. I *f* *tr*

Vln. II *f* *tr*

Vla.

P. *tr*

Cont. *tr*

- - - gi - la mia fè.

Ex. 1.6: Sarro, “In veder che so cangiarmi,” *La Partenope* 1.12, 44–48¹²³

[Partenope] *f* *tr* *tr* *tr*

l'hai di me l'hai d'a - mo-re e l'hai di me

[Continuo]

¹²² Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.13, 44r.

¹²³ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.13, 45v.

Sung in the guise of the “Amazon warrior,” these sentiments easily complicate this perception, as both ancient and early modern appropriation of Amazon lore suggest. In doing so, Stampiglia and Sarro clarified the theme of her vulnerability to love and, by extension, her emotional weakness as Queen.

“A battaglia! A battaglia!”

We next encounter Emilio and Partenope on the battlefield. How Mancia’s and Sarro’s respective settings represent this battle are illuminating, especially in terms of the claims made about gender and governance. His score calls for an eleven-measure “Sinfonia” (ex. 1.6), complete with martial gestures and *stile concitato* in the middle voices. Emilio enters the stage with a sense of regained confidence, and says to his troops: “I know that you will be able to fight and win.”¹²⁴ Partenope and her forces advance. Her presence on the battlefield undercuts Emilio’s defiant self-assurance: “But does Partenope lead the enemy squadron? Ah! Listen, no one / stain their sword in that breast.”¹²⁵ Stampiglia contrasts Emilio’s ambivalence with Partenope’s confidence: “Let’s face Emilio’s forces,” she exclaims, “The vile chill of fear does not pass through us, victory will be mine, and yours.”¹²⁶

¹²⁴ “So che pugnare e vincere sapete” (translation mine).

¹²⁵ “Ma le nemiche Squadre / Partenope conduce? Ah! Non ardite / tinger il ferro in quell bel seno: udite” (translation mine).

¹²⁶ “Siamo d’Emilio a fronte; / gelo di vil timor non passi in noi / che la Vittoria sta per me, per voi” (translation mine).

Ex. 1.7: Mancina, Sinfonia, *La Partenope* 2.1, mm. 1–11¹²⁷

Violin I: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a sixteenth-note triplet, followed by a series of sixteenth notes. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes.

Violin II: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a quarter rest followed by a quarter note, then eighth notes. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes.

Violin III: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a quarter rest followed by a quarter note, then eighth notes. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes.

Viola I: Alto clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a quarter rest followed by a quarter note, then eighth notes. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes.

Viola II: Alto clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a quarter rest followed by a quarter note, then eighth notes. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes.

Continuo: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a quarter note followed by eighth notes. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes.

Vln. I: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a triplet of sixteenth notes, followed by a series of sixteenth notes. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes. The third measure contains a series of sixteenth notes.

Vln. II: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes. The second measure contains eighth notes. The third measure contains a series of sixteenth notes.

Vln. III: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes. The second measure contains eighth notes. The third measure contains a series of sixteenth notes.

Vla. I: Alto clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes. The second measure contains eighth notes. The third measure contains a series of sixteenth notes.

Vla. II: Alto clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes. The second measure contains eighth notes. The third measure contains a series of sixteenth notes.

Cont.: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes. The second measure contains eighth notes. The third measure contains a series of sixteenth notes.

¹²⁷ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 32.2.3, 65r–65v.

6

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vln. III

Vla. I

Vla. II

Cont.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 6 and 7 of a musical score. It features six staves: Violin I, Violin II, Violin III, Viola I, Viola II, and Cello. Measures 6 and 7 are separated by a double bar line. Measure 6 includes various rhythmic patterns and accidentals, such as a sharp sign in the second violin part. Measure 7 shows a continuation of these patterns with some rests and dynamic markings.

8

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vln. III

Vla. I

Vla. II

Cont.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 8, 9, 10, and 11 of a musical score. It features six staves: Violin I, Violin II, Violin III, Viola I, Viola II, and Cello. Measure 8 is characterized by dense, fast-moving sixteenth-note passages in the violin and viola parts. Measures 9, 10, and 11 show a transition to a more melodic and sustained texture, with some instruments playing longer notes and others providing harmonic support.

In his revision, Stampiglia made substantial alterations. For instance, rather than beginning Act 2 with Emilio's call to arms, the battle scene became the Act 1 finale, complete with a choral exultation of the Neapolitan victory. Emilio rouses his troops not through recitative, but with a bravura aria, whose text retains the sentiment of the original:

Forti schieri vicino è il cimento,
E alle palme vi chiama il mio core.

Benché grande è l'impresa ch'io tento,
È men grande del vostro valore.

Determined troops, the endeavor is close,
And my heart calls you to the prize.

Although the challenge I attempt is great,
It is less so than your valor.¹²⁸

Each side then calls out for war, and the battle ensues. Noticeably absent from Sarro's score is Emilio's sudden wavering on seeing Partenope take the field. While this excision may have been practical, thereby providing Emilio's interpreter, Andrea Pacini, with an additional aria, we can also view the alterations as an amplification of the comic. After an emotional appeal at Partenope's feet earlier in the act, Emilio's sudden sense of the heroic suggests overcompensation or even emotional excess, sentiments highlighted by the choice of aria type and the actor's ability to comically accentuate the melisma on the word "palme" (prize), which recurs throughout the A section. It is once again difficult to take his claims of valor seriously.

¹²⁸ "Forti schieri vicino è il cimento," *La Partenope* 1.14 (translation mine).

Ex. 1.8: Sarro, “Forti schieri,” *La Partenope* 1.14, mm. 10–18¹²⁹

10

[Oboe I]

[Oboe II]

[Violin I]

[Violin II]

[Viola]

[Emilio]

For - ti schie-ri vi-ci - no il ci

[Continuo]

¹²⁹ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.13, 55r–55v.

14

Ob. I

Ob. II

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

E.
men - to e al-le pal - - - - -

Cont.

17

Ob. I

Ob. II

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

E.
- me. vi chia - ma il mio co - re.

Cont.

As the battle commences, Emilio's soldiers quickly pursue the Queen. She calls to Armino for aid. He rescues her, then chases the attackers. "Rosmira is attacked, and is almost overthrown by Emilio; but Arsace arrives with some soldiers, and frees her, making Emilio a

prisoner.”¹³⁰ These actions are critical for understanding the rest of the opera and the resolution of the characters’ respective gender inversions. Representing Partenope and Rosmira as requiring rescue complicates the claims made thus far about the (suit)ability of exceptional women to lead, as if to suggest their very physicality hindered them at the moment when their strength, both physical and emotional, was most needed. In other words, the juxtaposition of these two scenes, grounded in contemporary assumptions about gender, illustrated at once the possibilities and complications of female governance.

Rosmira fedele

Thus far, we have seen how the theme of ambivalence underpinned complex views about gender and governance in Stampiglia and Sarro’s *La Partenope*. One of the most interesting and instructive aspects of this narrative has been the character of Rosmira, who appears throughout much of the opera as Prince Eurimene. In many ways, she provides a contrast to Partenope. Even as she dresses and fights as a man, Rosmira paradoxically symbolizes ideal femininity. She came to Naples from Cyprus in search of Arsace, who had previously abandoned her. She loves him despite his infatuation with Partenope. The masculine masquerade itself suggests female virtue. As Marjorie Garber has noted, such instances of cross-dressing in early modern literature and theater, exemplified by such characters as Ariosto’s Bradamante and Stampiglia’s Rosmira,

¹³⁰ “Rosmira assalita e quasi abbattuta da Emilio; Sopraggiunge Arsace con alcuni soldati, e libera quella facendo Prigioniero Emilio” (translation mine).

more often signified fidelity and chastity.¹³¹ Donning such personas allowed women to pursue their quest without male sexual advances. When Stampiglia and Sarro reset this libretto, Rosmira's characterization remained largely intact. As the libretto circulated throughout Europe, however, impresarios accentuated Rosmira's virtue in productions often renamed *La Rosmira fedele*. Certainly this was the case in Venice, where Leonardo Vinci and Domenico Lalli introduced their *Partenope*, based largely on Sarro's version, in 1725; Vivaldi constructed a *pasticcio* around the same theme in 1738. Clearly, in a drama well imbued with romantic and political complication, the tale of Rosmira's faithfulness must have offered audiences a more appealing, if not safe, heroine.

Rosmira presents herself early on as an emblem of virtue. Although Arsace suspects Eurimene of resembling Rosmira, he waits until Act 1.6 to confront her. In *Partenope's* Royal Hall, he discloses his suspicions. Rosmira almost immediately assumes the moral high ground: "But I would not like to be betrayed by you as you betrayed Rosmira."¹³² Attempting to correct his confusion, she asks "Arsace, are you so quickly confused? / Listen, to follow you, I abandoned everything, / and now I meet you finally: / I am Rosmira."¹³³ Ridden with guilt, he asks forgiveness and attempts to renew their love. She scorns him, requesting only that "You must not say that I am woman, that I am Rosmira"¹³⁴

¹³¹ Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge Press, 1992), 25–37.

¹³² "Ma da te non vorrei / al pari di Rosmira esser tradito" (translation mine).

¹³³ "Arsace, ti sei / così presto smarrito? / Senti, per seguir te, tutto abbandono, / e pur ti giungo al fin: / Rosmira son Io" (translation mine).

¹³⁴ "Non devi / dir, ch'io sia donna, che Rosmira sia" (translation mine).

Ex. 1.9: Sarro, "Confusa, Pavento," *La Partenope* 1.6, mm. 1–19¹³⁵

Vivace e Spiccato

[Violin I and II]

[Viola]

[Rosmira]

[Continuo]

5

Vln. *p* *f* *p* *tr*

Vla.

R.

Cont.

Con-fu - sa__ pa - ven-to__ ve-der-mi__ de -

¹³⁵ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.13, 20r–20v. Although the original time signature is 3/8, Sarro (or his copyist) scored the aria in 6/8. My edition renders the score as it is presented in the manuscript.

10

Vln.

Vla.

R.

Cont.

-lu - sa per-chè mi ram - men-to che un di m'in - gan - na

15

Vln.

Vla.

R.

Cont.

sti m'in - gan - na - sti

f

The aria expounds on her feelings of betrayal and fidelity. Sarro's aria embodies a sense of controlled rage:

Confusa,
 Pavento
 Vedermi delusa,
 Perchè mi rammento
 Che un di m'ingannasti.

Lasciando schernita
 Quest'alma fedele,
 D'avermi tradita,
 Crudele,
 Ti basti.

Confused,
 I dread
 You seeing me disappointed,
 Since I recall
 That one day you deceived me.

Allowing you to mock
 This faithful soul,
 Having betrayed me,
 Pitiless,
 Enough.¹³⁶

The full force of Rosmira's agitation is distilled into Sarro's aria, which he sets in C minor and marks "vivace e spiccato." The opening ritornello leaves little doubt about her emotional torment. The violin's dotted rhythms, the continuo's relentless momentum, and sudden shifts in dynamics all prepare the listener for the whirlwind of emotions she will soon express. When she enters in m. 8, her text delivery sounds at a rapid pace, but the accumulation of pent up distress comes out in a melisma underscoring the phrase "m'ingannasti" (you deceived me), which begins in m. 12. Picking up on the opening triplet sequence from the continuo, Rosmira decorates the phrase with a descending group of thirty-second notes, which also serves to prepare the sequence for its next ascent. With each repetition of the melisma, the ensemble follows her lead, the lower strings breaking away only for brief moments of contrary motion (for instance, mm. 14 and 16). The overall rhythmic drive remains constant, focused primarily upon stepwise gestures. Though this aria presents a series of contradictory emotions, we also hear her strength and faithfulness. Arsace, by contrast, comes off weak, indecisive, and untrustworthy.

¹³⁶ "Confusa," *La Partenope* 1.6 (translation mine). Stampiglia's original version of this aria expressed Rosmira's sentiments more simply. In a short da capo aria, Rosmira asks: "Chi tanto t'ama / non vuol non brama / altra mercè, / tiranno mio / chieder poss'io / meno da te?" ("Who loves you a lot / does not want, does not crave / other mercies, / my tyrant, / can I ask / less of you?") (translation mine).

In Act 1.16, Rosmira's feelings toward Arsace seem to undergo a transformation. After pacifying Armindo, who continues to fret about his unrequited love for Partenope, Rosmira appears alone and admits in a soliloquy that she still loves Arsace, despite abandonment. In a new scene, she ponders ambivalently:

Vo' meditando sempre
 Contro l'infido Arsace ingiure nuove,
 E tenerezza e crudeltà mi muove.
 Piena d'affetto, ed d'ira,
 Or minaccia, or sospira
 Quest'alma innamorata,
 Che per lui pena, e di schernirlo ha core:
 Sono gli sdegni miei sigli d'amore.

I continue pondering
 New injuries against the unfaithful Arsace,
 And tenderness and cruelty move me.
 Full of affection and ire,
 This enamored soul,
 Which desires for him pain and mocking,
 Now threatens, now sighs:
 Disdain is my sign of love.¹³⁷

Even as Arsace continues to express indecisiveness over whom to love—Parthenope or Rosmira—Rosmira secretly pines for him in the hope that he will soon return, thereby granting her peace. Sarro sets the aria in F minor with muted strings, an effect that underscores her sadness. With famed singer Faustina Bordoni undertaking this role, the Teatro San Bartolomeo must have been brought to silence. The text follows:

So che il riso, e so che il vizzo
 Dolcemente accende un core.
 Ma il disprezzo
 Lo fa struggere d'amore,
 Domandar gli fa pietà.

Poi la pace,
 Oh quanto piace!

¹³⁷ "Vo' meditando sempre," *La Partenope* 1.16 (translation mine).

Par che dia
 Maggior contento
 Dopo il barbaro tormento,
 O di fredda gelosia,
 O di fiera crudeltà.

I know laughter and charm
 Sweetly inflame a heart.
 But contempt
 Causes it to destroy love,
 Begging him for pity.

Then peace,
 Oh how it pleases!
 It seems to give
 Greater happiness
 After the barbarous torment,
 Of either cold jealousy,
 Or proud cruelty.¹³⁸

Her emotional state is expressed first by the choice of keys: F minor, which is rare in the repertoire, with a short migration to B \flat minor (mm. 38–40). Though not strictly a lament, the aria's sentiments of fidelity and mixed emotions towards Arsace encourage spectators to empathize with the wronged, faithful heroine and her plight. Rosmira's character appeal turned on her ability to assert traditional ideas of femininity and domesticity; though angry and hurt, she remains loyal.

The A section juxtaposes themes of amorous happiness with expressions of disdain. Here we find Rosmira at her most lyrical. Trills and syncopations predominate, as do periodic phrases. The first melisma (mm. 27–36) highlights the phrase “struggere d'amor.” This section confronts the singer with a complex text declamation.

¹³⁸ “So che il riso, e so che il vezzo,” *La Partenope* 1.15 (translation mine).

Ex. 1.10: Sarro, "So che il riso," *La Partenope* 1.15, mm. 24–40¹³⁹

24

[Violin I]

[Violin II]

Viola

Rosmira

[Cont.]

ma il di-sprez-zo lo fa strug-ge - re d'a - mo -

29

- re do-man-dar gli fa pie - tà

36

do- man - dar gli fa pie - tà.

¹³⁹ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.13, 51v–52r.

What appears to be the beginning of a melisma on “d’amore” is quickly interrupted by a descent of a fourth, complete with trills on the strong beats. The melisma on “pietà” is thus far her longest one. Ascending a mostly chromatic span of a sixth, from A to F in mm. 31–36, the sequence underscores the idea that, of all the emotions Rosmira has expressed thus far, deliverance from pain remains most important.

In the B section (ex. 1.11), Rosmira’s reflections initially take her to a calmer place. Sarro depicts this peace with a brighter but short lived A \flat major, which soon modulates to C minor. Pondering “cold jealousy” and “proud cruelty” in m. 92 sends her through a stormy sequence highlighted by augmented fourths and diminished fifths: musically, safe ground appears hard to grasp. Sarro grants her an E \flat major triad on the first beat of m. 102, pivoting in the same measure to C minor. Rosmira appears to settle on C in m. 104, but the continuo upends our expectations for a cadence with an A \flat in m.103 that descends chromatically to F \sharp . She accomplishes a full cadence three measures later. A return to the A section will allow her to consider anew how the contradictory feelings of happiness and contempt continue to drive her relationship with Arsace.

One wonders whether this harmonic elusiveness parallels her own inability to securely capture her indecisive lover Arsace. As the ritual of opera seria prescribed, Rosmira would return to the A section, wherein she would ponder anew the joys that both enflame her heart and cause her anguish. Her fidelity persists despite abandonment. It will be this sense of fidelity and persistence at love that will not only continue to motivate her actions throughout the opera, but will, in the *lieto fine*, allow her to regain Arsace.

Ex. 1.11: Sarro, "So che il riso," *La Partenope*, mm. 84–108¹⁴⁰

84

[Violin I] *tr*

[Violin II] *tr*

[Viola]

Rosmira *tr*
Poi la pa-ce, oh quan-to pia-ce! Par che dia mag-gior con-ten-to do-po

[Cont.]

90

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

R.
il bar-ba-ro tor-men-to, o di fred-da ge-lo-si-a, o di fie-ra cru-del

Cont.

p

¹⁴⁰ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.13, 53r–53v.

98

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

R.

Cont.

tà, _____ o di _____

103

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

R.

Cont.

fie - ra _____ cru - del - tà, _____ o di fie - ra cru - del - tà.

D.C.

[^]

Conclusion: Partenope's Domestication and the *lieto fine*

In eighteenth-century Italian opera seria, the *scena ultima* generally allowed for the quick resolution of conflict. Most important was the final symmetrical pairing of couples by the ruling monarch. As Ellen Rosand, Wendy Heller, and others have demonstrated, instances in which women's power and sexuality arose required the necessary neutralization of such attributes, even

when perceived as unthreatening.¹⁴¹ The same held true in *La Partenope*. Rather strikingly, however, Partenope decides each character's resolution, even her own. The crisis of identity posed by Rosmira's transvestitism resolves with her agreeing to return to Arsace. Emilio, once a foe, gives up his amorous pursuit of the Queen. Freeing him, she confides: "Though I do want a lover, I want a friend."¹⁴² To Armindo, who saved her in battle, she gives herself, declaring him her spouse. Though the text provides little clue as to the implications of her choice, the popular seventeenth-century operatic *topos* of the warrior queen, to which Partenope's role alludes, as well as contemporary ideas about women and power, all suggest the same trajectory—the necessary diminution of her power through marriage.

Her abdication is finally striking for its parallels with Pierdomenico Soresi's observation that exceptional women should confine themselves to domestic life, whereby their intellect could foster the education of the home and make them an intellectual and emotional companion to their husband.¹⁴³ Even though she founded and protected Naples, her rule appears incomplete without a king, evidenced by the well-worn trope of female physical weakness (one often connected symbiotically to the mind). Stampiglia's opera builds a nuanced case for the domestication of the queen, repositioning her within what Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge have called a metaphorical "walled garden," a space created by eighteenth-century male

¹⁴¹ This theme is considered in Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 227–236; see also Wendy Heller, "The Queen as King: Refashioning *Semiramide* for Seicento Venice," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5:2 (1993): 93–114; and Freeman, "Amazons," 431–460.

¹⁴² "Se amante non ti vo', ti voglio amico" (translation mine).

¹⁴³ Pier Domenico Soresi, *Saggio sopra la necessità e la facilità di ammaestrare le fanciulle* (Milan: Federico Agnelli, 1774), 23–24.

writers to afford women creative voices, but in highly prescribed ways.¹⁴⁴ In doing so, the poet and musician have—like Odysseus—once again heard the siren’s song without fully succumbing to its beauty.

¹⁴⁴ Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge, “Women as Historical Actors,” in *A History of Women: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, ed. Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 1.

Chapter Two

**Imagining the Pleb: The Phenomenal *Canzona*
in Early Eighteenth-Century Neapolitan Comic Opera**

“Singing, pain becomes less bitter.” — Petrarch¹

In Chapter One, we saw how multiple rhetorical strategies were employed to Naples’s ancient civic muse to new theatrical contexts. In many ways, these devices followed well-worn paths traversed by previous women, poets, and philosophers of the so-called *querelle des femmes*. As civic muse, Parthenope was a unique operatic subject. In refashioning her for the opera stage, producers at the Teatro San Bartolomeo drew upon stereotyped imagery of female rulers from the classical period in an effort to strike a more ambivalent chord with regard to her emotional, intellectual, and physical suitability in leadership. Likewise, her abdication in the *scena ultima* paralleled contemporary prescriptions for the domestication of educated women. While these claims resonated across the peninsula, their expression in the “clear-tone voice” of Naples’s civic muse was all the more powerful for its local symbolism.²

Concurrently, another sector of Neapolitan society attracted attention from social commentators and opera impresarios alike: the city’s plebeians (*volgo* or *plebe*) — the urban poor. Though not actual citizens according to Neapolitan law, they came to paradoxically embody over the course of the eighteenth century (through iconography, music, literature, and other

¹ “Cantando il duol si disacerba.” Petrarch, *Petrarch’s Lyrical Poems: The Rime Sparse and Other Lyrics*, trans. Robert Durling (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 60.

² Homer, *The Odyssey* 12.186–191, trans. A.T. Murray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), 461–463.

forms of public discourse) the core of the city's identity.³ In the eyes of the elite, the figure of the pleb came to symbolize the power and brutality of the mob.

The arts responded to this social anxiety in many ways, but the *commedia per musica's* reaction was by far the most intriguing, particularly its cultivation of a short, strophic folksong performed by a plebeian character in a comic opera's opening scene. These canzonas not only told of love's trials, they were presented to characters as live performances, which we may describe as "phenomenal," a term we owe to Carolyn Abbate.⁴ In *Unsung Voices* (1991), Abbate defines such moments as a "musical or vocal performance that declares itself openly, singing that is heard by its singer, the auditors of the stage, and understood as "music that they (too) hear" by us, the theater audience."⁵ One of comic opera's theatrical clichés, the phenomenal canzona appears in multiple permutations in comic opera scores, few of which survive today, though the device is called for in many libretti.⁶

³ Barbara Ann Naddeo, "Neapolitan Itineraries: Re-collecting the City in Topographical Studies of Naples, 1650–1800" (paper presented at a conference on "Exoticizing Vesuvius" at The Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities, Cambridge University, Cambridge, September 18, 2009), 1–33. I would like to thank the author for a copy of her paper.

⁴ Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

⁵ Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 5.

⁶ Unfortunately, few examples of the Neapolitan *commedia per musica* survive. Extant scores include Piscopo/Vinci *Lo cecato fauzo* (1719), I-Nc; Saddumene/Vinci *Li zite 'ngalera* (1722), I-Nc; ?/Leo *Camilla ed Emilio* (1726), I-Nc (Act 2); Saddumene/Hasse *La sorella amante* (1729), D-Dlb; Federico/Pergolesi *Lo frate 'nmamorato* (1732), I-Mc, A-Wgn, F-Pn, and I-Nc; Federico/Pergolesi, *Il Flamino* (1735), I-Nc; Federico/Leo *Amor vuol sofferenza* (1739) GB-Lbm; Federico/Leo, *L'Alidoro* (1740) I-MC; Palomba/Piccini, *Il curioso del suo proprio danno* (1755/67) I-Nc; ?/de Majo *Il Napoletano nelli Fiorentini* I-Nc (Act 1). For a discussion of these works, see Robert Lang, "Neapolitanische Schule": *Lokalstilistische Ausprägungen in der Oper des Settecento* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 27–44. This list of extant scores is based on Lang, *Oper*, 32.

In his essay on the origins of comic opera in Naples, Piero Weiss, noting the pervasiveness of the “canzonetta popolare” in this repertoire, pondered its theatrical function and cultural meaning.⁷ Although we have no contemporary evidence regarding how it was used, the canzona acquired an “emblematic value” by inviting the spectator “into the world of the everyday.”⁸ Barbara Naddeo has framed Weiss’s question in more socio-linguistic terms.⁹ The interest in and representation of the Neapolitan dialect, Naddeo argues, centered not merely on the affirmation of local identity, but also on the representation of the pleb (the city’s internal other) as ontologically different. That is, the elite apparently viewed them as a younger, baser linguistic state, a socio-linguistic categorization Naddeo believes dovetailed with Giambattista Vico’s *La scienza nuova* (1725). For Naddeo, this “traditional song and dance,” with its theme of pastoral simplicity, constituted just another symptom of the plebeians’ atavistic state.¹⁰ Although she examines many early comic libretti, discussions of music’s role in imagining the pleb’s otherness are absent.

While both Weiss and Naddeo offer important insights into the phenomenal canzona, neither fully accounts for the socio-political context in which Neapolitan writers like Gian Vincenzo Gravina (1664–1718), Vico (1668–1744), and Paolo Doria (1667–1746) evoked the plebeian, nor do they examine the long-standing anxiety social elites (sometimes unfairly) affixed to what amounted to caricatures of the poor. The claims predicated on this anxiety held that, if

⁷ Piero Weiss, “Ancora sulle origini dell’opera comica: Il Linguaggio,” *Pergolesi Studies* 1 (1986): 124–148.

⁸ Weiss, “Origini,” 140.

⁹ Barbara Naddeo, “Urban Arcadia: Representations of the ‘Dialect’ of Naples in Linguistic Theory and Comic Theater, 1696–1780,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35:1 (2001): 41–65.

¹⁰ Naddeo, “Urban Arcadia,” 51.

left to their own devices, the urban poor might rise up in revolt. This happened during periods of great socio-political tension, most famously the 1647 Masaniello Revolt, and to a lesser extent the 1701 Revolt.¹¹ As Harold Stone has noted, the Masaniello Revolt in particular had a profound effect on the psychology of the Neapolitan populace, lasting well into the 1690s.¹² As we shall see, this anxiety could be drawn on as a powerful political device well into the eighteenth century and coincided with, but was not necessarily a result of, an emerging cultural interest in the Neapolitan dialect and comedies with plebeian characters.

In what follows, I collate seemingly disparate sources (selections from the writings of Gravina, Vico, and Doria on the pleb, ritual, narrative theory, and musicology) to explore the Neapolitan *commedia per musica*'s phenomenal canzona and the imagined state it constructed around the image of the pleb. First, I will examine the representation of the Pleb in early eighteenth-century Neapolitan sociological writing. I will then turn to the abundance rite known as *Cuccagna*, in which the elite staged the pleb at his worst. Finally, with the help of recent theories on narrativity and phenomenal performance, I will examine *canzone* from Leonardo Vinci's *Li zite 'ngalera* (1722), Giovanni Pergolesi's *Lo frate 'nmamorato* (1732), Leonardo Leo's *Amor vuol sofferenza* (1739), and his *L'Alidoro* (1740) in terms of how they characterized the pleb. Though this sample is admittedly small, they constitute the bulk of the surviving pleb songs in this repertoire. A separate canzona comes down to us from Vinci's comedy *Lo cecato fauzo* (1719), but little else of

¹¹ For an assessment of Vico's response to the Revolt of 1701, see Barbara Naddeo, *Vico and Naples: The Urban Origins of Modern Social Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), especially Chapter 1.

¹² Harold Stone, *Vico's Cultural History: The Production and Transmission of Ideas in Naples, 1685–1750* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 170–171. For more on the elite's literary interest in the Neapolitan dialect, see Michele Rak, *Napoli Gentile* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), 11–46.

Vinci's score.¹³ By contrast, many more comic opera libretti survive, and they afford a better sense of the overall literary practice and characterization of the *canzona*.¹⁴

Given the pervasiveness of the *canzona* in Neapolitan comic opera and negative depictions of the urban poor, the transformation of this group into musical pastorals (generally framed as concerned solely with the pursuits of love, music, and comedy) intentionally revised this symbol, I argue, using it to mitigate the longstanding stereotype of the rebellious pleb among the kingdom's professional elite (*civiltà*). Indeed, it was members of this group who heard these comedies at the Teatro dei Fiorentini, where comic opera reigned supreme. They notably vied with the landed gentry for control over the urban poor and appeared to gain at least symbolic leadership over them in the comic opera.¹⁵ In short, these *canzone* offered social reform in the guise of comedy.

¹³ For more on *Lo cecato fauzo*, see Kurt Markstrom, *The Operas of Leonardo Vinci* (Hilldale: Pendragon Press, 2007), 15–16; and Lang, *Oper*, 41.

¹⁴ For an analysis of these extant librettos, see Naddeo, “Urban Arcadia,” 47–55. Just recently, Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maione made available the fruits of their scholarly labor, a searchable website entitled “Opera Buffa Progetto, 1707–1750,” which includes critical editions of nearly every available libretto of Neapolitan comic opera written between 1707 and 1750. Pergolesi's *Lo frate'nnamorato* is oddly missing from this collection. See “Opera Buffa Progetto, 1707–1750,” accessed June 20, 2015, <http://www.operabuffaturchini.it/>. For a description of the project, see Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maione, “Opera Buffa Database,” *Eighteenth-Century Music* 12:1 (2015): 120–121.

¹⁵ For more on the divisions between the *civiltà* and the landed gentry, see Giuseppe Ricuperati, “Napoli e i Viceré austriaci, 1707–1734,” in *Storia di Napoli*, ed. Ernesto Pontieri (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1975), 7:347–72; and Angelantonio Spagnoletti, “The Naples Elites Between City and Kingdom,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill Press, 2013), 197–214.

“A Miserable Chaos of Horror and Confusion”: Representations of the Plebeians in Early Eighteenth-Century Neapolitan Social Discourse

Before turning to the canzone themselves, I will first examine some of the relevant social discourse on the Neapolitan pleb. Prominent Neapolitan writers like Gianvincenzo Gravina, Giambattista Vico, and Paolo Doria, when they addressed the subject, generally represented them in negative terms. This section seeks to understand some of their viewpoints.

When musicologists encounter the name of Gianvincenzo Gravina today, it is generally his aesthetic critiques of theater and his mentorship of the young Pietro Metastasio that resonate. Gravina’s accomplishments, however, were far reaching. In addition to nurturing the bright Metastasio, he assisted in the founding of the Roman Arcadian Academy, wrote extensively on poetics and tragedy, and conducted research into Italian linguistics. Though he wrote infrequently about the lower classes, Gravina captured some of his ideas in *Della Ragion poetica* (1708) and the “Discorso sopra l’*Endimione*” (1692).¹⁶ For our purposes, it is his ideas on comedy and the role of the pleb that are important.

Gravina posited poetry not as some expression of culture, region, country, or even a given poet, as one might presume, but rather as “mirrors from which shine varying [facets] of human nature.”¹⁷ As a “science of human nature,” poetry had the potential to yield deep insights into

¹⁶ Gianvincenzo Gravina, *Della ragion poetica* (Rome: Francesco Gonzaga, 1708); repr. Gianvincenzo Gravina, *Scritti critici e teorici*, ed. Amodeo Quondam (Bari: Laterza, 1973), 195–328; and idem, “Discorso sopra l’*Endimione*,” *Scritti critici*, 49–74. For an analysis of the *Della ragion poetica* in terms of the broader debate about “socio-cultural developmentalism” in eighteenth-century Naples, see Naddeo, “Arcadia,” 45–46.

¹⁷ “Sono specchi da cui per vari riflessi traluce l’umana natura.” Gravina, *Ragion*, 224 (translation mine).

the cultures of those captured within its lines.¹⁸ Blurring imagination and reality, this line of thinking could potentially yield broad implications for interpreting those one encountered daily, including the pleb. Inherent in his writings is the sense that the urban pleb existed as an “other” to educated men like Gravina. For example, in the “Discorso sopra l’*Endimione*” he notes that “given that the laws and rules are meant to ... bind the majority, which is composed by base individuals of imperfect customs and little knowledge, he who wishes to penetrate the logic of the law and understand the spirit of government must know the nature, custom, and concepts of the lower orders, which one discerns as readily as the customs and affections of men are revealed by the poet.”¹⁹ Thus, for Gravina, the desire to understand both the pleb and poetry was neither mere theory nor scholarly fancy, but practical.

The most suitable location for such analyses were not so much on the street or in the marketplace, but on stage: “One sees the ways of humankind more in the theaters than in the piazzas.”²⁰ For Gravina, it was specifically comedy featuring “the people” (*cittadini*) that was most instructive for understanding the lower classes, since this genre depicted “representation[s] of pure truth,” that is, the “display” of scenes with “specific facts” about them.²¹ He advocated a

¹⁸ “La scienza dell’umana natura” Gravina, *Ragion*, 223 (translation mine).

¹⁹ “Anzi essendo le leggi e le regole del governo ordite non tanto per li buoni e per i saggi, che son pochi e tali che per virtù propria si piegano al giusto, quanto per legar la maggior parte, la quale è composta di condizioni basse e di persone d’imperfetti costumi e di grosso conoscimento, chi vuol penetrar nell’interno delle leggi e comprender lo spirito del governo è necessario che ben conosca l’indole, il costume e i concetti della bassa gente, a misura e tenor de’ quali son formate le leggi ed è ordinato il tenore del viver civile, il quale tanto più chiaro si discerne, quanto più condizioni, costumi ed affetti di uomini dal poeta sono svelati” Gravina, “Discorso supra l’*Endimone*,” in *Scritti critici*, 56, trans. Naddeo in “Arcadia,” 45.

²⁰ “Onde si ravvisano i costumi degli uomini più sui teatri che per le piazze.” Gravina, *Ragion*, 217 (translation mine).

²¹ “La commedia una rappresentazione della pura verità, esponendosi in su le scene qualche fatto particolare de’ cittadini.” Gravina, “Discorso,” 62 (translation mine).

position where the imaginary states conjured in the comic theater felt almost more real than the realities of the street. In so doing, the poet became the ultimate magistrate of the lower classes.

Giambattista Vico, the author of the celebrated essay on *La scienza nuova* (1725), adopted a different strategy in his *Orationes*, a series of lectures on the value of a university education given at the University of Naples between 1699 and 1708.²² Although he does not explicitly mention the pleb, as Gravina and Doria do, he advocates for a system in which the educated guide the uneducated. As will become apparent, his depictions of individuals led by their passions bear striking resemblances to descriptions of the pleb in connection with the *Cuccagna*, especially the notion that the pleb's body holds sway over his mind.

Regarding his privileged audience as having been “born for wisdom,” Vico appealed in his lectures to its sense of social caste and assumptions about the civic role of education, observing that “the most important duty is rendering service to one's homeland and the performance of good works for the commonwealth.”²³ He echoed similar sentiments elsewhere, declaring that “I enjoin you to these studies so that you can thereafter serve the state accordingly.”²⁴ These lectures offered a detailed rationale for pursuing a humanistic education.²⁵ By mastering the humanities, he asserts, one bolsters both an elite identity and one's intrinsic nature: “Wisdom, therefore, is the law which God has assigned to mankind. We follow nature whenever we direct our minds to the study of wisdom. If, however, we pass from wisdom to folly,

²² For Vico's *Orationes*, I rely on Giorgio A. Pinton and Arthur W. Shippee's translations in *On Humanistic Education* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1993). For a reading of the *Orationes* as early statements on the process of civilization, which would later form the basis of Vico's *New Science*, see Naddeo, “Cosmopolitan,” 109–115.

²³ Vico, *Education*, 40 and 58.

²⁴ Vico, *Education*, 52.

²⁵ Vico, *Education*, 132.

then we deviate from our own nature and act against the law whose sanction threatens such immediate and fitting torments.”²⁶

It is specifically Oration 2, delivered on October 18, 1700, to the entering students of the University of Naples, in which Vico discusses the implications of renouncing wisdom. To do this, he employs the concept of the “fool.”²⁷ Regarding the fool, Vico argued that, “there is no enemy more dangerous and treacherous to its adversary than the fool to himself.”²⁸ Donald Verene has reminded us that Vico’s “fool” was not a new concept.²⁹ Indeed, the use of the fool (*stultus*) as a rhetorical trope dated back to at least Saint Anselm’s dialectical presentation of his ontological proof for God, and received renewed life in Sebastian Brant’s treatise on *Das Narrenschiff* (or *Ship*

²⁶ Vico, *Education*, 58.

²⁷ Vico, *Education*, 58. Vico’s fool has been the object of some interest. On the role of the “fool” in the relationship between wisdom and virtue, see Thomas Docherty, *Criticism and Modernity: Aesthetics, Literature, and Nations in Europe and its Academies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 207–208. For Donald Verene, Vico’s fool can be found in all of us; he emphasizes the intrinsic choice Vico presents to his audience of university students. See Donald Verene, *Knowledge of Things Human and Divine: Vico’s New Science and “Finnegan’s Wake”* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 73–74. On the fool as an “admonishment” to “slacking” students vis-à-vis the loss of the intellectual connection to humanity, see Barbara Naddeo, *Vico and Naples*, 58. Elsewhere, Naddeo explores the fool as a symbol of exclusion in Vico’s early social discourse, arguing that he was more in tune with contemporary social concerns than has been previously acknowledged. For Naddeo, Vico’s sacred/profane binary served to establish difference as natural within early eighteenth-century Neapolitan social discourse. She does not explicitly draw a connection between the fool and the pleb; however, given Vico’s reliance on comparative methodology, it is reasonable to conclude that, among other views (e.g., the slacking student, working against one’s nature, etc.), the image of the pleb would have easily resonated with his audience as a signifier for a sector of society dominated by their physical passions. See Naddeo, “Cosmopolitan,” 115.

²⁸ Vico, *Education*, 58.

²⁹ Verene, “Introduction,” in Vico, *Education*, 15.

of Fools) (1494).³⁰ Here, the fool was regarded as such for a skepticism of God. Vico follows a similar line of reasoning, but mixes the theological and sociological.

Why shun the fool? The fool, Vico argues, languishes in the “dark dungeon” of his body, where “the wardens are opinion, falsity, and error,” and “the guards are the senses, which are keenest in childhood but dulled by old age and throughout life severely impaired by perverse passions.”³¹ The fool “knows not the reason of things; he is ignorant both of what to do and what not to do.”³² He finds himself so tethered to his body that he frequently capitulates to desire. He hungers for diversions as soon as he satiates his appetite, which results in misery. For Vico, “the weapon of the fool is his own unrestrained passion.”³³ “The homeland of which he is deprived is the whole world. The wealth that he loses is human happiness. The dungeon into which he is thrown is his own body.”³⁴

The wise, who Vico presupposed included all those gathered at his lecture, was the fool’s implied opposite and Vico’s object of praise. In Oration I, he thus describes his audience as “youths of great natural ability.”³⁵ A university education carried a specific goal: the young and gifted were “to be educated for the common good of the citizenry.”³⁶ He observes further:

And what, I ask, should interest those as great as these magistrates in your education, O youths of great promise, for such a long time and with such concern? Can it be otherwise

³⁰ Verene, “Introduction,” in Vico, *Education*, 15.

³¹ Vico, *Education*, 70.

³² Vico, *Education*, 70.

³³ Vico, *Education*, 61.

³⁴ Vico, *Education*, 62.

³⁵ Vico, *Education*, 36.

³⁶ Vico, *Education*, 95.

than that you are now of special interest to the state so that later you yourselves will wisely show the same concern in the administration of it along with the prince himself?³⁷

If the Fourth Oration warned against the “fool” while praising wisdom, the Sixth Oration explicated the educated citizen’s role in society vis-à-vis the fool. Vico argues that “knowledge of the corrupt nature of man invites the study of the entire universe of liberal arts and sciences, and sets forth the correct method by which to learn them.”³⁸ As he sees it, “the inadequacy of language, the opinions of the mind, and the passions of the soul” collaborate to corrupt the mind to the detriment of the person.³⁹ As a remedy for such mental corruptions, Vico writes that “three are the very duties of wisdom—with eloquence to tame the impetuosity of the fools, with prudence to lead them out of error, with virtue toward them to earn goodwill and in these ways, each according to his ability, to foster zeal for the society of men.”⁴⁰ The genuine bearers of knowledge become “men much above the rest of mankind, and, if I may say, only a little less than the gods [for] a glory neither counterfeit nor transitory but solid and true follows such men.”⁴¹ In other words, the educated guard and tame the fool through education and moral instruction. Given the recent social revolts and the real possibility of new ones, it should not surprise us that Vico’s claims resonated with the city’s elite, who viewed themselves as both ideologically and ontologically over and above the plebeians.

By contrast, Paolo Doria was far more aggressive in his descriptions of and prescriptions for the pleb, a fact that seems to have made him and Naples popular in early Enlightenment

³⁷ Vico, *Education*, 94.

³⁸ Vico, *Education*, 125.

³⁹ Vico, *Education*, 129.

⁴⁰ Vico, *Education*, 130.

⁴¹ Vico, *Education*, 130.

circles.⁴² Georges Louis Le Clerc (1707–1788) declared in his *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne* (1714) that Doria's *La vita civile* (1709) compared in intellectual scope to the works of Hobbes and Pufendorf.⁴³ Unlike Vico's, Doria's writing provided a sense of clarity and action on how to address urban social ills.

The book that attracted international attention to Doria was his *La vita civile*.⁴⁴ Its popularity among literati was due to the appeal of social reform in Naples, where Doria advocated the continued elite rule over the poor and uneducated.⁴⁵ His thesis emphasized the impossibility of social stability without elite control, with magistrates overseeing the inculcation of his ideas in children. Although this prescription might have proven difficult to implement, Doria's first readers, writes Stone, "weren't worried about the practical problems of applying his thought," but rather took pleasure in a method that lacked the commitments suggested by contemporary theories of natural rights.⁴⁶ That Doria's principles of social reform resonated with elite Neapolitans and tapped into their apparent anxieties of the plebeians is clear. John Robertson writes that:

When Machiavelli identified the *popolo* as the bearers of *virtù*, the quality he had in mind was that of the political and martial energy rather than moral wisdom as such. Doria, by

⁴² Vico himself spoke highly of Doria's *La vita civile* in the dedication to his own *De antiquissima italorum sapientia ex linguae latinae originibus eruenda* (Naples, 1710). For an English translation, see Giambattista Vico, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians* (1710), trans. L.M. Palmer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 44.

⁴³ Le Clerc's review of *La vita civile* appears in *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne pour servir de suite aux Bibliothèques universelle et choisie* (Amsterdam, 1716), 5:54–125.

⁴⁴ Paolo Maria Doria, *La vita civile*, 2nd ed. ([Naples]: Daniello Hoepper, 1710).

⁴⁵ On Doria's bifurcation of Neapolitan society, see Naddeo, "Cosmopolitan," 116–122.

⁴⁶ Stone, *Vico*, 172.

contrast, respected and feared the political energy of a provoked populace—the Masaniello revolt was still vivid.⁴⁷

La vita civile arguably embodied this respect and fear.

Doria divides *La* into three parts. Sections 1 and 2 speak most candidly about the plebeians. In the “Parta Prima,” Doria considers the various attributes of the so-called “vita civile.” When framing the relationship between the upper and lower classes, he favors oppositional terms like “master” (*padrone*) and “pleb” (*servo*), positing the social classes as the few guiding the many.⁴⁸ Regarding the plebeians, he spoke frankly: for Doria, the plebeians are “that of a large crowd of people led by their blind passions, who hit one another to move ahead, the others hitting from behind. It is, in sum, a miserable chaos of confusion and horror.”⁴⁹ Their actions are understandable, he reasons, because they “are pillaged of every clear and perfect idea, and are only filled with desires and passions.”⁵⁰ Later, Doria heightens the rhetorical histrionics, noting that the plebeians are tortured by “the monstrous instability of our desires and passions; and to speak truly with some reflection, that, above all, one should drive away these beings.”⁵¹ Here one cannot help but note the discursive correlations with eighteenth-century accounts of the Cuccagna (to be discussed in the next section), which frequently emphasized the

⁴⁷ John Robertson, “The Predicament of Kingdoms Governed as Provinces,” in *The Case for the Enlightenment: Naples and Scotland, 1680–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 198.

⁴⁸ Doria, *Vita*, 109–110 (translation mine).

⁴⁹ “Che con quella di una gran folla di persone dalle loro cieche passioni guidate; che l’una l’altra urta, e procura ciascuna di farsi avanti, l’altera indietro spingendo; è in somma un miserabile caos di confusione, e di orrore.” Doria, *Vita*, 34–35 (translation mine).

⁵⁰ “Questo appunto è il volgo d’ogni chiara, e perfetta conoscenza spogliato, e solo di desideri, e di passioni ripieno.” Doria, *Vita*, 34 (translation mine).

⁵¹ “Mostruosa instabilità delle nostre voglie, e delle nostre passioni, a dir vero per poca riflessione, che sopra gli uomini si scaccia.” Doria, *Vita*, 60 (translation mine).

brute force and “monstrous instability of plebian passion and desire.” Whether Doria meant to invoke a series of well-rehearsed stereotypes or draw on his own interactions with the plebeians, we know little about his actual influences. My inclination is to suggest both interpretations.

Above the plebeians in station was the civil class, those who through education could ostensibly restrain their passions.⁵² This also included the elite of the *popolo* (doctors, lawyers, judges, merchants, and intellectuals), as well as Doria and comic librettists like Bernardo Saddumene and Gennaro Antonio Federico. Doria argued that the *civiltà* should lead the kingdom and oversee the plebeians, since they “have a clear, adequate and penetrating intellect . . . , thanks to the study of good philosophy and a long and diligent practice.”⁵³ They are, in short, the “true minister[s] of the state.”⁵⁴

Whereas Part 1 underscores the differences between the plebeians and the elite of the *popolo*, Part 2 offered reforms. A discussion of the “cinque massime” to be instilled in children forms the core of this section. Doria encouraged the head of the household to “teach them . . . like epigrams or proverbs, as one learns to say ‘mom’ and ‘dad,’ and thereby imprint them on their memory.”⁵⁵ *La vita civile*’s five “precepts” included: religious worship (*il culto della religione*), love of

⁵² “E pur’è vero, che nelle ben governate republicche la sola differenza, che, a mio credere, dev’essere fra il popolo volgare, e l’uomo colto e dotto, si è, che quegli ha solo delle verità le idee confuse, e questi deve averle chiare, e distinte, mercè lo studio da lui fatto.” Doria, *Vita*, 13 (translation mine). On Doria’s oppositional framing of society as an extension of Vico’s wise/fool dichotomy, see Naddeo, “Cosmopolitan,” 117–118.

⁵³ “Ha una mente chiara, adeguata, e penetrante; . . . mercè lo studio della buona filosofia, e una lunga e diligente pratica.” Doria, *Vita*, 433 (translation mine).

⁵⁴ “Il vero ministro di stato.” Doria, *Vita*, 433 (translation mine).

⁵⁵ “I padri di famiglia, ovver gli educatori de’ figliuoli devono loro insegnarle, facendo che le pronunzino ridotte in brevi sentenze, o proverbj [sic], in quella guisa, che imparano a pronunciar babbo, o mamma: e così portranno stamparle nella loro memoria.” Doria, *Vita*, 197 (translation mine).

birthplace (*L'amor della patria*), love of one's home and family (*l'amor della propria casa, e della famiglia*), love of a proper life (*dell'amore della propria vita*), and honest pleasure (*dell'onesto piacere*).⁵⁶

Such attitudes, Doria suggests, will prevent children from descending into “fantasy.” Moving towards “fantasy” brings one closer to the body and thereby impedes the plebeian from attaining freedom from himself. As Doria later declares, the wise must rule because “the people feel,” whereas “the wise know and feel.”⁵⁷ That is, their ability to understand both sides of the coin made them the most likely rulers.

Although Doria's affirmation of a singular pedagogy for children seemed—through merit—to enfold the plebeians within a larger *civitas*, nothing could have been further from Doria's goal. He advocated crowd control. The inculcation of his “massime,” in other words, offered a way to mitigate the negative cognitive faculties leading the plebs to follow their passions. Even as the plebeians were excluded from civic life, they formed a constituent part of it. As Doria observed, the “true essence of the *vita civile*” constituted “the mutual aid of virtue and natural faculties men offer one another to achieve human felicity.”⁵⁸ That is:

The just represses the unjust; the strong sustains the just; the scholar instructs the ignorant, and the ignorant serve the learned; the sage economist provides a living for those incapable of government; and thus, the rich govern the poor; the poor serve the rich, and in this guise one makes harmony of all the virtues, exactly like a musical instrument, in which every chord, touched alone, makes no consonance, but together form harmony.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ He explains each one through a series of short chapters. See Doria, *Vita*, 144–194.

⁵⁷ “Il popolo senta, ed il saggio conosca, e senta.” Doria, *Vita*, 200–1 (translation mine).

⁵⁸ “La qual cosa nostra, la vera essenza della vita civile essere uno scambievole soccorso delle virtù, e delle facultà naturali, che gli uomini si danno l'un l'altro, a fine di conseguire l'umana felicità.” Doria, *Vita*, 88 (translation mine).

⁵⁹ “Il savio, e giusto reprime l'audace, il vizioso, e l'ingiusto: il forte sostiene il giusto, ma debole: il dotto insegna lo ignorante, e lo ignorante serve al dotto, che lo dirige: il savio economo da vivere allo incapace di governo: e così il ricco governa il povero, il povero serve al ricco: e in

For Doria, the primary avenue for the mitigation of this anxiety lay with class stratification and social engineering, particularly with regard to the lower classes. In sum, the attribution of the stereotype of the dangerous, murderous mob, and other monikers of difference to the urban poor made their suppression easier and their regulation more pressing. If writers like Gravina, Vico, and Doria drew their content in part from the daily observations of life in the piazza, then Naples's many civic rites, such as Cuccagna, must have offered them dynamic case studies.

“This Barbarous Amusement...”: Staging the Plebs at Cuccagna

The rite of Cuccagna, or “land of plenty,” was one of the more important civic festivals in early eighteenth-century Naples.⁶⁰ Centered on the ritual sack of an ephemeral structure stocked with food and clothes, Cuccagna has been the subject of several studies by Neapolitanists, but it was Martha Feldman who introduced it to Anglo-American musicology.⁶¹ Although this *festa* was performed particularly during *Carnevale*, one could find it throughout the calendar. The ruling powers in Naples, be they the viceroys before 1734, or the Bourbons thereafter, sponsored such

questa guisa si fa un'armonia di tutte le virtù, appunto come in uno strumento di musica, nel quale ognuna corda, toccata sola, non fa consonanza, ma tutte insieme formano armonia.” Doria, *Vita*, 87 (translation mine).

⁶⁰ The theme of the “land of plenty” is pervasive in many cultures, not least of all the Italian peninsula. For an overview, see Luisa Del Giudice, “Mountains of Cheese and Rivers of Wine: *Paesi di Cuccagna* and Other Gastronomic Utopias,” in *Imagined States: Nationalism, Utopia, and Longing in Oral Cultures*, ed. Luisa Del Giudice and Gerald Porter (Logan: Utah State University, 2001), 11–57.

⁶¹ See Giuseppe Cocchiara, *Il paese di cuccagna, e altri studi di folklore* (Turin: Einaudi, 1956); Domenico Scafoglio, *La maschera della Cuccagna: spreco, rivolta e sacrificio nel Carnevale napoletano del 1764* (Naples: A. Guida, 1994); Franco Mancini, *Feste ed apparati civili e religiosi in Napoli dal Vicereame alla capitale* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1997); and Feldman, *Sovereignty*, 196–207.

events during important moments of city and state like the celebration of the *Infante's* birth in 1747.⁶² At other times, Naples's rulers, owing to high levels of violence and death, forbade the practice. Carlo, for example, temporarily banned some of the more severe portions of the ritual, because his wife, Maria Amalia of Saxony, found it crude and violent.⁶³ As I demonstrate, contemporary accounts parallel some of the social observations encountered in the previous section, suggesting an interrelationship between page and piazza.

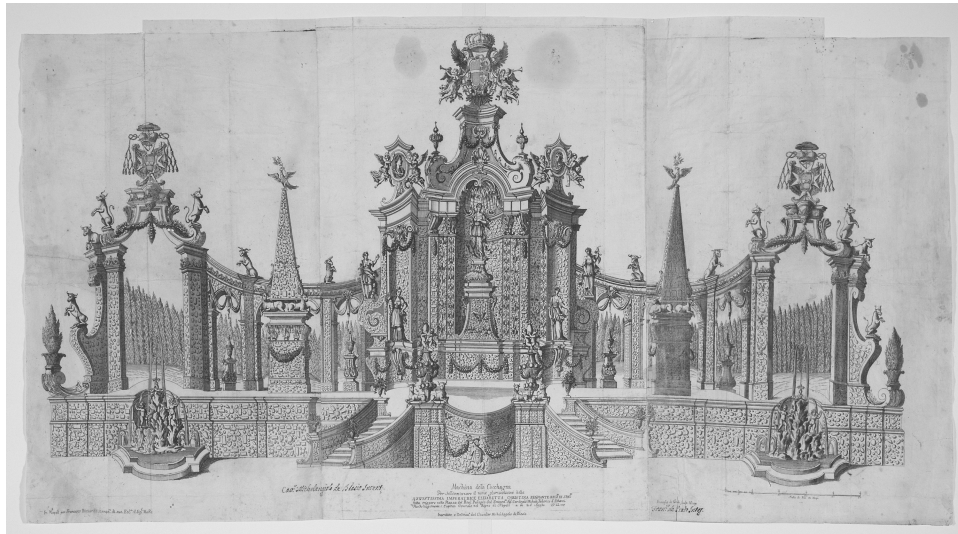
The scene typically occurred in the Largo del Palazzo, which faces the Royal Palace. Upon entering, the viewer encountered a large, ephemeral structure, constructed specifically for the purpose. One of many contemporary designs appears below (fig. 2.1). Organizers tied or nailed live birds and other prey to parts of the structure. In addition, royal guards situated themselves along the periphery of the piazza and held back the plebs until the viceroy, or later the king, signaled the beginning of the sack. On a higher vantage point sat the elite who had clear views of the masses. As the rite began, males from rival plebeian neighborhoods mobbed the structure in frantic pillaging. Organizers attached the best prizes (clothes, etc.) to the top of the central mast. The honor of acquiring them required physical skill and endurance, if not some luck. Knifings were not uncommon.⁶⁴ To the winner went the spoils of victory, and with it, notoriety to the victor's neighborhood.

⁶² Recorded in the *Narrazione delle solenni reali feste fatte celebrare in Napoli da S.M. il Re delle Due Sicilie Carlo* (Naples, 1749).

⁶³ Lady Anna Riggs Miller, *Letters from Italy describing the Manners, Customs, Antiquities, Paintings, & C. of that Country, in the years MDCCLXX and MDCCLXXI* (London: Printed for E. and C. Dilly, 1776), 2:178.

⁶⁴ See Del Giudice, "Cheese," 45; and Scafoglio, *La maschera*, 35.

Fig. 2.1: Machina della cocchagna per solennizzare il nome gloriosissimo della augustissima imperatrice Elisabetta Christina (etching) (1722)⁶⁵



The ritual space for Cuccagna seemed to mirror that of the theater. Contemporary accounts, including Lady Anna Miller’s below, often describe the upper classes viewing the lower classes from the royal palace’s many windows and balconies, while the plebs enacted their ritual of concentrated violence below. This dichotomy between viewer and actor was made explicit in the Cuccagna’s statute (c. 1670s), which described the plebs eating in front of the king and his court.⁶⁶ For Feldman, this moment “redefin[ed] the relation of the consumer to power,” such that control seem to lie momentarily with the plebs.⁶⁷ Of course, as part of carnival, it was an approved form of power redefinition.

⁶⁵ Michelangelo de Blasio, “Machina della cocchagna per solennizzare il nome gloriosissimo della augustissima imperatrice Elisabetta Christina” (1722). Image from the digital archives of the Getty Museum, Los Angeles; used with permission.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Scafoglio, *La maschera*, 11, trans. in Feldman, *Sovereignty*, 198.

⁶⁷ Feldman, *Sovereignty*, 198.

Though countless structural descriptions exist, one rarely finds contemporary visual renderings of the event in action.⁶⁸ The depiction of a Cuccagna in mid-sack, as shown in Filippo Falciatore's *Cuccagna in the Largo di Palazzo* (1740) in fig. 2.2, remains one of the most vivid and provocative of Cuccagna renderings. He captures much of the drama conveyed in contemporary accounts, but does so in a manner that suggests order and elegance out of chaos and violence. In other words, his composition functions not unlike like a *mise-en-scène*.

Fig. 2.2: Filippo Falciatore, *Assalto al paese di Cuccagna* (painting) (c. 1740)⁶⁹



Two descriptions from the mid and late eighteenth century respectively further this claim of theatricality: the first from German tourist Georg Keyssler, who stayed in Naples in 1756; and

⁶⁸ Perhaps one of the finest collections of festival prints, many of which depict festival monuments, is found in the Getty Research Library, Los Angeles, P910002. Some of their contents are reproduced in Del Giudice, “Cheese,” figs. 13–22.

⁶⁹ Filippo Falciatore, *Assalto al paese di Cuccagna* (c. 1740). Image from the digital archives of Fondazione Federico Zeri, University of Bologna; used with permission.

the latter by Lady Anne Miller, who witnessed a Cuccagna on February 9, 1771. Other accounts followed similar themes. Keyssler reported:

It is a phrase here, that a vice-roy, to keep the people quiet, Must provide three F's, namely, *Feste, Farine, Forche*, i.e. 'Festivity, Flour, and Gibbets;' the people being so excessively fond of public di-versions, Clamorous upon the dearth of corn, and *seditions unless they are Intimidated by severity* [italics mine]. Among their public entertainments, one of the Most remarkable is the procession with four triumphal cars on the four Sundays immediately preceding Lent But that which draws the greatest concourse at Naples is the *Cocagna* [sic], or Castle, built according to the rules of fortification, and faced all over with pieces of beef, bacon, hams, geese, turkeys, and other provisions, with which the imaginary country of *Cocagna* is said to abound; where the very trunks or branches of trees, are supported to be Bologna saussages. This welcome spectacle is exhibited once a year, and on each side of the castle is a fountain running with wine during the whole day. A party of soldiers is posted to restrain the ardour of the populace till the vice-roy appears in his balcony, which is the signal for the assault.⁷⁰

By contrast, Lady Anna Miller, who visited Naples in early 1771, remarked upon the Cuccagna's visual delights and its violence. Her account also described the level of pleasure experienced by the elite at viewing the plebeians during the rite:

There is a public entertainment for the people, which the great condescend to behold with no small degree of pleasure; it is called the *Cocagna* [sic]: I presume the *Venatio direptionis*, mentioned by Kennet in his Antiquities, is the origin of this amusement. This sport is continued once a-week during the Carnival. Opposite the palace, a building of wood is erected, the greater part of which is covered over with different articles of provision; the scenery is varied every week; the description of one will give you a sufficient idea of the others. A hill appears exactly opposite the palace, from the center of which bursts forth a fountain and falls into a basin at its foot; the base represents incrustations of rocks and shells like grotto-work; such is the appearance from the windows of the palace; but this grotto work is composed of nothing else than dried fish varnished and gilt, and intermixed with loaves of bread so well placed as to deceive the eye. On the sides of the hill (which is covered with green boughs,) appear living lambs ornamented with ribands and artificial flowers; in another part are calves and some oxen: amongst the boughs geese and pigeons are nailed fast by the wings. On the top stands a figure of Apollo playing on the lyre. Formerly all the creatures were placed here alive, and tied fast to the wood-work; but now, by this amiable Queen's particular command, the oxen are killed before the sport begins. The guards are drawn out round this artificial hill to prevent mischief; and at a signal given, the mob fall on, destroy the building, carry off whatever they can lay hold of, and fight with each other, till generally some fatal accident ensues.

⁷⁰ John George Keyssler, *Travels Through Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, and Lorrain*, (London: J. Scott, 1756), 2:369–370.

The court are frequently in the balconies of the palace, with most of the nobility of Naples, to see the *Cocagna*. When the Queen first saw this barbarous amusement, she was shocked at the cruelty of tearing the wretched animals to pieces, whose cries reached the palace, and commanded, as I have already said, that the cattle should not be exposed alive to the brutality of the populace; but the lambs, geese, pigeons, and some other poor birds, fall a living sacrifice to their amusement: they tear them away unfeelingly from their fastenings, so as often to leave their wings behind. We have been to see this sight...being permitted to occupy one of the royal balconies. In the midst of the riot and confusion, a *Lazzeroni* dropped, and was carried off by his comrades; he had received a stab in the breast by a knife from one of his brethren, who disputed with him somewhat taken off from the *Cocagna* [sic]. As such events are common upon this occasion, no notice was taken of it; but the man died on the spot.⁷¹

Miller's account is particularly noteworthy, since she invokes pastoral imagery in ways that parallel the imagery in comic opera. She writes that "a hill appears exactly opposite the palace, from the center of which bursts forth a fountain and falls into a basin at its foot; the base represents incrustations of rocks and shells like grotto-work," a description that could double as stage directions in a comic opera or seranata. Producers of this *Cuccagna* drew their inspiration from Arcadia, which apparently represented the most verisimilar environment for the plebeians. This group ("who run to make the sack") appeared chaotic, almost frightening in the context of the simplicity and harmony of this pastoral scene, one complete with livestock calmly grazing upon the ephemeral hills and symmetrical formal gardens. Such scenes had the effect of reminding the court, most of whom sat along the windows of the Real Palazzo, of the real threat posed by the urban poor. Christopher Marshall goes further: "The *Cuccagna* was designed and orchestrated in order to reinforce, in the most vivid and insistent manner possible, the stereotype of the inherent violence and bestiality of the people."⁷² Once more, the anxiety associated with the plebs could be defused through a ritual sack.

⁷¹ Miller, "Letter 36," 2:176–178.

⁷² Christopher R. Marshall, "*Causa di Stravaganze*": Order and Anarchy in Domenico Gargiulo's *Revolt of Masaniello*," *The Art Bulletin* 80:3 (1998), 492.

Phenomenal vs. Noumenal

Much of the evidence for this chapter relies on the presence of phenomenal canzone in these operas. For Abbate, phenomenal music is audible as music to the characters onstage, whereas their own music — the music they sing — is noumenal, and can only be heard by the audience.⁷³ Abbate characterizes the shift between noumenal and phenomenal music in opera as a “shift between performing narration on one hand and enacting dramatic events on the other, defining a move across a discursive space. Phenomenal narrative song in opera is a (heard) musical performance set against the unheard operatic music that functions (in part) as accompaniment to action, to the unwinding of a simpler form of time.”⁷⁴ For Abbate, “any operatic narrative creates such a node, a layering of time, in which real elapsed time, the time it takes a performer to perform, is laid over the time represented by the narrative.”⁷⁵ Most music in opera, however, is noumenal. When the Marschallin and Octavian thus engage in an extended conversation in Act 1 of Richard Strauss’s *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911), their music is understood as being spoken rather than sung. Minutes later, an Italian singer enters with a boisterous entourage, many of whom beseech the Marschallin for favors. As the Italian Singer begins his aria, those in attendance stop and listen in silence to a melody so rapturous in its beauty that the narrative action of the opera grinds to a halt. In this case, the phenomenal supersedes the noumenal. Such events are unique to narrative representation, as the phenomenal not only

⁷³ Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 5.

⁷⁴ Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 123.

⁷⁵ Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 123.

draws attention to itself for its rarity in post-seventeenth-century opera, it also underlines key moments in dramatic narrative. It is only Count Ochs's boisterous exasperation with the Notary that disrupts our attention and forces us back into the noumenal music of the drama.

Although early opera has attracted relatively little attention for its use of phenomenal music, "Possente Spirto," from Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (1601), and "V'adoro pupille" from Handel's *Giulio Cesare* (1724), are two famous examples from more than a century apart.⁷⁶ Nathan Link, writing on narrative representation in Handel, seeks to understand the narrative disparities between noumenal and phenomenal representation inherent to opera seria.⁷⁷ He argues that "unless we imagine that opera characters literally sing to each other at all times, a fundamental disparity presents itself: although the actors on stage sing to one another, the characters they represent within the story more often communicate in speech (or in some cases, as has been suggested, engage in silent reflection)," a disjunction he terms a "discontinuity of expression."⁷⁸ Such moments represent more than a momentary distraction; rather, they are pivotal to the overall narrative. In Handel's *Rinaldo* (1711), incantations and enchantments occur phenomenally, serving to evoke the old musical trope of music embodying magic. It is the tension borne out by the shift between noumenality and phenomenality that attracts the spectator's attention, thereby signaling a moment's importance. Link, in the end, concludes that the analysis of phenomenal arias and songs offers a deeper understanding into the representational fabric of

⁷⁶ Two notable exceptions are Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 1–54; and Daniel Chua, "Untimely Reflections on Operatic Echoes: How Sound Travels in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* and Beethoven's *Fidelio* with a Short Instrumental Interlude," *The Opera Quarterly* 21:4 (2005): 573–596.

⁷⁷ Nathan Link, "Story and Representation in Handel's Operas" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2006).

⁷⁸ Link, "Handel," 122.

opera seria; also, comprehending the status of an aria or song as either noumenal or phenomenal can illuminate events within the story, “in certain cases offering plausible explanations of otherwise confusing actions and events.”⁷⁹ I would add that such representational disparities offer insights into how a work conveys cultural or social information. In short, such disparities amplify intended social or musical ideas and in doing so invite further scrutiny on the part of the listener.

The Pastoral Aura

In early opera, one literary genre made phenomenal performance verisimilar: the pastoral. One of the most popular literary topics of the early modern era, the pastoral removed the spectator to a rural, if not more utopian, locality populated by shepherds, shepherdesses, courtly love, and music. As Nino Pirrotta demonstrated in his “Early Opera and Aria,” the “pastoral aura” opened up literary models to seventeenth-century Italian composers that allowed them to achieve a full sense of theatrical mimesis: noumenal recitative covered much of the dialogue, while canzone were nearly always performed phenomenally.⁸⁰ Pirrotta explains that “there is no breach of *vraisemblance* in the fact that the gods are exquisite singers; indeed, to all the characters of the pastoral landscape, the gift is given to express themselves ... in a form greater than ordinary speech.”⁸¹ Much of Pirrotta’s analysis relies on classical references to the Arcadians, particularly Polybius, whose *Histories* most famously made cultural anthropological

⁷⁹ Link, “Handel,” 192–193.

⁸⁰ Nino Pirrotta, “Early Opera and Aria,” in *New Looks at Italian Opera*, ed. W.W. Austin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 268.

⁸¹ Pirrotta, “Early Opera,” 264–5.

observations on the Arcadians. For Polybius, the presence of music marked the deciding factor in determining Arcadians as over and above the Cynaetheans, who had long since abandoned music:

Since the Arcadian nation on the whole has a very high reputation for virtue among the Greeks, due not only to their humane and hospitable character and usages, but especially to their piety to the gods, it is worthwhile to give a moment's consideration to the question of the savagery of the Cynaetheans, and ask ourselves why, though unquestionably of Arcadian stock, they so far surpassed all other Greeks at this period of cruelty and wickedness. I think the reason was that they were the first and indeed only people in Arcadia to abandon an admirable institution, introduced by their forefathers with a nice regard for the natural conditions under which all the inhabitants of that country live. For the practice of music, I mean real music, is beneficial to all men, but to the Arcadians it is a necessity.⁸²

Polybius tied virtue, humanity, and hospitality to Greek ideals of music's power. Music, in other words, contained the ability to temper the passions. Regardless, it was music, "real music," to quote Polybius, that kept the Arcadians from giving in to humanity's basest instincts.⁸³ The practice of music saved the Arcadians from such impulses, inculcating in them a greater sense of reason and humanity which, when coupled with long-standing claims of Arcadian cultural simplicity, only enhanced their popularity among early moderns.

As if to draw the starkest contrast possible between the Arcadians and Cynaetheans, Polybius later considered the key aspects of their society, specifically emphasizing their abandonment of music, and what he perceived as the logical implications of that choice:

The Cynaetheans, by entirely neglecting these institutions [the practices of music and virtue], though in special need of such influences, as their country is most rugged and their climate the most inclement in Arcadia, and by devoting themselves exclusively to

⁸² Polybius, *The Histories*, trans. William Roger Paton (London: Heinemann, 1922), 2:349.

⁸³ One recalls Vico's condemnation of the "fool" for giving into humanity's most base passions, as well as Doria's similar, though more pointed, claims of the "base plebs," who he describes in *La vita civile* as a "murderous mob."

their local affairs and political rivalries, finally became so savage that in no city of Greece were greater and most constant crimes committed.⁸⁴

Here, Polybius makes clear that two factors increased the sense of societal hardship. First, the region's geography and climate, which is "the most inclement in Arcadia." Second, though "ethnically" Arcadian, the Cynaetheans abandoned the practice of virtue and hospitality so prized by their brethren and instead "devot[ed] themselves exclusively to their local affairs and political intrigues."⁸⁵ Polybius was quite clear: if any group required music more to temper passions and instill virtue, it was the Cynthaeneans, for both their climate and culture evinced hardship. And yet, they abandoned music, which Polybius credited with only furthering that society's downward spiral, thereby "[becoming] so savage that in no city of Greece were greater and most constant crimes committed." The lesson is clear: the natural ability at and the practice of music correlated with a more humane, "civilized" society.

While the impact of Polybius's musical commentary is clear, what is less certain is its impact on Arcadian aesthetics during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, when Arcadian literary epistemology was especially popular.⁸⁶ Indeed, much literary historiography has credited Battista Guarini (1538–1612), regarded today by musicologists and literary historians alike for his pastoral *Il pastor fido* and as the primary transmitter of Polybius's comparative thoughts on a musical Arcadia. These appeared as part of a broader claim—

⁸⁴ Polybius, *Histories*, 2:353.

⁸⁵ Polybius, *Histories*, 2:353.

⁸⁶ For more on the growth and social makeup of Arcadian colonies in early eighteenth-century Italy, particularly in Rome and Naples, see Amodeo Quondam, "L'Istituzione Arcadia: Sociologia e Ideologia di Un'Accademia," *Quaderni Storici* 23 (1973), 405. A comparative analysis of the members by social class (gentry vs. popolo) and profession in both Rome and Naples is presented on page 436. On the flourishing of Arcadian colonies in Naples, see Amodeo Quondam, "Dal barocco all'Arcadia," in *Storia di Napoli*, 6:979–1042; and Pompeo Giannantonio, *L'Arcadia napoletana* (Naples: Liguori, 1962).

contained in his *Compendio della poesia tragicomica* (1602)—on the aesthetic realism of his shepherds’ poetics.⁸⁷ Regardless of whether Guarini’s *Il Compendio della poesia tragicomica* remained in the theoretical library of early eighteenth-century poets and librettists, the ideas and symbols associated with Arcadian aesthetics continued to resonate in early modern theater, poetics, and music, thereby underscoring the point that music represented not only an important aspect of the early modern pastoral tradition, phenomenal performance represented the most verisimilar and mimetic form of transmission.⁸⁸

The Siciliano

The musical topos most commonly associated with the “pastoral aura” and the phenomenal canzona was the siciliano, a minor-mode slow dance in compound meter, typically 6/8 or 12/8. The siciliano appeared irregularly in seventeenth-century music until the latter part of the century. Alessandro Scarlatti was arguably one of the earliest composers to employ the

⁸⁷ Guarini’s *Compendio* and *Il pastor fido* appear in Battista Guarini, *Il pastor fido e il Compendio della poesia tragicomica* (1601), ed. Gioachino Brognoligo, Scrittori d’Italia 61 (Bari: Laterza, 1914).

⁸⁸ See Ellen Rosand, *Seventeenth-Century Opera in Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 322–360. For more on the link between music and pastoral poetry, especially as it was discussed and practiced in early eighteenth-century Italy, see Ellen Harris, *Handel and the Pastoral Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), and more recently, *Handel As Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), which deals more thoroughly with the eroticism inherent to many of Handel’s pastoral cantatas composed during his formative years in Italy.

siciliano abundantly in opera.⁸⁹ His *La caduta de' Decemviri* (1697), for example, contained thirteen arias in 12/8, though not all of them were labeled siciliani.

Heinrich Christoph Koch (1749–1816), for example, described the siciliano as “A piece of rustic, simple, but charming character which imitates the melodies customarily danced by the people of Sicily.”

It is set in a slow 6/8 meter, and differs from the pastorale generally in its slower tempo, and in particular because (1) usually the first of the three first eighth notes in the first half of the measure is lengthened by a dot and the following shortened note is slurred with the longer, and (2) in the second half of the measure there rarely appear eighth notes, but more often quarter notes with two following sixteenths. Through this ordering the siciliano receives a special character and meter, *which markedly distinguish it from all other kinds of pieces* [italics mine].⁹⁰

In the *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flötetraversiere zu spielen* (1752), Johann Joachim Quantz (1697–1773) placed more emphasis on performance, noting that “an *alla siciliana* in twelve-eight time, with dotted notes interspersed, must be played simply, not too slowly, and with almost no trills. Since it is an imitation of a Sicilian shepherd’s dance, few graces may be introduced other than some slurred quarter notes and appoggiaturas.”⁹¹ In *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre* (1713), Johann Mattheson (1681–1764), likely describing the siciliano (under the guise, however, of a “slow English jig”), spoke to the prevalence of this dance type in the “Neapolitan and Sicilian style.”

The Neapolitan and Sicilian styles come primarily from a very particular and negligent style of singing. Its more distinguished species is either a slow English jig or a simple time, which has an unadorned *tendresse*. The other species, in an allegro or romping time, however, consists mainly of a song *à la barquerole*. Because the average man in these lands

⁸⁹ Meredith Little, "Siciliana," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, accessed 5 October 2011, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

⁹⁰ Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt am Main: August Hermann, 1802), s.v., “Siciliano.” Trans. Wye Jamison Allanbrook in *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: Le nozze di Figaro and Don Giovanni* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 44.

⁹¹ Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flötetraversiere zu spielen* (Berlin: Voss, 1752), 168. Trans. in Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture*, 44.

uses the guitar for his pleasure while singing, and because so much depends on the crowd's approbation; this type of composition thus always adheres to a common style.⁹²

Later in the century, Charles Burney (1726–1814), himself a visitor to Naples in 1770 and an admirer of its music, made observations on Neapolitan street songs. For Burney, canzone in the Neapolitan vein carried a distinct style:

The national music [in Naples] is so singular, as to be totally different, both in melody and modulation, from all that I have heard elsewhere. This evening in the streets there were two people singing alternately; one of these Neapolitan *Canzoni* was accompanied by a violin and *calascione* [sic]. The singing is noisy and vulgar, but the accompaniments are admirable, and well performed. The violin and *calascione* parts were incessantly at work during the song, as well as the ritornello. The modulation surprised me very much: from the key of A natural, to that of C and F, was not difficult or new; but from that of A, with a sharp third, to E flat, was astonishing; and the more so, as the return to the original key was always so insensibly managed, as neither to shock the ear, nor to be easily discovered by what road or relations it was brought about.⁹³

As these commentators demonstrate, a general consensus existed with regard to the siciliano and its cultural signifiers. In the *commedia per musica*, use of the siciliano allowed comic composers to

⁹² “Der Neapolitanische und Sicilianische Stylus kommt hauptsächlich auf eine ganz particuliere und negligente Art zu singen an. Ihre vornehmste Species ist entweder ein langsamer Englischer Giguen oder ein schlechter Tact, da eine ungeschminckte Tendresse statt hat; die andere Species aber, vom Allegro oder lustigen Tact, enthält meistentheils einen Gesang à la barquerole, den weil sich in diesen Ländern der gemeine Mann beym Singen meistens der Guitarre zu seiner Ergebung bedient, und weil zugleich daselbst von der Approbation des Vulgi viel dependiret, so bleibt auch immer bey derselben Art zu componiren [sic] von dem gemeinen Gusto etwas kleben.” Johann Mattheson, *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre, oder Universelle und gründliche Anleitung, wie ein Galant Homme einen vollkommenen Begriff von der Hoheit und Würde der edlen Music erlangen, seinen Gout darnach formiren, die Terminos Technicos verstehen und geschicklich von dieser vortrefflichen Wissenschaft raissoniren möge. Mit beygefügtten Anmerckungen Herrn Capell-Meister Keisers* (Hamburg, 1713), 204. Trans. Andrew Haringer in “Hunt, Military, and Pastoral Topics,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 206 (modified). Later, in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, Mattheson described the Siciliano as dominated by the iambic rhythm, another characteristic trait of the siciliano. See Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister; das ist gründliche Anzeige aller derjenigen Sachen, die einer wissen, können, and vollkommen inne haben muss, der einer Capelle mit Ehren und Nutzen vorstehen Will* (Hamburg: Herold, 1739), 165.

⁹³ Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 2nd ed. (London: T. Becket and Co., 1773), 307–308.

make plain the connections between lower-born characters and a rural, utopian context of shepherds and shepherdesses, and social and musical simplicity. In light of some of the social discourse by Gravina, Vico, and Doria, all of which imply a social anxiety of the pleb, the canzona became a theatrical medium in which the violent pleb was symbolically disarmed.

In order to explore this process further, I will now examine five instances of phenomenal canzone from the *commedia per musica* extant repertoire: Bernardo Saddumene and Leonardo Vinci's *Li zite'ngalera* (1722), Gennaro Federico and Pergolesi's *Lo frate'nnamorato* (1734), Federico and Leonardo Leo's *Amor vuol sofferenza* (1739), and Federico and Leo's *L'Alidoro* (1740). Not only do they represent most of the surviving examples of plebeian-sung phenomenal canzone in comic operas dating from 1707 and 1747, they are also fascinating works in their own right.⁹⁴ It should also be noted that, as the eighteenth century progressed, so too did literary and musical aesthetics. Thus, while early eighteenth-century productions demonstrated a preponderance for pleb characters singing phenomenal canzone, by the mid 1720s there were increasing examples of middle and upper-class characters assuming this role—"Rendimi la pace" in Saddumene and Hasse's *La sorella amante* (1729), for example. In such instances, social and musical contexts are important.

Bernardo Saddumene and Leonardo Vinci: *Li zite'ngalera* (1722)

The canzona "Vorria reventare sorecillo" appeared in Bernardo Saddumene and Leonardo Vinci's *Li zite'ngalera* (1722), the first fully extant Neapolitan *commedia per musica*. Vinci's

⁹⁴ The full list appears in fn. 3.

opera opened at the Teatro dei Fiorentini on January 3, 1722. It was not the composer's first foray into comic opera. Earlier examples include *Lo cecato fauzo* (1719) and *La festa di Bacco* (1722), among others.⁹⁵ Besides a collection of comic arias and a handful of libretti, sources for Vinci's early career in comic opera do not survive. *Li zite 'ngalera*, for this reason, remains an important exemplar of Naples's comic voice. Dedicated to Maria Livia Spinola, wife of the new Austrian viceroy, Marc'Antonio Borghese, *Li zite 'nglara* was, as suggested by the Neapolitan *Avvisi*, well received:

On Saturday the *opera in musica* in Neapolitan dialect entitled *Li zite 'ngalera* was put on stage for the first time at the Teatro Fiorentini, attaining the summit of satisfaction of the most excellent Vicereagents who went there to listen to it with almost all the nobility The music, composed by the celebrated maestro di cappella, Leonardo Vinci, contributed not a little to the excellence that was attained.⁹⁶

The opera is set in Vietri sul Mare, one of the most picturesque towns along the Amalfi Coast. The accompanying *argomento* provides the opera's backstory. The story centers on two couples: Belluccia/Carlo and Ciomma/Titta. Years earlier, Carlo abandoned Belluccia in nearby Sorrento and now lives in Vietri. Belluccia, who has since discovered Carlo's whereabouts, arrives in Vietri disguised as a man, named Peppariello. Rather than confront Carlo, who now loves Ciomma, she hopes to win him back. Her masquerade succeeds well enough to even attract the attentions of Ciomma.

The use of local backdrops marked an important feature of the Neapolitan *commedia per musica*. If not in Naples itself, then these comedies were set elsewhere along the Bay of Naples or

⁹⁵ The complete list of Vinci's early *commedie per musica* include: *Le doje lettere* (1719), *Lo cecato fauzo* (1719), *Lo scagno* (1720), *Lo scassone* (1720), *Lo barone di Trocchia* (1721), *Don Ciccio* (1721), *Li zite 'ngalera* (1722), *La festa di Bacco* (1722). For more on these early works, see Kurt Markstrom, *The Operas of Leonardo Vinci, Napoletano* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2007), 19–39. See also the survey of Vinci's *commedie per musica* in Hertz, *Galant*, 82–86, which includes a description of and partial score for “Vorria reventare.”

⁹⁶ *Avvisi di Napoli* 2 (January 6, 1722). Trans. in Markstrom, *Vinci*, 28.

the Amalfi Coast. A secondary characteristic of these comedies was to favor plebeian characters over aristocrats. By the 1720s and 1730s, spectators saw increasing numbers of characters from the Neapolitan professional class (doctors, lawyers, etc.), characters whose social caste matched the librettists and impresarios.⁹⁷ More importantly, libretto rubrics and extant scenography, when available, emphasized pastoral scenes associated with Arcadia.⁹⁸ Though no known set designs for *Li zite 'ngalera* exist, we can assume, based on Vietri's famous natural beauty, that its proximity to Naples and the tendency to inflect comedies with pastoral signifiers, Saddamene and Vinci maintained that aesthetic here.

As Act 1.1 opens, Ciccariello, the barber Col'Agnolo's assistant, sings to himself while sweeping the shop. The stage directions describes the scene: "In front of his store Master Col'Agnolo works on his razor; Ciccariello sweeps and sings; Ciomma embroiders at the door; from a distance, Carlo passes."⁹⁹ The role of the young boy Ciccariello was likely sung *en travesti*.¹⁰⁰ The text and a vocal score appear below:

⁹⁷ For more on this facet of the comic opera with regards to the representation of the Neapolitan dialect, see Naddeo, "Arcadia," 48.

⁹⁸ See Naddeo, "Arcadia," 51–52. Naddeo demonstrates the pervasiveness of the Arcadian trope in the Neapolitan comic opera, noting the appeal for early writers of the comic opera for scenes in and around gardens. By placing plebeian characters within a pastoral context, what she terms an "Urban Arcadia," contemporary poets intended to represent the plebeians as "atavistic," that is, linguistically—and by extension naturally—younger than members of the meritocratic and aristocratic elite. While I do not dispute the basic premise of her argument, my own take emphasizes the power of the phenomenal canzona as a means of disarming the trope of the dangerous pleb.

⁹⁹ "Masto Col'Agnolo affelanno rasola nnanze a la poteca soja, Ciccariello, che scopa e canta, Ciomma nnanze a la porta che fa pezzille, Carlo, da lontano, che passeja." My thanks go to Roberto Scoccimarro for assisting me in translating the Neapolitan.

¹⁰⁰ Strikingly, the only recording available to date, featuring the Italian period ensemble La cappella dei Turchini, recasts him as a tenor, which vocally obscures his age. Leonardo Vinci, *Li zite 'ngalera*, Cappella de Turchini, dir. Antonio Florio (Opus 111 OPS 30-212/213, 1999).

Vorria reventare sorecillo
 Pe mettere paura la sia Annella,
 Le vorria dà no muorzo a lo pedillo,
 E straccià la podea de la donnella.
 E pò, peccché sò tanto peccerillo,
 Mme vorria abbuscà na peccerella,
 Ca vedo nzorà chisto, e nzorà chillo,
 E pe mmè no nce stà na moglierella.
 E bà,
 E sse breccie, che puorte mpietto,
 Tu le puorte pe mmè sciaccà.¹⁰¹

I would like to become a little mouse
 To shock aunt Annella,
 I would like to bite her tiny foot,
 And want to rip off part of her skirt.
 And then, because I am very young,
 I would like to find a wife,
 Seeing that everyone is coupling,
 And [yet] for me there is no wife.
 Oh yes!
 And the jewels you wear,
 You do so for me to be hurt.¹⁰²

The canzona is set in 12/8 in A minor, with iambic rhythms governing the principal motive. The accompanying rubric includes no information regarding on-stage instruments. The colascione or guitar, however, would have been the most common instrument to accompany plebeian folksongs.¹⁰³ In this case, the opening ritornello only mimics the sound of the colascione

¹⁰¹ Bernardo Saddumene, *Li zite 'ngalera: commeddeia de lo signore Bernardo Saddumene da recetarese a lo Triato de la Pace* (Naples: A spese de li 'mpressarie, 1724). Libretto located in I-Nsn. A modern facsimile of both the score and libretto appear in vol. 25 of Howard Mayer Brown, ed. *Italian Opera, 1640–1770* (New York: Garland Press, 1979). Critical edition of the libretto: “Li zite 'ngalera,” Opera Buffa Project, 1707–1750, accessed on June 15, 2015, <http://www.operabuffaturchini.it/operabuffa/libretti/ZiteNgalera1722-1.jsp>.

¹⁰² I would like to thank Roberto Scoccimaro for his assistance in translating this Neapolitan canzona.

¹⁰³ For more on the colascione, see Rudolph Lück, “Zur Geschichte der Basslauten-Instrumente Colascione und Calichon,” *Deutsches Jahrbuch der Musikwissenschaft* 5 (1960): 67–75. This is, of course, a trope that will continue well into the eighteenth century, with “Voi che sapete” and “Deh vieni non tardar,” from Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), providing some of the most

through a string ensemble. We may conclude, then, that the ritornelli for “Vorria reventare sorecillo” should be heard as noumenal and Ciccariello’s singing as phenomenal.

Ex. 2.1: Vinci, “Vorria reventare sorecillo,” *Li zite‘gnalera* 1.1, mm. 1–30¹⁰⁴

Vor - ri - a re-ven-ta-re so-re - cil-lo,___

5 Pe met-te-re pa -ur'a la sia_An-nel-la, la sia_An- nel-la,

9 Le vor-ria dà no muor-zo a lo pe-dil-lo. E strac- cià la po - dea de la gon-nel-la.---

13 E pò, pec-chè sò tan - to pec-ce - ril - lo,___
Ca ve - do nzo-rà chi sto, e nzo-rà chil-lo,---

notable examples. In both arias, Susanna accompanies, first Cherubino and then herself, on a guitar, conveyed by plucked strings in the orchestra.

¹⁰⁴ Vocal score based on I-Nc, Rari 1.6/d.1, 1r–3r.

17

Mme vor-ri - a ab - bu - scà na pec - ce - rel - la, na pec - ce - rel la; —
E pe mmè no nce stà na mo - glie - rel - la, na mo - glie - rel la. —

21

E bà, e bà, E ste brec - cie, che puor - te 'm

24

piet - to, Tu le puor - te pe mmè sciac - cà. E bà, e bà. E pe mmè no nce

27

[Recit.]

Ciom.

stà na mo - glie - rel - la, na mo - glie - rel - la. — Ah, ah, ah...

The canzona moreover draws on a prominent musico-literary signifier associated with Arcadia: the lover ennobled by love. The song's playful, yet melancholic sensibility affords Ciccariello a modicum of emotional nuance. Whereas the first half of the canzona portrays his playfulness, sadness dominates the second half. Ciccariello muses more broadly: "And then, because I am a very young, / I would like to find a wife." The rest of the canzona follows a similar path, with Ciccariello—or the character he depicts—expressing his torment at her intention "for me to be hurt." With this in mind, he concedes, "And [yet] for me there is no wife."

The Arcadian topic was augmented by stylistic idioms common to characters of Ciccariello's station, such as syllabic singing, an emphasis on minor scales, and limited tessituras, musical traits that aided the construction of otherness for these pleb characters. The use of the minor in this canzona has already been noted. In general, the tessitura here is limited, spanning only a sixth. Ciccariello's phrases tend to be brief, with much of the initial text declamation occurring through repeated notes, which descend either a fourth or ascend a third. For example, Ciccariello sings the first phrase of the strophe syllabically via a repeated E, which descends a measure later to B. Following a short unison ritornello in m. 4, he intones "pe mettere paur'a" on B. In most instances, his melodies occur through step-wise motions. When disjunct motion happens, it is minimal (such as the movement of a major third from E to C in m. 22). One of the more interesting stylistic features of this canzona occurs in mm. 21 and 22. Answering the previous phrase, Ciccariello sings "Pe mettere paur'a la sia Annella" over a repeated B, which later ascends stepwise to D. The listener expects a return to A, but Ciccariello continues to G#, then ascends chromatically to B \flat (flat $\hat{2}$) in preparation for the cadence on A in the subsequent measure.

The momentum builds in the second section, beginning in m. 22. As if invoking the B section of a da capo aria (all within the confines of a through-composed canzona), Vinci depicts Ciccariello's momentary joy at the prospect of seeing "the jewels you wear." This occurs in some striking ways. First, Ciccariello raises the flat $\hat{2}$ to B. Second, the monophonic ritornelli shift to a short ostinato in m. 22, which serves to underscore Ciccariello's anxiety about being single. He sighs several times, "E bà ... e bà," beginning in m. 22. This time, the iambic gestures lengthen to an eighth-note dotted-quarter note. The effect serves to convey the energy and anxiousness of youth, even as it is distilled into Ciccariello's lament. His desire is such that he experiences difficulty sustaining the kind of longer phrases heard earlier. By m. 26, the bass ostinato suddenly stops, literally abandoning Ciccariello to his lament.

Evoking Arcadian musical signifiers, "Vorria reventare" marked this scene as noteworthy, repositioning this Pulcinella-like character within a dramatic frame less common to his character type. His desire *for* love and *to* love deepens our sense of empathy for Ciccariello and his plight, and thereby assists in softening the charged image normally ascribed to his class.

Federico and Pergolesi: *Lo frate 'nnamorato* (1732)

Whereas Vinci's Ciccariello longs for a wife, Vannella and Cardella, who appear in Gennaro Federico and Giovanni Pergolesi's *Lo frate 'nnamorato* (*The Enamored Brother*, 1732) employ two additional topoi associated with plebeian characters: a lightheartedness at love and bawdy humor.¹⁰⁵ *Lo frate 'nnamorato* premiered at Naples's Teatro dei Fiorentini on September 27, 1732.

¹⁰⁵ On *Lo frate 'nnamorato*, see Francesco Degrada, "Lo frate 'nnamorato e l'estetica della commedia musicale napoletana," in *Napoli e il teatro musicale in Europa tra Sette e Ottocento: Studi in onore di*

Pergolesi's first comedy, it garnered much praise and yielded two slightly altered versions for Naples: 1734 and (posthumously) 1748.¹⁰⁶ Despite the opera's appeal and the subsequent pan-European interest in Pergolesi's *oeuvre*, particularly in Paris,¹⁰⁷ this *commedia musicale* (as Federico termed it) drew less interest than Pergolesi's Tuscan operas. Gordana Lazarevich has surmised, I believe correctly, that the opera's effectively bi-lingual libretto (Tuscan and Neapolitan) was the principal cause; that is, the unintelligibility of the Neapolitan dialect to non-Neapolitans complicated the work's lasting appeal.¹⁰⁸

Dialect as a signifier of social class was presumed in *Lo frate*. As contemporary librettists related, *personae* verisimilitude and dialect incomprehension by actors raised increasing concern by the 1730s.¹⁰⁹ Even by the 1720s, Neapolitan audiences began to clamor for a new type of

Friedrich Lippmann, ed. Bianca Maria Antolini and Wolfgang Witzmann (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1993), 21–35; and Barbara MacKenzie, "Neapolitan Comic Opera in Naples and in Rome: Pergolesi's *Lo frate 'nnamorato* and Latilla's *La fina cameriera*," *Studi Pergolesiani* 3 (1999): 183–99.

¹⁰⁶ For more, see Gordana Lazarevich, "*Lo frate 'nnamorato*," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, accessed 5 October 2011, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>. See also Hertz, *Galant*, 105–107.

¹⁰⁷ On the reception of Pergolesi's comedies in Paris, especially the *La Querelle des Bouffons*, see William Weber, "*La musique ancienne* in the Waning of the *Ancien Régime*," *Journal of Modern History* 56 (1984): 58–88; Robert Isherwood, "The Conciliatory Partisan of Musical Liberty: Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, 1717–1783," in *French Musical Thought, 1600–1800*, ed. Georgia Cowart (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1989), 95–119; Andrea Fabiano, "L'affirmation de l'opéra italien à Paris et le rôle de Carlo Goldoni (1752–1815)" (Ph.D. diss., University of the Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III, 1995), 13–55; Robert Isherwood, "Nationalism and the *Querelle des Bouffons*," in *D'un opéra l'autre: hommage à Jean Mongrédien*, ed. Jean Gribenski (Paris, 1996), 323–30. Robert Isherwood, "Nationalism and the *Querelle des Bouffons*," in *D'un opéra l'autre: hommage à Jean Mongrédien*, ed. Jean Gribenski, Marie-Claire Mussat, and Herbert Schneider (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 1996), 323–30.

¹⁰⁸ Lazarevich, "*Lo frate 'nnamorato*."

¹⁰⁹ Mastro Giorgio famously notes with regard to writing a libretto in Tuscan and Neapolitan: "I was asked only to compose an intrigue, whose plot should be so pleasing that even the Tuscan actors could be given reason to laugh and be able to interact with those who speak in Neapolitan. Offering several reasons, I tried to refuse this proposal, which I viewed as improper and

commedia per musica, one that eschewed over-naturalized settings of plebeians in dialect. Instead, they turned to hybrid comedies consisting of Tuscan and Neapolitan dialects, a paradigm shift Paologiovanni Maione has demonstrated occurred out of theatrical practicality—namely, innovation and comedy’s increasing popularity among audiences and performers, both from within and without Naples.¹¹⁰ Linguistic blending allowed management an easier task of hiring the most talented performers, regardless of regional or national provenance.

Federico, like his colleagues in Neapolitan theater, came from the elite of the popolo, that is, the professional class. A lawyer by training, he flourished in comic theater from about 1726 to 1743, the year he died. Well regarded for his collaborations with Pergolesi, especially *La serva padrona* (1733), Federico has been appropriately accorded a place as one of the important innovators of comic opera. For Graham Hardie, we should view Federico not as the sole innovator of this new hybrid comedy, but as the poet who ironed out the aesthetic issues intrinsic to operas blended with seria and buffa characters.¹¹¹ In other words, he endeavored to represent his lower characters less as social caricatures, imbuing them instead with greater emotional depth and humanity. Federico’s strategy for linking seria and buffa characters, as Hardie posited,

unprecedented even by the one who had submitted it, and I was unwillingly obliged to compose this play, as the producer said ... since there has not been anything of worth so far among similar approaches that incorporate this mixture of languages, namely Tuscan and Neapolitan.” Mastro Giorgio, *La Tresca*. Also worthy of note is the anonymous librettist to the 1724 play *Lo schiavo d’amore*, wherein he observes of the use of the two dialects: one must observe the “two most necessary requirements according to reason; that is, on the one hand, the variety of expressions in the colloquial style, so much the more significant as he has the humblest characters speak their own dialect, and the more bourgeois use more refined speech. Anonymous, *Lo schiavo p’amore*. Trans. in Paologiovanni Maione, “The ‘Catechism’ of the *commedeja pe’ mmuseca* in Early Eighteenth-Century Naples,” in *Genre in Eighteenth-Century Music*, ed. Anthony R. DeDonna (Ann Arbor: Steglein Publishing, 2008), 19.

¹¹⁰ For more, see Maione, “Catechism,” 3–35.

¹¹¹ Graham Hardie, “Gennaro Antonio Federico’s *Amor Vuol Sofferenza* and the Neapolitan Comic Opera,” *Studies in Music* 10 (1976): 62–66.

occurred through theatrical intrigue, with plebeian characters acting as intermediaries. However, similar strategies were used in the comedies predating Federico's—Ciccariello in Vinci's *Li Zite 'ngalera*, for example. The social station of these and other characters encouraged this kind of interrelationship. One wonders, then, if it is more productive to speak of Federico as a cultivator of pre-existing generic attributes rather than as an innovator. As Pietro Napoli-Signorelli described Federico's output, "Everything [in Federico's comedies] is true, graceful, natural, and never over the top (*pulcinellesca*)."¹¹²

The libretto of *Lo frate* provides some of the opening context. "As the curtain rises," the rubric relates that, "Vannella is sweeping at her front door, Cardella gathers flowers from the vases of her balcony."¹¹³ Federico sets the comedy in the Arcadian-like locale of Capodimonte. Situated just three miles up the Via Toledo on a hill overlooking the city, it is one of the lovelier, more verdant parts of Naples. To this day, the Parco di Capodimonte retains much of the pastoral character it had during the eighteenth century.

Act 1.1 begins with a strophic *canzona a due*, performed by two plebeian maids, Vannella and Cardella. Vannella sings the first strophe, Cardella the second in jest. The text and vocal score appear below:

VANELLA

Passa ninno da ccà nnante,
E mme fa lu zinnariello.
Furfantone, maleziuso,
Tu cu mmico vuo' pazzià.

¹¹² "Sempre è vera, sempre graziosa, sempre naturale, e non mai pulcinellesca." Pietro Napoli-Signorelli, *Vicende della coltura nelle Due Sicilie* (Naples, 1786), 551 (translation mine).

¹¹³ "Vannella scopanno nnante a lo portono de la casa soja, e Cardella coglienno sciure da le teste ncoppa a lo barcone de la casa soja." I would like to thank Roberto Scoccimarro for his assistance in translating this passage.

CARDELLA

Io, pe ddarele martiello,
Nu mme voto a tene'mente.
Furfantone, malezioso,
Io te voglio fa canìa.¹¹⁴

VANELLA

My beloved passes by,
And gives me a smart-aleck remark.
Naughty, rascal,
You want to have fun with me.

CARDELLA

To keep him jealous,
I choose to ignore him.
Naughty, rascal,
I want you to act like a dog.¹¹⁵

The libretto includes no mention of on-stage instruments. Though we hear the opening ritornello nomenclurally, the phenomenality of Vannella's performance is nevertheless suggested by each character's reaction to the other's performance. As Vannella completes the first strophe, Cardella interrupts her by anticipating the second stanza. Vannella reacts, saying: "What? You know the song, too?"¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Gennaro Federico, *Lo frate nammorato, commeddeja pe mmuseca de Jennarantonio Federico napolitano da rappresentarese a lo Triato de li Shioarentine lo carnevale de chist'anno 1734* (Naples: a spese de Nicola de Bejase, 1734). Libretto found in I-Nc.

¹¹⁵ My thanks go to Roberto Scoccimarro for his assistance in translating the Neapolitan text.

¹¹⁶ "Che? Tu pure la saie sta canzona?" (translation mine).

Ex. 2.2: Pergolesi, "Passa ninno da ccà nnante," *Lo frate 'nnamorato* 1.1, mm. 1–16¹¹⁷

5 Vannella
Pas-sa nin-no da ccà nna-nte e mme

8
fa-lu zin-na-riel-lo. Fur-fan-to-ne, ma-le-ziu-so, Tu cu

¹¹⁷ Vocal score based on I-Nc, Rari 7.5.27–29 (A–C), 11r–13v.

10 Cardella

mmi- co_ vuol' paz-zi- à, tu cu mmi- co_ vuol' paz-zi-à. Io, pe dda - re - le mar - tiel - lo, Nu mme

13

vo - to a_ te - ne' - men - te. Fur - fan - to - ne, ma - le - ziu - so, Io te

15 Rec. [Card.]

vo - glio_ fa ca - nià, io te vo - glio_ fa ca - nià. Che te

Pergolesi set the *canzona a due* to a lilting 12/8 siciliano in G minor. Introducing their bawdy song is a five-measure ritornello. As if employing a lament, the violins present a lyrical, yet mournful melody in G minor. The continuo, employing a descending “romanesca” gesture (mm. 1–2), underpins this melancholic sentiment.¹¹⁸ The effect grants the initial phrase an additional measure of seriousness. Amplifying the rhetorical distance between our expectations and the

¹¹⁸ For more on the “Romanesca,” see Robert Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 25–44.

score is a sixteenth-note run, from G to D, in mm. 7 and 8. While much of the canzona adheres to the stylistic traits enumerated earlier (for example, narrow tessitura and syllabic text delivery), the stepwise ascent from G to D punctuated by an octave leap at the end of the phrase is noteworthy for the attention it begs. But for the words “furfantone” (rascal) and “malezioso” (naughty), one might interpret the gesture as a kind of musical sigh. It is this disparity in signifiers that fills the moment with comedy. Initially, the joke is on only Vannella, since she misunderstands its intended meaning and effect. As Cardella confirms in the subsequent recitative, “this song,” which once caused me to “[get] a spanking from my aunt” for singing it, “teaches you to make love.”¹¹⁹

Cardella, demonstrating her own familiarity with the song, takes over the second strophe. Her performance intentionally heightens the sexual tension. In her strophe, she sings: “To keep him jealous, / I ignore him.” Cardella repeats the line “rascal, naughty” over the same five-note span (G to D) as before. For her, the strophe ends differently. Whereas the first stanza presented a female character as the object of her lover’s desire, the second conveys her own desires. The song’s bawdiness peaks in the second strophe: “I want you to act like a dog.” Sentiments like these were rarely, if ever, appropriate for higher-born characters. For plebeian characters, however, such notions were considered inherent to their verisimilitude and the comic aesthetic. In this way, Vannella and Cardella reflect the more inclusive social space carved out for them, their phenomenal canzona providing the appropriate sonic backdrop. Once again, how they were imagined onstage seems a far cry from the dangers they ostensibly posed in the piazza.

¹¹⁹ “Io la diceva, e nce abbuscaie da zia Ca’sta canzona / ‘Mpara a fa l’ammore” (translation mine).

Federico and Leo: *Amor vuol Sofferenza* (1739)

In Gennaro Antonio Federico and Leonardo Leo's *Amor vuol Sofferenza* (1739), the opening canzona—another *canzona a due*, this time with responses by characters standing nearby—explores the suffering of love, a theme that resonated with the opera's title, "Love Causes Pain." Leo's opera opened at the Teatro Nuovo "in the autumn of this year, 1739," and quickly became one of his most popular comedies.¹²⁰ Just three years later, Florence revived it without the Neapolitan dialect for pleb characters, Vastarella and Mosca. Interestingly, this production also transformed the couple from a bread seller and a coachman respectively to an herb seller and a factotum. But perhaps the most important revision came in 1744, when Leo revised it as *La finta frascatana*, placing more emphasis on the role of Eugenia, the pseudo-high-born character who assumes the role of servant to live closer to her lover, Alessandro. Also known as the "finta frascatana," Eugenia is described in the libretto as a "servant girl in the house of Alessandro's uncle, with the name of Ninetta, beloved of Alessandro."¹²¹ Vastarella and Mosca, once again, take on new identities, this time as Pimpinella and Mosca, an innkeeper from Lucca.¹²²

The pleb character Vastarella, described in the libretto as "from the village of Portici," is our main focus. As the opera opens, we discover that she loves Mosca, the Neapolitan coachman,

¹²⁰ "Nell'Autunno di questo anno 1739." Gennaro Antonio Federico, *Amor vuol sofferenza, commedia per musica da Gennarantonio Federico, napoletano. Da rappresentarsi nel teatro Nuovo di sopra Toledo nell'autunno di quest'anno 1739, dedicata all'ill. ed eccell. signore D. Leio Pacecco Carafa* (Naples: Nicola di Biase, 1739), [i]. Libretto in I-Nc. See Matteo Summa, *Amor vuol sofferenza: il teatro giocoso di Leonardo Leo* (Fasano: Schena Editore, 1994); and Hertz, *Galant*, 139–141.

¹²¹ "Finta fraschetana, e serve in casa del zio di Alessandro col nome di Ninetta, amante di Alessandro." Federico, *Amor*, [ii].

¹²² For more, see Leonardo Leo, *Amor vuol sofferenza*, ed. Giuseppe Pastore (Bari: Società Patria per la Puglia, 1962), xvii.

but later turns her gaze towards the silly Luccan character, Fazio Tonti. Not unlike plebeian characters of other third generation *commedie per musica*, Vastarella serves as an important intermediary between the amorous intrigues around her (she gets caught up in several herself) and the opera's two social castes: plebeians and everyone else. Such characters cleverly solved the challenge of balancing the various classes with appropriate musical styles.

The opera's location of Portici is likewise noteworthy. The libretto describes the scene as set in "a delightful spot" (*luogo delizioso*) at the Portici Villa.¹²³ The use of the phrase "luogo delizioso" is, as noted earlier, a common literary marker of the pastoral. Portici lies eight miles southeast of Naples. A bucolic seaside town, it rests at the foot of Mount Vesuvius. Whereas modern day Portici interlocks with multiple Neapolitan suburbs, eighteenth-century Portici more closely resembled an intimate fishing village. Beyond its semi-pastoral, coastal backdrop, Portici likely resonated with the opera's spectators for another reason. Carlo began construction of his summer residence there in 1738, known today as the Royal Palace of Portici (constructed 1738–1742).

The rubric for Act 1.1 sets the scene and character positions: "Vastarella [stands] in front of her bread stand selling bread, while "Ridolfo [appears] on a balcony in front of the door to his garden; Camilla [is] on the step of her house."¹²⁴ The inclusion of a garden (in this case, the presence of a door leading to a garden) is important, as it commonly suggested the semi-rustic setting within a thoroughly urban context, what Naddeo has termed the "urban Arcadia," a paradoxical state in which pleb characters (and indeed other urbanites) assumed common

¹²³ "La scena rappresenta un luogo delizioso della Villa di Portici." Federico, *Amor*, [iii].

¹²⁴ "Vastarella avanti alla sua bottega da vendere pane, [...] Ridolfo su un poggiolo avanti alla porta del suo giardino, Camilla sulla loggia di sua casa."

Arcadian signifiers.¹²⁵ Garden scenes were quite common in the early *commedie per musica*, but less so by the 1740s.

The phenomenality of Vastarella's performance of "Negrecato è cchillo" is not initially explicit. Neither libretto nor score designate the use of on-stage instruments like the colascione. In fact, the performance's phenomenal status does not become clear until Ridolfo and Camilla respond *a due* at the end of the canzona. Leo likely meant for us to hear the vocal line as phenomenal and the orchestral line as noumenal. Moreover, the canzona's dense harmonies and ornate accompaniment eschew the kind of simple, often monophonic accompaniments present in earlier siciliani. Strikingly, Vastarella elevates this canzona to a plane of musical signification somewhat distant from the plebeian conceits we have come to expect. In doing so, she sounds musically closer to Eugenia, Ridolfo, and Camilla, all of whom are described as members of the popolo's elite. The full text and vocal score appear below:

VASTARELLA

Negrecato è cchillo core,
 Che se fa schiavo d'ammore;
 Quanta sciorte de trommiente,
 Quanta stiente, e quanta pene
 Lo scurisso a da passà.¹²⁶

EUGENIA

(Il mio cor ch'è fra catene,
 Ben l'intende, e ben lo sa.)

VASTARELLA

(Sarria poco chello ffuoco,
 Che te leva l'arrecietto:
 Lo sperì pe n'arma ngrata

¹²⁵ Naddeo, "Urban Arcadia," 51–52.

¹²⁶ The 1739 libretto contains this minor variant: "Lo scurisso ha da provà."

Che non ha de te pietà,
 È n'arraggia, è no despietto,
 Che po farete crepà.)

CAMILLA AND RIDOLFO

(Ahi! Per me la sorte irata
 Tanto vuole, e tanto fa.)¹²⁷

VASTARELLA

Every heart, which is enslaved to love
 Fills with grief;
 How many have been troubled,
 What adversity and pain
 The poor soul has to endure.

EUGENIA

My heart, which is in chains,
 Understands and knows [love] well.

VASTARELLA

(That fire, which takes away
 Peace, is the least
 To yearn for an ungrateful soul:
 Who has no pity for you,
 Feels such anger, such a grudge,
 That can let you die).

CAMILLA AND RIDOLFO

Oh, this furious state
 Does so much to me.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ “Amor vuol sofferenza,” Opera Buffa Project, 1707–1750, accessed June 20, 2015,
<http://www.operabuffaturchini.it/operabuffa/libretti/AmorVuolSofferenza-1.jsp>.

¹²⁸ I would like to thank Roberto Scoccimarro for his help in translating this Neapolitan canzona.

Ex. 2.3: Leo, “Negrecato è cchillo core,” *Amor vuol Sofferenza* 1.1, mm. 1–42¹²⁹

Allegretto

The musical score is in 3/8 time and consists of four systems. The first system shows the piano introduction with a treble clef staff and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked *Allegretto*. The second system begins with a vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff). The vocal line starts with the lyrics "Vastarella" and "Ne - gre - ca - to è". The piano accompaniment features a prominent bass line with a *p* dynamic. The third system continues the vocal line with lyrics "cchil - lo co - re, Che se fa schia - vo d'a - mmo - re;". The piano accompaniment includes a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth system continues the vocal line with lyrics "Quan - ta scior - te de trom - mien - te, Quan - ta stien - te e quan - ta pe - ne". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern.

Allegretto

Vastarella
Ne - gre - ca - to è

cchil - lo co - re, Che se fa schia - vo d'a - mmo - re;

Quan - ta scior - te de trom - mien - te, Quan - ta stien - te e quan - ta pe - ne

¹²⁹ Vocal score based on I-Nc, Rari 7.3.1, 11r–12r. Ms. scores for *Amor vuol sofferenza* can be found in I-Nc (Act I only), I-Mc, A-Wgn (Act I only), GB-Lbm, and F-Pn. The four extant copies present an interesting issue: a time signature of 3/8 in a grouping of 6. The copyist followed this instruction but organized each measure into six beats. This may relate to the copyist’s interpretation of the phrases. Regardless, 3/8 appears to have been the desired time signature. One finds a similar interpretation in Sarro’s “Confusa, pavento” in *La Partenope* (1722). For more, see Pastori’s commentary in Pastore, *Amor*, 425, Act 1, note 1. I have transcribed the score from the above manuscript.

16

lo scu - ris - so a da pas - sà, lo scu - ris - so a da pas - sà, lo scu - ris - so a da pas - sà.

Though Vastarella’s canzona bears many hallmarks of the siciliano, Leo also included many musical refinements that served to blur both musical and social signifiers. In this regard, Francesco Degrada correctly observed that, while this canzona appears to “spring from the deep soul of Naples,” it rather marked Leo as working within a purely “cultured” tradition, which included other comedies like *Lo frate ’nnamorato* and *Amor vuol sofferenza*. That is, it contained “a highly sophisticated harmonic, timbric and formal language [that] evokes elements of the city’s popular tradition, mediated by semi-cultured street musicians.”¹³⁰ On one level, we can understand this phenomenon as part of a long-standing and well-documented interest in Neapolitan folk culture by the cultured elite, both from within and without Naples.¹³¹ Yet, on another level, the “culturalization” of these characters suggests some mitigation of the plebs’ negative symbolization, while simultaneously carving out a definable space for them to inhabit. In other words, the more plebeian characters assumed the roles of musicians and lovers, the less dangerous they appeared.

Consider first the opening ritornello. “Negrecato è cchillo,” which Leo sets in G minor, lacks the simplicity and “street singer” attributes associated with the canzona style (for example,

¹³⁰ Francesco Degrada, “*Amor vuol sofferenza*” in Leonardo Leo, *Amor vuol Sofferenza*, Nuova Orchestra Scarlatti di Napoli, under the direction of Daniele Moles (Nuova Era 7222, 1994).

¹³¹ See, in particular, Melissa Calaresu, “From the Street to Stereotype: Urban Space, Travel and the Picturesque in Late Eighteenth-Century Naples,” *Italian Studies* 62:2 (2007): 189–203.

Vinci's "Vorria reventare"). The triple meter, pastoral backdrop, and Neapolitan dialect all help to signify pastoral clichés. However, within these contours lies a vocal line seemingly at odds with the conventional canzona form, as sung by Neapolitan plebs. With Vastarella's entrance in m. 8, it is immediately clear that her approach to melodic development differs from previous examples. In general, Leo provides her a wider tessitura and more ornamentation than is common to such characters. For example, her opening phrase begins with a galant three-note slide, from B \flat to D, leaps a fourth to G, and then down an octave. Her phrases are also infused with *sdrucchioli* (triplets), dotted-sixteenth-thirty-second notes, three-note slides, and grace notes—stylistic clichés more common to seria characters.

Though "Negrecato è cchillo core" draws on a now familiar set of musical and theatrical signifiers, Leo concurrently raises her musical tone, thereby bringing her closer in style to the middle-class and upper-middle-class characters. In doing so, he cleverly depicts Vastarella's song as having a profound emotional effect on the higher-born characters around her, with each one responding in kind. The lesson, in short, seems to be that love (both its joys and sufferings) and musicality are the touchstones of one's humanity, even a pleb's.¹³² In other words, she is *almost* one of them.

Federico and Leo: *L'Alidoro* (1740)

During the 1740 season, Federico and Leo collaborated again on a new *commedia per musica*, this time a production called *L'Alidoro*. Whereas a good deal of information survives on

¹³² For more on this aspect of Arcadian aesthetics, see Gerbino, *Arcadian*, 5.

Amor vuol Sofferenza, we know little in the way of contextual information about *L'Alidoro*. Only two copies of the libretto survive, one in the British Library, the other in the Naples Conservatory Library.¹³³ Musicologists thought the score lost, but it turned up several years ago in the Abbey of Montecassino and now resides in the Biblioteca Statale del Monumento Nazionale di Montecassino.¹³⁴

L'Alidoro opens not with singing plebeians, but with a plaintive lament by the comedy's heroine and pseudo-aristocrat, Faustina. In her opening canzona, "Le mie voci accoglieti," sung in the Tuscan dialect befitting her higher station, Faustina is sad about her impending marriage to Don Marcello, whom she dislikes. She prefers Luigi, her companion on the hill. We are meant to hear this performance as phenomenal, for Luigi responds to her song in the subsequent recitative:

Ma i colli, e i prati sordi saranno,
 Né ascolteranno;
 Voi spargerete all'aure, a i venti
 Voci e lamenti;
 E resterete bella e delusa,
 Trista, e confuse: Credete a me.

But the hills and fields will be indifferent,
 nor will they hear;
 You scatter to the air, to the winds
 Voices and laments;
 And will remain misguided, disappointed,
 Unhappy, and confused: Trust me.¹³⁵

¹³³ Gennaro Federico, *L'Alidoro commedia per musica di Gennarantonio Federico napoletano da rappresentarsi nel Teatro de' Fiorentini* (Naples: Nicola de Biase, 1740). See Graham Hardie, "Leonardo Leo (1694–1744) and His Comic Operas *Amor Vuol Sofferenza* and *Alidoro* (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1973), 200.

¹³⁴ The ms. score is found at: I-MC, 3-E-2.

¹³⁵ "L'Alidoro," Opera Buffa Project, 1707–1750, accessed on June 26, 2015, <http://www.operabuffaturchini.it/operabuffa/libretti/Alidoro40-1.jsp> (translation mine).

In the subsequent scene, Federico and Leo draw a contrast between the pastoral Faustina and the Arcadian “rustic” character type, embodied by the miller Meo and his lover Zeza, a tavern girl.¹³⁶ They approach Faustina and Luigi from offstage; Meo plays his colascione, a folk instrument then at its height in popularity in southern Italy.¹³⁷ The score relates: “Meo, who comes playing the colascione with his Zeza, and the above.”¹³⁸ As Meo begins to strum the colascione, we hear a siciliano. The text and score (colascione and voice) appear below:

Dapò ch’ammore mpietto mm’ha feruto
 E mm’ha sto core conzomato, e arzo,
 Mmè tenemente, e rride lo cornuto;
 E isse sta co na tubba, e cco no sfarzo.¹³⁹

Io so ffatto cchiù scuro de paputo,
 E ssempe stongo de salute scarzo;
 E ppe n’avere a cchi cercare ajuto,
 Strillo com’a na gatta quann’è Marzo.
 E cquann’è Marzo, e mmare:¹⁴⁰
 E bieneme tu, Nenna, a conzolare.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Zeza and Meo were originally played by the buffa actors Margherita Pozzi and Girolamo Piani, who also performed in Leo’s *Amor suol sofferenza*.

¹³⁷ Naddeo asserts that the use of this and other Neapolitan folk instruments aligns the plebeians with representations of their atavism. She refers to the instruments as “ancient,” and yet its place in Neapolitan music circles goes back only to the sixteenth century. It is more likely that the instrument was part of an elite fad for the instrument at the time, evidenced by numerous collections of keyboard pieces in the style of a colascione. See Naddeo, “Urban Arcadia,” 51.

¹³⁸ “Meo, che vien sonando il colascione, con esso Zeza e i suddetti” (translation mine).

¹³⁹ In his edition, Scoccimarro notes that the libretto and manuscript score differ slightly at this line. The libretto contains: “E isse sta co na tubba, e cco no sfarzo” (“And he is standing there in a top hat, and with much pomp). The manuscript score changes it slightly to: “E isse sta co na tubba Nenna ca co no sforzo” (“And he is standing there in a top hat, girl, with much pomp”).

¹⁴⁰ This line, according to Scoccimarro, is meant to produce a nonsensical musical rhyme, which one finds occasionally in these pleb canzone. The focus here is on the play of the words “Marzo” and “mmare,” and is intended to further paint the sensuality of the strophe. Roberto Scoccimarro, e-mail message to author, July 20, 2015.

¹⁴¹ “L’Alidoro,” Opera Buffa Project, 1707–1750, accessed on June 26, 2015, <http://www.operabuffaturchini.it/operabuffa/libretti/Alidoro40-1.jsp>.

Since love bruised me in the breast
 And is consuming and firing my heart,
 The cuckold laughs thinking of me;
 And he is standing there in a top hat,
 and with much pomp.

I am more miserable than a scarecrow,
 And always I'm sickly;
 And since I have no one to help me,
 I cry like a cat in March.
 When March comes, and the sea...:
 Come, girl, to console me.¹⁴²

Leo marks the siciliano “Andante mosso.” The opening two measures consist of a lilting ostinato. Meo enters in m. 6. His simple phrases, limited tessitura, and iambic rhythms mark this song as one of Degrada’s “cultured street songs,” discussed earlier. The length of Meo’s phrases is generally irregular (for instance, mm. 6–7 and mm. 9–11), with each of the two respective phrases providing a cadence by way of a short-long rhythm. It highlights the challenge of integrating folk music idioms into an “art music” context.

In this context, Leo places greater emphasis on the canzona’s folkloric elements. Consider, for example, his initial phrase on the upbeat to m. 6. He opens with a repeated D (the fifth), which escapes downward to A. Meo then traverses a passing tone B \flat to C in order to rest on A. His cadence is marked by the now familiar eighth note tied to a dotted quarter note, which also characterized “Vorria reventare.” As Meo concludes the phrase, we hear him strum D in octaves to segue to the ritornello in m. 7.2. The ritornello itself retains a simple character: other than a brief moment of fifths with a stretch to the upper neighbor (B \flat) in m. 8.2, he performs the melody in octaves.

¹⁴² I am grateful to Roberto Scoccimarro for his aid in translating this passage.

Ex. 2.4: Leo, “Da pò ch’ammore mpietto,” *L’Alidoro* 1.3, mm. 1–13¹⁴³

Scena III

Meo che vien sonando il calascione, con esso Zeza e i suddetti
[Faustina, Luigi ed Elisa]

Andante mosso

Zeza

Meo

Meo co lo calascione

Andante mosso

Zeza

Meo

3

Zeza

Meo

5

Da po' ch'am - mo - re mpiet - to m'ha fe -

¹⁴³ Leonardo Leo, *L’Alidoro*, ed. Roberto Scoccimarro (self-published), 27–29. I am grateful to Roberto Scoccimarro for a copy of his performance edition of Leo’s *L’Alidoro*, excerpts of which appears with his permission.

7

Zeza

Meo

ru - to, —

9

Zeza

Meo

e m'hastoco - recon-zu-ma-toe ar zo —

5 6

12

Zeza

Meo

mme te - ne mmen - te — e rri - de lo cor - nu - to; —

14

Zeza

Meo

e sse sta co na tub - ba nen__ na (e) co no sfar - zo

(1)

(1) Ms: "E sse sta co na tubba nenna CA co no sfarzo";
 Libretto: "E sse sta co na tubba e co no sfarzo".

17

Zeza

Meo

e sse sta co na tub - ba__

19

Zeza

Meo

e sse sta co na tub - ba nen__ na (e) co no sfar - zo

(1)

In the next section (mm. 14–21), the canzona’s momentum picks up. Focusing on the theme of being derided by the cuckold, Meo describes his fictitious competitor as “standing there in a top hat, and with much pomp.” The moment clearly conveys the character’s anxiety at this

prospect, for Meo performs a dotted-eighth-sixteenth gesture in m. 14 for the first time in the song. Until now, he has sung to a slow, lilting pattern of quarter and eighth notes. So as to make clear the excited sentiment of the moment, Meo ascends in m. 15 to E \flat —his highest note yet—on the word “Nenna” (girl). The phrase then descends to G by way of a flat $\hat{2}$ (A \flat) on the penultimate beat of m. 20. Zeza joins Meo’s song in m. 22. Rather than echo him, she offers a rejoinder. To his bidding (“come, girl, to console me”), referring to the canzona’s line about being cuckolded, Zeza responds: “To console you. / the girl who wants you to be her love is not dead.”¹⁴⁴ We are once again reminded of the song’s phenomenality.

It is rare for plebeian characters in the Neapolitan comic opera to perform more than one phenomenal canzona in Act 1. In a striking move, Meo and Zeza propose a second song. Whereas Meo’s first song marked a transitional scene, this performance is meant, in the words of Zeza, to “entertain them as well.”¹⁴⁵ The phenomenal performance occurs at the end of Act 1.3. Following a dialogue between Luigi, Meo, Faustina, and Zeza, wherein Meo implores the ladies to take Don Marcello with them to Naples so as to prevent him from flirting with Zeza, Zeza intervenes. In a moment of frustration, Zeza pleads with Meo to halt such talk: “To singing and enjoying ourselves.”¹⁴⁶ Zeza sings while Meo accompanies here:

ZEZA

La Campagna mo ch’è bella,
Venerenne, o Rennenella,
Si lo nido te vuoje fa.

¹⁴⁴ “A cconzolare, e sole: / Ca non è mmorta chi bene te vole” (translation mine).

¹⁴⁵ “Revertì a lloro puro” (translation mine).

¹⁴⁶ “A ccantà, e a rrevertirece...” (translation mine).

A DUE

Ttirititì tiritommola.

ZEZA

Mo ch'è bella Campagna,
A ttrovare la Compagna,
Palommiello, puoje volà.

A DUE

Ttirititì tiritommola.

ZEZA

E buje altre nnamorate,
Ch'abbrosciate co lo core:
Mo l'ammore è bello a fa.¹⁴⁷

ZEZA

The country is now lovely,
Come, oh little swallow,
If you want to make the nest.

A DUE

Ttirititì tiritommola.

ZEZA

Now the country is lovely,
You can go in search, little dove,
Of your beloved girl.

A DUE

Ttirititì tiritommola.

And you lovers,
Whose hearts burn:
Now is beautiful for making love.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ “L’Alidoro,” Opera Buffa Project, 1707–1750, accessed on June 26, 2015, <http://www.operabuffaturchini.it/operabuffa/libretti/Alidoro40-1.jsp>.

Ex. 2.5: Leo, “La Campagna mò ch’è bella,” *L’Alidoro* 1.3, mm. 1–13¹⁴⁹

La campagna mò ch’è bella, segue atto I, sc.3.

Allegro

Zeza

Meo

Don
Marcello

Allegro

4

Zeza

Meo

D. Marc.

La cam

¹⁴⁸ My thanks go to Robert Scoccimarro for his assistance in translating this Neapolitan text.

¹⁴⁹ Leonardo Leo, *L’Alidoro*, ed. Roberto Scoccimarro (self-published), 27–29. I am grateful to Scoccimarro for a copy of his performance edition of Leo’s *L’Alidoro*, excerpts from which appear with his permission.

6

Zeza

pa - gna mò ch'è bel - la, vie - ne ten_ ne, o ren_ ne - nel_ la_ _ _ _ _ vie - ne

Meo

D. Marc.



8

Zeza

ten_ ne, o re_ ne nel_ la, si lo ni_ do si lo ni_ do te_ vuò

Meo

D. Marc.

6
5

10

Zeza

fà. E tti - ti - ri - ti e tti - ti - ri - ti ti - ri tom - mo -

Meo

E tti - ti - ri ti e tti - ti - ri - ti e tti - ti - ri - ti ti - ri tom - mo -

D. Marc.



12

Zeza

la. A Mò ch'è bel - la la cam

Meo

la.

D. Marc.

A *p*

Meo and Zeza's canzona follows the basic contours of the musical topoi associated with plebeian characters (iambic rhythms, simple melodies, and narrow tessituras), but this time in the major mode. Similar to the Pergolesi example, the literary themes available to characters like Zeza traverse more boundaries than those afforded to seria characters. Zeza, accompanied by

Meo on the colascione, sings of spring and the desire to find his mate. In the second stanza, the sentiments become more explicit, reminding “you lovers” that “now is beautiful for making love.” Faustina, our *prima donna* in the comedy, never addresses love or sex in this fashion. It would not only have fallen beneath her station to do so socially, but would lack the appropriate verisimilitude for her character type.

Likewise striking is the dichotomy, intentional or unintentional, between on-stage spectator and performer—not unlike the dynamics present at Cuccagna. In this case, however, the emphasis is placed not on enjoying, or at least witnessing, humanity at its basest, but on taking pleasure in an impromptu concert. No doubt, Faustina shares the sentiments expressed in Zeza’s song, even though she herself cannot express them the way Zeza does. What Luigi, Faustina, and Elisa also witness in this phenomenal performance is a common trope within pastoral comedy—shepherds and shepherdesses devoting themselves to the pursuit of love and music. Even as Federico and Leo evoke this idea as a way to rhetorically disarm the stereotype of the dangerous pleb, they affirm its power. Indeed, the love shared by Meo and Zeza shines through this short, strophic canzona. It is only with Don Magnifico, an aristocratic character disdained by all present, that they shed this brightness.

Conclusion

The phenomenal canzona had the ability to signify much more than a mere invitation to the “world of the everyday,” to quote Weiss. Its presence could cause a disruption in the narrative fabric of a given opera. Such moments not only afford a richer understanding of the rhetorical dynamics of early opera, they provide important clues about possible socio-political

cues. It is the combination of dynamics—poetic level, dialect, persona, and context—that determines the musical or socio-political representation of a given moment, not merely the presence or absence of a phenomenal canzona. Indeed, multiple examples abound wherein persona, a higher poetic register, and dialect suggest a different context and ultimate signification.¹⁵⁰

The theoretical salience of “narrative disruption” as a signifier for possible socio-political cues also yields further implications for interpreting how cultural elites represented the figure of the pleb in comic opera. What is clear from this investigation is that many of the negative stereotypes of the Neapolitan pleb gleaned from contemporary social discourse as well as observations from the piazza did not manifest themselves in the same ways in the operas, particularly the phenomenal canzona. Rather, a different strategy was apparently adopted. Thinking in terms of its position in comic opera, the popularity of Arcadian aesthetics, and the well-documented fear of the plebs by the elite suggests that these canzone presented a kind of social reform by another means, even if only within the confines of an imagined state, a near utopia. Now, rather than potentially dangerous urban beggars, the city’s cultural elite encountered simple Arcadians, whose lives were too caught up in the intrigues of love, games, and music to pursue threats to urbanity—a new and improved pleb for a new, ever idyllic city.

¹⁵⁰ Hasse’s *La sorella amante* (1729) and Pergolesi’s *Il Flaminio* both open with this type of canzona.

Chapter Three

**“Ornamento più caro de’ nostri spettacoli”:
Metastasio’s *Achille in Sciro* (1737), King Carlo III,
and the Rhetoric of Inevitability at the Teatro San Carlo**

On the evening of November 7, 1737, a new opera by local favorite Domenico Sarro inaugurated Naples’s Teatro San Carlo. Constructed in just nine months, this theater in the “capital of the musical world” opened as the largest in Europe.¹ The crowning jewel of the new Bourbon monarchy and one of several important royal projects, the Teatro symbolized the king’s commitment to social and political reform, the most prominent of which included the political centralization of a newly independent state.² Some reforms would come, while others would fall away as too complex, too political, or too expensive. For the moment, however, the evening called for celebration.

That evening’s opera was a revised setting of Pietro Metastasio’s *Achille in Sciro*.³ Penned just the previous season to celebrate the nuptials of Maria Theresa and Francis Stephen in Vienna on February 12, 1736, the libretto related the story of the youthful Achilles on the Greek island of Scyros. Though not Metastasio’s most popular drama, *Achille in Sciro* was yet another contribution to what had become one of the most frequently

¹ “La capital du monde musicien.” Charles De Brosses, *Lettres d’Italie du président de Brosses*, ed. Frederic d’Agay (Paris: Mercure de France, 1986), 401 (translation mine).

² For more on these architectural projects and their relationship to Carlo’s socio-political reforms, see Robin Thomas, “Charles Bourbon’s Naples: Architecture and Urbanism” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2007).

³ When discussing Metastasio’s character Achille, I will use the English form, Achilles, which should help to distinguish Achilles the classical hero, *Achille* the opera, and Achille the character in Metastasio’s libretto. I follow Metastasio’s names for the other characters.

represented classical subjects in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe.⁴ Even so, one might question the atypical choice of subject to both inaugurate a new theater and celebrate a nascent monarchy. Dressing Achilles in women's clothes, his mother Thetis hid him on this distant Greek island to save him from the Trojan War. Her actions were not without cause, for the Delphic oracle foretold Achilles's death in battle. In most versions of the tale, the climax occurs when, through the machinations of Ulysses (who wants to carry Achilles to war), our young hero reveals himself. Performance (dance in classical sources, singing in operatic settings) became a tenuous form of expression for Achilles, while simultaneously instigating his eventual, if not inevitable, downfall. It was the call of the military trumpet that activated his innate masculinity, thereby revealing his true identity.⁵

This chapter examines Domenico Sarro's setting of *Achille in Sciro* as the central event at the inauguration of the Teatro San Carlo and the imagined state it constructed around the image of King Carlo III. Though Sarro's score shows near fidelity to Metastasio's original *scrittura*, the socio-political context and underlying motivations for its choice differed from those in Vienna. With local politics in mind, this chapter seeks to situate Sarro's opera and the inauguration within a broader political frame. Given Carlo's initial political challenges and the theater's massive construction effort, the inauguration sought to cement Carlo's image centrally within the kingdom's political and cultural imagination. As I will demonstrate, the narrative of Achilles on Scyros and the inaugural events cleverly propagated

⁴ Prominent examples from the visual arts include Nicholas Pouissin's *Achilles and the Daughters of Lycomedes* (c.1625–1630) (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts), Pompeo Girolamo Batoni's *Achilles at the Court of Lycomedes* (1745), and the same artist's *The Education of Achilles by Chiron* (1746) (both of which hang in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence).

⁵ For more on the rhetoric of "recognition" in eighteenth-century opera seria, see Richard Kramer, *Cherubino's Leap: In Search of the Enlightenment Moment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), especially Chapter 7, entitled "*Anagnorisis*: Gluck and the Theater of Recognition."

a rhetoric of inevitability around Carlo's ascension to the throne. The court perpetuated this notion, I believe, to iron out the transition from the Austrian vice-regency and to address a longstanding mistrust among the landed gentry, a naturally skeptical group from whom Carlo sought good will and loyalty.

Classical Views of Achilles

The figure of Achilles would have been well known to Naples's educated elite, who would have encountered it in their classical education and in the visual and performing arts. Two episodes from the Achilles myth most fascinated early modern artists and musicians: (1) the young Achilles, hiding on the island of Scyros with Deidamia; and (2) Achilles the man, the hero of the Trojan War. I will address some of the commonly received versions of Achilles, honing in on his transvestitism, since Metastasio himself draws on this aspect of Achilles lore. Of the two, the myth of the young Achilles on Scyros is less well known today than the more mature figure from *The Iliad*, which celebrates Achilles's heroism and ultimate defeat in the Trojan War. In fact, classical accounts suggest that the foreknowledge of his death, revealed to his mother Thetis by the Delphic Oracle, proved an important catalyst in Achilles being taken from the Centaur, his mentor.

Premodern retellings of the Achilles legend are numerous.⁶ And while most accounts agree on the basic points of the narrative, there are also variances. The nymph Thetis and King Peleus, who ruled Myrmidons, conceived Achilles. An alternate version, presented in

⁶ Though not all encompassing, the narratives that focus on Achilles's time on Scyros include Pseudo-Apollodorus's *Bibliotheca* 3.13, Hyginus's *Fables* 96, and Statius's *Achilleid*.

the *Argonautica*, relates that Zeus aggressively pursued Thetis, though she resisted him.⁷ The Roman poet Statius tells us that Thetis, in an attempt to immortalize Achilles, held him by the heel and immersed him in the River Styx, unwittingly sealing his fate.⁸

Of the extant sources on Achilles, Statius's *Achilleid* (1st Century CE) remains the most detailed on his youth, especially his relationship with Deidamia, Lycomedes's daughter, on Scyros. Statius focused on two episodes: Achilles's awkwardness as a dancer and his self-revelation by way of the trumpet call. Statius captured the first event in Book I. In it, Ulysses and his men observe Achilles and the women of the court dancing for those in attendance:

Already they begin to move, and the Ismenian pipe gives the
Signal to the dancers; four times they beat the cymbals of
Rhea, four times the maddening drums, four times they trace
Their manifold windings. Then together they raise and lower
Their wands, and complicate their steps, now in such fashion
As the Curetes and devout Samothracians use, now turning
To face each other in the Amazonian comb, now in the ring
Wherein the Delian sets the Laconian girls a-dancing, and
Whirls them shouting her praises into her own Amyclae.
Then indeed, then above all is Achilles manifest; then more
Than ever does he scorn the delicate steps, the womanly
Attire, and brooks the dance and mightily disturbs the scene.⁹

As instructed, Ulysses's men arrive with gifts, which are meant to trick Achilles into revealing himself, for Lycomedes:

Alas! How simple and untaught, who knew not the cunning
Of the gifts nor Grecian fraud nor Ulysses' many wiles!
Thereupon the others, prompted by nature and their ease-loving
Sex, try the shapely wands or the timbrels that answer

⁷ Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.755–69, trans. R. C. Seaton (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), 345.

⁸ See Statius, *Achilleid* 1.133–134, trans. J. H. Mozley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 519. For more, see Jonathan Burgess, *The Death and Afterlife of Achilles* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 9–13.

⁹ Statius, *Achilleid* 1.826–838, trans. Mozley, *Achilleid*, 571.

To the blow, and fasten jeweled bands around their temples;
 The weapons they behold, but think them as a gift to their
 Might sire. But the bold son of Aeceas no sooner saw before
 Him the gleaming shield encased with battle-scenes—by
 Chance too it shone red with the fierce stains of war—and
 Leaning against the spear, then he shouted loud and rolled his
 Eyes, and his hair rose up from his brow; forgotten were his
 Mother's words, forgotten his secret love, and Troy fills all
 Breasts Already was he stripping his body of the robes,
 When Agyrtes, so commanded, blew a great blast upon the
 Trumpet: the fits are scattered, and they flee and fall with
 Prayers before their sire and believe that battle is joined. But
 From his breast the raiment fell without his touching, already
 The shield and puny spear are lost within the grasp of his
 Hand—marvelous to believe! And he seemed to surpass by
 Head and shoulders the Ithacan and Aetolian chief: with a
 Sheen so awful does the sudden blaze of arms and martial fire
 Dazzle the palace-hall.¹⁰

The trumpet, which forms an important catalyst in Statius, also figured prominently in versions by Pseudo-Apollodorus and Hyginus. Pseudo-Apollodorus, for instance, describes the scene in the follow way:

Bred at this court, Achilles had an intrigue with Deidamia, daughter of Lycomedes, and a son Pyrrhus was born to him, who was afterwards called Neoptolemus. But the secret of Achilles was betrayed, and Ulysses, seeking him at the court of Lycomedes, discovered him by the blast of a trumpet.¹¹

Hyginus's version is similar: Ulysses's gifts are brought to Lycomedes's court; Achilles hears the trumpet and responds by throwing off his female clothing.¹²

¹⁰ Statius, *Achilleid* 1.845, 1.857, and 1.875–82, trans. Mozley, *Achilleid*, 573 and 575.

¹¹ Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.13.8–10, trans. J.O. Frazer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), 73–75.

¹² “When Thetis the Nereid knew that Achilles, the son she had borne to Peleus, would die if he went to attack Troy, she sent him to island of Scyros, entrusting him to King Lycomedes. He kept him among his virgin daughters in woman's attire under an assumed name. The girls called him Pyrrha, since he had tawny hair, and in Greek a redhead is called Pyrros. When the Achaeans discovered that he was hidden there, they sent spokesmen to King Lycomedes to beg that he be sent to help the Danaans. The King denied that he was there, but gave them permission to search the palace, when they couldn't discover which one he was. Ulysses

Each of those versions explored (or perhaps celebrated) gender transmutability. Given seventeenth-century Italian opera's fascination with identity and masking, it should not surprise us that librettists and composers alike eagerly adopted these dynamic myths, especially in Venice. The earliest operatic setting of the Achilles on Scyros legend, and a likely influence on Metastasio, was *La finta pazzo* (1641). With a libretto by Giulio Strozzi and score by Francesco Saccati, *La finta pazzo* opened at Venice's Teatro Novissimo in 1641. Acknowledging its popularity and influence, Ellen Rosand has referred to it as "the first and possibly the greatest operatic "hit" of the century."¹³ Strozzi's libretto shows Statius's influence, yet diverged enough (including a mad scene for Deidamia) that only the basic contours of the myth survived. In a famous scene, "Dolce cambio di Natura," Strozzi and Saccati thus framed Achilles's transvestitism as easily transmutable—that is, as easy as affixing a mask.¹⁴ Here Achilles's unmasking occurs by his own carelessness. And whereas Ippolito Bentivoglio and Giovanni Legrenzi also delighted in Achilles's seemingly effortless change of gender, their version—this time called *Achille in Sciro*—for Ferrara (1663; rev. 1664) strayed

put women's trinkets in the fore-court of the palace, and among them a shield and a spear. He bade the trumpeter blow the trumpet all of a sudden, and called for clash of arms and shouting. Achilles, thinking the enemy was at hand, stripped off his woman's garb and seized shield and spear. In this way he was recognized and promised to the Argives his aid and his soldiers, the Myrmidons." Hyginus, *Fabulae* 96, trans. Mary Grant (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1960), 85.

¹³ Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 90.

¹⁴ For more commentary on how it relates to the Achilles on Scyros myth, see Peter Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles: Gender and Genre in Statius' Achilleid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4–5. "Dolce cambio di Natura" is reproduced and translated in both Heslin, *Achilles*, 5, and Wendy Heller, "Reforming Achilles: Gender, Opera Seria and the Rhetoric of the Enlightened Hero," *Early Music* 26:4 (1998), 575.

farther from Staius, inviting in countless subplots and comic moments, both necessary theatrical clichés of mid-century Venetian opera.¹⁵

When Metastasio (then the Caesarian Poet to the Imperial Court in Vienna) turned to the subject of the transvestite Achilles in 1735, it came by way of a court commission to honor the forthcoming nuptials between Maria Theresa and Francis Stephen, then the Duke of Lorraine.¹⁶ By 1736, the Duchy of Lorraine had become one of the weakest political entities in Europe, with Stephen often living up to his reputation as not cut out for leadership.¹⁷ Marrying for love, his relationship with Maria Theresa proved to be one of his strengths.¹⁸ The Austrian court announced their engagement in December 1735; the wedding itself took place on February 12, 1736. Metastasio penned the libretto in a mere

¹⁵ For example, the Preface notes that “if this play does not proceed according to the strict rules of Aristotle, [at least] it follows the pleasant custom of the age, being a new kind of composition, which, unlike the ancient ones, has as its aim more to delight than to instruct.” Trans. in Rosand, *Opera*, 58. For more on the adaptation of this myth, see Heslin, *Achilles*, 8–12.

¹⁶ For critical editions of *Achille in Sciro*, see Pietro Metastasio, *Tutte le opere di Metastasio*, ed. Bruno Brunelli (Milan: A. Mondadori, 1952), 1:751–78. This and subsequent versions (Venice, 1737; Paris, 1755; Turin, 1757; and Paris, 1780) can be found at The University of Padua’s “Progetto Metastasio,” the goal of which is to archive all Metastasio’s dramas and poems in critical editions: http://www.progettometastasio.it/pietrometastasio/indice_a.jsp (accessed on May 15, 2015). On the issue of genre in the 1736 libretto, see Francesca Menchelli-Buttini, “*Achille in Sciro*: Drama and Ceremony,” in *Italian Opera in Central Europe*, ed. Melania Bucciarelli, Norbert Dubowy, and Reinhard Strohm (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2006), 1:253–274.

¹⁷ On Stephen, see Franz Hennings, *Und sitzt zur linken Hand: Franz Stephan von Lothringen* (Vienna: P. Neff, 1961); on the young Maria Theresa, see Robert Pick, *Empress Maria Theresa: The Earlier Years, 1717–1757* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966). On the Habsburg monarchy generally, see Charles Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹⁸ For more on the political dimensions of their relationship, see Heslin, *Achilles*, 32.

eighteen and a half days, a pace that departed from his typical pattern of three months, and which he described as grueling.¹⁹

The libretto is generally faithful to Statius, though Metastasio admits in the final paragraph of his lengthy *argomento* that:

One meets this circumstance among all the ancient and modern poets; but being that there has been some discord among them in the events, we have removed all but what is best arranged to the conduct of our fable, without adhering to one over the other.²⁰

In Heslin's reading of the *argomento*, the libretto represents "a slightly embarrassed acknowledgement that Metastasio had been preceded by a number of other poets in bringing this story to the operatic stage."²¹ Heslin is only partially correct. While it makes sense that Metastasio nods somewhat sheepishly to previous poets and their settings, the immediate literary context also provides clues. Metastasio offered less explanation than we would prefer with regard to his literary and historical sources, yet the *argomento* also fits within a broader literary tradition marked by a relative slipperiness with classical sources. More often than not, the subscription to a particular rhetorical strategy outweighed the need for a critical elucidation of literary sources.²²

¹⁹ Metastasio, *Opere*, 1:133. The incident also came up in a meeting between Metastasio and Charles Burney, who visited the poet in 1772. See Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, The Netherlands, and United Provinces* (London: T. Becket, 1775), 1:303.

²⁰ "Incontrasi questo fatto presso che in tutti gli antichi e moderni poeti; ma essendo essi tanto discordi fra loro nelle circostanze, noi senz'attenerci più all'uno che all'altro, abbiam tolto da ciascheduno ciò che meglio alla condotta della nostra favola è convenuto" (translation mine).

²¹ Heslin, *Achilles*, 30.

²² On the issue of adaptation and imitation in baroque opera, see John T. Winemiller, "Recontextualizing Handel's Borrowing," *Journal of Musicology* 15:4 (1997): 444–470. For a broad overview of adaptation practices in eighteenth-century fiction, see Mary Helen McMurrin, *The Spread of Novels: Translation and Prose Fiction in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

As Metastasio worked on *Achilles in Sciro*, he diverged sharply from previous models. He was, according to Heller, not only informed by Bentivoglio's seventeenth-century libretto, but additionally endeavored to reform the Achilles myth away from seventeenth-century models, which depicted Achilles as weak and effeminate, in favor of a more overt masculine identity.²³ Thus, in Metastasio's setting, Achilles's bodily gender often compromises his ability to remain "feminine" and discreet. The revelation of his true gender occurs at the climax of Act 2. King Lycomedes, Deidamia's father, asks Achilles, in the guise of Deidamia's lady-in-waiting, Pyrrha, to play the lyre. Though he hesitates, Achilles relents, but only at Deidamia's urging. Our young hero sings three stanzas of a phenomenal canzona with choral refrains. Suddenly, a trumpet sounds and a commotion is heard offstage, all planned, of course, to lure Achilles into Ulisse's trap. Already charmed by the swords and shields Ulisse has presented to Lycomedes, Achilles throws down his lyre, declaring it now repugnant. He then takes up the weapons mixed among the gifts.²⁴ For Heller, the binary Metastasio draws between music and femininity on the one hand, and weapons and masculinity on the other, correlates with shifting ideas of gender and sexuality in the eighteenth century. Old and new ideologies, exemplified by Bentivoglio's representation of gender as easily transmutable and Metastasio's revision, demonstrates the distance writers like Zeno, Metastasio, and their contemporaries traveled from seventeenth-century models.²⁵

²³ For more, see Heller, "Achilles," 562–581.

²⁴ "E questa cetra / dunque è l'arme d'Achille? Altre n'offre, e più degne, / a terra, a terra. / Vile stromento!" Metastasio, *Achille in Sciro* (Vienna, 1736). For a critical edition of 1736 version, see "Achilles in Sciro (1736)," Progetto Metastasio, <http://www.progettometastasio.it/pietrometastasio/libretti/ACHILLE/libretti/P-0.jsp> (accessed on May 16, 2015).

²⁵ For more on the connections between Zeno and Metastasio, see Elena Sala Di Felice, "Zeno, Metastasio e il teatro di corte," in *Italia-Austria alla ricerca del passato comune*, ed. Paolo

As a nuptial opera, *Achille in Sciro* also had to walk a fine line in its dramatic representation, especially since any kind of allegorical misfire might cause a political and even diplomatic stir. In this case, Achilles and Deidamia allegorized Stephen and Theresa, respectively. Very sensibly, the role of Lycomedes was generously revised so as to draw only positive comparisons to Charles VI.²⁶ In doing so, Metastasio made a direct appeal to the Emperor as an enlightened monarch. And for Stephen, *Achille in Sciro* likely expressed the court's (or at least Metastasio's) political and military hopes for the young Duke. The triumphalism shared by all regarding Achilles's fated victories proved imaginary at best: Francis would, just weeks later, lead an army against the Ottomans, a battle Austria would lose. In Naples, by contrast, the newly crowned Carlo III and his court sought to bring together music, architecture, spectacle, and politics to boldly proclaim the emergence of a new kingdom, coincidentally one Austria let slip through its fingers less than three years before.

The Politics of Theater, the Theater of Politics

By 1737, King Carlo could claim two triumphs: a marriage contract and a new opera house. While peace negotiations continued in Vienna to formally end the War of the Polish

Chiarini and Herbert Zeman (Rome, 1995), 523–68; Paolo Gallarati, “Zeno e Metastasio,” in *Metastasio e il melodramma*, ed. Elena Sala Di Felice and L. Sannia Nowè (Padua, 1985), 89–104. On the musical implications of Zeno's literary aesthetics, see Robert Freeman, *Opera without Drama: Currents of Change in Italian Opera, 1675–1725* (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1981).

²⁶ For a reading of Achilles and Lycomedes as expressions of Enlightenment political ideology, see Heslin, *Achilles*, 32.

Succession, Carlo's mother, the Spanish Empress Elizabeth Farnese, secured the marriage between her son and Princess Maria Amalia, the eldest daughter of Augustus III, Elector of Saxony and the King of Poland. All parties concerned signed the marriage contract in October 1737.²⁷ Maria's youthful age of 13 required papal dispensation, which necessitated a postponement until May 9, 1738.²⁸ The marriage itself took place by proxy in Dresden; Maria Amalia did not arrive in southern Italy until June 19, 1738.

Maria, a musical connoisseur, was accustomed to the magnificent court opera at Dresden, which Johann Adolf Hasse (1699–1783) oversaw.²⁹ Whereas Europeans generally held Naples's musical life (especially the conservatories) in high regard, the city lacked the infrastructure, architecture, and political reputation to rank as a European capital on a par with Dresden, Vienna, or Paris, a status Carlo sought.³⁰ The court set in motion plans for several prominent architectural projects, which, if completed, would transform the capital into a space befitting a monarchical seat. However, the Carolinian court wisely spent its initial political capital on reforming the kingdom's vast bureaucracy. Of all the recommendations, economic reform was the most urgent. Indeed, throughout much of the Austrian vice-regency (1707–1734), the Austrians had drained the city and its outlying

²⁷ Antonio Scotti, *Napoli Borbonica* (Naples: Edizioni Bideri, 1972), 22.

²⁸ For more on the politics of the nuptials, see Hans-Bertold Dietz, "The Dresden-Naples Connection, 1737–1763: Charles of Bourbon, Maria Amalia of Saxony, and Johann Adolf Hasse," *International Journal of Musicology* 5 (1996), 96.

²⁹ See Panja Mücke, "Johann Adolf Hasses Dresdner Opern im Kontext der Hofkultur" (Ph.D. diss., Philipps-Universität, Marburg, 2000); and Reinhard Wiesend, "Johann Adolf Hasse als Dresdner Oberkapellmeister (1750–1764)," *Hasse-Studien* 5 (2002): 19–31.

³⁰ See R. Burr Litchfield, "Naples under the Bourbons: An Historical Overview," in *The Golden Age of Naples* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 1:5.

provinces of economic resources, sending the bulk of them to Vienna in support of the imperial crown.³¹

The Teatro San Carlo was the first major building project. Constructed over a period of nine months in 1737, it replaced the aging Teatro San Bartolomeo, which had been the primary theater for opera seria in Naples. Why first construct a theater when so many other projects were pressing? Historiography's traditional response presupposed a political rationale, epitomized by Michael Robinson, who claimed that Carlo III "cared little for opera personally," a long-standing claim he drew somewhat uncritically from earlier Neapolitanist Harold Acton.³² The primary inspiration for constructing the theater likely lay with Maria Amalia, his future wife. Seeking to build on the city's musical reputation, Carlo hoped to prove to her and the Dresden court that the Kingdom of Naples could build an opera house worthy of a Saxon princess and transform the capital into a cosmopolitan city, one to which Europe would look for direction in culture, education, and philosophy.³³ Its construction, then, embodied a political promise to both her and the Neapolitans, many of whom had grown weary of undelivered promises. Carlo sought to differentiate himself from the Spanish and Austrian vice-royals who preceded him.

Though new to the Neapolitans, Carlo III was not new to the Italian peninsula, where

³¹ On Austria's policies in Naples, see Giuseppe Ricuperati, "Napoli e i Vicerè austriaci, 1707–1734," in *Storia di Napoli*, ed. Ernesto Pontieri (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1972), 7:347–72.

³² Michael Robinson, *Naples and Neapolitan Opera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 7. See also Harold Acton, *The Bourbons of Naples, 1734–1825* (London: Methuen Press, 1956), 33. More recently, Hans-Bertold Dietz has persuasively demonstrated that this assertion represents an "oversimplification that distorts the historical picture." For more, see Dietz, "Dresden-Naples," 98.

³³ Dietz, "Dresden-Naples," 99.

he had resided for the preceding three years. An eager teenager, he left Seville for Italy on October 20, 1731, arriving in Florence on March 9, 1732, after a bout of smallpox.³⁴ In Florence, he resided with his cousin Gian Gastone de' Medici at the Pitti Palace; Gian Gastone later declaring Carlo his heir. This reportedly angered Charles VI, the Holy Roman Emperor, who himself anticipated receiving the rank of Ruler of the Romans from Gian Gastone.³⁵ It was at this time that Carlo took up printmaking and hunting, hobbies he maintained for the rest of his life, and at which he would distinguish himself. His hunting skills, in particular, caught the attention of Sir Horatio Mann, a British diplomat in Florence, who once related a rather amusing story of how the king practiced his craft. When Carlo found himself bored in Gian Gastone's palace, the future king "amused himself by shooting with a bow and arrow at the birds in the fine tapestry-hangings of his rooms, and was become so very dexterous that he seldom missed the eye he aimed at. John Gaston was much displeased when he was told how sadly his precious *meubles* of the goblins were treated by the expertness of his pupil."³⁶ In October 1732, Carlo, encouraged by his mother Elizabeth Farnese, left for Parma.

Carlo came of age during the War of the Polish Succession. Augustus II the Strong's death in 1733 created a political crisis in Poland, with multiple European states offering claims to the throne. France allied itself with Savoy and Spain (forming the so-called Bourbon Compact of 1733) against Austria. Elizabeth Farnese, Carlo's mother, harbored great ambitions for her son, even though Spain controlled a small portion of Northern Italy. She

³⁴ Vittorio Gleijeses, *Don Carlos* (Naples: Edizioni Agea, 1988), 46–48.

³⁵ Acton, *Bourbons*, 18.

³⁶ Quoted (without citation) in Acton, *Bourbons*, 15.

desired to regain portions of the peninsula, including the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, which had been lost in the Treaty of Utrecht. Austria had officially controlled much of the region since 1720. As a birthday present, Carlo's parents designated him (alongside Jose Carillo de Albornoz, Duke of Montemond) head of the Spanish armies in Italy.³⁷ Now armed with an impressive force, Carlo turned his sights on Naples and Sicily, territories his mother prized above all others. King Philip supported the move with a declaration, dated February 27, wherein he granted his son license to liberate Naples of "excessive violence [by Austrian viceroys], oppression, and tyranny."³⁸ Now bearing the title of Duke of Parma, Carlo set out on March 5 from the Umbrian hilltop town of Perugia to begin his march south to Naples. Austria counted Naples as one of the jewels in its crown but ironically left the city largely undefended. The fight for Naples ended quickly. In addition to being underprotected, few of the kingdom's nobles supported the Austrians. Among the gentry, hopes remained high that Carlo's victory might yield, if nothing else, the kingdom's real independence. By March 9, 1734, the Spanish had conquered Ischia and Procida, two of the outlying islands in the Bay of Naples, with the Austrian Navy's defeat coming a week later. The Spanish occupied the Castel Nuovo on May 6, and Carlo entered the city on May 10, processing to Naples's Duomo to receive the blessing of Cardinal Pignatelli, the Archbishop of Naples.

Once all the *Te Deums* has been sung and the celebrations came to an end, the Carolinian regime began the challenging task not just of governing, but of suturing together a kingdom of disparate backgrounds and interests. Carlo faced political challenges on multiple

³⁷ Acton, *Bourbons*, 18.

³⁸ "Han penetrato il mio reale animo i clamori delle eccessive violenze, oppressione e tirannia che da tanti anni a questa parte ha comesso il Governo Alemanno. Ho sempre presenti le dimostrazioni di Giubilo ... con le quali io fui ricevuto a Napoli." Cited in Gleijeses, *Don Carlos*, 49.

fronts, obstacles he and his ministers aptly combatted. First, there was the nobility. Under the Austrians, Naples's feudal barons had granted themselves much political and judicial independence, such that previous viceroys provided them much control over feudal lands and local jurisdictions.³⁹ The king therefore found himself in a difficult position, as he wished to centralize the kingdom around the royal complex, a structure he modeled on Louis XIV's court. Carlo, however, needed the gentry's financial support and symbolic accession. The gentry likewise sought concessions in hopes of improving their own respective situations.⁴⁰ In a letter dated April 11, 1734, Carlo lamented in a somewhat annoyed manner that there was "an enormous crowd of nobles, who come daily."⁴¹ That said, Louis XIV himself had once encouraged Philip V, Carlo's father, to treat the Neapolitan gentry well.⁴² It is hard to believe that such important advice was not passed on to Carlo, for the Marquis of Salas, José Joachim de Montealegre, Carlo's Secretary of State, granted the nobles many honors and favors. For example, he increased the noble ranks and instituted stricter boundaries on landed titles.⁴³ For those who espoused traitorous tendencies, Carlo's advisor, Count Santo

³⁹ Acton, *Bourbons*, 31.

⁴⁰ See Tommaso Astarita, *The Continuity of Feudal Power: The Caracciolo di Brienza in Spanish Naples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 36–67. On baronial jurisdiction, see Giovanni Montinori, "The Court: Power Relations and Forms of Social Life," in *Naples in the Eighteenth Century: The Birth and Death of a Nation State*, ed. Girolamo Imbruglia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 24.

⁴¹ "Un terrible concours de nobles, qui vien tous les jours." Charles III, *Lettere ai sovrani di Spagna*, ed. Imma Ascione (Rome: Ministero per i beni e le attività culturale, 2001), 1:372. My thanks go to Joe Johnson for his assistance in translating this passage.

⁴² Louis XIV, letter to Philip V, (January 23, 1702). Reprinted in Antonio Bulifon, *Giornale del Viaggio d'Italia dell'invittissimo, e gloriosissimo monarca Filippo V Re delle Spagne, e di Napoli, etc.* (Naples, 1703), 4. On some of the possible political implications of this advice to Carlo III, see Thomas, "Naples," 44.

⁴³ For more, see Montinori, "The Court," 25–29.

Stefano, marginalized them, and even occasionally confiscated their property.⁴⁴ He also instituted the *Giunta d'Inconfianza*, or the Committee of Distrust, which the court entrusted with the investigation of traitors.⁴⁵ Describing their duties and St. Stefano's personality, British Consul Edward Allen wrote to the Duke of Newcastle in July 1734:

This great change [the centralization of the treasury], which affects so many thousand dependents on the Robe, occasions loud complaints and heavy disgust among all that set of people, which has been prevalent, and have still a great influence Now it is certain that a greater circulation and plenty of money is already visible, but this is not sufficient in the opinion of the Neapolitans for the restraint of their liberty, which they enjoyed in the greatest latitude before; whereas a new court of State Inquisition The Count St. Stefano never leaves the prince one moment, and seems as if his whole thought of attention was engaged and occupied about his person.⁴⁶

Allen's description of the Giunta and St. Stefano's singular mission underscored the seriousness with which the Carolinian court, while remaking its administration, engaged the nobles. More so than sheer political coercion, the Teatro San Carlo would unite the kingdom around the king like no other.

Crafting a Theater, Uniting a Kingdom

When Carlo conquered Naples in 1734, the musical life of that city was at its zenith, though many of the city's theaters were in decline, especially the Teatro San Bartolomeo, whose walls had reverberated for decades with the trills and roulades of great singers, as well as the clamor of appreciative audiences. The Teatro San Bartolomeo devoted itself

⁴⁴ Acton, *Bourbons*, 31.

⁴⁵ Acton, *Bourbons*, 31.

⁴⁶ Quoted (without citation) in Acton, *Bourbons*, 32.

specifically to opera seria, as opposed to the Teatro dei Fiorentini (among others), which dealt in comedy. The Bartolomeo was the city's largest house and, though owned by the Ospedale degli Incurabili, had long received financial support from the viceroy.⁴⁷ The theater's interior, however, was cramped, with difficult sightlines, issues Ferdinando Galli-Bibiena (1657–1743) attempted to mitigate in 1699.⁴⁸ His renovations, however, failed to solve the problems: the building had to come down.⁴⁹ In 1735, the king made drastic changes to the administration and treasury. The court first sought a new superintendent, removing the impresario Lelio Carafa, as well as restoring the theater's royal subsidies.⁵⁰ These steps, I believe, suggest a keener interest in the affairs of the opera than has been previously acknowledged.

The court investigated the possibility of constructing a new theater as early as September 1736. As construction began, it was clear that the new opera house would “correspond to the dignity of the resurrected monarchy and to the population of one of the largest metropolises of Europe,” as the early nineteenth-century Neapolitanist Emmanuelle

⁴⁷ Ulisse Prota-Giurleo, *Breve storia del teatro di corte e della musica a Napoli nei secoli XVII–XVIII* (Naples: L'arte tipografica 1952), 68.

⁴⁸ Benedetto Croce, *I teatri di Napoli, secolo 1500–1800* (Naples: L. Pierro, 1891; repr., Naples, 1968), 2:262.

⁴⁹ Croce, *Teatri*, 2:262–3.

⁵⁰ Archivio di Stato di Napoli (ASN), *Teatri*, f. 1. Cited in Croce, *Teatri*, 2:260, fn. 3. Many documents related to the early history of the Teatro San Carlo were destroyed during the bombing of Naples in 1944. Croce's *Teatri* thus remains a fundamental resource for the many lost sources it transmits. See John Marino, “Constructing the Past of Early Modern Naples: Sources and Historiography,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill Press, 2013), 11–34.

Taddei put it.⁵¹ This would be accomplished with Europe's largest opera house to date. The overall administration was entrusted to José Joaquín de Montealegre (1698–1771). In Robin Thomas's assessment, de Montealegre proved both an apt administrator and able, if not eager, governmental reformer, especially with regard to finances and general administration.⁵² In order to enact reforms, de Montealegre and Carlo shifted feudal authority to the newly centralized administration in Naples, a move that weakened the landed gentry's claims over taxation, land, and justice.⁵³

As a model for the new opera house the king apparently preferred the plans for the Teatro Farnese in Parma, his mother's family seat, while de Montealegre expressed interest in two more recent theaters: the Teatro Filarmonico in Verona and the Teatro Argentina in Rome. In Thomas's view, these theaters were the inspiration for de Montealegre's initial plans, but the court abandoned the Filarmonico model, a bell-shaped construction, in favor of the horseshoe configuration of the Teatro Argentina, designed by Gerolamo Theodoli for the Sforza-Cesarini family in 1731.⁵⁴ After finalizing the basic model, they engaged two architects to begin construction: Giovanni Antonio Medrano (1703–c.1750) and Angelo Carasale (d. 1742). Medrano had honed his craft in Spain under military architect Juan Próspero de Verboom and tutored Carlo in architecture and battle studies in the king's youth. Angelo Carasale, by contrast, possessed a more thorough background in theater

⁵¹ “Un teatro ... corrispondesse alla dignità della risorta monarchia ed alla popolazione di una delle più grandi metropoli dell'Europa.” Emmanuelle Taddei, *Del Real Teatro di San Carlo: cenno storico* (Naples, 1817), 4.

⁵² Thomas, “Naples,” 26.

⁵³ See Pasquale Villani, *Mezzogiorno tra riforme e rivoluzione* (Bari: Laterza, 1962; repr. 2013), especially 22–25.

⁵⁴ Thomas, “Naples,” 29.

construction. Appointed by Viceroy Michele Federico D'Althan (r. 1722–1728) as the royal works engineer, he garnered many royal commissions (for example, the Teatro Nuovo) and did well as an impresario. This facet of his career is particularly striking, considering others described his personality as “undiplomatic, uncivil and eccentric.”⁵⁵ Despite these shortcomings, Charles engaged him to oversee the improvements to the old Teatro San Bartolomeo as well as plans for the new Teatro San Carlo.⁵⁶

The new theater was seen as an expression of royal power. As a public theater, the Teatro was meant to remind spectators of the opera's royal patron and the political centralization of his kingdom. The royal coat of arms hung conspicuously over the *palcoscenico*. The king's box represented the focal point of the theater, and sat directly opposite the stage. Attached to the royal box was a private hallway that led directly to the palace, giving the king leave to come and go as needed.⁵⁷ When present, the monarch symbolically became, as Napoli-Signorelli famously put it, “the most dear ornament of our spectacles.”⁵⁸

The Teatro San Carlo admitted anyone who could purchase a ticket to the ground-level *platea*, which cost 3 carlini.⁵⁹ The nobles, of course, occupied the boxes. Charles Burney, following a visit to the theater, described the boxes as “very roomy and commodious, with leather cushions and stuffed backs, each separated from the other by a broad rest for the

⁵⁵ Quoted in Holmes, *Opera*, 110.

⁵⁶ For more on Carasale, see Croce, *Teatri*, especially Chapter 16.

⁵⁷ For more on the myth that Carasale built the corridor in three days, see Croce, *Teatri*, 2:284.

⁵⁸ “Ornamento più caro de' nostri spettacoli.” Pietro Napoli-Signorelli, *Storia critica de' teatri antichi e moderni*, 6 vols. (Naples: Orsino, 1787), 6:250 (translation mine).

⁵⁹ ASN, *Teatri*, f.1. Cited in Croce, *Teatri*, 2:276, fn. 2.

elbow.”⁶⁰ Each box was like “a private house” and sat twelve comfortably.⁶¹ Once an owner purchased a box, the inhabitant held exclusive rights. It also obligated him or her to contribute a seasonal subscription.⁶² Boxes near the king went to court officials and members of the upper nobility. The king’s five ministers sat closest to him. Carlo himself decided on the sale of all the other nearby boxes.⁶³ Otherwise, the higher one sat, the lower one’s station. The organization of the theater so mirrored the kingdom’s stratified society that grand tourist Madam Sara Goudar described the San Carlo as “contain[ing] an entire nation.”⁶⁴ With so many in close proximity, eager for social interaction, this created a beehive of activity, a point later underscored by Samuel Sharp, another visitor to city:

It is so much the fashion at Naples, and, indeed, throughout all Italy, to consider the Opera as a place of *rendezvous* and visiting, that they do not seem in the least to attend to the musick, but laugh and talk through the whole performance, without any restraint; and, it may be imagined, that an assembly of so many hundreds conversing together so loudly, must entirely cover the voice of the singers I had been informed, that though the Italians indulged this humour in some degree, yet, when a favourite song was singing, or the King was present, they observed silence.⁶⁵

As construction neared completion, excitement mounted. After examining the theater on October 27, 1737, Carlo wrote to his parents: “The theater is magnificent, and the voice

⁶⁰ Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy or, the Journal of a Tour Through Those Countries, Undertaken to Collect Materials for a General History of Music*, 2nd ed. (London: T. Becket and Co., 1773), 342.

⁶¹ Burney, *Present State*, 330.

⁶² ASN, *Teatri*, f.1. Cited in Croce, *Teatri*, 2:276, fn. 1.

⁶³ ASN, *Teatri*, f.1. Cited Croce, *Teatri*, 2:277, fn. 2.

⁶⁴ Sara Goudar, *Relation historique des divertissements du carnival de Naples* (Naples, 1774), 8.

⁶⁵ Samuel Sharp, *Letters from Italy, Describing the Customs and Manners of that Country in the Years 1765 and 1766* (London: R. Cave, 1767), 78–79.

extends like no other.”⁶⁶ One of Carlo’s chief ministers, Bernardo Tanucci, who was present at the theater’s initial test, ranked it more favorably than the opera house in Paris.⁶⁷

The Teatro San Carlo opened on November 4, 1737, Carlo’s name day. The *Gazzetta di Napoli* reported that the theater was “filled with ladies, adorned with rich clothing and precious gems and moreover with men in suits of the most ostentatious lace trimming.”⁶⁸ On his arrival for the inaugural performance, the king congratulated Carasale for his fine work, placing his hand on Carasale’s shoulder as a sign of public approbation.⁶⁹

The performance began with a laud, boasting of the theater’s beauty.⁷⁰ The morning after the performance, de Montealegre, reported the previous day’s events to the Marque de

⁶⁶ “Le theatre est reussi magnifique, & on extend la voix mieu que dans aucun autre.” Charles III, *Lettres*, 2: 249. My thanks go to Joe Johnson for his assistance in translating this passage.

⁶⁷ “Quel di Parigi non vale la metà di questo.” Bernado Tanucci, *Epistolario* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1980), 1:193.

⁶⁸ “Si videro tutti i palchi riempiti di dame, adorne di richissimi abiti, e di preziosissime gemme, com’altresì di cavalieri in abiti di sfarzossissima gala.” *Gazzetta di Napoli* (November 5, 1737) (translation mine). Cited in Croce, *Teatri*, 277, fn. 2.

⁶⁹ “Il re entrando nella sala, maravigliando l’opera grande e bellissima, battè le mani all’architetto, mentre plausi del popolo onoravano il re, cagione prima di quella magnificenza. In mezzo all’universale allegrezza il re fede chiamare Carasale, e pubblicamente lodandolo dell’opera, gli appoggiò la mano su la spalla come segno di protezione e di benevolenza.” Pietro Colletta, *Storia del reame di Napoli dal 1734 al 1825* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1834), 68. Although Carasale’s work on the Teatro San Carlo would later yield several major commissions, including another collaboration with Medrano on the hunting lodge at Capodimonte, his career ended in embezzlement charges in 1740. He died in Castel Sant’Elmo in 1742. For more on Carasale’s fate, see Gaetana Cantone, “Il teatro del re: dalla corte alla città,” in *Il Teatro del Re. Il San Carlo da Napoli all’Europa*, ed. Gaetana Cantone and Franco Greco (Naples, 1987), 62–63.

⁷⁰ The music for this laud is apparently lost. The surviving text reads: “Genio Real, di già compita è l’opera / che seppe concepir tua vasta idea: / Ecco il nuovo, sublime, ampio teatro, / di cui più vasto Europa ancor non vide. / Ben da me si provide / a quanto uopo facea/per supercar dell’altre Etadi i preggi, / nè Roma nè vantà chi lo pareggi.” See Croce, *I teatri di Napoli*, 2: 281–282.

la Cuadra in Madrid:

Yesterday on the august name day of His Majesty, there was a countless multitude of all classes of folk in this Palace, rivaling one another in elegance and in demonstrations of gifts and love. At dusk the Castles and Galleons made the Royal Salute with the discharge of all the Cannons, and shortly afterward His Majesty passed into the new San Carlo theater through the passageway and, connecting from his own rooms, His Majesty attended the entire performance of the Drama of the famous Metastasio entitled *Achilles in Sciro*, which, although it lasted 5 hours, did not happen to be tiresome to His Majesty nor to the countless multitude, who took part in it. It is the best praise that can be made of the Poetry of the Piece, of the good taste of the Music, of the ability and skill of the Actors, of the skill of the Dancers, of the magnificence of the Stage Scenes, and of the cleverness of the Dances. With respect to having already made to you in my previous letter a description of the theater, I can only add for your curiosity the attached chapter from the *Gazeta de Nápoles* [sic] and the Opera's Libretto as testimony of my kind consideration.⁷¹

We can glean a lot of information from de Montealegre's report, but perhaps the two most important points to emerge were the spectacle's length (five hours) and the suggestion (perhaps propaganda) that the opera "did not happen to be tiresome to His Majesty." If the latter point is accurate, it would serve as further evidence against the idea of an anti-opera

⁷¹ "Ayer día del Augusto nombre de SM fue innumerable el concurso que hubo en este Palacio de todas clases de Personas, compitiéndose unas a otras en las Galas, y en las demostraciones de obsequio y de amor. Al anochecer hicieron estos Castillos y Galeones la Salva Real con la descarga de todo el Cañon, y poco despues pasó SM al nuevo teatro de San Carlos por el pasadizo, y comunicación de sus propios cuartos, y asistió SM a toda la representación del Drama del famoso Metastasio intitulado el *Achilles in Sciro*, la qual aunque duro 5 hora no llegó el caso de que fuese fastidiosa a SM ni al innumerable concurso, que intervino en ella que es la mayor alabanza, que puede hacer de la Poesia de la Pieza del buen gusto de la Música, de la habilidad y soltura de los Cómicos, de la destreza de los Bailarines, de la magnificencia de las Sceneas, y de lo ingenioso de los Bailes, y respecto de haber ya hecho a VS en mi antecedente una descripción del teatro, sólo puedo añadir para mayor curiosidad suya el capítulo adjunto de la *Gazeta de Nápoles*, y el Liberato de la Opera para testimonio de mi atención." Letter from Montealegre to De la Cuadra from Naples (November 5, 1737). Archivo General de Simancas, Spain, Sección Estado, leg. 5811, fol. 141. Transcribed in Andrea Sommer-Mathis, "Achilles in Sciro—Eine Europäische Oper? Drei Aufführungen von Metastasios drama per musica in Wien, Neapel und Madrid," in *Pietro Metastasio—Uomo Universale (1698–1782): Festgabe der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zum 300*, ed. Andrea Sommer-Mathis and Elisabeth Theresia Hilscher (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 237. I would like to thank Joe Johnson for his assistance in translating de Montealegre's letter.

king. By all accounts, opening night was a success. The question, however, remains of how Achilles's revelation scene might have aided Carlo's absolutist project by underscoring the idea of his inevitability to the throne, a claim propagated to mitigate the continued doubt among the nobles.

***Achille in Sciro* (1737)**

As opera goers settled in for the evening's spectacle, perhaps they observed that the opera's backdrop resembled that of the port of Naples; location and backdrop are significant in opera generally. For Metastasio and Sarro's *Achille in Sciro*, the opera's setting was not only significant, but was likely an important factor in the choice of subject. The selection was in many ways fortuitous for the Carolinian regime, in that the opera arguably permitted the court to thumb its nose at Vienna while reminding spectators of Naples's cultural and political legacy as the jewel in the crown of *Magna Graecia*.⁷² In this context, the drama itself, I believe, enacted an extended metaphor of forging a bright political and cultural future—by way of Achilles's revelation of his essential identity—as a legitimate, independent kingdom, a hope embodied in the inauguration of the Teatro San Carlo. As a letter from one of Carlo's deputies suggested, Metastasio's longstanding connection to Naples also proved an important factor in the choice of libretto, and for more erudite observers the classical connection

⁷² See Chapter One for more on these historical ties.

between Statius and Naples likely resonated.⁷³ The opera's scenic backdrop of the harbor on the island of Scyros likewise drew a direct parallel with Naples's own geography: opera goers looked on as Achilles himself docked in the Bay of Naples and walked ashore.

From the opening pages of the libretto, we glean what must have been a stunning backdrop of Scyros:

The outside of a magnificent temple dedicated to Bacchus [the Teatro San Carlo]. Between the pillars of the temple is discovered on one side the wood sacred to the Deity, and on the other side the sea coast of Scyros. The piazza is filled with Bacchanals celebrating the festival of the God [the public dedication of the opera house], to the sound of various instruments. A numerous company of the noble dames of Scyros descending the steps from the temple: with these are seen Deidamia and Achilles, the last in a female habit.⁷⁴

In many respects, this scene bears little difference from others portraying pagan rites in opera seria.⁷⁵ Beyond petitions to the divine, such moments can evoke location and plot dynamics. So too here: the perspective of “the wood sacred to the Deity, and on the other side the sea coast of Scyros” mapped neatly and conveniently onto the Neapolitan cityscape. It would have been hard not to view the opening scene as an allegory of the theater's inauguration.

⁷³ See Helmut Hucke, “*L'Achille in Sciro* di Domenico Sarri e l'inaugurazione del Teatro di San Carlo,” in *Il Teatro di San Carlo 1737–1987*, ed. Bruno Cagli, Agostino Ziino, and Franco Mancini (Naples: Electa, 1987), 1:24; and Croce, *Teatri*, 2:165.

⁷⁴ “Aspetto esteriore di magnifico tempio dedicato a Bacco, donde si scende per due spaziose scale. È il tempio circondato da portici, che, prolungandosi da entrambi i lati, formano una gran piazza. Fra le distanze delle colonne de' portici scopresi da un lato il bosco sacro alla deità, dall'altro la marina di Sciro. La piazza è ripiena di Baccanti, che, celebrando le feste del loro nume, al suono di vari stromenti cantano il seguente coro. Preceduti e seguiti da numeroso corteggio di nobili Donzelle, scender si vedono dal tempio ed avanzarsi a poco a poco Deidamia, ed Achille in abito femminile.” English translation based on Pietro Metastasio, *Dramas and Other Poems of the Abbè Pietro Metastasio, Translated from the Italian*, trans. John Hoole (London: Otridge and Son, 1800), 2:3

⁷⁵ For an analysis of this trope in opera seria, see Bruno Forment, “*La Terra, Il Cielo e L'Inferno: The Representation and Reception of Greco-Roman Mythology in Opera Seria*” (Ph.D. diss., University of Ghent, 2007), 50–73.

It is against this backdrop that Achilles and Deidamia first appear. Dressed as Pirra, Deidamia's lady in waiting, Achilles sits in private conversation with Deidamia, who alone knows his true identity. As they converse, she notes their close proximity to the harbor and frets over the boisterous shouts coming from the ships moored nearby. "Hast thou not heard these seas," to quote from John Hoole's later translation, "are fill'd with impious pirates? Thus were borne / the wretched daughters from their mourning fires, / the kings of Tyre and Argos," Deidamia explains to Achilles.⁷⁶ In this scene, we encounter Achilles at a moment of both strength and tenderness. He assures her, "Fear not, my love, is not Achilles here?"⁷⁷ Even so, Deidamia feels compelled to caution him about revealing his secret. "O! Forbear; / someone may hear thee: should'st thou be discovered, / I am lost myself, and thou to me art lost," she warns.⁷⁸ As is likewise apparent in Metastasio's original, the character of Deidamia frequently acts as a stabilizing force for the occasionally impetuous Achilles. This becomes quite the task for her, since, as will become apparent throughout the drama, Metastasio characterizes him as driven by his real gender. It is not until Act 2.8 that Achilles reveals himself, but two passages in Act 1 and 2 anticipate the revelation of his masculine identity: scenes 1.2 and 1.3 and 2.4 and 2.5. In each one Metastasio represents Achilles's gender as essential, ready to burst forth with little provocation, be it in protection of Deidamia or, more often, in reaction to the tempting symbols and sounds of war.

⁷⁶ "Non sai / che d'infami pirati / tutto è infestato il mar? Così rapite / fur le figlie infelici al re d'Argo e di Tiro." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:5–6.

⁷⁷ "Di che temi, mia vita? Achille è teco." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:6.

⁷⁸ "Ah taci; alcuno (Guardandosi intorno) / potrebbe udirti; e, se scoperto sei, / son perduta, ti perdo. E che direbbe / il genitor deluso?" Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:6.

Act 1.2 introduces Nearco, the only other character to share Deidamia's knowledge of who Pirra really is. Nearco chastises them both for their "impudent care."⁷⁹ In doing so, he invites further scrutiny and gossip. Nearco declares, "All eyes observe how still / you shun society, and the court the shades."⁸⁰ Achilles, however, appears distracted by events in the harbor. Perhaps foreshadowing the blast of the trumpet in Act 2, Metastasio notes that an indeterminate "martial sound" rings out from one of the boats in the harbor.⁸¹ In the midst of Nearco's admonition, Achilles, who is not paying attention, observes the ship: "Sure that sound / from yonder ships bespeaks them freighted deep / with arms and warriors."⁸²

Achilles appears so transfixed at the presence of these ships that Deidamia observes, "quietly to Nearco," "Heavens! What martial spirit / flames in his looks! Each art must be employ'd / to draw him hence."⁸³ His fixation on the sounding trumpet is confirmed at the close of the scene.⁸⁴ After Deidamia's aria, "No, ingrato! Amor non senti," wherein she chastises Achilles for his inattention and indifference to the dangers that surround him, Metastasio concludes the scene not with an exit aria *per se*, but with a rubric describing our hero's actions as she departs. The stage directions indicate that Deidamia exits. "Achilles follows her, then stops at the entrance, and turns again to observe the ships, which are now so

⁷⁹ "Impudente cura." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:7.

⁸⁰ "Ognun la vede, ne parla ognuno." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:7.

⁸¹ Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:7.

⁸² "Il suon guerriero, / (intento ad altro, non l'ascolta) / che da que'legni uscì, d'armati e d'armi / mostra che vengan gravi." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:7.

⁸³ "(Piano a Nearco) Oh, come in volto / già tutto avvampa! Usar conviene ogni arte / per trarlo altrove." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:7.

⁸⁴ "Que' legni in porto / bramo veder." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:7.

near, that on the deck of one of them is distinguished a warrior completely armed.”⁸⁵ Achilles remains spellbound.

With Deidamia’s exit, Achilles and Nearco converse more candidly in scene 1.3. Achilles’s attention, however, remains on the ships in the harbor and the boisterous sounds issuing from them. As the scene opens, his envy for the warriors stirs: “See Nearchus, / observe that warrior clad in shining arms, / of port majestick.”⁸⁶ Here again, Achilles’s true masculinity, Metastasio suggests, causes our hero to momentarily forget himself and his surroundings. By remaining alone (*scompagnata*, unaccompanied) with Nearco, Achilles in fact transgresses Scyros’s gender norms. Nearco voices his concern, reminding Achilles, “Hence: it ill befits / that thou, a seeming virgin, wrapt in weeds / of female softness, still should’st linger here / alone, without defense.”⁸⁷ Achilles is nevertheless determined to stay and admire the warriors, who are emblematic of his true identity. Nearco, increasingly unnerved by Achilles’s defiance, reveals that Teagene, Achilles’s rival for Deidamia’s hand, has recently arrived in Scyros. The longer Achilles remains, the greater the chance, Nearco suggests, that Teagene may win her over.⁸⁸

Achilles reacts in the aria “Ah! Dov’è quest’alma ardita?,” a semi-rage aria that addresses the conflict arising from his dissimulation. In a rare but effective strategy, Sarro sets

⁸⁵ “Deidamia parte. Achille s’incammina appresso a Deidamia; ma, giunto alla scena, si volge e s’arresta di nuovo a mirar le navi, già avvicinate a tal segno, che su la sponda di una d’esse possa distinguersi un guerriero.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:8.

⁸⁶ “Nearco, osserva (tornando indietro) / come splende fra l’armi / quell guerrier maestoso.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:8–9.

⁸⁷ “Ah! V’è; non lice / a te, che una donzella / comparisci alle spoglie, in questo loco / scompagnata restar.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:9.

⁸⁸ “Ma Deidamia intanto / sarà col tuo rival.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:10.

the first line, “Steal my beloved,” to a brief *accompagnato*, which serves to build tension he then releases in the aria.⁸⁹ Exasperation and fear send Achilles into a state of self-loathing.

The text and a portion of the score appear below:

ACCOMPAGNATO

Involarmi il mio Tesoro!

ARIA

Involarmi il mio Tesoro!
 Ah! Dov'è quest'alma ardita?
 Ha da togliermi la vita
 Chi vuol togliermi il mio ben.

M'avvilisce in queste spoglie
 Il poter di due pupile;
 Ma lo so ch'io sono Achille,
 E mi sento Achille in sen.

ACCOMPAGNATO

Steal my beloved!

ARIA

Steal my beloved!
 Ah! Where is this daring spirit?
 He who wants to rob me of my beloved
 Will have to take [my] life.

In this garb, the power of two eyes
 Humbles me;
 But I know that I am Achilles,
 And I feel I am Achilles in my breast.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ “Involarmi il mio Tesoro!”

⁹⁰ Interestingly, John Hoole’s translation of “Dov'è quest'alma ardita?” changes the basic meaning of the first line, which I translate as “Where is this daring spirit?” He interprets it in more threatening terms: “What mortal dares my wrath excite.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:10.

Ex. 3.1: Sarro, "Involarmi il mio tesoro," *Achille in Sciro* 1.4, mm. 1–20⁹¹

The image displays a musical score for a scene from *Achille in Sciro*. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Achille (singing), and Continuo. The second system includes staves for Violin I (marked with a 10), Violin II, Viola, and Continuo. The time signature is 3/8, and the key signature has one flat (B-flat). The lyrics for Achille are "In-vo-lar - mi il mio te-so-ro!".

⁹¹ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.8, 20r. In the manuscript, the copyist organizes mm. 3–20 into six beats per measure, though the stated time signature is 3/8. The grouping shifts to three beats per measure on the subsequent folio. Given that the score is marked 3/8 and generally follows 3/8, rather than 6/8, I present the above example as 3/8.

Ex. 3.2: Sarro, "Involarmi il mio tesoro," *Achille in Sciro* 1.4, mm. 67–79⁹²

67

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *p*

Vla. [*p*]

A. In - vol - ar - mi il mio te - so - ro, il mio te -

Cont. *p*

73

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. [*f*]

A. so - ro! Ah! Dov' - è, Ah! Dov - è quest' al - ma ar - di - ta,

Cont. [*f*]

⁹² Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.8, 22v.

Strikingly, rather than focus his rage on Teagene, his rival, he turns inward. In the opening ritornello, upper strings spin out scales in triplets over a relentless drumming bass, which shifts occasionally to octave leaps for enhanced dramatic effect, with the violins resorting to *stile agitato* (for instance, mm. 17–20). One wonders if the general lack of melismas (ex. 3.2) rather serves to illustrate his state of mind. While musical filigree can suggest associations with the “feminine,” galant composers also employed it to signify authority and class.⁹³ That is, the ability to perform intricate melismas not only demonstrated the singer’s ability, but also could be interpreted as a symbol of the character’s political and even physical power. In this case, by withholding the power melismas can symbolize (especially for characters interpreted by the primo uomo), Sarro’s textual painting here demonstrates both Achilles’s current anxiety and insecurity over his transvestitism.

In scenes 2.4 and 2.5, we once again find our hero—through the council of Nearco—caught between his masculine gender and the need to hide that identity for love. Metastasio organizes 2.4 around Lycomedes, Pirra (Achilles), and Nearco. Lycomedes expresses his frustration with Deidamia’s disinterest in Teagene, who arrives on Scyros to woo her. Achilles is, of course, distraught at the very prospect. Amplifying this tension, and indeed the irony, is Lycomedes, who asks Pirra to intercede with Deidamia on his behalf: “teach [Deidamia] to respect a father’s choice; / teach her the virtues of a noble husband, / and kindle in her breast a flame for him / who merits her love: so may she meet / his fond

⁹³ On some of the ways in which the Queen of the Night asserts her authority through music, see Rose Subotnik, “Whose *Magic Flute*? Intimations of Reality at the Gates of the Enlightenment,” *19th-Century Music* 15:2 (1991): 135–137.

address with equal fair return, / and all a wife's endearments."⁹⁴ In an aside, Achilles directly blames his feminine dress for this new unhappiness: "Yes, to / you, ye weeds of shame, I owe this insult."⁹⁵ The rest of the scene follows the young hero, struggling to control himself. In a second aside, he admits: "(What shall I Say? No longer can I bear / such cruel sufferings.)"⁹⁶ Lycomedes leaves Pirra with this task and an aria, "Fa che si specchi almeno," which shows the king as being decisive, even as he leaves poor Achilles in emotional distress.

This tension bears full fruit in 2.5 and 2.6. What is important here is the distance Achilles travels between forsaking his feminine cover and then resuming it for Deidamia's sake. Achilles's frustration stems not so much from hiding his identity, but rather at appearing "cowardly." For example, he rebukes Nearco: "From these limbs / to strip these woman's weeds—Shall I, Nearchus, / thus basely pass my life, my prime years? / And must I bear it tamely, while I see / my threats despis'd; and to complete my shame, / charged with a haughty lord's imperious mandate? I see, I see by other's great example / my own reproach; nor will I feel each moment / the conscious blush."⁹⁷

Achilles draws multiple comparisons between his outward appearance and his gender. Citing Chiron, his early mentor, Achilles asks "Did Chiron now / behold his pupil in these slothful vestures, / where should I hide? How answer, when with looks / of stern reproach he

⁹⁴ "Che la scelta / tu le insegnassi a rispettar d'un padre; / che i meriti del suo sposo / le facessi osserrar; che amor per lui / le ispirassi nel seno, onde l'accolga / com'è il dover d'un'amorosa moglie." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:38.

⁹⁵ "Questo pur deggio a voi, misere spoglie (Con ira)." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:38.

⁹⁶ "(Mi perdo. Lo sento / che soffrir più non posso.)" Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:39.

⁹⁷ "Degg'io / passer così vilmente tutti gli anni migliori? E quanti oltraggi / ho da soffrir? Le mie minacce or veggo / ch'altri deride; ingiurioso impiego / or m'odo imporre; or negli esempi altrui / i falli miei rimproverar mi sento." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:40.

cries: ‘Where, where, Achilles, / is now thy sword, with all the warrior’s arms? / No mark of Chiron’s school, save yonder lyre, / debas’d from heroes’ praise to strains inglorious.’”⁹⁸

Here, for this first time, he repudiates the lyre, on which he received instruction, as being unworthy of him, and thereby drawing a direct link to his true masculinity. The lyre comes up a second time in 2.8 when, due to some trickery by Ulisse, Achilles reveals himself.

If scenes 2.5 and 2.6 anticipate the moment of Achilles’ revelation in 2.8, they also provide Metastasio an occasion to deceive us into believing the moment occurs here. After expressing exasperation with his transvestitism and concern over the possibility that Deidamia will marry Teagene, Achilles convinces Nearco the time has come to jettison his feminine garb. Nearco agrees: “No—I own / the generous truth: ’tis time to rouse thy soul / from drowsy sleep; shake off that base attire, / and haste to scenes where honor calls to prove / thy dauntless heart.”⁹⁹ Achilles suddenly falters, recalling his love for Deidamia,¹⁰⁰ and closes out the scene with the aria “Potria fra tante pene,” wherein he offers a justification to reveal himself. The musical aspects of the aria itself intimate emotional security, a sentiment lacking in Act 1.

⁹⁸ “Ah ora ... Ah! Che direbbe, / se in questa gonna effeminato e molle / mi vedesse Chirone? Ove da lui / m’asconderei? Che replica, se in volto / rigido mi chiedesse: / “Ov’è la spade, ove l’alt’armi, Achille? / Ah! Di mie scuole / tu non serbi altro segno / che la cetra avvilita ad uso indegno.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:41.

⁹⁹ “No: io conosco; è tempo / che dal sonno ti desti, che ti svolga da questi / impacci femminili, e corra altrove a dar dei tuo gran cor nobile prove.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:41.

¹⁰⁰ “Andrebbe / nudo in mezzo agl’incendi, andrebbe solo / ad affronter mille nemici e mille. / Pensi a Deidamia, è mansueto Achille.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:41.

Ex. 3.3: Sarro, "Potria fra tante pene," *Achille in Sciro* 2.5, mm. 7–14¹⁰¹

7

[Violin I]

[Violin II]

[Viola]

[Achille]

[Continuo]

f *p*

Po - tria... fra tan - te pe - ne la - sciar l'a - ma - to -

10

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

A.

Cont.

be - ne, la - sciar l'a - ma - to be - ne chi cor - di ti - gre a - ves - sa nè ba - ste -

13

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

A.

Cont.

reb - be - an - cor, nè ba - ste - reb - - be an -

¹⁰¹ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.8, 95r.

Potria fra tante pene
 Lasciar l'amato bene
 Chi un cor di tigre avesse,
 Nè basterebbe ancor.

Che quel pietoso affetto,
 Che a me si desta in petto,
 Senton le tigri istesse,
 Quando le accende Amor.

What lover, though his harden'd breast
 A tiger's heart contains,
 Can leave his dearest maid opprest
 With love's afflicting pains.

The pity now that rends my soul,
 And all the pangs I prove,
 Must sure a tiger's rage control,
 When tigers yield to love.¹⁰²

Although the aria portrays Achilles in a weaker position, I would argue that it also prepares him for self-revelation in Act 2.8. In other words, this temporary desperation provides the necessary catalyst for him to reassume his essential gender. Scenes 1.3, 2.5, and 2.6 isolate a broader tension in Metastasio's libretto, to the effect that, by 2.8, Metastasio frames Achilles's revelation as inevitable.

“Già invaso d'estro guerriero”

If scenes 1.3 and 2.5 suggest that Achilles's subterfuge necessitates confinement, then 2.8 and 2.9 (which unfold the circumstances of his revelation) arguably mark the overall resolution of this antagonism and thereby advance the claim of allegorical inevitability.

¹⁰² Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:42.

Whereas seventeenth-century models portrayed the figure of Achilles betraying himself haphazardly or inhabiting a transmutable sexual identity, Metastasio's version emphasized the hero's essential masculinity, in ways that accord with evolving Enlightenment notions of gender and sexuality.¹⁰³ Achilles is discovered not through his own carelessness *per se* (though his masculinity sometimes occludes his reason), but by his innate instinct, an inclination that draws him compulsively to the armor and weapons laid before Lycomedes. We have already witnessed Achilles's fixation with the warships moored in Scyros harbor. We also saw his willingness to risk discovery in defense of Deidamia. We thus arrive at our hero's final temptation: before the Scyrosian court, Lycomedes bids Achilles (still in the guise of Pirra) to entertain them with a beautiful performance on the lyre. It is a test he both passes and fails.

Achilles, ensnared in Ulisse's trap, reveals himself in Act 2.8. How this occurs says much about the dynastic themes of the inauguration. According to the stage directions, the scene opens to:

A great hall, a table in the middle: above are placed musicians and numerous spectators. Licomede, Teagene, Deidamia and Ulisse seated at the table. Arcas stands by Ulisse, and Achilles by Deidamia. Courtiers, damsels, and pages.¹⁰⁴

In referencing "musicians and spectators," Metastasio signals the scene's phenomenality, a designation Nathan Link might describe as self-referential.¹⁰⁵ That is, the librettist occasionally employed such moments to solicit audience attention, as well as to point up their

¹⁰³ See Heller and Heslin.

¹⁰⁴ "Gran sala illuminata in tempo di note, corrispondente a diversi appartamenti, parimente illuminati. Tavola nel mezzo, credenze all'intorno; logge nell'alto, ripiene di Musici e Spettatori. Licomede, Teagene, Ulisse e Deidamia, seduti a mensa; Arcade in piede accanto ad Ulisse; Achille in piede accanto a Deidamia; e per tutto Cavalieri, Damigelle e Paggi." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:46.

¹⁰⁵ Nathan Link, "Story and Representation in Handel's Operas" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2006), 122.

salience within the opera's overall narrative, as is the case here. A chorus of phenomenal singing opens the scene:

Lungi lungi fuggite fuggite,
 Cure ingrante, molesti pensieri;
 No, non lice del giorno felice
 Che un istante si venga a turbar.
 Dolce affetti, diletta sinceri
 Porga Amore, ministri la pace,
 E da' moti di gioia verace
 Lieta ogni alma si senta agitar.

Lungi lungi fuggite fuggite,
 Cure ingrante, molesti pensieri;
 No, non lice del giorno felice,
 Che un istante si venga a turbar.

Far, far be hence! Unwelcome here,
 Intruding thought and jealous fear;
 Nor let a moment's gloom appear
 To cloud this happy festive day.
 While love inspires and peace invites,
 Affection's mild and calm delights,
 Let joy, which rules over social rites,
 In every breast exert his sway.

Far, far be hence! Unwelcome here,
 Intruding thought and jealous fear;
 Nor not let a moment's gloom appear
 To cloud this happy festive day.¹⁰⁶

Lycomedes offers a toast; Deidamia asks Achilles to pour her drink. The overt affection the two share attracts Teagene's notice, who, observing them, wonders: "(Strange effect / Of unexampled passion.)"¹⁰⁷ Ulisse then offers a short soliloquy meant to prompt Achilles's self-revelation:

È di te degna,
 Gran re, la brama.

¹⁰⁶ Metastasio, "Lungi lungi fuggite fuggite" (*Achille in Sciro* 2.8). Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:44.

¹⁰⁷ "Guardando Deidamia ed Achille ... Che strano affetto!" Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:45.

Ove mirar più mai
 Tant'armi, tanti duci,
 Tante squadre guerriere,
 Tende, navi, e cavalla, aste e bandiere?
 Tutta Europa v'accorre;
 Omai son vuote
 Le selve e le città. Da' padre istessi,
 Da' vecchi padre invidiata e spinta
 La gioventù proterva
 Corre all'armi fremendo.
 (Arcade osserva.)

Mighty King,
 The thought is worthy of thee. What eyes again
 Shall view such arms, leaders, such a host
 Of gallant warriors,
 Countless steeds and vessels,
 Spears bristled,
 Banners streaming to the wind;
 All Europe there assembled.
 Woods and cities
 Are deserts now: encouraged by their fires,
 Their reverend fires, who mourn their age,
 The impatient youth rush forth to arms.
 (Observe him, Arcade, now.)¹⁰⁸

Ulisse's speech clearly riles Achilles, for Deidamia turns to him, cautioning "Pyrrha!" Achilles "takes the cup, then stops again to listen."¹⁰⁹ As if to gauge the agitation welling up in Achilles, Ulisse ups the rhetorical ante, now speaking eloquently of glory and honor: "None, none remain / whose bosoms ever felt the stings of honor, / or knew a wish for glory: scarcely virgins, / or tender brides escape the general flame; / and those, whom hard

¹⁰⁸ Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:45.

¹⁰⁹ "Si riscuote, prende la tazza, s'incammina, poi torna a fermarsi." Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:46.

necessity detains, / rave at their fate and call the Gods unjust.”¹¹⁰ Though clearly agitated, Achilles refrains from stepping forward.

Just as Achilles’s frustration climaxes, Lycomedes bids Deidamia: “Go [Deidamia], place the lyre in Pyrrha’s hand. / Now, daughter, urge her with skill / to raise her voice and join the sounding chords: / she nothing can deny thee.”¹¹¹ That Metastasio connected musical performance (as opposed to war) with the feminine made Achilles’s jettisoning of his lyre all the more stark. The irony, of course, is that the scene unfolds within a spectacle in praise of the largest opera house in Europe.

In a second performance, “Achilles sings, accompanying his voice with the lyre.”¹¹² Sarro sets the phenomenal aria “Se un core annodi” to a *mandolino* and continuo, an orchestral imitation of a lyre. Achilles picks up his lyre, per the King’s request, and performs a strophic canzona in 3/8, with a refrain, of which ex. 3.3 captures a portion:

Se un core annodi,
Se un'alma accendi,
Che non pretendi,
Tiranno Amor?

Vuoi che al potere
Delle tue frodi
Ceda il sapere,
Ceda il valor.

When you knot a heart,
When you light a soul,
What, tyrannical love,

¹¹⁰ “Chi d'onore / sente stimuli in sen, chi sa che sia / desio di Gloria, or non rimane. / Appena restano, e quasi a forza, / le vergini, le spose; e alcun, che dura / necessità trattien, col ciel s'adira, / come tutti gli dei l'abbiano in ira.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:46.

¹¹¹ “Deidamia, imponi / che alle corde sonore / la voce unisca e la maestro mano: / tutto farà per te.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:46.

¹¹² “Canta accompagnandosi con la lira.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:46.

Do you not claim?

His cruel frauds, on every hand,
He spreads alike for all:
Not valor can his power withstand,
And wisdom's self must fall.¹¹³

The choir echoes him with the refrain, "Se un core annodi":

Se in bianche piume
De' numi il nume
Canori accenti
Spiegò talor;

Se fra gli armenti
Muggì negletto,
Fu solo effetto
Del tuo rigor.

When in white plumes
The god of gods
Sometimes deployed
Singing accents;

When amid the herds
He bellowed neglected,
It was just the effect
Of your severity.¹¹⁴

Choir: Refrain

De' tuoi seguaci
Se a far si viene,
Sempre in tormento
Si trova un cor;

E vuoi che baci
Le sue catene,
Che sia contento
Del suo dolor.

Who'er betrayed by female smiles

¹¹³ Metastasio, "Se un core annodi" (*Achille in Sciro* 2.8). Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:47 (modified).

¹¹⁴ Metastasio, "Se un core annodi" (*Achille in Sciro* 2.8). Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:47 (modified).

Would join the train of Love,
Too late shall find his cruel wiles,
And lasting sorrow prove.

The tyrant wills that every slave
Should kiss the galling chains;
Should boast the sufferings beauty gave,
And triumph in his pains.¹¹⁵

Ex. 3.4: Sarro, "Se un core annodi," *Achille in Sciro* 2.8, mm. 46–56 ¹¹⁶

46

Mandolino

Achille

del - le tue fro - di ce - da il sa - pe - re

[Continuo]

50

Man.

A

ce - da il sa - pe - re, ce - da il va -

[Cont.]

54

Man.

A

lor, ce - da il va - - lor.

[Cont.]

Segue Coro

¹¹⁵ Metastasio, "Se un core annodi" (*Achille in Sciro* 2.8). Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:47.

¹¹⁶ Score based on I-Nc, Rari 31.3.8, 116r.

In “Se un core annodi,” Metastasio transforms Achilles from an awkward dancer (as told in classical sources) to a virtuosic musician. To assess Achilles’s ability, one need only glance at mm. 46–56. Periodic phrases govern melodic development. From Achilles’s gifted hands emanates a lyrical melody, the primary gestures of which (including triplets and Lombard rhythms) fit well with those associated with feminine musical traits and galant virtuosity. In doing so, the canzona allows Achilles to further authenticate this temporary mask of Pirra, while demonstrating his musical abilities.

The moment of entrapment arrives. As Achilles reaches the height of his song the stage directions indicate that, “the song is interrupted by the followers of Ulisse bringing in the presents for the king.”¹¹⁷ At this point, the libretto’s pace quickens. Ulisse’s men lay before Lycomedes gifts of dyed cloth, gems, vases, and weapons. Metastasio increases the tension by having each character comment on the beauty of a given object. Deidamia marvels at the gems, declaring, “The Aeolian sea does not have gems as lucid as those.”¹¹⁸ Likewise, Teagene, Achilles’s competitor for Deidamia, observes that, “I ne’er till now / beheld the sculptur’d vase / So fram’d and fashion’d by a master hand.”¹¹⁹ Achilles/Pirra is clearly distracted by these observations, for Deidamia encourages him to “Resume thy

¹¹⁷ “(Al comparer dei doni portati da’ Seguaci di Ulisse s’interrompe il canto d’Achille).” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:48.

¹¹⁸ “L’eo marina / non ha lucide gemme al par di quelle.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:49 (modified).

¹¹⁹ “Altri finora / sculti vasi io non vidi / di magistero equal.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:49.

lyre.”¹²⁰ The presentation of the gifts marks just the prelude. Ulisse has planned a mock attack in the palace.

Metastasio’s treatment of this famous episode packs all the excitement of a modern action film. To ferret out our hero, Ulisse has arranged for calls of “All’armi” to resound. Then, as written in the libretto, “a noise is heard of arms and warlike instruments, all the guests rise with looks of astonishment and fear except Achilles, who remains seated with an intrepid air.”¹²¹ Some spectators run toward the fight, while others (among them Deidamia) escape in fear. Only Arcade and Ulisse respond with mock surprise. As the crowd scatters, “Ulisse draws aside with Arcade to observe Achilles, who stands up, already taken with by his warrior spirit.”¹²² As is evident from the above description, Metastasio afforded the composer much opportunity for heightened musical display. Although no surviving evidence relates how this moment unfolded phenomenally, or even how it was received, the surviving score suggests a conservative approach, with much of the action occurring in secco recitative. The declaration of “all’armi” thus occurs through a one-measure burst of four-part exclamations. After the crowd disperses, our young hero takes Ulisse’s bait, with Ulisse and observing out of view.

Sarro sets Achilles’s monologue “Ove son,” in which he finally submits to his true masculinity (“What sudden fire now glows / within my bosom! I can hold no longer”), as an

¹²⁰ “Ritorna / agl’interrotti carmi.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:49.

¹²¹ “S’ode strepito d’armi. Licomede, snudando la spade, corre al tumulto. Fugge orgnuno. Ulisse si ritira in disparte con Arcade per osservare Achille, che si leva, già invaso d’estro guerriero.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:49.

¹²² “Ulisse si ritira in disparte con Arcade per osservare Arcade, che si leva, già invaso d’estro guerriero.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:50.

accompagnato.¹²³ The strings, which burst forth in a *concitato* D major, underpin the desperate moment. With each *caesura*, the ensemble cuts through with sharp quarter notes, sometimes with diminished chords. Strikingly, Sarro concludes the accompagnato with an aside by Ulisse—“Observe him, Arcas, well”—opting thereafter for secco recitative.¹²⁴ It is here that Achilles declaims the most famous monologue in Metastasio’s libretto—his moment of revelation. Achilles, frustrated with himself, throws down the lyre and picks of a sword, declaring:

E questa cetra
 Dunque e l’arme d’Achille?
 Ah! No; la sorte
 Altre n’offre, e più degne,
 A terra, a terra,
 Vile stromento!

And is this lyre
 The weapon for Achilles?
 No, fortune now provides me nobler arms
 More worthy of me—Away!
 To earth, to earth!
 Vile instrument!¹²⁵

The rubric explains that Achilles “dashes it on the ground, and goes to the table to take the arms from the presents brought by Ulysses.”¹²⁶

All’onorato incardo
 Dello scudo pesante
 Torni il braccio avvilito:

(in questa mano lampeggi il ferro)

¹²³ “Che fiamma è questa, / onde sento avvamparmi?” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:50.

¹²⁴ “Guardalo. (Piano ad Aracde).” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:50.

¹²⁵ Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:50.

¹²⁶ “Getta la cetra e va all’armi, portate co’ doni di Ulisse.” Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:51.

Ah! Ricomincio adesso
 A ravvisar me stesso.
 Ah, fossi a fronte
 A mille squadre e mille.

This hand debas'd
 Shall wield the ponderous buckler's weight,
 Weight, and this the gleaming sword:

(takes the sword and shield)

Ah! Now I feel,
 I know myself Achilles—
 Lead me, Gods!
 To meet [...] with single force a thousand foes.¹²⁷

Sarro opted instead for simplified recitative. Regardless, the dramatic efficacy of Metastasio's scene remained intact. Achilles's true identity has been revealed.

Conclusion

Our young hero is thus set back on the path to war and the fateful death that awaits him at the hands of Hector. Although the Delphic Oracle foretold his death, prompting Thetis to exile her son to Scyros, the implications of that revelation would wait for another day. For now, the spectators in attendance at the Teatro San Carlo's inauguration celebrated Lycomedes's resolution of Achilles's tension between the glory of war and the triumph of love. His ability as a warrior was always assumed. Although the opera's celebration of marriage aligned neatly with current events (which, to some degree, honored Carlo's forthcoming nuptials, but also propagated the appealing notion that Naples stood not just the

¹²⁷ Metastasio, *Dramas*, 2:51 (modified).

equal but the superior to its old rival, Vienna), Metastasio's libretto, when considered alongside the inauguration of the Teatro San Carlo itself, likewise permitted the Carolinian regime to cleverly advance the claim of the inevitability of Carlo's reign through the extended metaphor of Achilles's revelation as an "enlightened hero," to borrow Heller's phrase.¹²⁸

As I have shown, without the Teatro San Carlo itself, such rhetoric presented through any other Metastasian opera seria would have sounded quite hollow to the Neapolitan gentry, who had proven themselves weary of political promises from Spanish and Austrian viceroys. Yet, when coupled with this architectural down payment, the imagined state constructed around Sarro's *Achille in Sciro* and the inaugural events refreshed the image of the king and kingship in such a way as to convey a sense of positive momentum around the young monarch. No less important was what Sarro's opera seem to suggest about Scyros (Naples): that of a beautiful, artistic city on the verge of political and cultural glory. The evening indeed called for celebration.

¹²⁸ Heller, "Achilles," 577.

Chapter Four

Dreaming of Alexander in a Theater State, Naples, 1747**Introduction**

Thumbing through the *Narrazione delle solenni reali feste fatte celebrare in Napoli* (1749) is quite an experience.¹ As a gala book, its dimensions are considerable: 19 × 22 inches.² The tale told within its pages relates the many games played, operas heard, galas danced, processions witnessed, banquets attended, and not least of all civic rites and fireworks observed, all to celebrate the birth of Filippo, the Kingdom of Naples's first royal prince in over two centuries. A grateful King Carlo III and his Saxon wife, Maria Amalia, gave thanks through an elaborate two-week grand *festa*, which commenced on November 4, 1747. This day was auspicious on two counts: it was the king's name day and the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of the Teatro San Carlo. A material object article of royal propaganda, the *Narrazione delle solenni reali feste fatte celebrare in Napoli* (referred to hereafter as the *Narrazione*) was meant to convey, both in text and opulently illustrated plates, the experience of attending this event. Although the festival celebrated the birth of the prince specifically, it also venerated the king and kingship generally (embodied in the king himself and the state) in a necessary imbrication of father and son, king and prince, present and future.

¹ *Narrazione delle solenni reali feste fatte celebrare in Napoli da Sua Maesta il Re dell Due Sicilie Carlo Infante di Spagna Duca di Parma, Piacenza & c. per la nascita del suo primogenitor Filippo Real Principe delle Due Sicilie* (Naples: [N.P.], 1749).

² Dimensions as reported by Alden Murray in "The Court and *Cuccagna*," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 18:5 (1960), 157.

The *Narrazione* and the spectacle it detailed offered up a kind of mid-eighteenth-century *Gesamtkunstwerk*, wherein the arts combined in celebration of this new *primogenitore* and the belief that the succession of the Bourbon line (and by extension the Kingdom of Naples itself) was all but secure, no doubt a relief to the parents and court alike, who until now had celebrated the birth of two daughters but no sons. Yet despite the multimedia form of the *Narrazione*, as well as the event's relevance to both Neapolitan political and musical history, a bird's eye view of the 1747 *festa* has gone lacking. This is not to say that the subject has been neglected altogether, but rather to suggest that when scholars have examined the *festa*, they have primarily done so from their own disciplinary concerns. William McClung, for example, has studied the *Narrazione* through the Foucauldian lens of power and coercion, specifically with regard to how court scenographer and architect Vincenzo Re (1700–1762) manipulated internal spaces, with the goal of perpetuating the idea of the harmony between the Neapolitan classes.³ Heather Minor has examined at the construction of plates and explained why the gala book's publication, which should have occurred quickly, languished for two years.⁴

Musicologists have shown less interest in the *Narrazione* itself, save for Neal Zaslaw, who studied its illustrations for evidence on the placement of the court orchestra.⁵ The principal musical events were a revival of Johann Adolf Hasse's *Siroe, re di Persia* (Bologna, 1733) and a new *festa teatrale* by young librettist Ranieri De' Calzabigi and popular Neapolitan composer Giuseppe

³ William McClung, "The Décor of Power in Naples, 1747," *Journal of Architectural Education* 52:1 (1998), 40.

⁴ The lapse in the publication of the *Narrazione* was due to a paper shortage and concerns about print quality. See Heather Hyde Minor, "Rejecting Piranesi," *The Burlington Magazine* 118 (2001): 412–419.

⁵ See Neal Zaslaw, *The Birth of the Orchestra: History of an Institution, 1650–1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 153.

De Majo, entitled *Il sogno di Olimpia*.⁶ It staged the famous episode of Olympia's prophetic dream—that her son Alexander the Great would achieve military greatness and ascend to the throne of the Greek empire—as a metaphor for the presumptive future success of young Filippo.⁷ Rather, much of the discourse has focused on Calzabigi's biography and early theatrical compositions for what they elucidate about the poet's youthful literary style and his career in Naples.⁸ *Olimpia* was one of several examples from Calzabigi's formative years in Naples and shows a clear dependence on Metastasio, especially his *Il sogno di Scipione*. The two would later differ, both in person and in print, on the poetics of tragedy vis-à-vis contemporary opera seria.⁹

⁶ The most comprehensive work on the *festa teatrale* remains Raymond Monelle, "Gluck and the *festa teatrale*," *Music and Letters* 54 (1973): 308–25; and Jacques Joly, *Les fêtes théâtrales de Métastase à la cour de Vienne (1731–1767)* (Clermont-Ferrand: Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines, 1978). On the *festa teatrale* in Naples, see Teresa Gialdroni and Agostino Ziino, "La festa teatrale nella tradizione musicale napoletana, 1734–1797," in *Il Settecento*, ed. Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1994), 419–468.

⁷ On De Majo, Ulisse Prota-Giurleo reports that "Giuseppe De Maio, Primo Maestro della R. Cappella di V. M. supplicando espone, come già che la rara Clemenza di V.M si è degnata di ammettere suo figlio Gio. Francesco per sonare da secondo cembalo la Serenata fatta per ordine di V.M., la supplica di ammetterlo nella Real Cappella per Organista con qualche soldo stimerà la Real Clemenza di V.M., avendo il Supplicante una ben grossa famiglia di Quattro figlie femine e questo solo ed unico maschio, e il tutto lo riceverà quam Deus." Ulisse Prota-Giurleo, *Breve storia del Teatro di Corte e della musica a Napoli* (Napoli: L'Arte tipografica, 1952), 123. On Calzabigi's time in Naples, see *Ranieri Calzabigi tra Vienna e Napoli*, ed. Federico Marri and Francesco Paolo Russo (Livorno: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1998).

⁸ See, in particular, Francesca Menchelli-Buttini, "Due Feste Teatrale Napoletane di Ranieri De' Calzabigi," in *Ranieri De' Calzabigi tra Vienna e Napoli: atti del convegno di studi (Livorno, 23–24 Settembre 1996)*, ed. Federico Marri and Francesco Paolo Russo (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1997), 147–163; and Maurizio Piscitelli, "I libretti napoletani di Ranieri De' Calzabigi," *Critica letteraria* 19 (1991): 320–340.

⁹ Calzabigi and Metastasio began a correspondence in 1747. In it Metastasio somewhat harshly critiqued the young poet's *Il sogno di Olimpia*, observing: "L'argomento della sua Festa è grande, maestoso e proporzionatissimo all'occasione: lo stile è felice con nobiltà, e nobile senza timore, chiaro, numeroso, poetico, e tale in somma ch'io non repute sicurissima la cura di migliorarlo: i pensieri son giusti, veri e connessi; e ne sarei ancora più soddisfatto se la copia loro corrispondesse alla qualità ... del *Sogno d'Olimpia* mi congratulo sinceramente seco, assicurandola con quell candore, di cui forse in questa lettera le ho data evidente pruova, che da lungo tempo in qua non

These perspectives have all proven invaluable in fleshing out the *Narrazione*'s political rhetoric, and yet we still know little about the *festa* itself, its musical components, or the construction of Carolinian socio-political identity, the ideological mission underpinning the event.¹⁰ This chapter seeks to redress the imbalance by asking how the Carolinian regime imagined their collective future around the *primogenitore* Filippo. Building upon McClung's work on architecture and power, my claim is that the successful display of cultural and political power at the *festa* hinged not solely on court scenographer Vincenzo Re's abilities to imagine new social and political relationships through modified spaces, as McClung contends, but also on reifying the concept of Carolinian kingship throughout the festival, a process that only comes into view when examining *Il sogno di Olimpia*, the principal musical event, in its proper context.

The first section considers some of the classical narratives on Alexander the Great, but specifically his place in early modern models of classical education, where his exploits loomed large. The next part addresses the *Narrazione* as a rhetorical document, its juxtaposition of internal and external spaces, and how the gala book can help us understand the construction of

mi sono pervenute d'Italia composizioni poetiche che tanto m'abbiano soddisfatto, e ch'io giudico su tali fondamenti non esser questi più alti segni a quali possono aspirare i suoi felice talenti." Pietro Metastasio to Ranieri de' Calzabigi, Vienna, (December 30, 1747), in Pietro Metastasio, *Tutte le opere di Pietro Metastasio*, ed. Bruno Brunelli (Milan: Mondadori, 1951), 3:331.

¹⁰ Neapolitan Secretary of State Bernardo Tanucci offered his own observations: "Today we are at the nativity festivals for the [royal] son. Calzabigi has written the cantata. The Neapolitans disapprove of it. I do not know if it is out of true judgment or hatred of a foreigner, of which all the nations persecute and many have also eaten as the cannibals do presently. I am not a poet, but with common sense I judge most of it well, and in other parts I see errors that one could fix easily" "Siamo ora qui noi nelle feste natalizie del figlio maschio. Calsabigi [sic] ha fatta la cantata che questi napoletani disapprovano, non so se per vero giudizio o per odio del forestiero, cui tutte le nazioni persequitano e molte hanno mangiato come anche fanno i cannibali presentemente. Io non son poeta, ma col senso commune la giudico buona per la maggior parte e nell'altra vedo errori che si potrebbero facilmente emendare" Bernardo Tanucci, *Epistolario*, ed. R.P. Coppini and R. Nieri (Rome: Edizioni di storia e Letteratura, 1980), 2:327 (translation mine).

Carolinian political propaganda. This portion also sets the stage for the chapter's two central sections: *Il sogno di Olimpia* and the 1747 *Cuccagna*. By combining contemporary accounts, letters, the *Narrazione*, Calzabigi's libretto,¹¹ and De Majo's score,¹² we can see and hear the Carolinian court going about the business of devising their brand of absolutist propaganda, specifically the representation of the first Carolinian royal succession. In many ways, the serenata and abundance rite alike unfolded a binary between internal and external, suggested by the *Narrazione* itself, emphasizing the gradual reification of kingship, which culminated in the appearance of the king himself during *Cuccagna*.

Prophesizing an Emperor, Educating a King

When the court first heard *Il sogno di Olimpia*, the legend of Olimpia's dream, with its prophecy of Alexander's future greatness, was familiar to opera goers. Alexander the Great stood out as a principal figure of study for the European aristocracy, but especially with regard to the education of royal families. Thus the Neapolitan court's choice of subject fit well within this tradition and aim. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, Europe's aristocracy was given an education in languages (especially Latin and Greek), the arts, literature, history, and rhetoric,

¹¹ Ranieri De' Calzabigi, *Il sogno di Olimpia / La Nascita / Del Real Principe delle due Sicilie / FILIPPO DI BORBONE / Ne' giorni 6, 11, 13, 16 del mese di Novembre 1747* (Naples: Ricciardi, 1747). The only known copy lies in I-Rvat. My appreciation goes to Francesca Menchelli-Buttini for making a copy available.

¹² Ms. score is in I-Mc, Nosedà A.33. A microfilm copy is also found at F-Pn, D7264-5.

among others.¹³ Georgina Masson, in her biographical research on the leading seventeenth-century patroness of the arts, Queen Christina of Sweden (1629–1689), has shown that as Christina received her classical education she came to admire classical figures emblematic of their stoic principles, particularly Alexander the Great, Cyrus, Caesar, and Scipio.¹⁴ The figure of Alexander the Great emerged from her notes as particularly noteworthy of study and emulation.

When readers of Christina's time wished to record relevant ideas about or quotations by classical figures like Alexander, they did so in a notebook referred to as a "commonplace book." One typical strategy involved the collection of sayings and narratives from ancient histories and myths, so as to resurrect them later in conversation and in writing.¹⁵ In his research on the classical sources for Handel's *Alessandro*, Richard King examined a number of these commonplace books.¹⁶ Of particular interest are those belonging to another young monarch, Queen Anne of England, which survive today in the Koninklijk Huisarchief in The Hague.¹⁷

¹³ Particularly helpful here has been James Bowen's three-volume *A History of Western Education* (London and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972–1981), especially vol. 3; and Richard King, "Classical History and Handel's *Alessandro*," *Music and Letters* 77:1 (1996): 34–63. On the mutual benefit to artists and patrons alike of this education project, see Benjamin Rowland, Jr., *The Classical Tradition in Western Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 249.

¹⁴ See Georgina Masson, *Queen Christina* (London: Secker Warburg, 1969), 55. See also Susanna Åkerman, *Queen Christina of Sweden and Her Circle: The Transformation of a Seventeenth-Century Philosophical Libertine* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1991); Veronica Buckley, *Christina: Queen of Sweden* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004); and Oskar Garstein, *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in Scandinavia: The Age of Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina of Sweden, 1622–1656* (Leiden: Brill Editore, 1992).

¹⁵ For more on this practice, see R.R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 269–70.

¹⁶ King, "Alessandro," 36–37.

¹⁷ Koninklijk Huisarchief, The Hague, Netherlands, Archief A17 No. 470/3.

From them, we glean the process by which the young princess gathered notable material. One volume, in particular, assembled selections by Plutarch, Thucydides, and Herodotus, as well as twenty-eight pages from Plutarch's *Lives*. For each personage, Anne made specific observations about a given hero's traits and actions.¹⁸ Clearly, such archival sources have the potential (and should certainly be investigated further) to reveal how an eighteenth-century ruler or patron may have engaged with the classical figures they saw onstage. Though Alexander was not yet a prominent figure in the Neapolitan *primogenitore's* education, the Carolinian court drew on this subject as an easy metaphor for their own royal power. Moreover, given Naples's historical and cultural ties to *Magna Graecia*, the kingdom could more compellingly tie itself back to a glorious past, of which Alexander the Great and his empire formed an important part.

From Dreams of Alexander to Dreams of Philip

Alexander's mother, Olimpias, was born in c. 375 BCE to King Neoptolemus I (r. 370–357 BCE) of Epirus, which lies near modern-day Macedonia.¹⁹ Known by multiple names throughout her life, including Polyxena and Myrtale, she assumed the new name of Olimpias in 356 BCE. Waldemar Heckel has conjectured that her future husband Philip II's victory in the Olympics as well as the news of Alexander's birth may have been the reasons for the change.²⁰

¹⁸ King, "Alessandro," 36.

¹⁹ In this chapter, "Olimpias" refers to Alexander's mother, as conveyed in classical sources. The Italianization, "Olimpia," will denote the character in De Majo's serenata.

²⁰ Waldemar Heckel, *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander: Prosopography of Alexander's Empire* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 181.

She would later change her name to Stratonice. Philip and Olimpias married in 357 BCE.

According to Plutarch, Philip fell in love with Olimpia about the time the two joined the *Kabeiri* mystery cult on Samothrace.²¹ The night before they consummated their marriage:

The bride [Olimpias] dreamed that there was a peal of thunder and that a thunder-bolt fell upon her womb, and that thereby much fire was kindled, which broke into flames that traveled all about, and then was extinguished. At the same time, too, after the marriage, Philip dreamed that he was putting a seal upon his wife's womb; and the device of the seal, as he thought, was the figure of a lion.²²

As Plutarch makes clear, some seers interpreted this dream as significant, believing that “Philip needed to put a closer watch upon his marriage relations; but Aristander of Telmessus said that the woman was pregnant, since no seal was put upon what was empty, and pregnant of a son whose nature would be bold and lion-like.”²³

Complications soon arose. Not only was Olimpias known to be jealous and Philip combative, but “all the women of these parts were addicted to the Orphic rites and the orgies of Dionysus from very ancient times being called Klodones and Mimallones.”²⁴ These rituals apparently involved the worship of serpents, to the extent that their presence “dulled the ardor of Philip's attention to his wife.”²⁵ The result was that “he no longer came often to sleep by her side, either because he feared that some spells and enchantments might be practiced upon him by her, or because he shrank from her embraces in the conviction that she was the partner of a superior

²¹ Plutarch, *Alexander* 2.1, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916). For more on the cult, see Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 283.

²² Plutarch, *Alexander* 2.2.1–7, trans. Perrin, *Alexander*, 227.

²³ Plutarch, *Alexander* 2.3.1–5, trans. Perrin, *Alexander*, 227.

²⁴ Heckel, *Alexander*, 181–182, and Plutarch, *Alexander* 2.5.1–3, trans. Perrin, *Alexander*, 227.

²⁵ Plutarch, *Alexander* 2.4.3, trans. Perrin, *Alexander*, 227.

being.”²⁶ In section 3.3 of *Alexander*, we learn that the young warrior was born on day six in the month of Hecatombaeon, or about July 20, 356 BCE.²⁷ Plutarch describes the birth:

On this day the temple of Ephesian Artemis was burnt. It was apropos of this that Hegesias the Magnesian made an utterance frigid enough to have extinguished that great conflagration. He said, mainly, it was no wonder that the temple of Artemis was burned down, since the goddess was busy bringing Alexander into the world.²⁸

As with Olimpias, Alexander the Great’s biography has been largely transmitted by Plutarch, though Quintus Curtius Rufus’s and Flavius Arianus’s “histories” of Alexander remain important sources.²⁹ It was particularly Plutarch’s narrative, however, that garnered much attention in the early modern era. Indeed, the *Lives* (of which *Alexander* formed a part) was so popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that James Thomson has argued that its readers’ lens on classical Greece and Rome was constructed largely through reading Plutarch.³⁰ One might debate the veracity and value of such claims, yet by the eighteenth century few operatic subjects attracted more attention than Alexander the Great. In his analysis of Hugo Riemann’s *Opem-Handbuch* (1979), Franz Stieger’s *Opemlexikon* (1979–1983), and Claudio Sartori’s *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800* (1980), King has calculated that Alexander the Great

²⁶ Plutarch, *Alexander* 2.4.3–7, trans. Perrin, *Alexander*, 227.

²⁷ Heckel, *Alexander*, 181; and Plutarch, *Alexander* 3.1.2, trans. Perrin, *Alexander*, 229.

²⁸ Plutarch, *Alexander* 3.3.3–7, trans. Perrin, *Alexander*, 229.

²⁹ Quintus Curtius Rufus, *Histories of Alexander the Great*, trans. J. E. Atkinson and John C. Yardley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Flavius Arianus, *History of Alexander*, trans. E. Illif Robson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929). See also Elizabeth Baynham, *Alexander the Great: The Unique History of Quintus Curtius* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

³⁰ James Alexander Thomson, *The Classical Background of English Literature* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 107. Basic also are Rudolf Hirzel, *Plutarch* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1912); D.A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London: Duckworth Press, 1973), and Ernst Anselm Joachim Honigmann, “Shakespeare’s Plutarch,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 10:1 (1959): 25–33.

proved one of the most popular operatic subjects in opera seria.³¹ These findings correlate well with the claim that Alexander figured prominently in aristocratic commonplace books. In sum, the choice of Alexander made logical sense as an operatic subject for the 1747 *fiesta*, given the political context. The uniqueness of the libretto, however, lay in Calzabigi's focus on Olimpia and her dream, rather than on Alexander himself.³² As we shall see, this rhetorical strategy mirrored the *fiesta* generally, where Filippo appeared only in symbol, not in person.

Representing Power, Reifying Kingship

Before turning to *Il sogno di Olimpia* itself, I wish to examine the 1749 gala volume, both to guide the reader through this spectacle and to account for some of the political rhetoric surrounding it. With the full title of *Narrazione delle solenni reali feste fatte celebrare in Napoli da sua Maestà il Re delle due Sicilie Carlo Infante di Spagna Duca di Parma, Piacenza ... per la Nascita del suo primogenitor Filippo Real Principe delle due Sicilie*, this oversized book was issued a year later than planned, due in part to a paper shortage, as well as design issues.³³ The folio consists of a frontispiece, twenty pages of descriptive prose, and fifteen engravings. These plates afford gorgeous views of the Teatro San Carlo, designed by the Teatro's chief set designer, Vincenzo

³¹ King, "Alexander," 40.

³² As Martha Feldman has shown, mothers were rare characters in opera seria, a claim that further distinguishes *Olimpia*'s libretto within this genre. See Martha Feldman, "The Absent Mother in Opera Seria," in *Siren Songs: Representation of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 29–46.

³³ On these issues and Giovanni Antonio Piranesi's place in this context, see Minor, "Piranesi," 412–419.

Re (1695–1762).³⁴ Carlo Grigori engraved the frontispiece, while the identity of the project's overall designer remains unknown. We may otherwise assign nine engravings to Giuseppi Vasi, three to Nicholas Jardin, and one each to Louis Le Lorrain, Angelo Guidici, and Felice Polanzani respectively.³⁵ Each plate focused the reader's attention on a specific public space. Particularly salient was the Sala Grande, part of the Royal Palace, which Re reconstituted into a theater for *Il sogno di Olimpia* (fig. 4.1). He likewise dressed the Teatro San Carlo, transforming it into a vast ballroom with lavish balls on opposite evenings to the opera. The outdoor structures were equally stunning, particularly the Castel Nuovo and the tower built for the Cuccagna.

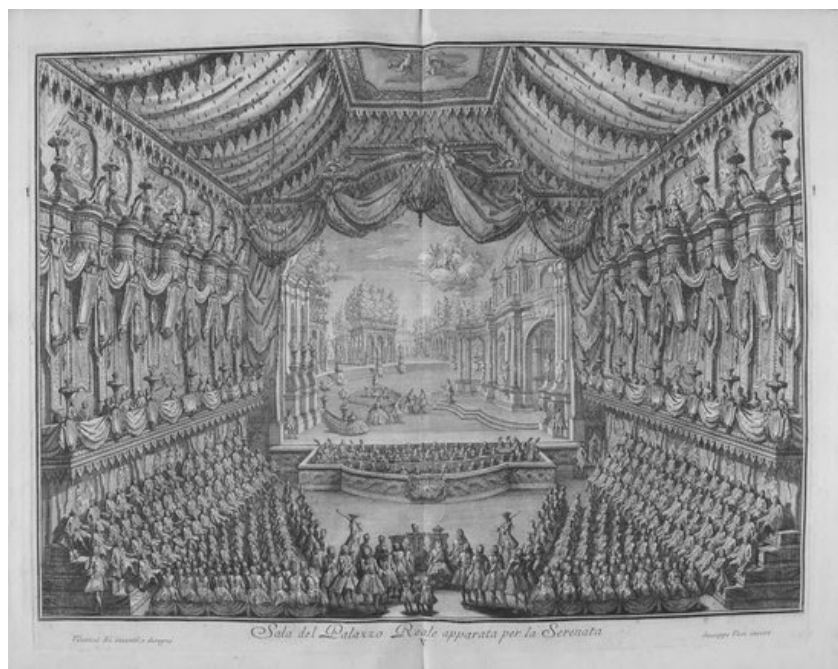
The *Narrazione* guided the reader through various displays of absolutist power and symbolism, bifurcating the experience between those from within (political elites) and those from without (the plebs). The flow of events and their attending political signifiers suggest a gradual reification of kingship and of royal succession. Fixed centrally within this constellation of events was De Majo's opera, whose prophetic discourse extolled the future deeds of both the young prince and Macedonia (or rather, the Kingdom of Naples). The actualization of these deeds (the second node in this *fiesta*) arguably came to full fruition at the Cuccagna, when the king initiated a centuries-old rite of gift exchange between himself and his people. Although this rite of abundance was controversial, mostly because of its attendant violence, Cuccagna remained the most public, tangible form of forging ties with the people, particularly the urban poor. Though unstated, the presumption was that someday the prince himself would, as the King of Naples,

³⁴ One finds various spellings of his name throughout archival sources and contemporary scholarship. Some variations include Vincenzo del Re, Vincezo dal Re, and Vincenzo Re. For the sake of simplicity, I will use the last. For biography and analyses of his work, see Franco Mancini, "Appunti per una storia della scenografia Napoletana del settecento. L'Epoca d'oro: Pietro Righini e Vincenzo Re," *Napoli Nobilissima* 2:2 (1962): 59–68.

³⁵ Murray, "Cuccagna," 157.

wave the white handkerchief, the traditional way to begin the rite.

Figure 4.1: “Sala del Palazzo reale appparata per la serenata,”
Narrazione delle solenni reali feste (Naples, 1749)³⁶



The festival commenced on November 4, 1747, the “day consecrated to the glorious name of his majesty,” and continued, according to the *Narrazione*, in the following schedule:³⁷

Table 4.1: Overview of the 1747 Festa, *Narrazione delle solenni reali feste*³⁸

Saturday, November 4	Gran Gala, e Festa di Ballo di Parata in Palazzo
Sunday, November 5	Gran Gala, e opera al Teatro

³⁶ Newberry Library, Chicago, Case oversize F 034035.59. Used with permission.

³⁷ “Giorno consecrato al glorioso Nome di Sua Maestà” *Narrazione*, 4 (translation mine).

³⁸ *Narrazione*, 4.

Monday, November 6	Gran Gala, e Serenata in Palazzo
Tuesday, November 7	Repose (Riposo)
Wednesday, November 8	Mezza Gala, Festa di Ballo in domino, e Giuoco in Palazzo
Thursday, November 9	Mezza Gala, e Serenata al Teatro
Friday, November 10	Repose
Saturday, November 11	Mezza Gala, Festa di Ballo in domino, e Giuoco in Palazzo
Sunday, November 12	Mezza Gala, e Serenata al Teatro
Monday, November 13	Festa di Ballo in domino, e Serenata al Teatro
Tuesday, November 14	Repose
Wednesday, November 15	Mezza Gala, e Serenata al Teatro
Thursday, November 16	Ballo in domino, Giuoco, e Serenata a Palazzo
Friday, November 17	Repose.
Saturday, November 18	Gran Festa in Ballo in Teatro con Maschera di carattere
Sunday, November 20	Gran Gala, Cuccagna, Fuoco d'artificio, illuminazione al Castello Nuovo, e Ballo di Parata a Palazzo

Fig. 4.2: Frontispiece, *Narrazione delle solenni reali feste* (Naples, 1749)

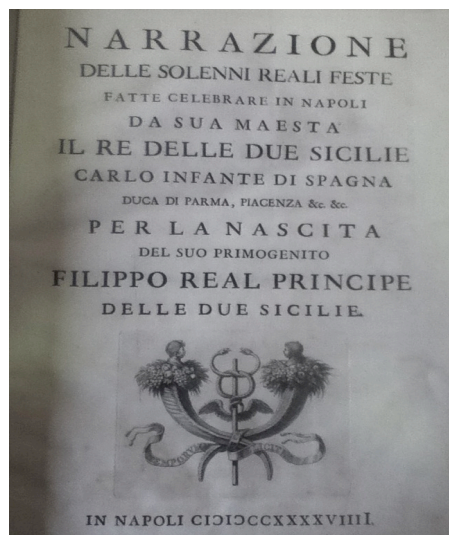


Fig. 4.3: “Facciata del Castello Nuovo Illuminato Trasparenti,”
Narrazione delle solenni reali feste (Naples, 1749)

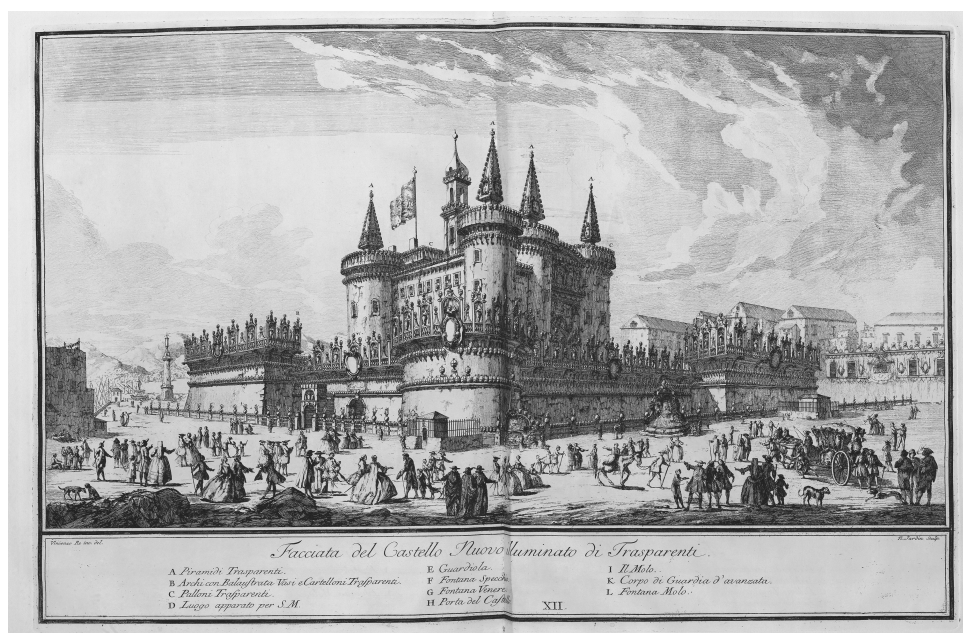


Fig. 4.4: “Disegno della Gran Festa da Ballo in Prospettiva fattasi nel Teatro San Carlo,”
Narrazione delle solenni reali feste (Naples, 1749)



The detail of each engraving is immense, such that one nearly expects the scenes to spring to life (see figs. 4.3 and 4.4). The most prominent of the depicted spaces included the Palazzo's Gran Sala (where De Majo premiered his serenata), the Teatro San Carlo, and the adjoining square.

On the second evening, the court staged a free performance (*gratuito l'ingresso*) of Johann Adolf Hasse's setting of Metastasio's *Siroe, re di Persia* (Bologna, 1733).³⁹ The opera tells the story of two brothers, Medarse and Siroe, who compete for their father's esteem and affection. The cunning Medarse quickly gains his father's favor over Siroe. Similar to Arbace in Metastasio's *Artaserse*, the elder Siroe finds himself imprisoned, suspected of taking the life of Idaspe. In the end, Siroe regains King Cosroe's approval while Medarse's villainy is revealed. Admittedly, the choice of libretto baffles. The focus on the subject of a virtuous son is clear, as is the choice of an opera by two beloved figures associated with Naples. On the other hand, the role of a king, ill-advised by an elder son, would seem an almost uncomfortable juxtaposition with Carlo III in the midst of a celebration of kingship and royal succession. Other than a few details conveyed in the *Narrazione* about the choice of libretto, we know little, including the whereabouts of any surviving scores. Reinhard Strohm has conjectured that a manuscript score in the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, may have been the source for this production.⁴⁰

Day three ushered in the premiere of De Majo's serenata *Il sogno di Olimpia*, the festival's much anticipated musical centerpiece. *Olimpia* received additional performances on days six, nine, twelve, and thirteen. A masked ball, described in the gala book as a "domino" with gaming,

³⁹ *Narrazione*, 8.

⁴⁰ Strohm describes the score in I-Vnm, MS IV 575 as an "intermediate version" between Hasse's original conception of the opera (Bologna, 1733) and his final setting (Warsaw, 1763). See Reinhard Strohm, *Dramma per Musica: Opera Seria in the Eighteenth-Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 281. On the 1763 production, see Frederick L. Millner, *The Operas of Johann Adolf Hasse* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 152–169.

occurred on days five, eight, ten, and thirteen.⁴¹ Day thirteen combined both gaming and the serenata's final performance. The venues for these activities varied depending on the day and type of entertainment. The serenata, for instance, was performed at the Palazzo on days three and thirteen but moved to the Teatro for days six, nine, and twelve.⁴²

The overall uniqueness of the symbolization plotted here by Re and the court lies in the ability to mediate the potential tensions between the elite of the *popolo* (primarily lawyers and scholars) and the landed gentry. The festival's many events (including *Olimpia*) were technically open to the public, yet the *Narrazione* drew clear distinctions around social castes and their placement within specific localities. In his analysis of Re's "architectural interventions," McClung, drawing on Foucauldian theories power construction, has argued that Re's modifications to these spaces of social and political importance bifurcated the festival between "inside" and "out." The gentry and *popolo* enjoyed the majesty from within; the plebs partook from without.⁴³ Even as the perception of a social alliance between the gentry and the elite of the *popolo* seemed firm, Re's transformation of the Teatro San Carlo into a ballroom symbolically demarcated the two upper classes, such that while dancing each group viewed the other. The king, of course, observed all. As McClung observes, "Re fashioned a spatial metaphor for their enlightened absolutism, subjecting the two antagonistic but dependent classes [the gentry and the *civiltà*] to each other's reciprocal presence and gaze, and both to the king's total and unceasing surveillance."⁴⁴ His claims about social influence are sound, but how the events unfolded (from the focused interiority of *Il sogno di Olimpia* to the conspicuous exteriority of Cuccagna) also

⁴¹ *Narrazione*, 4.

⁴² For more, see McClung, "Power," 39.

⁴³ McClung, "Power," 43–44.

⁴⁴ McClung, "Power," 44.

charted a symbolic trajectory meant to make concrete the concept of kingship as the festival progressed over the two weeks from the internal to external.

This juxtaposition between the internal and external also aligns neatly with what I term the festival's "prophecy/realization" dynamic. If the many dances and social interactions were governed by a strict set of social prescriptions, then the festival's principal events—De Majo's *Il sogno di Olimpia* and the Cuccagna—presented their own narratives on the nature of kingship and the Kingdom of Naples's future. In order to understand how these two moments supported the gradual reification of kingship, I will look first at Calzabigi and De Majo's *Olimpia* and then examine the *Narrazione*'s discursive representation of the 1747 Cuccagna. In short, the serenata's narration of Olimpia's dream became a metaphor for the durability of the monarchy and, in particular, the future political successes of Filippo and the kingdom. *Olimpia*'s forward-looking discourse functions consistently throughout the *festa teatrale*. Framed around a dream, a popular topos throughout Greek and Roman myth for conveying or receiving prophecy, the serenata prepared festival goers for the festival's climax, the Cuccagna, wherein the abstract notions of kingship pondered so eloquently in the opera became actualized, thereby completing this gradual reification of kingship. The *Narrazione* coupled the internal with dreams of the future (as represented in *Olimpia*), while the external presented the king and kingship as fully constituted in his physical being. Young Filippo? He was always present in symbol, but rarely in person.

“E questo, o numi, è il figlio”: Calzabigi and De Majo's *Il sogno di Olimpia*

As spectators settled in for the premiere of *Il sogno di Olimpia*, which the libretto describes interchangeably as a “festa teatrale” and “drammatico componimento,” their eyes were treated

to the sumptuous sets designed specifically for the occasion by Re. The scene “depicts a delightful [spot] that opens up to a magnificent household Temple in the Macedonian palace.”⁴⁵ A plate of Re’s set appears in fig. 4.1, and is by far one of the most alluring in the gala book. The roles, whose interpreters included a veritable who’s who of mid-century singers, were distributed as follows:⁴⁶

Olimpia..... Vittoria Tesi
 Jove Caffarelli
 Apollo Egiziello
 Marte Gregorio Babbi
 Il Destino Giovanni Manzuoli
 Il Virtù Angela Conti

Olimpia adopts a tripartite form, though only Acts 1 and 2 survive in score. In accordance with the aesthetics of the *fiesta teatrale*, political allegory governed character and literary development. As the concluding *Licenza* makes clear, opera goers were meant to interpret Olimpia and Alessandro (who never actually appears in the drama) as symbolic of Maria Amalia and Filippo respectively. The plot itself is simple: the serenata opens on a sleeping Olimpia. In a dream, Jove, Mars, Apollo, and Destiny appear to her and describe in turn the future greatness of her son, Alexander. They likewise debate among themselves what will constitute his most heroic attributes. What becomes increasingly evident is the extent to which, both in theme and language, Calzabigi framed these themes in prophetic terms. Given the nature of this genre and its attending propagandistic aims, this strategy would be rather unremarkable. Yet when contextualizing *Olimpia* within the broader festival, the serenata itself suggests a “prophetic” tone,

⁴⁵ “Rappresenta in una Deliziosa che introduce ad un magnifico Tempio domestico nella Reggia di Macedonia.” Calzabigi, *Olimpia*, [5] (translation mine).

⁴⁶ Calzabigi, *Olimpia*, [6].

one whose prognostications would appear to become reality in the Cuccagna, that moment in the festival when the king was seen by all to enact a thickly textured rite of abundance.

Following a boisterous Italian overture in D major, complete with the full complement of oboes, brass, and timpani befitting such a royal occasion, the scene opens on a sleeping Olimpia, sung by one of the century's great prima donnas, Vittoria Tesi.⁴⁷ The deity La Virtù then appears, and later Il Destino. Calzabigi, in framing his drama around Olimpia's dream, not only followed a well worn path (anchored in classical myth) of characters experiencing premonitions or prophecies in dreams,⁴⁸ he also signaled, as Menchelli-Buttini has shown, the drama's intentional imitation of, if not outright reliance on, Metastasio's serenata *Il sogno di Scipione* (1735), a brand of poetics from which Calzabigi would later depart.⁴⁹ Especially at Naples, the figure of

⁴⁷ For more on Tesi, see Helmut Hucke, "L'*Achille in Sciro* di Domenico Sarri e l'inaugurazione del Teatro di San Carlo," in *Il Teatro di San Carlo 1737–1987*, ed. Bruno Cagli, Agostino Ziino, and Franco Mancini (Naples, 1987), 2:21–32; and Edward J. Dent, "Italian Opera in the 18th Century," *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft* 14 (1912–13): 500–09.

⁴⁸ Note, for example, this well known passage from Homer's *The Iliad*: "Quickly he came to the swift ships of the Achaeans, and went to Agamemnon, son of Atreus, and found him sleeping in his hut, and over him was shed ambrosial slumber. So he stood above his head, in the likeness of the son of Neleus, Nestor, whom above all the elders Agamemnon held in honor; likening himself to him, the Dream from heaven spoke, saying: "You sleep, son of battle-minded Atreus, tamer of horses. A man that is a counselor must not sleep the whole night through, one to whom an army has been entrusted, and on whom rest so many cares. But now, quickly heed me, for I am a messenger to you from Zeus, who, far away though he is, cares for you greatly and pities you. He wants you to arm the longhaired Achaeans with all speed, since now you may take the broadway city of the Trojans. For the immortals who have their homes on Olympus are no longer divided in counsel, since Hera has bent the minds of all by her entreaties, and sorrows have been fastened on the Trojans by the will of Zeus. But keep this in your mind, and do not let forgetfulness lay hold of you, whenever honey-hearted sleep lets you go." Homer, *The Iliad* 2.5, trans. A.T. Murray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), 61–63.

⁴⁹ See Ranieri De' Calzabigi and Christoph W. Gluck's Preface to *Alceste* (1769) in *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity Through the Romantic Era*, ed. Oliver Strunk (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 673–675.

Metastasio and his dramatic formula for the *dramma per musica* continued to influence local poetics.⁵⁰

Ex. 4.1: De Majo, "Dove son!," *Il sogno di Olimpia* 1.1, mm. 1–19⁵¹

Largo Cantabile

[Violin I] Largo Cantabile

[Violin II] *Sotto voce* *f*

[Viola] *f* *p*

[Continuo] *f* *p*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Cont.. *f*

⁵⁰ Whereas the deities Fortuna and Constanza caught Scipione's attention (Fortuna: "Vieni e segui miei passi / o gran figlio d'Emilio") in *Il sogno di Scipione*, Calzabigi and De Majo intentionally struck a different chord in their opening recitative. On choosing Metastasian texts because of the poet's local connections, see See Hucke, "Teatro di San Carlo," 1:24; and Croce, *Teatri*, 2:165.

⁵¹ Score based on F-Pn, D7264, 33r–37r.

5

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

O.

Cont.

Do-ve son! Che m'av-ven-ne! On-de si spar-ge

8

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

O.

Cont.

L'au-re-o che mi cir-con-da vi-vo rag-gio di lu-me!

10

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

O.

Cont.

O-ve si ac-cen-de quell' in-

12

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

O.

Cont..

so - li-to ar-do-re che mi tro - vo nel cor! Chi mi sol - le - va per que ste im-men-se

16

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

O.

Cont..

Vi - e? Qual' am - pia sce - na di fis - se, di va -

18

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

O.

Cont..

gan - ti lu - ci - di - si - me stl - le s'a - pre su - gl'oc - chi mie - i? Do - ve

The *accompagnato*'s opening ritornello, marked *Largo cantabile*, establishes the dream as the frame of the opera. De Majo marked the opening phrase “*sotto voce*.”⁵² This sense of calm, however, quickly fades. A sudden *forte* disrupts the moment in m. 2.3, which in turn begins a sequence of *tremulati* in the upper strings; this figure occurs with some frequency in opera seria, often to signify the supernatural.⁵³ This undulating ornament, coupled with the first violin's dissonance and syncopation in m. 2, furthered the dramatic tension in such a way as to bring the drama and its dream into view. Underpinned by a drumming bass on G, violins and violas yield to the pulsation in m. 3. On beats 3 and 4 of m. 4, violins abandon the pulsation in favor of octave leaps on B and G respectively. Underneath, the continuo descends an interval of a diminished fifth, from G to C#, thereby bringing the ensemble to a halt.

This frenetic ritornello appears to awaken Olimpia. Though ostensibly dreaming throughout, she “awakes” to her situation. As the ritornello concludes, she cries out:

Dove son! Che m'avvene!
 Onde si sparge
 L'aureo che mi circonda
 Vivo raggio di lume! Ove
 Si accende
 Quell'insolito ardore
 Che mi trovo nel cor!
 Chi mi solleva
 Per queste immense vie!
 Qual'ampia scena
 Di fisse, di vaganti,
 Lucidissime stelle
 S'apre sugli occhi miei!
 Dove son! Che m'avvene ...
 E Tu ... Chi sei?

⁵² It is not known whether the designation is original or a copyist's addition.

⁵³ Note Hasse's use of this gesture (notated in the score as a “*tremulato*”) in Cleofide's *accompagnato* in Act 2 of *Cleofide* (Dresden, 1731), his version of Metastasio's *Alessandro nell'Indie*, which relates Alexander's battles in India.

Where am I! What is happening!
 The gold encircling me
 Gives off a
 Bright ray of light!
 Where is ignited
 That extraordinary ardor
 I find in my heart!
 Who will raise me up
 To these immense paths!
 Reveal to my eyes
 That vast scene
 Of fixed, wandering,
 Clearest stars!
 Where am I! What is happening? ...
 And you? ... who are you?⁵⁴

Heightening the supernatural, while simultaneously reinforcing the scene's dreamscape, De Majo sets the moment as a "numinous accompagnato," a phrase coined by Bruno Forment to describe the musical space for characters to address a deity or be addressed by one.⁵⁵ This musical topic appeared with some frequency in seventeenth-century Venetian opera, and by the eighteenth century had become a constituent part of every opera composer's tool kit. In *Olimpia*, it served the dual purpose of amplifying the supernatural while sonically depicting the "ray of light" (*raggio di lume*) the libretto describes as encircling her.⁵⁶

Olimpia, not knowing whether she wakes or sleeps, is confused. In presenting her as such, Calzabigi and De Majo afford us a deeper sense of her interiority, a perspective that likewise dovetailed with the *festa*'s emphasis on internal spaces as a metaphor for the exclusivity of the upper classes (as opposed to the external with the lower classes). As she sings, the orchestra

⁵⁴ Calzabigi, "Dove son," *Il sogno di Olimpia* 1.1 (translation mine).

⁵⁵ On the "numinous accompagnato," see Bruno Forment, "La Terra, Il Cielo e L'Inferno: The Representation of Greco-Roman Mythology in Opera Seria" (Ph.D. diss., University of Ghent, 2007), 50–73.

⁵⁶ "L'aureo che mi circonda / vivo raggio di lume" (translation mine).

interjects itself only sparingly, as if to punctuate her thoughts. At the phrase “Who will raise me up / to these immense paths?” the orchestra accelerates its rate of interjection, thereby sonically underpinning her confusion and fear. Invoking the numinous mode of *accompagnato*, De Majo suspends the strings around a shimmering G# diminished chord in m. 18, which serves to underscore the phrase “Clearest stars” (*lucidissime stelle*), as Olimpia observes the radiance surrounding her.⁵⁷ This momentary respite gives way to her original pronouncements of confusion—“Dove son! Che m’avvenne.” Suddenly, seeing an apparition, she startles: “And you? ... who are you?” This all marks the highly dramatic entrance of Il Virtù, who descends from above and declares to Olimpia that, though asleep, her soul is in transport to the “ample rings of heaven.”⁵⁸ As a framing device, the opening scene draws on many of the common literary and theatrical conventions associated with prophecy and the supernatural. It would become clear as the serenata unfolded that the use of prophetic discourse did not just entail the hopeful claims of a justifiably excited court, but also figured as part of a broader strategy whose goals would only be realized at the Cuccagna.

Concord, Discord, and Alessandro’s “Grandezze Future”

To grasp how Calzabigi’s use of prophetic discourse was employed for this purpose, and how De Majo himself set this gesture, I examine the famous duet for Caffarelli and Egiziello.

Toward the end of Part II, Marte, Giove, and Apollo unite to describe the future glories that

⁵⁷ “Lucidissime stelle s’apre sugli occhi miei” (translation mine). See Forment, “La Terra, Il Cielo e L’Inferno,” 50.

⁵⁸ “Ampi cerchi del Ciel” (translation mine).

Alexander/Filippo will bring Macedonia/Naples. Following Destino's aria, Giove steps forward to announce: "Olimpia, now is the time / when the order of the fates / reveal all to you: that all intend / great futures for your son."⁵⁹ The assembled deities impress her with the many kingdoms that will fall before Alessandro. Giove, for example, exclaims prophetically: "The destiny of Asia / is already determined."⁶⁰ Olimpia/Maria Amalia finds herself rarely separated from these prognostications. Her future is necessarily bound up with her son's, despite her reactions which vacillate between fear and wonder. Nevertheless, she stands ready to support her son, and the deities likewise reinforce the future prominence of both mother and child.⁶¹ Comforting Olimpia, Giove declares: "And between many victories and many endeavors / you, sweet mother, will have / the best part of Alexander in [your] heart."⁶²

The subsequent duet, with its prophetic discourse, reinforces these sentiments. It marked the climax, not just of Calzabigi's serenata, but, if contemporary accounts are to be believed, of Naples's opera season. Sir Horace Mann, a British diplomat living in Florence, described with excitement the forthcoming opera to Horace Walpole, and the famous Whig politician and man of letters.⁶³ The reasons for all that anticipation had as much to do with the spectacle itself as it

⁵⁹ "Olimpia è tempo adesso / che l'ordine de' Feti / tutto si sveli a te: che tutta intenda / le grandezze future / del Figlio tuo" (translation mine).

⁶⁰ "È già deciso / il destino dell'Asia" (translation mine).

⁶¹ Calzabigi, *Olimpia*, 24.

⁶² "E fra tante Vittorie, e tante imprese / tu dolce Madre avrai; / tu la parte migliore / D'Alessandro nel cor" (translation mine).

⁶³ Their collected letters are captured in *Mann and Manners at the Court of Florence, 1740–1786: Founded on the Letters of Horace Mann to Horace Walpole*, ed. John Dorm (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1876).

did with the prospect of witnessing the rivalry between Caffarelli and Egiziello.⁶⁴ In a letter dated September 19, 1747, Mann offered Walpole an analysis of the relationship between the two castrati. Caffarelli, in particular, had a notorious reputation. Critics lambasted his many inappropriate actions during performances, including but not limited to mocking other actors, audience members, and the orchestra.⁶⁵ Mann's report from Florence provides us some sense of this aspect of Caffarelli's personality, as well as the great anticipation that greeted the 1747 *fiesta*:

Caffarelli sings most divinely well Our second opera [in Florence] begins on Sunday and will be acted in a hurry to give time to Caffarelli to get to Naples by the latter end of October to prepare for the great cantata which is to be performed among other pompous rejoices for the birth of the Duke of Calabria, which are to last from the 2nd to the 19th of November. Most of the English now here will return thither. In the cantata there is to be a duo by Caffarelli [Giove] and Egiziello [Apollo] Caffarelli swears he will make Egiziello sing out of time; he did so by the [Giovanna] Astrua and then publicly beat time to her, for which he was sent to prison.⁶⁶

Clearly, there was an expectation that the duet might be the cause of scandal, if not an outright musical battle.

Turning to the duet itself, the score calls, ironically, for an expressive marking of "Amoroso." "Tu sarai del caro Figlio" mimics the duet type common to lovers in conventional opera seria. Rather than express mutual amorous sentiments (or even disagreement), Apollo and Giove unite to assure Olimpia of the tenderness and love Alexander will show her, sentiments

⁶⁴ Productions centered on enmities between singers were nothing new. My own research has demonstrated that "operatic pairs" sometimes sprang up intentionally to capitalize on them. See Robert Torre, "Operatic Twins and Musical Rivals: Two Settings of *Artaserse* (1730)," *Discourses in Music* 6:1 (2006): 1–12. For a more comprehensive discussion of the many permutations in opera seria, see Reinhard Strohm, "Dramatic Dualities: Metastasio and the Tradition of the Operatic Pair," *Early Music* 26:4 (1998): 551–561.

⁶⁵ Charles Burney, for instance, recorded Porpora's reaction to Caffarelli: "Porpora, who hated him for his insolence, used to say, that he was the greatest singer Italy had ever produced." See Charles Burney, *A General History of Music: From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (London, 1789), 2:818.

⁶⁶ Mann, *Correspondence*, 1:267.

that appear to overwhelm her. Again, note the prominence of the simple future (*futuro semplice*) tense here.

Ex. 4.2: De Majo, “Tu sarai del caro figlio,” *Il sogno di Olimpia* 2.6, mm. 8–11⁶⁷

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 8-9) features Violin I and Violin II with a forte dynamic and a sixteenth-note pattern, marked with a '6' and a trill 'tr'. The Viola part has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Apollo's part is silent in these measures. The Continuo part provides a bass line with a dynamic of 'p'. The second system (measures 10-11) shows Violin I and II with a sixteenth-note pattern, Viola with eighth notes, Apollo with lyrics 'ra - i del ca - ro fi - glio il di -', and Continuo with eighth notes.

APOLLO

Tu sarai del caro Figlio
 Il diletto, la speranza;
 Lieto oggetto di piacer.

GIOVE

Bagnerà di pianto il ciglio
 Nella dolce rimembranza,

⁶⁷ Score based on F-Pn, D7265, 258v.

Nel tuo tenero pensier.

APOLLO

Quest'affetto,

GIOVE

E quest'amore,

APOLLO

Alla Gloria,

GIOVE

Ed all'onore,

A DUE

Ancor più l'accenderà.

APOLLO

Come mai di madre il core
Goder può maggior contento;

A DUE

O miglior felicità.

APOLLO

You will be the delight and hope
Of your dear son;
The happy object of joy.

JOVE

He will be brought to the brink of tears
In sweet remembrance,
In your tender thoughts.

APOLLO

This affection,

JOVE

And this love,

APOLLO

To glory,

JOVE

And honor,

BOTH

Will increase more and more.

APOLLO

How could a mother's heart
Thrive with greater happiness;

BOTH

Oh wonderful happiness!⁶⁸

Given the rumored tension between Caffarelli and Egiziello, this duet likely met with great anticipation and interest.

The duet's musical syntax emphasizes the kind of abundant ornamentation common to mid-century galant opera seria. An eight-measure ritornello with periodic phrases, ornamented triplets, sequences, and trills yields to Apollo's reassurances to Olimpia that "You will be the delight and hope of your dear son." In the first section, Apollo's singing is primarily syllabic, with appoggiaturas smoothing out the edges; the continuo offers an unobtrusive pulsation of quarter and eighth notes. Giove's entrance largely mimics Apollo's, with some minor variations of ornamentation. Apollo and Giove exchange their respective proclamations to Olimpia. In m. 38, Apollo initiates a thrust and parry between the two castrati on the phrase "Quest'affetto." Given their supposed enmity, one might surmise that this would be an occasion for playing on, if not

⁶⁸ Calzabigi, "Tu sarai del caro figlio," *Il sogno di Olimpia* 2.6 (translation mine).

fully accentuating, such notions. The exchanges “questo affanno,” “e questo amore,” “alla Gloria,” and finally “e all’onore” sound almost as if the two are fencing musically. These gestures served not just the possible theatrics of staged spite, but also the development and realization of a localized climax, which occurs three measures later. All this underscores the phrase “sempre più l’accenderà.”

Ex. 4.3: De Majo, “Tu sarai del caro figlio,” *Il sogno di Olimpia* 2.6, mm. 37–50⁶⁹

The musical score for Ex. 4.3 is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 37 to 39, and the second system covers measures 40 to 42. The score includes parts for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Giove, Apollo, and Contrabass. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The score features various musical notations, including dynamics (f, p), articulation (accents), and phrasing slurs. The lyrics for Giove and Apollo are: Giove: "E que - sto a -"; Apollo: "Que - sto af - fet - to". The lyrics for the vocal parts in the second system are: G. (Guitar): "mo - re, e all' - o - no - re, sem - pre"; A. (Alto): "al - la glo - ri - a, sem - pre".

⁶⁹ Score based on F-Pn, D7265, 266v–269r.

42

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

G.

A.

Cont.

tr *tr* *tr* *f* *p*

tr *tr* *tr* *p*

tr *tr* *tr*

più_ l'ac - cen - de - rà, l'ac - cen - de - rà,

più_ l'ac - cen - de - rà, l'ac - cen - de - rà,

f

46

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

G.

A.

Cont.

49

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

G.

A.

Cont.

f *p*

f *p*

sem - pre_ più, sem - pre_ più, sem - pre l'ac -

sem - pre_ più, sem - pre_ più, sem - pre l'ac -

At the end of m. 41, the two castrati sing once more in thirds, but also challenge each other through an array of imitative counterpoint. The violins support their imitative feats, doubling the singers, while the continuo offers a steady drumming bass. De Majo accentuates the verb “l’accenderà,” the *futuro semplice* form of “to ignite,” through an intricate web of imitative counterpoint (mm. 44–49). In doing so, he builds a metaphorical fire through an ascending gesture supported by imitative counterpoint. Each time one singer ascends over the other a momentary victory is suggested. They arrive together in thirds at “sempre più” on beat four of m. 49. As an example of the future-oriented discourse prominent throughout *Il sogno di Olimpia*, this duet, with its ostensible singer rivalry, provided ample focus on the overall prophetic theme of the opera, whose teleological answer would come at the Cuccagna as the king raised his white handkerchief, the symbol of gift reciprocity between the king and his people, thereby conspicuously making the abstract notion of kingship more concrete.

So, did Caffarelli and Egiziello unite in sweet musical concord? Unfortunately, we know little about the intended or actual reception of this duet. Anecdotes survive about Caffarelli’s rivalries with Egiziello and others, but the joke may be on us. On December 19, 1747, Mann resumed his correspondence with Walpole, writing:

You have heard of the great doings at Naples, and the rivalship [sic] between Caffarelli and Egiziello, which luckily did not, as was expected, disturb the festa. Upon Caffarelli’s arrival at Naples, Egiziello went to make him a visit, and was received by that saucy creature upon a stool, where he sat during the whole visit. The affair was made up by mediators, and afterwards they appeared good friends.⁷⁰

The antagonism between Caffarelli and Egiziello was perhaps less vitriolic than originally suggested, and by all accounts, the evening concluded well. As stated in the *Narrazione*: “The serenade ended; for the excellence of musicians, and the desire of those who listened, it seems

⁷⁰ Horace Mann to Walpole (December 19, 1747), in *Mann and Manners*, 1:271.

that it should not so soon come to an end; the King together with the Queen departed, and the celebration for that evening concluded.”⁷¹ Calzabigi and De Majo’s serenata was heard four more times at the festival, both in the Gran Sala and in the Teatro. In each presentation, three chairs appeared before the stage, two occupied by the king and queen, and the last, which was left symbolically open for the young prince (fig. 4.1).⁷²

The 1747 Cuccagna and Displays of Kingship

The final day’s activities (Sunday, November 19) moved the festival outdoors. For those outside the aristocracy, this portion would have been their only experience of the Bourbon court’s two-week celebration, and thus the various activities focused on the king’s (and by extension, the court’s) relationship to the people as externally displayed throughout the day’s events. According to the *Narrazione*, the day included “[a] Grand Gala, Cuccagna, Fireworks, illuminations at the Castello Nuovo, and a parade ball at the palace.”⁷³ The primary spectacle this time was not a grand serenata, though it adopted many theatrical conceits, but rather a Cuccagna. Cuccagne had become by the seventeenth century a prominent marker of Neapolitan festivity and identity and were, not surprisingly, celebrated often, but especially during state events and every Sunday during Carnival.

⁷¹ “Finita la serenata, che per l’eccellenza dei Musici, e per desiderio di chi l’ascoltava, pareva, che non dovesse così tosto aver fine; il Re insieme colla Regina si partirono, e tu compiuto il festeggiare di quella sera.” *Narrazione*, 19 (translation mine).

⁷² For more, see Murray, “Cuccagna,” 163.

⁷³ “Gran Gala, Cuccagna, Fuoco d’Artificio, Illuminazione al Castello Nuovo, e Ballo di Parata a Palazzo.” *Narrazione*, 4.

More than just a grand spectacle, these rituals intentionally provided the populace a “great variety of obstacles, put there just for that purpose” to amuse the aristocracy, who sat along the windows and balconies of the Palazzo Reale.⁷⁴ Key to the rite’s efficacy was the king himself, whose presence was compulsory not just to initiate it, but also to embody and fully legitimate the state and his paternal relationship to it. The Spanish and Austrian viceroys drew on this phenomenon in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in an effort to quell tensions between the viceregal government and the local populace.⁷⁵ By 1747, the Cuccagna had become more centralized than ever, and with the Teatro San Carlo, the Castel Nuovo, the Palazzo Reale, and the Bay of Naples positioned as backdrops, it came to represent in space, finance, and symbol the king, his court, and the rhetoric of abundance.⁷⁶

While evidence suggests that street singers frequently performed broadsides at these rites, the examination of such performances has largely remained the purview of folklorists, anthropologists, and historians.⁷⁷ Martha Feldman’s work, which focuses on how the props of luxury (particularly the social and musical rituals of opera seria) and abundance (food, clothes, and entertainment) seemed more like forced gifts in light of the 1764 famine, nicely demonstrates the value of looking at the Cuccagna alongside the civic rituals that coincided with the opera

⁷⁴ Miller, “Letter 36,” 2:61.

⁷⁵ On rituals in Spanish Naples, see Gabriel Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour: Communication and Reception of Symbolic Forms of Power in Viceregal Naples* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), especially Chapter 2.

⁷⁶ For more on the centralization and the implications for the 1764 Cuccagna, see Feldman, *Sovereignty*, 199.

⁷⁷ For more on the broadside tradition and its representation of the mythical land of the cuccagna, see Del Giudice, “Cheese,” 17.

seria season.⁷⁸ For Feldman, the Cuccagna represents a “classic instance” of Marcel Mauss’s theory of gift exchange, particularly his concept of the “total social phenomenon,” which denotes “all kinds of institutions [that] are given expression at one and the same time—religious, juridical, and moral, which relate to both politics and family ... economic ones, which supposed special forms of production and consumption.”⁷⁹ As enacted at the 1764 Cuccagna, at least, this process of “gift exchange” occurred, as Feldman notes, in two ways. First, gift exchange reproduced metaphorically the collective kingship structure presupposed by the Bourbon dynasty; and second, and perhaps more conspicuously, it affirmed Naples’s stratified economy, wherein the king (and by implication, the prince) ruled over all.⁸⁰

The basic ritual grammar Feldman describes here likely guided most performances of the rite, yet what is also clear is that political ideology inflected these events. And though the average pleb might have responded with indifference to the absolutist political ideologies espoused therein, surviving evidence suggests court officials concerned themselves with such details. We know, for instance, that the basic appearance and theme changed seasonally, and that during carnival, it could change by the day.⁸¹ Part of what made the Cuccagna the “archetypical

⁷⁸ Feldman, *Sovereignty*, 196–203. Franco Mancini and Cesare De Seta have also framed this celebration as a ritual threat of famine; in 1764, actual famine loomed in the city. See Franco Mancini, *Feste ed Apparati civili e religiosi in Napoli* (Naples: Edizione Scientifiche, 1968), 17–18; Cesare De Seta, *L’Italia del Grand Tour* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1992), 190. On the 1764 Cuccagna, see Domenico Scafoglio, *La maschera della Cuccagna: spreco, rivolta e sacrificio nel Carnevale napoletano del 1764* (Naples: Colonnese, 1981); and Laura Barletta, *Il carnevale del 1764 a Napoli: protesta e integrazione in uno spazio urbano* (Naples: Società Editrice Napoletana, 1981).

⁷⁹ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (1923–1924), trans. W. D. Halls (London: Routledge, 1990), 3.

⁸⁰ Feldman, *Sovereignty*, 199.

⁸¹ On the various types of themes expressed in these structures, including monuments, ships, temples, gardens, etc., see Del Giudice, “Cheese,” 45; and Murray, “Court and Cuccagna,” 165.

imagined state,” to borrow Del Giudice’s phrase, was its ideological framing.⁸² It would no doubt be a challenging if not impossible task to set about interpreting each Cuccagna’s underlying ideology or agenda, let alone its context. In most instances, asymmetrical gift exchange appears to have driven its underlying purpose, with, as Feldman has shown, the Bourbon iteration registering barely a pretense of voluntary gift exchange.⁸³

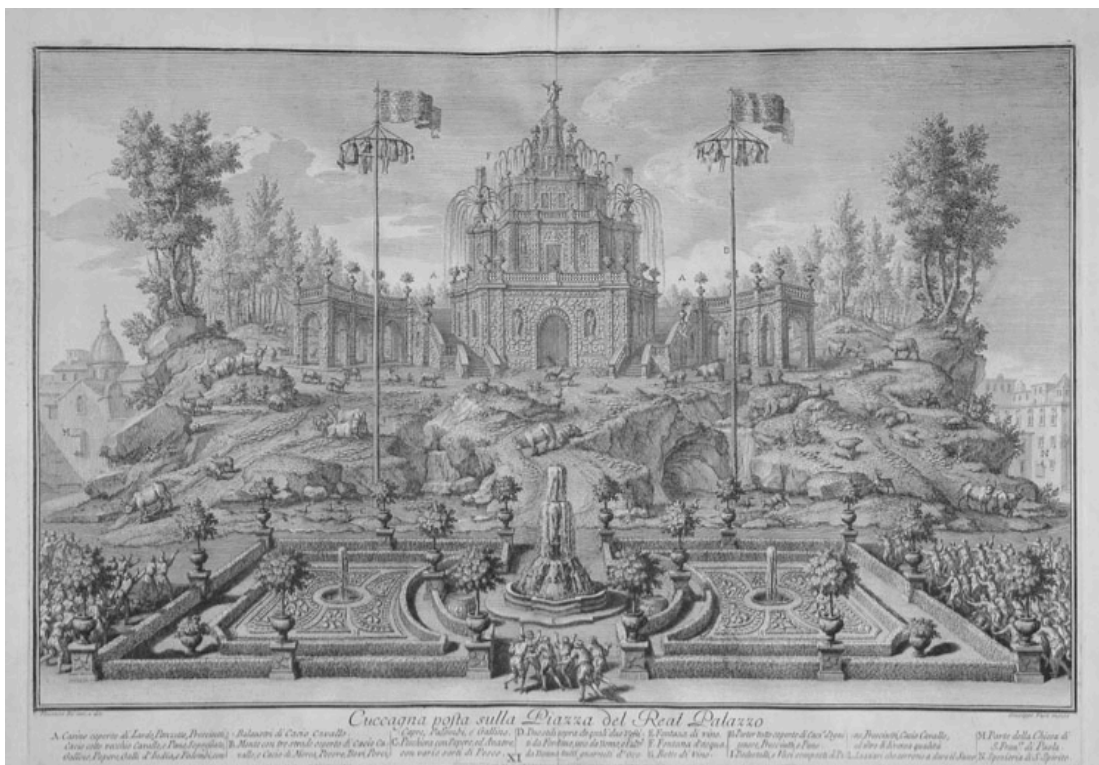
By contrast, such highly scripted events as the 1747 *fiesta* celebrating the birth of Filippo provide further insights into the performance of socio-political ideology in the Cuccagna. As implied by the *Narrazione* itself, the 1747 Cuccagna was situated within a long progression of events (guiding us from the internal to the external, and from an abstract dream about the future greatness of Filippo, by way of Alexander the Great, to conspicuous, yet suspect claims of sovereign generosity), pinpointing not only the festival’s move outdoors, but also its climax. Only by reading the 1747 Cuccagna in dialogue with De Majo’s opera, and the rest of the festa’s events, does its ideological role make sense. The *Narrazione* furthermore describes the “apparatus [as] represent[ing] a pleasant hill dressed not only with grazing oxen, sheep, goats, pigs and other live animals, but also other wild beasts.”⁸⁴ Finally, there stood the king himself. The sack could not begin (soldiers held back the Plebs, as suggested in both prose and plates) until he gave the signal.

⁸² Del Giudice, *Cheese*,” 12.

⁸³ Feldman, *Sovereignty*, 202. The claim that participants in Bourbon *cuccagne* barely hinted at the voluntary nature of gift exchange was one of the key facets of how this ritual played out in mid-century Naples.

⁸⁴ “Rappresentava questa Macchina un’amena collina vestita all’intorno di alberi ... tra i quali si vedevano pascolare non solo bovi, pecore, capre, porci ed altri animali vivi, ma anche altre bestie salvatiche.” *Narrazione*, 14 (translation mine).

Fig. 4.5: “Cuccagna posta sulla piazza del Real Palazzo,”
Narrazione delle solenni reali feste in Napoli ... (Naples, 1749)⁸⁵



The *Narrazione* captured this moment:

But when the time came that the Cuccagna was to be plundered, the King made the usual sign, the plebs set about to sack it, and in a very short time, not only was everything plundered; but they climbed, not without opposition, to the top of the farthest right antennas, [and] took away the clothes which were hung there, thereby bringing the prize for their dexterity.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Vincenzo Re, “Cuccagna posta sulla piazza del Real Palazzo” (1749), etching, Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Used with permission.

⁸⁶ “Ma quando tempo parve, che la Cuccagna si saccheggiasse, fattosi dare dal Re il consueto segno, accorse la plebe a gran folla a darle il sacco, ed in brevissimo tempo, non solo fu ogni cosa predata; ma saliti, non senza contrasto, due più destri degli altri in fino alla cima delle antenne, ne tolsero via i vestimenti, che a quelle erano appesi, così riportando il destinato premio della loro destrezza.” *Narrazione*, 15 (translation mine).

Key to the 1747 *festa* and its Cuccagna was court scenographer Vincenzo Re.⁸⁷ No evidence places him in an administrative role over the festival (indeed, the *Narrazione* names Count Raffaello Tarasconi Smeraldi),⁸⁸ yet he was responsible for transforming the many spaces depicted in the *Narrazione*'s plates. From Parma, he trained as a painter with Pietro Righini. When Righini moved to Naples in 1737 to design the scenic backdrops for Sarro's *Achille in Sciro* (the Teatro San Carlo's inaugural opera), Re followed him, but remained in Naples after his teacher returned to Parma in 1740. He assumed the title of court scenographer the same year, a position that would afford him many opportunities to design both opera sets and Neapolitan civic festivals. Re's style emphasized an "artificial naturalness" built upon a classical language of architecture, elements evident in the *Narrazione*'s etchings.⁸⁹ Moreover, Re cleverly repurposed spaces in the Palazzo Reale and Teatro San Carlo for the 1747 *festa*, such that their function appeared to reverse itself.⁹⁰ For instance, he transformed the Gran Sala into a theater, complete with boxes, for performances of *Il sogno di Olimpia*, while also creating intricately textured sets (Fig. 4.1). Finally, he contributed the ephemeral structure for the 1747 Cuccagna (fig. 4.5), which would be pillaged in a matter of minutes. Though the 1747 *festa* required many collaborators to realize these fantastic spaces and imagined states, we may credit Re with their actual design and implementation. The value, of course, of extending the imaginary world of opera into the Largo

⁸⁷ For more, see Franco Mancini, *Scenografia napoletana dell'età barocca* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1964), 94–108.

⁸⁸ On Raffaello Tarasconi Smeraldi's role in the production of the *Narrazione*, see Minor, "Piranesi," 412–419.

⁸⁹ Mercedes Viale Ferrero, "Re, Vincenzo," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*; <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O008569> (accessed June 25, 2016).

⁹⁰ For more on this dynamic and its implication for power coercion, see McClung, "Power," 44.

del Palazzo, just steps away from the Teatro San Carlo, lay in ensuring thematic and ideological consistency, while intentionally blurring both participants' and viewers' perception of reality and imagination.

In contrast to the 1764 Cuccagna, it appears the king's gift in 1747 was not so much the many components of the event (food, clothes, etc.), but rather the imagined state (complete with its own rules, rituals, and expectations) the court created out of this event—with Prince Filippo at its center. In this particular imagined state, what was previously symbolically internal (balls, operas, processions, etc.) became external. Here, what had been prophesized abstractly in *Olimpia*, viewed multiple times throughout the festival, was now being realized in concrete terms, with the king appearing before all to bestow gifts. Filippo and Carlo were, of course, inextricably linked, with young Filippo ensuring the royal succession and embodying the future. While much of the celebration centered on the son as gift, inevitably such events were also about the king and his political relationship to his people.

Written accounts unfortunately tell us little about young Filippo's actual participation in the festival generally and the Cuccagna particularly, and yet the prints themselves are suggestive. Recall that an empty chair was placed next to the royal couple at performances of *Olimpia*, thereby signifying the prince's position as primogenitor. Given the festival's theme of prophecy, as well as the necessity to symbolically link father and son, it should come as no surprise that the court likewise employed a similar strategy during the Cuccagna. This claim remains speculation, of course, since neither extant accounts nor iconography describe the event in detail, other than to remark upon the king's presence.

The moment when abstract notions of kingship appeared to solidify into a tangible form of kingship, and thereby the symbolic unification of king and son, had arrived. As the king waived the white handkerchief, making real (if only for the moment) the king's promises of

prosperity, the plebeians completed the contract by sacking the ephemeral structure. If the imagined state of the Cuccagna was a gift given, it was also a gift received. Indeed, such moments of ritualized violence were intended to prevent future riots by focusing the plebeians' energy on the sack.⁹¹ It fed the notion, espoused by gentry and foreign visitors like John Keyssler alike, that, “To keep the people quiet, [one] must provide three F’s, namely, *Feste, Farine, Forche*, i.e. ‘Festivity, Flour, and Gibbets;’ the people being so excessively fond of public di-versions, Clamorous upon the dearth of corn, and seditious unless they are Intimidated by severity.”⁹² The transaction was clear: the Cuccagna enacted a complex interrelationship, wherein both the king and his people were meant to profit, but in actuality, the king benefited most. The plebeians merely received diversion through ritualized rioting.

Fig. 4.6: “Prospettiva della Macchina del Fuoco artificiale posta nella Piazza del Castello nuovo,” *Narrazione delle solenni reale ...* (Naples, 1749)



⁹¹ Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), especially 85–116.

⁹² John George Keyssler, *Travels Through Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, and Lorrain* (London: J. Scott, 1756), 2:369.

Conclusion

Similar to McClung's claims of social caste at the festival (such that each division viewed the other while the king observed all), the king *cum* Filippo participated at once from within and without. The kingdom freely celebrated the notion of kingship and succession, but in an environment that was tightly scripted and controlled. So doing, Carlo celebrated his son, the kingdom assured (or at least appeared to assure) its own succession, and the lower classes were once again placated. Unfortunately, imagined states and actual reality sometimes collide, often in the most intriguing and ironic ways. After the Cuccagna, the court planned to ignite fireworks (fig. 4.6), which were meant to conclude the *fiesta*, and provide a final diversion for the populace. In a gruesome sign of foreshadowing, the Genoese ambassador related back to Genoa that the fireworks machine caught fire prematurely.⁹³ According to the account, many spectators were either killed or maimed in the ensuing panic. Just as unfortunate was the realization that young Filippo would not live up to the level of heroism ascribed to him in *Il sogno di Olimpia*. Indeed, as the years progressed, it became increasingly clear that he suffered from a cognitive disability, one that would forestall any chance of assuming leadership of the kingdom. The dreams of Filippo would remain just that.

⁹³ The report by the Genoese ambassador is conveyed without citation in Alden Murray, "The Court and *Cuccagna*," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 18:5 (1960), 167.

Epilogue

“A city ... does not tell its past.”¹

Throughout the writing of this dissertation, Calvino’s *Invisible Cities* was never too far away. Indeed, it was a text to which I often found myself drawn. Published in 1972, the novel centers on a series of conversations between Venetian explorer Marco Polo (1254–1324) and the Mongolian Emperor Kublai Khan (1215–1294). Polo attempts to convey the beauty and wonder of the cities he has encountered in his explorations, but is encumbered by the language barrier they share. To mitigate the divide, Polo draws on objects from each city as metaphorical substitutes. In short, our perception of cities, or whatever ontologies we think they may have, are actually contingent, debatable, and imagined.

This feeling that one can never know a city is both exciting and daunting. In fact, even as we share the same urban space, each of us interprets that space in drastically different ways. Imagination, as a necessary cognitive faculty for interpreting the world, fills in the details where the known (or at least the perceived) and unknown collide. “With cities, it is as with dreams: everything imaginable can be dreamed, but even the most unexpected dream is a rebus that conceals a desire or, its reverse, a fear. Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.”² In many ways, this connection between cities and dreams

¹ Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), 11.

² Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 44.

provides an apt metaphor for interpreting a city through research, be it sociologically, anthropologically, historically, or even musically.

For its part, this dissertation has sought to examine some of the imagined states constructed around four symbols —Partenope, Pleb, King, and Prince—all of them associated with early eighteenth-century Naples and opera's role interpreting them. Thinking in terms of how this genre imagined new states has allowed us to bring to light a number of findings that aid a deeper understanding of socio-political identity in Naples. For example, juxtaposing representations of the pleb in early eighteenth-century social discourse and comic-opera highlights, as we saw, an intriguing disparity. The stereotype of the dangerous pleb was primarily constructed out of tales of the 1647 Masaniello Revolt, during which the plebs (and others) plundered houses, threatened violence, and nearly overtook the city. These actions and the anxieties they stirred continued to resonate in the early eighteenth century, especially among Naples elite. The primary finding here is that, in contrast to these popular stereotypes, the reimagined pleb heard singing canzone in the opera house posited a type of social reform, which, though advocated in contemporary writings (most popularly by Doria), had never come to pass. Indeed, government policy granted little more than placation through the many *cuccagne* in which the lower classes were eager to participate. The phenomenal canzona, with its iambic rhythms and lyrical melodies, became a sonic backdrop for this state. Onstage, at least, the symbol of the pleb lost some of its negative potency.

Additionally, we saw how, even with a cliché figure like the king (embodied in the character of Achilles), thinking in terms of the imagined state built around his persona and the new Teatro San Carlo provided valuable perspectives regarding the atypical choice of libretto, as well as some of the political ideologies underpinning that selection. Cleverly, *Achille in Sciro* contained a narrative that, through its structure and characterization of Achilles, advanced a

claim of political inevitability, both of Carlo's kingship and the newly minted Kingdom of Naples. Rather than empty propaganda, this opera tied in well politically with Carlo's goals of centralizing the kingdom around his person and instituting the kinds of reforms that could make Naples a truly remarkable capital, all against a backdrop of courtiers hopeful but skeptical of the young king's political abilities. Although the gilding inside the theater did not yet match the outside urban environment, the celebrations of kingship and opera at the 1737 inauguration sought to imagine a utopia where the two met, where Naples reclaimed its bright past as the crown jewel of the ancient *Magna Graecia*.

Thinking in terms of spectacles and the mediation of figures also allowed some marginalized compositional voices to come to the fore: Domenico Sarro and Giuseppe De Majo. Sarro especially, who throughout the temporal purview of this dissertation held the roles of Maestro di Cappella of Naples and Vice-maestro di Cappella, was a pleasant discovery and one of the dissertation's prominent red threads. Although his compositions tended toward the conservative side of the galant (in contrast to composers like Vinci and Hasse), Sarro's music is elegant, well-constructed, textually centered, and deeply rooted in Metastasian opera seria. It was Sarro, after all, who set Metastasio's first important libretto, *Didone abbandonata* (Naples, 1724). This early connection to Metastasio would firmly plant Sarro as an important contributor to eighteenth-century Neapolitan culture. It is my hope that renewed interest in his music by performers like Vivica Genaux and ensembles like Concerto Köln and La cappella dei Turchini will continue to promote this composer to eager audiences. Likewise, as Leonardo Leo's successor to Naples's Royal Chapel and the father of Gian Francesco De Majo, one of the brightest compositional voices in late eighteenth-century Naples, Giuseppe De Majo's place in mid-eighteenth-century Neapolitan cultural life remains to be fleshed out.

This dissertation has also widened the methodological thinking around opera in early eighteenth-century Naples by demonstrating the possibilities for considering opera's role in the construction of new, alternate terrains and its potential insights for a deeper understanding of identity construction in Naples. From this lens, opera emerged not just as some prominent cultural institution in a city mythologized around music, but as an active participant in that mythologization. For example, in Chapter One, we saw how the civic muse Parthenope was re-appropriated many times and in many guises. In most versions, she signified either the city itself or a protective civic deity. Stampiglia's *La Partenope* reimagined her in such a way as to draw parallels with contemporary debates about women in education and leadership. Informed by siren lore, amazon mythology, and discourses about exceptional women, we saw how opera posited her domestication at the end of the opera as all but inevitable. Paradoxically, the amazon queen who liberates her city from outside threats confines herself to the domesticate sphere, a necessary result of falling in love. In doing so, Stampiglia reimagined the civic muse and siren not as a strong, benevolent civic deity, but as an appropriate emblem for Enlightenment Naples's many women of talent.

As a result of the necessary interdisciplinarity, the consideration of the four symbols of Neapolitan identity was not just an organizational conceit for this dissertation, though it has served that purpose well. Rather, the core of this dissertation has been about the malleability of these figures in opera and how, by focusing on them and their mediation, the musicologist achieves, I believe, a greater interpretational specificity and efficiency. As the great imagination machine of the eighteenth century, opera could easily create virtual realities. Most conjure localities more distant to the Italian shore, and often in highly utopian terms. No doubt, Naples itself played the imaginary utopia for many northern European travelers, drawn by the beauty of its landscapes and the clearness of its music. Though most of the discourse has focused on

external imaginings of the city and its music, I demonstrated the value of exploring some of the ways Neapolitans themselves constructed imagined states internally, both consciously and unconsciously.

And yet, the overall picture of how elite Neapolitans interpreted these states and Naples more generally remains fragmentary. The four organizing figures of this dissertation and the metaphors/operas mediating them offer up what Calvino has referred to in his description of cities as “poles of the flags.” They present, in other words, the historian with what one might call interpretive markers or touchstones, all of which contribute to a more accurate representation of this complex urban tapestry. Finally, though it is hoped this dissertation has pierced some of the multiple axes of identity construction vis-à-vis opera in Naples, we depart from this project with the feeling of paradox: we know Naples and its cultural life better, but we also have the nagging suspicion that we know less. In other words, the more we seek to learn, the more the city conceals. Calvino sums up this paradox well with regard to his fictional city of Tamara: “You leave Tamara without having discovered it.”³

³ Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 19.

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