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## AMAZONS FROM MADRID TO VIENNA, BY WAY OF ITALY: THE CIRCULATION OF A SPANISH TEXT AND THE DEFINITION OF AN IMAGINARY

*The fascinating phenomenon of the migration of theatrical subjects between literary genres, languages and countries is enriched through a new example discussed in this article. A handwritten libretto compiled in Rome for the court of Vienna, La simpatia nell'odio, ovvero Le amazoni amanti by Giovanni Pietro Monesio (1664), was discovered to be a faithful translation of the Spanish play Las Amazonas by Antonio de Solís (1657), hitherto known as the basis of a much later libretto, Caduta del regno delle Amazzoni, by Domenico De Totis (1690), set by Bernardo Pasquini. Monesio's libretto not only allows us to reconstruct the manner and time of the European circulation of a Spanish subject (from Madrid to Rome, to Vienna and Naples), but also to shed light on wider cultural aspects. First of all, it increases the number of librettos closely based on Spanish plays, of which so far only a few examples by Giulio Rospigliosi were known. Secondly, it provides further proof of the hypotheticised Spanish influence on the fortune of the Amazons in Italian opera and confirmation that its first appearance was beyond the Alps rather than in Italy. Finally, in the context of the the Habsburg Viennese court, the success of the Amazons seems to be linked to the political need to create a strong symbolic association between the 'discourse' on the virago and the legitimization of female power.*

Italian culture, 'assailed' and apparently 'suffocated' at length by foreign domination, was afforded a unique opportunity compared to other European cultures: to cultivate and strengthen an inclination to absorb and develop elements from other cultures, making a virtue out of necessity. In various aspects, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Spaniards, Austrians and the French helped to stimulate and enhance an exceptional cultural laboratory in Italy.

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A-Wn Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek  
I-Bc Bologna, Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica  
I-Fas Florence, Archivio di Stato  
I-Mb Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense  
I-Pci Padua, Biblioteca Civica

Among other disciplines, the study of seventeenth-century libretti has a role in delineating the time, place and manner of circulation, and the appropriation and transformation of foreign cultural products in Italy. The migration of subjects and the importation of foreign dramatic texts in Italian opera libretti is an area of recent research that has proven to be an excellent example of the virtue of interdisciplinary collaboration in the performing arts.<sup>1</sup> The present article is a contribution in this spirit.

I have recently discovered that a manuscript libretto, *La simpatia nell'odio, ovvero Le amazoni amanti* by Giovanni Pietro Monesio (1664), is an Italian translation of a Spanish play, *Las Amazonas*, by Antonio de Solís (1657), which was long known as the basis of another libretto, written at much later date, *La caduta del regno delle Amazzoni* by Domenico De Totis (1690).<sup>2</sup> Drawing on my research on the myth of the Amazons as the subject matter of Baroque operas,<sup>3</sup> a topic common to the three works dealt with here, I discuss Monesio's libretto in the light of the European circulation of another Spanish text and its context in the Viennese imperial court, an investigation that sheds more light on the political and cultural meanings that were most likely conveyed by the Amazonian theme.

The libretto *La simpatia nell'odio* has many interesting aspects. First, along with Giulio Rospigliosi's well-known dramas (*Dal bene il male*, 1654; *L'armi e gli amori*, 1656), it appears to be one of the earliest works that is a close adaptation, nearly a translation, of a Spanish play, even though it has recently been discovered that basing libretti on Spanish models dates

<sup>1</sup> For a few examples see the contributions of Hispanists such as M. G. Profeti, *Commedie, riscritture, libretti: La Spagna e l'Europa* (Florence, 2009), in particular section 3, *Commedie, testi con musica, libretti*, which collects works that are either new or have previously been published elsewhere; J. Sepúlveda, 'La adaptación italiana de *El Alcázar del Secreto* de Antonio de Solís: Un libretto para el Teatro Ducal de Milán', in id. and E. Liverani, *Due saggi sul teatro spagnolo nell'Italia del Seicento* (Rome, 1993), pp. 55–124; and musicologists such as P. Fabbri, 'Drammaturgia spagnuola e drammaturgia francese nell'opera italiana del Sei-Settecento', *Acta Musicologica*, 63 (1991), pp. 11–14, and *Revista de Musicología*, 16/1 (1993), pp. 301–7; D. Daolmi, 'Attorno a un dramma di Rospigliosi: Le migrazioni europee di un soggetto di cappa e spada', *Musica e Storia*, 12 (2004), pp. 103–45; C. Lanfossi in *Un'opera per Elisabetta d'Inghilterra: 'La regina Floridea'* (Milano 1670), *edizione critica del libretto di Teodoro Barbò e della musica di Francesco Rossi, Ludovico Busca, Pietro Simone Agostini*, ed. Lanfossi (Milan, 2009); and N. Badolato, *Lope de Vega negli intrecci dei drammi per musica veneziani*, in G. Poggi and M. G. Profeti (eds.), *Norme per lo spettacolo, norme per lo spettatore: Teoria e prassi del teatro intorno all' 'Arte Nuovo'*. *Atti del Convegno internazionale, Università di Firenze, 19–24 ottobre 2009* (Florence, 2011), pp. 359–75.

<sup>2</sup> Noted by L. Bianconi in *Il Seicento* (Turin, 1982), p. 201, and studied by A. Menichetti, '*La caduta del regno delle Amazzoni*: L'ultimo grande spettacolo operistico del Seicento romano', 2 vols (thesis, University of Bologna, 1981), pp. 26, 61–82, as well as by M. G. Profeti, '*Los juegos olímpicos e Las Amazonas* fra Madrid e Roma', in ead., *Commedie, riscritture, libretti*, pp. 175–201.

<sup>3</sup> A. Garavaglia, 'Il mito delle Amazzoni nell'opera italiana fra Sei e Settecento' (Ph.D. diss., University of Pavia, 2007); Milan, forthcoming.

from as early as the 1640s.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, *La simpatia nell'odio* confirms Rome as the location of the vogue for libretti based on Spanish texts, preceding the period in which Spanish theatre was very popular in Vienna, which began in 1666 with the arrival of an Infanta to be married to the Emperor. Moreover, it attests to Solís's Italian success in seventeenth-century librettos well before *Il palazzo del segreto* (1683) by the Milanese Giovanni Rabbia.<sup>5</sup> In its subject matter Monesio's libretto anticipates the success of the Amazons in Italian Baroque opera by a decade. It is increasingly clear that the subject is of Spanish origin, and was appreciated outside Italy as well. It appears to validate a symbolic link between the representation of viragos and the legitimacy of female power in the seventeenth century. The work also sheds light on a librettist, Monesio, of whom we still know too little: he is best known as the author of the text of *L'accademia d'Amore* by Alessandro Stradella but, owing to the irrepressible imagination of Remo Giazotto and his elusive source, his role in mid-seventeenth century Rome has yet to be discovered.<sup>6</sup>

#### I. ROME–VIENNA: *LA SIMPATIA NELL'ODIO* BY MONESIO

Monesio's libretto, preserved in a sumptuous manuscript with the imperial coat of arms of a double-headed crowned eagle in the centre,<sup>7</sup> was cited by Herbert Seifert in 1985 in his monograph on seventeenth-century opera in Vienna, but has never been studied for its theatrical content.<sup>8</sup> The dedication (transcribed in the Appendix) to the Dowager Empress

<sup>4</sup> See A. Tedesco, "'Scrivere a gusti del popolo': L'Arte nuovo di Lope de Vega nell'Italia del Seicento", *Il Saggiatore musicale*, 13 (2006), pp. 221–45, at 221–8; and the more recent contributions by F. Antonucci, 'Un ejemplo más de reescritura del teatro áureo en la Italia del siglo XVII: Giacinto Andrea Cicognini y el texto del *Giasone*', in A. Gallo and K. Vaiopoulos (eds.), '*por tal variedad tiene belleza*': *Omaggio a Maria Grazia Profeti* (Florence, forthcoming); and id. and L. Bianconi, 'Plotting the Myth of *Giasone*', in *Manuscript, Edition, Production: Readying Cavalli's Operas for the Stage. Proceedings of the International Congress, New Haven, 30 April–2 May 2009* (Farnham, forthcoming).

<sup>5</sup> The erroneous tradition that attributed *Il palazzo del segreto* to Carlo Maria Maggi has been refuted by R. Carpani, *Drammaturgia del comico* (Milan, 1998), pp. 104–5, based on a Florentine manuscript *avviso*.

<sup>6</sup> R. Giazotto, *Vita di Alessandro Stradella*, 2 vols (Milan, 1962) claimed to have discovered a manuscript at the Biblioteca Brignole Sale of Genoa entitled *Memorie del signor cavaliere Giovanni Paolo Monesio*, a close friend of Stradella, containing ample information on him. This volume has never been found, however, and was almost certainly the result of a very 'original' idea of historiography, as I mentioned in *Alessandro Stradella* (Palermo, 2006), p. 78. Moreover, Giazotto calls him Giovanni Paolo instead of Giovanni Pietro, but indeed means the author of *L'accademia d'Amore* (Giazotto, *Vita di Alessandro Stradella*, i, p. 207).

<sup>7</sup> A-Wn, Cod. 9956, 4<sup>o</sup>, fol. 58.

<sup>8</sup> See H. Seifert, *Die Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof im 17. Jahrhundert* (Tutzing, 1985), p. 452. It is not known on what source F. Steiger, *Opernlexikon*, 10 vols (Tutzing, 1975), iii, p. 1131, based his placement of the first opera of *La Simpatia* [sic] *nell'odio* in Ferrara.



Figure 1 Giovanni Pietro Monesio, *La simpatia nell'odio, ovvero Le amazoni amanti*, Cod. 9956, title page, fol. [2<sup>r</sup>]

Eleonora II Gonzaga-Nevers was signed in Rome by the author himself, on the 1st of August, 1664; therefore the libretto, of which the title page is shown in Figure 1 and the list of characters in Figure 2, could have arrived in Vienna in August, or September at the latest.

In addition to the libretto, the music of an aria composed by Emperor Leopold I survives. It is well known that the Emperor was not only an erudite patron and protector of the arts and sciences, but also an impassioned musician. In the final pages of a manuscript volume from Leopold's personal library the music for the song *Arruoli a mio danno* is written in his own hand and its origin is indicated in the top margin: from 'Monesio's play, act II, scene IV';<sup>9</sup> it is in fact the second stanza from the aria *Desire di gloria* sung by Mitilene.

Seifert identified the libretto with the 'drama' set to music by Leopold for the Empress's birthday celebrations, on 18 November of that year, which

<sup>9</sup> A-Wn, Mus.Hs.16.583/2 (title page of vol. 1: *Arien zu den Balletten, welche an der römischen keyserlichen Meyestät Leopoldi des Ersten hoff, in dero Residenz statt Wien von den 16 Februar 1665 bis den 23 Februar des 1667igsten Jahrs gehalten worden. Erstes Buch, componiert von Johann Heinrich Schmelzer köinglicher Cammermusicus*), fol. 95<sup>v</sup>: 'comedia del Monesio, atto 2<sup>do</sup>, scena 4<sup>a</sup>'. Seifert, *Die Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof*, pp. 51, 452.



Figure 2 Giovanni Pietro Monesio, *La simpatia nell'odio, ovvero Le amazzoni amanti*, Cod. 9956, cast, fol. 3<sup>v</sup>

is mentioned in a *avviso* sent to Florence a few days later.<sup>10</sup> A reference to the birthday of 1664, however, appears in the score of a one-act composition by Antonio Bertali, *Pazzo amor*: ‘Operetta per la nascita dell’imperatrice Eleonora, 1664’.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, according to Seifert, there are two possible hypotheses: either the author of the *avviso* named the wrong composer, though it is highly unlikely he would confuse His Majesty with a common composer, or two separate works were written for the event, only one of which was performed.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Avviso* of 22 Nov. 1664, sent to Florence by Giovanni Chiaromanni (I-Fas, *Mediceo del principato*, Relazioni con stati esteri): ‘Under the Emperor’s orders, on the 18th day of the current month, the birthday of the Empress, a play will be performed set to music by His Majesty himself [Leopold], adorned at the conclusion with a dance performed by twelve pages, superbly dressed, and concluding with a lavish dinner, attended by the prince’s ministers and a number of ladies and gentlemen of this city’ (‘Li 18 del corrente mese, giorno natalizio dell’Imperatrice, fu per ordine dell’Imperatore recitato un dramma posto in musica da Sua Maestà medesima e ornato in fine con un balletto fatto da 12 paggi superbamente vestiti, chiudendosi la festa con una lauta cena, alla quale assisterono li ministri de’ principi e una quantità di dame e cavalieri di questa città’); transcribed in Seifert, *Die Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof*, p. 680. *Relatio historica*, 53 (1664/65), Frankfurt am M., 1665, p. 28: ‘On Tuesday, 18.08 [but in fact 18.11] ... on the same day, in honour of Her Majesty the Empress Dowager’s birthday a great play was performed, which included beautiful dances’ (‘Dienstag den 8.18. diß ... ist eben diesen Tag Ihrer Mayestät der verwittibten Kayserin Geburtstag zu Ehren eine ansehnliche Comœdi gehalten worden, wobey schöne Baletten zu sehen gewesen’); Seifert, *ibid.*, p. 679.

<sup>11</sup> A-Wn, Mus.Hs.16861, fol. 46.

<sup>12</sup> See Seifert, *Die Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof*, pp. 50–1.

Two other elements, however, support the hypothesis that the opera that was performed was actually *La simpatia nell'odio*: (a) the *avviso* speaks of a 'drama', a term that is usually used for three-act operas rather than one-act plays; (b) a libretto ready at the beginning of August would normally be staged within a few months (postulating that it arrived in Vienna in August or September). But the lack of a printed copy of the libretto, a prologue and any reference to the birthday celebrations in the dedication suggests that the opera was not entirely set to music and performed.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, the song featured in Leopold's manuscript could simply mean that the Emperor used the text for a one-off aria and the possibility that the opera was not staged could be explained by the period of mourning at the Viennese court from late January to mid-August, following the death of the Emperor's brother, the Archduke Charles Joseph. The libretto probably reached Vienna just as the mourning period was over, but since it was an 'opera tragicomica per musica' (as stated on the title page of the manuscript), a rare genre in the capital of the Empire,<sup>14</sup> it was probably not the most suitable opera to be staged within these few months. To date, nothing more is known about the performance.

The professional relationship between Monesio and the Viennese court is not easy to reconstruct, as biographical information on the poet, as mentioned earlier, is scarce.<sup>15</sup> In any case, there must have been a long-standing relationship, since ten years after the libretto for *La simpatia nell'odio* Monesio published two collections of poems for music in Rome, *La musa seria* and *La musa familiare* (1674), dedicated respectively to Leopold and Eleonora, his symbolic muses.<sup>16</sup> The dedication of a poetic text to Eleonora, included

<sup>13</sup> The various catalogues of libretti make no mention of printed copies of *La simpatia nell'odio*. See L. Allacci, *Drammaturgia . . . accresciuta e continuata fino all'anno 1755* (Venice, 1755; facs. repr. Turin, 1966); O. G. Th. Sonneck, *Catalogue of Opera Librettos printed before 1800*, 2 vols (Washington, DC, 1914); C. Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800*, 7 vols (Cuneo, 1990–5).

<sup>14</sup> See H. Seifert, 'Gattungsbezeichnungen früher Musikdramen in Österreich', in B. Marschall (ed.), *Theater am Hof und für das Volk: Beiträge zur vergleichenden Theater- und Kulturgeschichte. Festschrift für Otto G. Schindler zum 60. Geburtstag* (Maske und Kothurn, 48; Vienna, 2002), pp. 167–77. A tragicomedy in music had already been staged in Vienna the year prior to the drafting of *La simpatia nell'odio*: *Fausto, ovvero Il sogno di Don Pasquale. Tragicomedia abbreviata ed adornata di prologo e finale per musica* by Francesco Maria de Luco Sereni (Vienna, 1663; A-Wn, 38.J.182).

<sup>15</sup> This lacuna has already been brought to attention by T. Affortunato, 'Nuove fonti documentarie su Carlo Caproli del Violino (Roma, 1614–1668)', *Fonti musicali italiane*, 13 (2008), pp. 7–17, at 11–12, which cites a passage from the testament of the Roman composer Carlo Caproli in which Monesio is referred to as the author of verses for music. From F. Quadrio, *Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia*, 4 vols, ii (Milan, 1741), pt. 1, p. 329, we only learn that Monesio died in Rome in 1684 and was secretary to Cardinal Francesco Mairaldchini; there is no entry for him in vol. 75 of the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> G. Monesio, *La Musa seria. Parte prima delle poesie per musica . . . alla sacra maestà cesarea dell'imperatore Leopoldo primo* (Rome, 1674) and *La Musa familiare. Parte seconda delle poesie per musica . . . alla sacra imperial maestà dell'imperatrice Leonora* (Rome, 1674).

in *La musa seria*, even refers to an annual salary paid to Monesio by the Empress.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, his collaboration with the Viennese court already seems to have been established by 1663 with his libretto for the oratorio *Il figlio prodigo*, also set to music by Leopold, but printed only in 1678,<sup>18</sup> and even earlier than this, in 1661, with the verses of a pastorale entitled *Indovinnelli amorosi*, which has not been mentioned in the musicological literature.<sup>19</sup>

## II. THE SUBJECT AND PLOT OF *LA SIMPATIA NELL'ODIO*

The libretto depicts the vicissitudes of the son of the Queen Thalestris and Alexander the Great in the kingdom of the Amazons. The classic historical legend – which does not belong to the Hellenic core of Amazonian mythography, but rather to Quintus Curtius Rufus' *History of Alexander the Great* – only tells the story of the encounter between the virago and Alexander, without any mention of descendants. Briefly, it is the story of how Thalestris, in a moment of crisis within the female realm, seeking to have a daughter worthy of the throne, travels with an army to Hyrcania, hoping to conceive a child with Alexander, after a couple of weeks returning to her empire. The episode, which is also mentioned in the *argomento* of *La simpatia nell'odio* with reference to the sixth book of Curtius Rufus' *History of Alexander*, only represents the background leading up to the opera, because the protagonist of the story is actually Thalestris's son, ironically not the girl his mother wanted but a boy. Of course, it is precisely this play on sexual identity that irreverent seventeenth-century drama is based on.

<sup>17</sup> Monesio, *La Musa seria*, p. 8, on the same line as the cantata *Or che lieto e giocondo* we can read: 'Season's Greetings to the Sacred Caesarean Majesty of the Empress Eleonora, from whose supreme charity the author in Rome receives an annual salary' ('Augurio di buone feste alla sacra maestà cesarea dell'imperadrice Leonora, dalla cui somma beneficenza riceve in Roma l'autore annuo stipendio'). In a manuscript collection of cantatas, also dedicated to Eleonora and preserved in Turin (Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Giordano 18), there are four songs with poems by Monesio (*Cercavo due pupille, C'è altra pena che morire, Ignoto volante, su, batti le piume, Io m'innamorerà*), along with others by Camillo Scarano and Giovanni Lotti, who are also Roman writers working at the Viennese court; see M. Deisinger, 'Giuseppe Tricarico: Ein Kapellmeister auf Reisen von Rom über Ferrara nach Wien', *Römische historische Mitteilungen*, 48 (2006), pp. 359–94, at p. 388.

<sup>18</sup> See also Ch. Speck, *Das italenische Oratorium 1625–1665: Musik und Dichtung* (Turnhout, 2003), p. 459 (n. 114). *Il figlio prodigo. Oratorio cantato nell'augustissima capella dell'imperatrice Eleonora. Composizione di Giovanni Pietro Monesio* (Vienna, 1678?). The score is preserved in A-Wn, Mus.Hs.16866 (*Il figliuol prodigo. Musica di sua maestà cesarea dell'imperatore Leopoldo . . . Poesia di Pietro Monesio*).

<sup>19</sup> *Indovinnelli amorosi. Riecreazione pastorale per musica di Giovanni Pietro Monesio* (Vienna, 1661; Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, Hollstein/Herberstein-Bibliothek, 28664/6/5). There is no mention of the print in Seifert's appendix 'The author's additions and corrections' (updated in 2010) to the chronology of performances in Seifert, *Die Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof*, <www.donjuanarchiv.at>.

The events following the encounter between Thalestris and Alexander, and therefore the plot of the story, are modern invention. The background to the opera is described in the *argomento* and can be summarized as follows:

1. On her way back Thalestris gives birth to a baby boy, Astolfo, but her maternal affection and her love for Alexander keep her from killing the child, as the Amazonian law requires. Since the oracle of Apollo has announced that the birth of this child will cause the kingdom of the viragos to collapse, Thalestris hides the boy in a cave and hands him over to the care of Indatirso, an exile from Sarmatia. She asks him to pretend to be the biological father and not to tell the child about his true origins. In order to avoid having anyone enter the forest she consecrates it to Jupiter, erects a temple and elects Indatirso as the priest.
2. After Thalestris's death, Menalippe is elected to the throne, arousing the wrath of her envious cousin Mitilene.
3. Polidoro, Prince of the Sarmatians, wants to attack the kingdom of the Amazons, but when he sees a portrait of Menalippe he falls in love with her. With the help of Martesia, one of the queen's ladies-in-waiting, he manages to enter her rooms secretly.

Although they have nothing to do with the legend of Thalestris, Martesia and Menalippe are appropriate names since they belong to Amazonian mythography. The Sarmatians, or Sauromatians, according to Herodotus, were a people born from a cross between the Scythians and the Amazons, just like the creation of mixed couples at the end of the opera, an aspect I will discuss again later. Herodotus recounts how the Sarmatians, having tested the heroism of the viragos in battle, wanted to have their young men sleep with them to ensure valorous progeny, and therefore invited the men to camp next to the female nation. When the women understand the good intentions of the Sarmatians, they gradually agree to sleep with them and involve them in their daily lives, until the time comes when the young men decide to live with the viragos permanently. The early modern subject of the work therefore combines a legendary tradition regarding Thalestris and Alexander the Great (as narrated by Curtius Rufus) and a historical one, regarding the relationship between the Amazons and the Sarmatians (as reported by Herodotus).

The plot of the opera develops around two main couples: a clandestine one that has already been formed, Queen Menalippe and Polidoro the Prince of the Sarmatians; and a couple in the process of coming together, the belligerent Mitilene and Astolfo, son of Thalestris and Alexander. Initially, the latter are indifferent to amorous passion: she is obsessed with weapons and hatred towards anyone of the male sex, while he is a savage,



## Amazons from Madrid to Vienna

raised in a cave, and has never seen a woman before in his life. Thus on the one hand, we have a couple that cannot declare their relationship and lives on fleeting encounters, and on the other a couple that suffers the uncertainties of inexperience in love. At the end of the second act the two couples are placed in a difficult situation under suspicion of mutual betrayal, in a typically Baroque dramatic manoeuvre; this delays the finale and thus increases its effect. Parallel to these two love stories is a third plot, a common element in seventeenth-century plays, involving the servants Martesia, Volpino and Lucindo.

### III. THE ORIGINAL SPANISH TEXT: *LAS AMAZONAS* BY SOLÍS

Although the paratexts in Monesio's libretto do not refer to any early modern source, as was standard practice, it is sufficient to compare the characters of the opera with those of Antonio de Solís's heroic-mythological play *Las Amazonas* (1657) to realize that the former is very likely a revised translation of the latter.<sup>20</sup> As can be seen in the synoptic table below, the characters not only share the same names – undergoing only minor graphic and phonetic adjustments in the transition from Spanish to Italian (Miquilene becomes Mitilene, Menalife becomes Menalippe) – but they also share the same roles:

Solís, <i>Las Amazonas</i> (1657)		Monesio, <i>La Simpatia nell'odio</i> (1664)	
ASTOLFO	galan	ASTOLFO	figlio di Alessandro Magno e di Talestri, regina delle Amazoni
POLIDORO	principe di Sarmacia	POLIDORO	principe di Sarmacia
AURELIO	capitan	AURELIO	uno de' capitani dell'esercito di Sarmacia
INDATIRSO	viejo	INDATIRSO	vecchio custode d'Astolfo, da lui creduto per padre
LUCINDO	gracioso	LUCINDO	servo timido di Polidoro
MENALIFE	reyna	MENALIPPE	regina delle Amazoni
MIQUILENE	dama	MITILENE	cugina di Menalippe
CAMILA		VOLPINO	nano favorito di Mitilene
IULIA			
MARTESIA		MARTESIA	donzella della regina
Acompañamiento de Amazonas			Coro di Amazoni
Soldados			Coro di Soldati

<sup>20</sup> For an analysis of Solís's play see Profeti, 'Los juegos olímpicos e *Las Amazonas*'. In view of the concerns raised by F. Serralta, 'La comedias de Antonio de Solís: Reflexiones sobre la edición de un texto del Siglo de Oro', *Criticón*, 34 (1986), pp. 159–74, on the philological accuracy of the modern edition of A. de Solís, *Comedias*, ed. M. Sánchez Regueira, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1984), i, pp. 387–462, I will cite the text of *Las Amazonas*, as Profeti suggests (p. 188, n. 24), directly from the *editio princeps*, by indicating the pages of the print: *Parte ix de comedias nuevas escogidas de los mejores ingenios de España* (Madrid, 1657), pp. 85–124 (exemplar consulted: Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, R/22662). In the transcription of the texts, in Spanish and Italian, I use modern spelling and punctuation.

The only difference concerns the queen's servants, who, as minor characters, could be reworked without altering the coherence and unity of the play. Compared to Solís's play, Monesio's libretto reduces the number of servants from three female (Camila, Iulia, Martesia) to two who are of the opposite sex (Volpino, Martesia). For this reason, the man creating the third intrigue in the Spanish text is Polidoro's servant Lucindo, an outsider to the realm of the Amazons, while in the libretto Volpino, the virago's court dwarf, the only man allowed in the female empire, plays the role of one of the seducers.

Table 1 outlines and compares the presence and alternation of the characters in the scenes of the play and the opera,<sup>21</sup> from which it becomes clear that almost identical configurations of characters take part in the development of the dramatic action. Note in particular the agreement between the first and the third set change of each act of the libretto and the related sections of Solís's text. The only exceptions are the following: (1) the first scenes of the third set change of Act II (II. 10–11), namely the solo laments of Indatirso and Volpino; (2) the scenes involving only servants (those labelled with the letters *a*, *b* and *c* in the column related to the play). The latter have different characters in the libretto, but except in scene *c* they have the same position in the play and correspond systematically to the second set change of each act, always set in the Royal Courtyard. Therefore the comic scenes in the libretto function as intermezzi between the set changes in which the main action takes place:

Solís, <i>Las Amazonas</i> (1657)		Monesio, <i>La simpatia nell'odio</i> (1664)
a	→	I. 4–5 and I. 10: <i>Cortile regio</i>
b	→	II. 8: <i>Cortile regio</i>
c	→	III. 8: <i>Cortile regio</i>

Apart from rewriting of these scenes, which moreover was the quite frequent, Monesio made a rather unusual choice not to alter the overall dramatic structure of the play: the three *jornadas* of the Spanish text correspond precisely to the three acts of the libretto and its individual scenes have the same dramatic content as the corresponding episodes in the play. Although the transition from a spoken play to a libretto always involves cutting down the length and number of the dialogues and monologues to adapt the lines to a different 'dramatic time', the themes that create action and interaction between the characters in the libretto basically remain untouched.

To understand in greater detail how Monesio tackled the job of translating the piece from its Spanish idiom and adapted it to the new dramatic genre it is helpful to compare a few passages from the libretto, both

<sup>21</sup> The idea of outlining the *liaison des scènes* as illustrated in the table is based on a model that was proposed for the first time by L. Bianconi, 'Orlando, dall'Arcadia agl'Inferi', in *Orlando. Drama in tre atti* (1733), da un libretto di Carlo Sigismondo Capeci (1711), musica di Georg Friedrich Händel (Venice, 1985; republished in Reggio Emilia, 2004).

Table 1 *Comparison of the alternation of the characters on stage (liaisons des scènes) in the texts by Solís and Monesio (in the left column the grey bands a b c mark the comic scenes)*

Solís, <i>Las Amazonas</i> (1657)	Monesio, <i>La simpatía nell'odio</i> (1664)
MAR CAM IUL MIT MEN POL AST LUC AUR IND	MAR VOL MIT MEN POL AST LUC AUR IND
<div style="text-align: right;">AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">AST—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">AST—AUR</div> <div style="text-align: right;">IUL—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">CAM—IUL—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">CAM—IUL—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MEN—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MEN</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MEN—POL</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MIT—MEN—[POL]—IND</div> <div style="text-align: right;">IUL—MIT—MEN</div>	<div style="text-align: center;"><i>Bosco</i></div> <div style="text-align: right;">1 AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">2 AST—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">3 AST—AUR</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Cortile regio</i></div> <div style="text-align: center;">4 VOL</div> <div style="text-align: center;">5 MAR—VOL</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Stanze regie</i></div> <div style="text-align: right;">6 MEN—POL</div> <div style="text-align: right;">7 VOL—MIT—MEN—POL—IND</div> <div style="text-align: right;">8 MIT—MEN</div> <div style="text-align: right;">9 MEN</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Cortile regio</i></div> <div style="text-align: right;">10 MAR—LUC</div>
<div style="text-align: right;">AST—AUR</div> <div style="text-align: right;">AST—AUR</div> <div style="text-align: right;">AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MAR—IUL—MIT—AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MIT—AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">IUL—MIT—AST—IND</div> <div style="text-align: right;">AST—IND</div>	<div style="text-align: center;"><i>Bosco</i></div> <div style="text-align: right;">1 AST—AUR</div> <div style="text-align: right;">2 AST—AUR</div> <div style="text-align: right;">3 AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">4 VOL—MIT—AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">5 MIT—AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">6 MIT—AST—IND</div> <div style="text-align: right;">7 AST—IND</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Cortile regio</i></div> <div style="text-align: right;">8 MAR—VOL</div> <div style="text-align: right;">9 MAR—VOL—MEN—POL</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Stanze di Mandane. Notte</i></div> <div style="text-align: center;">10 IND</div> <div style="text-align: center;">11 VOL</div> <div style="text-align: right;">12 MAR—MEN—POL—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">13 MAR—MIT—MEN—POL—AST—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">14 MIT—AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">15 VOL—MIT—AST</div>
<div style="text-align: right;">IUL—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">CAM—IUL—LUC</div>	<div style="text-align: center;"><i>Stanze di Mandane. Giorno</i></div> <div style="text-align: right;">1 POL—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">2 POL—LUC—IND</div> <div style="text-align: right;">3 VOL—MIT</div> <div style="text-align: right;">4 MIT—MEN</div> <div style="text-align: right;">5 MEN</div> <div style="text-align: right;">6 VOL—MEN—POL</div> <div style="text-align: right;">7 MEN—POL</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Cortile regio</i></div> <div style="text-align: center;">8 MAR—VOL</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Campo con padiglioni</i></div> <div style="text-align: right;">9 AST—LUC—AUR</div> <div style="text-align: right;">10 POL—AST—LUC—AUR</div>
<div style="text-align: right;">IUL—MEN—POL—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MAR—CAM—IUL—MIT—MEN—POL—AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MIT—AST</div>	<div style="text-align: right;">11 VOL—MIT—AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">12 MAR—VOL—MIT—MEN—POL—AST—LUC—IND</div>
<div style="text-align: right;">POL—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">POL—LUC—IND</div> <div style="text-align: right;">CAM—MIT</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MIT—MEN</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MEN</div> <div style="text-align: right;">CAM—MEN—POL</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MEN—POL</div>	<div style="text-align: center;"><i>Cortile regio</i></div>
<div style="text-align: right;">AST—LUC—AUR</div> <div style="text-align: right;">POL—AST—LUC—AUR—IND</div> <div style="text-align: right;">CAM—IUL—LUC</div> <div style="text-align: right;">MIT—AST</div> <div style="text-align: right;">CAM—IUL—MIT—MEN—POL—AST—LUC—IND</div>	<div style="text-align: center;"><i>Cortile regio</i></div>

dialogues and monologues, with the original text. Let us begin with the very first lines, where the savage Astolfo launches into a long soliloquy complaining about his life as a recluse, living in a cave, and decides to go out to discover the outside world:<sup>22</sup>

Solís, *Las Amazonas*, I (1657, p. 85)

ASTOLFO

Injusto padre mío,  
que para hacer esclavo mi albedrío  
te vales desta cárcel de la tierra,  
en cuyo seno lóbrego se encierra,  
por decreto del hado,  
y muy urgente<sup>23</sup> feliz, que sepultado  
desde el instante mismo que he nacido,  
solo conoce al sol por el oído.

Monesio, *La simpatia nell'odio*, I. 1 (fol. 5<sup>r</sup>)

ASTOLFO

Mio genitore ingiusto,  
che, per far prigioniere  
un libero volere,  
questo carcere angusto  
a' danni miei formasti  
e con zelo spietato,  
per obbedire al fato,  
d'umanità le leggi, empio, obliasti.  
Onde a te piacque in un medesimo istante  
di far di me tragitto  
da la cuna in cui nacqui  
a questa tomba in cui sepolto io vivo,  
de la luce del sol sempre mai privo; . . .

The comparison between the two texts reveals that Monesio's version is in part a faithful translation, and partly a rewritten version that maintains the original motifs, while spreading them over more lines. The passage from the libretto appears to be longer than that of the play, though the overall length of the monologue is greater in the latter (*Las Amazonas*: 91 lines; *La simpatia nell'odio*: 62 lines). There are also other lines in Astolfo's soliloquy in which the identity between play and libretto is even clearer, especially the passages expressing his growing sense of wonder in exploring the world:

Solís, *Las Amazonas*, I (1657, p. 85)

ASTOLFO

Mas qué nuevo hermoso horror  
los ojos me ha perturbado? . . .  
O mundo, con qué temor  
te comienzo a imaginar: . . .  
Estraña máquina es esta!

Monesio, *La simpatia nell'odio*, I. 1 (fols. 5<sup>v</sup>–6<sup>r</sup>)

ASTOLFO

qual nuovo e bell'orror gl'occhi mi adombra? . . .  
Con che strano timore  
comincia, o mondo, a immaginarti il core? . . .  
Che già machina è questa!

<sup>22</sup> The theatrical motif of a young man of royal lineage who, owing to an unfortunate horoscope, is forced to live like a savage, removed from the world he should belong to by birth, had a long tradition in Spanish theatre prior to Solís, for example *La vida es sueño* by Calderón (1635), who in turn rewrote the works of Lope de Vega, Guillén de Castro and Velez de Guevara, who dramatised this motif in various ways. See F. Antonucci, *El salvaje en la Comedia del Siglo de Oro: Historia de un tema de Lope a Calderón* (Pamplona and Toulouse, 1995; now also available at <[www.cervantesvirtual.com](http://www.cervantesvirtual.com)>).

<sup>23</sup> It is obviously an error in the *editio princeps* in terms of meaning, also because it creates hypermetry.

## Amazons from Madrid to Vienna

Another scene which is interesting to analyse synoptically, and which is one of the most dramatic in the play, is the scene where the proud Miquilene, who would like to exterminate all the Sarmatians since they are men, has the opportunity to kill the enemy Astolfo in his sleep, but an unexpected attraction stops her from her murderous intentions.<sup>24</sup> Even the stage directions – which indicate how the Amazon approaches him, hesitates, and then falls in love, followed by Astolfo's awakening – confirm the complete dramaturgical correlation between the two texts. The episode opens with a long monologue delivered by the Amazon, where she becomes aware of experiencing a new feeling for the first time in her life and for fear of falling a victim to this feeling she prepares to kill Astolfo.

Solís, *Las Amazonas*,  
II (1657, pp. 104–5)

*Và à tirarle, y se detiene.*

MIQUILENE

... mas ¡qué atrevido  
semblante! qué generoso  
agrado! qué dulce hechizo!

...

muera, pues, muera dormido  
porque quando abra los ojos  
no se cumpla el vaticinio.  
Esto ha de ser, muera. ...

Monesio, *La simpatia nell'odio*,  
II. 4 (fols. 26<sup>r</sup>–27<sup>r</sup>)

*Vuol tirare e si ferma.*

MITILENE

Da si vaga sembianza  
sento accendermi al petto  
nuove faville d'amoroso affetto.

[aria 1] Fieri sdegni il piè fugace ...

[aria 2] Belle luci addormentate ...

[aria 3] Impongasi fine

al dubbio litigio  
e il fiero prodigio  
di nostre ruine  
con destra omicida  
dormendo si uccida.

Note that in this case the librettist keeps the beginning and end of the dramatic curve unchanged, which ranges from the first symptoms of

<sup>24</sup> Fausta Antonucci has kindly pointed out to me that the motif of the sleeping savage, whose life is spared by another character because he or she feels compassion upon observing the sleeping individual, had already been introduced in *Urson y Valentin* by Lope de Vega (though in this case it is the brother – who, however, is unaware of this relationship – who feels an inexplicable affection due to ‘a blood connection’ and stops himself). Antonucci has also informed me that a related motif, of having the young warrior woman fall in love, is also frequent in contemporary plays that include a savage: it is usually a woman who has been raised removed from the courts and the delicate manners that are considered feminine. Such women, as the Amazons, tend to disdain love by virtue of their code of chastity, and in connection with their practice of hunting and warfare, but eventually succumb to the force of love, the universal end that women cannot help but surrender to. This is the theatrical theme known as ‘The Diana complex’: see M. Vitse, *Éléments pour une théorie du théâtre espagnol du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Toulouse, 1988), pp. 542–7. On the few Spanish plays prior to Solís which include Amazons, namely *Las grandezas de Alejandro*, *Las mujeres sin hombres* and *Las justas de Tebas* by Lope, and *Las Amazonas en las Indias* by Tirso de Molina, see the recent contributions by M. Trambaioli, ‘La figura de la Amazona en la obra de Lope de Vega’, *Anuario Lope de Vega*, 12 (2006), pp. 233–62, and M. Blanco, ‘L’Amazone et le Conquistador ou les noces manquées de deux rebelles: À propos d’*Amazonas en las Indias* de Tirso de Molina’, in G. Leduc (ed.), *Réalité et représentation des Amazones* (Paris, 2008), pp. 179–97.

infatuation to the desire to kill someone who is a threat to her moral strength, but in no fewer than three successive arias he develops the Amazon's most emotionally intense moment. In this case, Mitilene's monologue in the libretto is twice as long as the one in the Spanish play (*Las Amazonas*: 27 lines; *La simpatia nell'odio*: 54 lines).

Astolfo's awakening is also full of tension, for he sees a woman for the first time in his life. Monesio preserves not only the dramatic motifs underlying the verbal exchange in Solís's play, but also the length and alternation of the individual speeches. It is even possible to observe how he maintains the stichomythia in the line split between the two characters and the anaphora in Astolfo's last speech:

Solís, *Las Amazonas*, II (1657, p. 105)

*Vale à tirar, y despierta Astolfo, y ella se detiene.*

ASTOLFO

¿Quién a llegar se ha atrevido  
donde yo? pero ¿qué veo?  
detente, suspende el tiro,  
hermosa deidad, ¿quién eres?  
¿quién eres, bello prodigio,  
que me han robado los ojos  
todos los demás sentidos?

MIQUILENE

Una mujer soy.

ASTOLFO

Qué dices?

¿mujer eres? aora digo  
que pueden temer los ojos;  
pues son como los oídos.

MIQUILENE

Defiéndete ya que abriste  
los ojos, y se ha cumplido  
el presagio, que no quiero,  
que me des lo que mis bríos  
pueden quitarte, y que digas  
que haces la guerra conmigo.

ASTOLFO

Pues ¿por qué, hermosa homicida,  
– cuya belleza ha podido  
alumbrar en un instante  
tinieblas de todo un siglo –  
pues por qué contra mí empuñas  
ese azcero vengativo?  
¿qué hay en mí que te merezca  
tanto rigor? . . .

Monesio, *La simpatia nell'odio*, II. 5 (fol. 27<sup>r-v</sup>)

*Mentre Mitilene sta in atto di scoccare il dardo,  
Astolfo si sveglia.*

ASTOLFO

Chi tanto ardisce, o là? ma che miro?  
Bella deità, chi sei  
che involi in un baleno  
col tuo chiaro splendore  
i respiri al mio seno  
a' miei spirti il vigore?

MITILENE

Donna sono.

ASTOLFO

Ora sì che affermo e dico

che al pari de l'udito  
ponno gl'occhi temer duolo infinito.

MITILENE

Ma già che gl'occhi apristi  
e s'avverò d'Appollo il vaticinio  
che al volger de' tuoi lumi a' suoi bei rai  
minacciò l'amazonico estermínio,  
difenditi, se puoi, dal mio furore,  
schermisceti, se sai, dal mio rigore.

ASTOLFO

Perché, o bella guerriera  
(bèltà che puote illuminar gl'abissi),  
perché con brama altèra  
di quel ferro veloce  
or' armi a' danni miei l'arco feroce?  
Perché, o bella, perché  
tanto rigor con me?

Solís's play was performed for the first time on 7 February 1655 at the Royal Palace in Madrid, and was then printed in 1657 in *Parte ix de comedias nuevas escogidas de los mejores ingenios de España*.<sup>25</sup> It is fairly certain that Monesio consulted this collection, and that he had no difficulties in reading Spanish. It is more difficult, however, to explain his decision to translate a Spanish text for the Viennese court, apart from the fact that it was becoming a common practice.

In virtue of the connection between the two Habsburg families (Iberian and Austrian) Spanish theatre was never lacking in Vienna, although its period of greatest success is generally placed a few years after the libretto of *La simpatía nell'odio*, in other words from the time of the arrival of the new Spanish empress, Margarita, at the end of 1666.<sup>26</sup> The marriage of Margarita, the daughter of Philip IV of Spain and Mariana of Austria (Eleonora II's stepdaughter), to her uncle, Leopold I (Mariana's brother), was intended to strengthen relations between the courts. The wedding was planned for April 1660, but since the Infanta was only nine years old it was necessary to wait until December 1663 for the *capitulaciones* and April 1666 for the proxy marriage in Madrid.<sup>27</sup> After 1666, a libretto is known that proclaims on the title page that it is the translation of a Spanish text, *Benché vinto, vince amore, o il Prometeo. Opera in musica tradotta dallo spagnolo all'italiano idioma* (1669),<sup>28</sup> but before this time the circulation of Spanish commodities in Vienna is not very noteworthy, even though Leopold I was already acquainted with Spanish literature and purchased volumes for his library.<sup>29</sup> In this context, Monesio's libretto – if it were recognised that it was derived from Solís's play – represented an exception.

<sup>25</sup> See references in n. 20. A copy of this print, moreover, is also preserved in A-Wn, \*38.V.10.(9): if this exemplar was already in Vienna at the same time as the libretto's arrival, it would be possible to assume that the sovereigns were aware that *La simpatía nell'odio* was a translation of *Las Amazonas*.

<sup>26</sup> See the contributions of A. Sommer-Mathis, 'Las relaciones teatrales entre las dos ramas de la Casa de Austria en el Barroco' and M. de los Reyes, 'Relaciones teatrales españolas y austriacas durante el reinado de Leopoldo I y Margarita de Austria (1663–1673)', in J. M. Díez Borque and K. F. Rudolf (eds.), *Barroco español y austriaco: Fiesta y teatro en la corte de los Habsburgo y los Austrias. Museo Municipal de Madrid, abril-junio 1994* (Madrid, 1994), pp. 41–57 and 59–66; M. G. Profeti, 'Primerò es la honra di Agustín Moreto con le musiche di Antonio Draghi', in E. Sala and D. Daolmi (eds.), 'Quel novo Cario, quel divin Orfeo': Antonio Draghi da Rimini a Vienna (Lucca, 2000), pp. 99–117; and especially the extensive overview by A. Noe, 'Die Rezeption spanischer Dramen am Wiener Kaiserhof des 17. Jahrhunderts: Versuch einer Bilanz', *Daphnis*, 30 (2001), pp. 159–218.

<sup>27</sup> See K. F. Rudolf, *Unión dinástica y razón política: Los Austrias y los Habsburgo de Viena en el siglo XVII*, in Díez Borque and Rudolf (eds.), *Barroco español y austriaco*, pp. 33–40.

<sup>28</sup> *Festa con la quale celebrarono la nascita della serenissima regina delle Spagne, donna Marianna d'Austria, le sacre e cesaree maestà, gl'augustissimi Leopoldo e Margarita, nel teatro dell'Imperial Palazzo di Viena, l'anno 1669* (Vienna, 1669). Noted, for example, by Noe, 'Die Rezeption spanischer Dramen', p. 197.

<sup>29</sup> See A. G. Reichenberger, 'The Counts Harrach and the Spanish Theatre', in *Homenaje a Rodríguez Moñino*, 2 vols (Madrid, 1966), ii, pp. 97–103.

There are at least two possible hypotheses that might explain this circumstance: (1) the subject matter was imposed by the individual commissioning the piece, and perhaps even the source text; (2) Monesio may have had *carte blanche*, but in this case I would not rule out the influence of another Roman, Cardinal Giulio Rospigliosi, author of the only libretti preceding *La simpatia nell'odio* that were faithful adaptations of Spanish plays. Having returned from his nunciature in Spain, Rospigliosi composed the librettos *Dal bene il male* (1654) and *L'armi e gli amori* (1656), basing them on Spanish cloak-and-dagger plays by Antonio Sigler de Huerta and Juan Pérez de Montalbán.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, Monesio's libretto precedes what was hitherto considered to be the first Italian translation of a play by Solís, namely *Il finto medico* (1669), derived by the actress Angiola D'Orso from *El doctor Carlino* and dedicated to the Roman Maria Mancini Colonna.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Monesio's text also precedes what has so far been considered the first libretto based on a play by Solís, *Il palazzo del segreto* by Giovanni Rabbia (Milan, 1683), based on *El alcázar del secreto* (1657).<sup>32</sup>

IV. ROME: LA CADUTA DEL REGNO DELLE AMAZZONI  
BY DE TOTIS

Again in Rome, in January 1690, the poet Domenico De Totis published the libretto of another opera on the same subject matter, the sumptuous

<sup>30</sup> On *Dal bene il male* see I. Bajini, 'Recitato-cantato: Da un dramma di Antonio Sigler de la Huerta a un libretto d'opera di Giulio Rospigliosi', in M. T. Cattaneo (ed.), *Intersezioni: Spagna e Italia dal Cinquecento al Settecento* (Rome, 1995), pp. 67–101, whereas for *L'armi e gli amori* see both M. G. Profeti, 'Armi ed amori: La fortuna italiana di *Los empeños de un acaso*', in id., *Materiali, variazioni, invenzioni* (Florence, 1996), pp. 99–120, and Daolmi, *Attorno a un dramma di Rospigliosi*. At first Daolmi concluded that the paternity of both libretti (along with those of *La vita umana* and *La comica del cielo*) should not be credited to Giulio Rospigliosi but rather to his nephew Giacomo; following a re-examination of the sources, however, he claimed that the dramas were written by Giulio, but that it was the specific intention of the chroniclers to create confusion by crediting them to his nephew. See id., 'Sulla paternità degli ultimi drammi di Clemente IX', *Studi secenteschi*, 46 (2005), pp. 131–77, and 'Sugli ultimi libretti di Giulio Rospigliosi', *Studi secenteschi*, 50 (2009), pp. 321–4. The issue is then taken up again by Profeti, *Commedie, riscritture, libretti*, pp. 142–6, who, lacking clear evidence to the contrary, remains inclined to attribute them to Giulio.

<sup>31</sup> *Il finto medico. Comedia d'Angiola Orso, comica, dedicata all'illustrissima ed eccellentissima madama Maria Mancini Colonna, duchessa di Tagliacozzo etc.* (Ronciglione, 1669; reprinted the same year in Ferrara and Bologna with the title *Paolo Gemma, ovvero Il ruffiano in Venezia e medico in Napoli*). In addition to her profession as comica dell'arte D'Orso translated Spanish comedies into Italian. See M. Marigo, 'Angiola d'Orso, comica dell'Arte e traduttrice', *Biblioteca teatrale*, 18 (1990), pp. 65–94, and V. De Luca, "'Dalle Sponde del Tebro alle Rive dell'Adria": Maria Mancini and Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna's Patronage of Music and Theater between Rome and Venice, 1659–1675' (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2009), p. 62.

<sup>32</sup> See the file in *Commedie, riscritture, libretti*, pp. 426–7.



*La caduta del regno delle Amazzoni*.<sup>33</sup> As had long been known, this libretto was also based on Solís's *Las Amazonas*. The opera, in fact, resulted from a commission of Spanish origin: it was performed in Rome, with music by Bernardo Pasquini, at the initiative of the Spanish ambassador Luis Francisco de la Cerda, Marquis of Cogolludo and Duke of Medinaceli,<sup>34</sup> and staged in the theatre at Palazzo Colonna. The Colonna family supported Spanish politics (Maria Mancini, wife of the high constable Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna, was the dedicatee of the D'Orso's translation of *El doctor Carlino* by Solís), and the opera was intended to celebrate the marriage between Charles II of Spain and Maria Anna, the daughter of the Palatine Elector.<sup>35</sup> For such an occasion, setting to music the subject of a Spanish play was almost de rigueur.

De Totis already had long experience in developing libretti based on Spanish plays for productions at the Royal Palace in Naples that were dedicated to the Spanish viceroy: *Psiche* (1683) and *Fetonte* (1685) were both based on plays by Calderón, *Ni amor se libra de amor* (Madrid, 1664) and *El Faetonte* (Madrid, 1674) respectively.<sup>36</sup> At the time De Totis wrote the libretto for *La caduta* in 1690, two editions of the Spanish play were available, one of 1657, and a second that was included in the edition of Solís's plays in 1681. The latter edition seems to have brought new fortune to the play in Madrid, judging from the number of times it was revived

<sup>33</sup> According to S. Franchi, *Drammaturgia romana: Repertorio bibliografico cronologico dei testi drammatici pubblicati a Roma e nel Lazio, secolo XVII* (Rome, 1988), pp. 621–2, and Profeti, *Commedie, riscritture, libretti*, pp. 427–9, there were three printings of the libretto *La caduta* in the same year: one printed by Francesco Buagni and sold by Francesco Leone Sartori, *Libretti*, no. 4349; exemplar consulted: I-Mb, Racc.Dram.1189), the other two printed by the Reverenda Camera Apostolica, one in-12°, and sold by Giovanni Antonio Settari (Sartori, *Libretti*, no. 4348), the other in-4°. S. Franchi, *Le impressioni sceniche: Dizionario bio-bibliografico degli editori e stampatori romani e laziali di testi drammatici e libretti per musica dal 1579 al 1800*, 2 vols (Rome, 1994), p. 718, argues that the edition sold by Settari matches the original poetic text of De Totis, while that of Buagni should contain the text that was actually sung during the staging. All printings, however, seem to date after the performance, since their title pages read 'staged' ('fatta rappresentare'), and not 'to be staged' ('da rappresentarsi'); even De Totis, in the dedication, claims that the opera had 'already been performed with an excess of regal pomp and grandeur' ('rappresentata già con eccesso di regal pompa e grandezza').

<sup>34</sup> See E. Bojan and A. Vencato, 'La committenza spagnola in Italia durante la dominazione', in A. L. Bellina (ed.), *Il teatro dei due mondi* (Padua, 2000), pp. 47–99, on the relationships between the Colonnas and the De la Cerdas, and the extensive study by J. M. María Domínguez Rodríguez, 'Mecenazgo musical del IX Duque de Medinaceli: Roma-Nápoles-Madrid, 1687–1710' (Ph.D. diss., University of Madrid, 2010), on the Duke of Medinaceli's musical patronage and thus that of *La caduta* (pp. 105–24).

<sup>35</sup> On the relations between the Spanish ambassadors and the Colonna family see E. Tamburini, *Due teatri per il principe: Studi sulla committenza teatrale di Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna, 1659–1689* (Rome, 1997) and, though it refers to a slightly earlier period, De Lucca, "Dalle Sponde del Tebro".

<sup>36</sup> See the relative entries in the appendix of Profeti, *Commedie, riscritture, libretti*, pp. 393–5.

during the decade just prior to the Roman staging of *La caduta*,<sup>37</sup> which may have been the catalyst for the decision to develop a new libretto from the Spanish play. Similarly, the libretto for *Il palazzo del segreto*, of 1683, probably was based on the same edition.

Since the correlation between De Totis's libretto and Solís's play has recently been examined by Maria Grazia Profeti,<sup>38</sup> here I will only analyse the relationship between De Totis's and Monesio's libretti; the latter is chronologically placed exactly between the Spanish text and *La caduta*, and both were written in the same city. In contrast to Monesio, however, De Totis changed the names of all the characters except for Mitilene:

De Totis, <i>La caduta</i> (1690) <sup>39</sup>		Monesio, <i>La simpatia nell'odio</i> (1664)
ARTIDE	[A] figliuolo d'Alessandro Magno	ASTOLFO
LICANDRO	[T] re di Sarmazia	POLIDORO
ARCONTE	[T] suo capitano	AURELIO
IDASPE	[B] custode d'Artide	INDATIRSO
TURPINO	[B] scudiero di Licandro	LUCINDO
MANDANE	[S] regina delle Amazzoni	MENALIPPE
MITILENE	[S] sua sorella, generalessa	MITILENE
TISBE	[S] cameriera della regina	VOLPINO
		MARTISIA

Replacing the name Menalippe with Mandane is perfectly consistent with the names that were associated with the myth of the Amazons, although in this case it is merely the use of a name and not a different character. Licandro is not Prince but King of Sarmatia; Mandane and Mitilene are cousins, not sisters; Mandane has a female servant, Tisbe, as in Solís's play, but in this case there is only one, not three. In short, the changes were very minor.

By comparing the dramaturgy of the two texts in detail, outlined in Table 2, one can see how, apart from the names of the characters, the overall structure of De Totis's libretto is largely faithful to Monesio's libretto, albeit with some alterations, possibly due to changes in theatrical tastes. Once again, the greatest alterations are in the servants' scenes: the number of scenes changes and consequently their plot, though the love intrigue remains. The only new elements are Turpino's disguise as an

<sup>37</sup> In 1681, 1682, 1685 and 1687. See J. E. Varey and N. D. Shergold, *Comedias en Madrid (1603–1709): Repertorio y estudio bibliográfico* (London, 1989), p. 55.

<sup>38</sup> See Profeti, 'Los juegos olímpicos e Las Amazonas'.

<sup>39</sup> Vocal ranges drawn from the manuscript score: London, British Library, Add. 16150–2 (*Gli Amazoni*).

Table 2 *Comparison of the dramaturgical framework in the libretti by Monesio and De Totis*  
 Legend: | (central) = common scenes; † (side) = comic scenes; ● = new scenes

Monesio, <i>La simpata nell'odio</i> (1664)	De Totis, <i>La caduta</i> (1690)
ACT I	ACT I
<i>Forest [Day]</i>	<i>Open countryside [Dawn]</i>
1 Astolfo, enclosed in a cave, complains of his fate, opens a passageway and leaves.	1 Artide, enclosed in a cave, complains of his fate, opens a passageway and leaves.
2 Lucindo also leaves the cave, out of breath, and he warns Astolfo about the risk of meeting the Amazons and explains why he has been kept there.	2 Turpino also leaves the cave, out of breath, and he warns Artide about the risk of meeting the Amazons.
3 Aurelio appoints Astolfo army general.	3 Arconte appoints Artide army general.
<i>Royal Courtyard</i>	<i>Mandane's rooms</i>
4 Volpino boasts of being the only man in the kingdom of the Amazons, revered and adored.	4 Turpino confesses his fear of the Amazons to Tisbe and she convinces him to dress as a woman to avoid any risks.
5 Volpino succumbs to the flattery of Martesia.	5 Licandro basks in being seduced by Mandane. ●
<i>Royal rooms</i>	
6 Menalippe and Polidoro flirt; the Amazon explains Mitilene's belligerent intentions towards the Sarmatians; Polidoro is curious to discover how beautiful she is.	6 Mandane and Licandro flirt.
7 Mitilene, with Amazons, brings the prisoner Indatirso to Menalippe, who tells her he was Astolfo's tutor. [→ <i>La caduta</i> , I. 14]	7 Tisbe announces the arrival of the belligerent Mitilene and Licandro flees.
8 Mitilene wants to convince Menalippe to attack the Sarmatians, but she does not yield.	8 Mitilene, with Amazons, wants to convince Mandane to attack the Sarmatians, but she does not yield.
9 Mitilene, alone, reaffirms her heroic courage.	9 Mandane and Licandro devise a plan to kill Mitilene. ●
<i>Royal Courtyard</i>	<i>Suburban</i>
10 Martesia, betraying Volpino, courts Lucindo, who tries to get news about Polidoro, but is forced to succumb.	10 Turpino, dressed as a woman, comments on the ambiguity of the sexes.
	11 Artide, head of the army, stops Turpino, mistaking him for an Amazon.
	<i>Rooms with alcove</i>
	12 Turpino takes off his women's clothes.
	13 Mandane reflects on how to reconcile love and rulership. ●
	14 Mitilene brings the prisoner Idaspe to Mandane.
	ACT II
	<i>Mandane's rooms</i>
	1 Licandro reflects on love. ●
	2 Turpino tells Licandro that Artide is undeservedly at the command of his army. ●
	3 Licandro returns to his military commitments and leaves Mandane. ●
	4 Turpino reflects.
	5 Turpino tells Tisbe that he wants to leave.
ACT II	<i>Garden with fountains and flower arrangements</i>
<i>Forest</i>	6 Arconte and Artide prepare to face Mitilene.
1 Astolfo tells Aurelio that he wants to defeat the Amazons.	

<p>2 An Amazonian choir enthrals Astolfo.</p> <p>3 In order to hear the singing yet not be seduced by love, Astolfo hides in his cave and falls asleep.</p> <p>4 Mitilene and Volpino come across the sleeping Astolfo: Mitilene would like to kill him, but she finds herself attracted to him.</p> <p>5 Astolfo wakes up and although Mitilene and he both try to resist their attraction for each other, they eventually succumb to it.</p> <p>6 Mitilene and Astolfo are afraid they will be seen together, and separate.</p>	<p>7 Artide falls asleep to the music of a violin concert.</p> <p>8 Mitilene silences some Amazons who are playing music to celebrate the carnival, and then sees Artide sleeping: she would like to kill him, but she finds herself attracted to him; although Artide and Mitilene both try to resist their attraction for each other, they eventually succumb to it.</p>
<i>Mandane's rooms</i>	
<p>7 Indatirso tells Astolfo the story of his origins; he warns him about Mitilene and advises him to go back and lead the army again.</p>	<p>9 Licandro unbosoms himself to Turpino. •</p> <p>10 Mandane and Licandro devise a plan to kill Mitilene. •</p> <p>11 Turpino and Tisbe comment on the intentions of the two kings. •</p>
<i>Royal Courtyard</i>	
<p>8 Volpino and Martesia flirt, but they are interrupted by the arrival of Menalippe; Volpino hides.</p> <p>9 Displays of affection between the couples Menalippe–Polidoro and Martesia–Lucindo. Volpino discovers Martesia's betrayal.</p>	<p>12 Arconte tells Artide that the army is ready.</p> <p>13 Idaspe arrives and tells Artide the story of his origins.</p>
<i>Mitilene's rooms. Night</i>	
<p>10 The prisoner Indatirso laments.</p> <p>11 Volpino complains about Martesia's betrayal.</p> <p>12 Mitilene's arrival disturbs the displays of affection between the couples. Menalippe hides Polidoro and Lucindo and flees with Martesia.</p> <p>13 Mitilene and Astolfo arrive and the former suspects that Menalippe has a lover; the couples Menalippe–Martesias and Polidoro–Lucindo go off in different directions.</p> <p>14 Astolfo suspects that Mitilene has a lover and they meet in the dark. [→ <i>La caduta</i>, III. 11]</p> <p>15 With a lamp Volpino illuminates the room; Mitilene and Astolfo remain alone; Mitilene suspects that Astolfo is Mandane's lover; they renew their mutual suspicions of betrayal against each other and declare war on the battlefield. [→ <i>La caduta</i>, III. 12]</p>	<p>14 Mandane advises Licandro where to lie in wait to kill Mitilene. •</p> <p>15 Licandro realises that he is about to kill for love. •</p>
<i>Tunnel</i>	
<p>ACT III</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Mitilene's rooms. Day</i></p> <p>1 Lucindo reminds Polidoro of his responsibilities.</p>	<p>16 Licandro and Artide are afraid their lovers will betray them.</p> <p>17 Mitilene is afraid that Artide is cheating on her with Mandane, and Artide is afraid he is being cheated on by Licandro.</p>
<i>Rooms</i>	
<p>ACT III</p>	<p>18 Tisbe punishes Turpino.</p> <p>ACT III</p>

- 2 Indatirso tells Polidoro that he is his father; he wants his son and Lucindo to flee, but Polidoro chooses to stay with Menalippe and sends Lucindo to reassure the soldiers that a truce is imminent. [→ *La caduta*, III. 7–8]
- 3 Mitilene shares the woes of her love life with Volpino.
- 4 Mitilene tells Menalippe that she is ready to attack the Sarmatians.
- 5 Alone, Menalippe complains about Mitilene's intentions and Polidoro's alleged betrayal.
- 6 Menalippe overhears the conversation between Volpino and Polidoro.
- 7 Menalippe and Polidoro confront one other, but Menalippe continues to suspect that he has betrayed her and sends him away, declaring war on the Sarmatians.

*Royal Courtyard*

- 8 Martesia and Volpino argue about their alleged infidelities.

*A field on the banks of Thermodon set up with army tents.*

- 9 Lucindo assures Astolfo that Polidoro is not Menalippe's lover and Astolfo placates the wrath of the soldiers.
- 10 Astolfo and Polidoro agree to put their war plans against the Amazons aside.
- 11 Although the Sarmatians are friendly towards the Amazons, the women act like proud enemies; then the lovers clear matters up and the Amazons succumb.
- 12 The couples are formed: Mitilene–Astolfo (King of the Thermodon) and Menalippe–Polidoro (King of the Sarmatians).

*Courtyard with colonnade*

- 1 Mitilene laments that she was seduced.
- 2 Mitilene shares her woes with Mandane, but the latter believes that it is all Licandro's fault.
- 3 Mandane laments about the alleged betrayal.
- 4 Turpino goes back to Tisbe.
- 5 Turpino reflects on the relationship between the sexes.

*Suburban*

- 6 Artide confesses to Arconte that he is in love and is afraid he has been betrayed. •
- 7 Idaspe advises Licandro and Lucindo to flee, but Licandro is not sure whether he should stay with Mandane or leave.
- 8 Idaspe sends Turpino to prepare the troops.

*[Mitilene's rooms]*

- 9 Tisbe makes Mitilene believe that Licandro is infatuated with her. •
- 10 Mitilene consoles herself. •
- 11 Mandane enters Mitilene's room to see if Licandro is cheating on her with Mitilene.
- 12 Licandro follows Tisbe's advice and pretends to be Mitilene's lover, believing that he is talking to her, but instead he is talking to Mandane, who loses her temper.

*Countryside with tents set up*

- 13 Turpino reveals to Artide that Licandro was in Mitilene's rooms preparing a plot against her.
- 14 Artide and Licandro set matters straight on their mutual suspicions of being their lovers' lovers.
- 15 Idaspe warns them that the Amazons are going to attack.
- 16 Although the Sarmatians are friendly towards the Amazons, the women act like proud enemies; then the Amazons succumb and the couples are formed: Mitilene–Artide (King of the Thermodon) and Mandane–Licandro (King of the Sarmatians).

Amazon (I. 4 and I. 12) and the solo scenes where he mocks the inversion of the relationship between the sexes and the virile identity of the Amazons (I. 10 and III. 5). Such scenes keep the comic element of the opera high, perhaps even raising it, as can be seen in the following lines:

De Totis, *La caduta*, I. 4

TURPINO

Già il sesso a rinegar Turpin  
s'appresta,  
ch'ove le donne portano i calzoni  
agli uomini portar convien la vesta.

Turpino is getting ready to renounce his  
gender,  
since where the women wear the pants  
the men had better wear dresses.

De Totis, *La caduta*, I. 12

TURPINO

Maledetto paese! A quel ch'io veggio,  
qui l'esser uomo è mal, femina è peggio;  
  
onde per questi lidi  
sol sicuri saran gli ermafroditi.

Cursed country! From what I see,  
this is a dangerous place for men,  
and even more so for women;  
on this land  
only hermaphrodites are safe.

De Totis, *La caduta*, I. 10

TURPINO

Chi mai l'avesse detto  
che dovesse Turpino,  
per farsi creer donna,  
cangiar le braghe in gonna . . .  
ma non son'io già solo a far da  
femina,  
ché ne conosco tanti  
che s'ornano e si lisciano,  
si pelano, si strisciano,  
s'inanellano il crin, dormon coi  
guanti,  
a segno ch'io confesso  
ch'oggi il cappello sol distingue  
il sesso.

Who would have thought  
that Turpino would ever,  
to disguise himself as a woman,  
trade his breeches for a skirt . . .  
but I'm not the only one behaving like a  
woman,  
since I know many  
who adorn themselves and put on make-up;  
they shave and make themselves up,  
they curl their hair and sleep with  
gloves,  
to the point that I confess  
that today only a hat distinguishes  
the gender.

Turpino, having disguised himself as an Amazon (I. 4) to blend in with the viragos and save himself from their murderous hatred, laments about the reverse danger (I. 12), that he was arrested by the Sarmatians for being a woman warrior (Artide, deceived by his female disguise, aggressively defines him as 'donna o danno del mondo'). And in another intermediate scene, Turpino draws inspiration from his cross-dressing to make fun of the effeminate, and therefore lewd, habits of a part of contemporary male society (I. 10). By comparing the same passage and the same concept in Monesio's and De Totis's libretti, it is clear that the latter aims for a

## Amazons from Madrid to Vienna

more comical tone than the former (especially the biting tone of the verses ‘ma, summarie del sesso / fatta ricognizione, si decapita.’):<sup>40</sup>

Monesio, *La simpatia nell’odio*, I. 2

LUCINDO

e s’avvien che uomo alcun tra loro inciampi,  
son più crude ver lui d’angue affricano;  
anzi son sì rubelle al nostro sesso  
che con strage inaudita  
svenano appena nati i maschi figli.

if a man were to cross their path  
they would be more cruel to him than an  
African snake; they are so very contrary to our  
gender that they carry out unspeakable  
massacres  
of newborn baby boys.

De Totis, *La caduta*, I. 2

TURPINO

e se un uomo qui capita,  
non gli si fa processo,  
ma, summarie del sesso  
fatta ricognizione, si decapita.

if a man should turn up here  
he will not be put on trial;  
but as soon as they identify his sex  
they decapitate him.

It is also possible to deduce from Table 2 that De Totis has made the following structural innovations in the main plot, compared to the libretto for *La simpatia nell’odio*:

1. Mandane and Licandro’s plot to kill Mitilene (I. 9);
2. Mandane’s considerations on how to reconcile ruling and love (I. 13);
3. Artide’s deep sleep, induced not by a concert of female voices but by violins (II. 7);
4. Mitilene’s silencing of the concert of the Amazons at Carnival (II. 8).

In contrast, compared with the original play, De Totis leaves out, for example, the long narrative about the myth of the Amazons (I. 2) and Polidoro falling in love with Menalippe through her portrait – a motif, moreover, which mirrors Thalestris’s infatuation with Alexander the Great. Though he maintains the plot of the play almost entirely, he completely rewrites the setting. There are only a few small passages which unavoidably seem reminiscent of the text of the play or of Monesio’s libretto, to the point that it is difficult to understand which one De Totis had under his eyes while he was writing. Let us examine a few.

In Artide’s opening monologue, referring to the oil lamp that was the only source of light in the cave, the De Totis uses the Marinian term ‘liquefatta oliva’,<sup>41</sup> which is not found in the Spanish text. He seems to have taken it out of Monesio’s libretto, at the same point in the scene:

<sup>40</sup> I wonder if this is the aspect of originality that Antonio Politauri refers to in the *imprimatur* of the libretto ‘of all the operas I have revised this contains the most capricious invention’ (‘opera all’altre sue da me rivedute superiore per l’invenzione capricciosa’).

<sup>41</sup> See *Adone*, canto IV, ottava 165, and *Rime marittime*, sonetto 47 (‘D’un’alta rupe, ove talor s’imbosca’).

Monesio, *La simpatia nell'odio*, I. 1 (fols. 5<sup>v</sup>–6<sup>r</sup>) De Totis, *La caduta*, I. 1

ASTOLFO

Ma se fissar non posso  
a la lampa febea  
le abbagliate pupille,  
ben mille volte e mille  
fu più soave in quella grotta il lume  
che liquefatta oliva  
a le mie luci offriva.

ARTIDE

Sventurati miei lumi,  
a cui sol vien permesso,  
alla luce mal viva  
di liquefatta oliva  
su taciti volumi,  
mirar da fosche linee il mondo espresso.

Likewise, in a scene from *La caduta* where Mitilene wants to kill Artide in his sleep, the Amazon defines him as ‘nuovo mostro’, reminiscent of ‘mostro inumano’ from *La simpatia nell'odio*, but then reconsiders and decides that he is ‘non già sì deforme / come apparve il primier questo ravviso’, wording reminiscent of the Viennese libretto in the lines ‘non è così deforme / come me ’l figurò sdegno adirato’.

Monesio, *La simpatia nell'odio*, II. 4

MITILENE

... Ma su rustico sasso  
giace il mostro inumano?  
altri, l’uccise, oh Dio,  
e involò le vittorie a la mia mano.  
(*Si appressa ad Astolfo*)  
Per osservare se vive a lui m’appresso.  
(*conosce che dorme*)  
... [aria]  
Ma che parlo, che dico?  
È viltà troppo enorme  
(*lo contempla*)  
il desiar che viva empio nemico;  
non è così deforme  
come me ’l figurò sdegno adirato.

De Totis, *La caduta*, II. 8

MITILENE

*S’avvede d’Artide che dorme.*  
Ma veggio, o veder parmi  
novo mostro, che il fianco adagia e dorme.  
Su, su, miei spirti, a la vendetta, a l’armi.  
*Va per ucciderlo, si ferma in guardarlo.*  
Ma non già sì deforme,  
come apparve il primier, questo ravviso.  
Tutto l’orror d’Averno insieme accolto  
balenava in quel viso.

This scene, with its dramatic length and organisation, is the culminating point of the opera. After the staging, twelve Spanish and Italian sonnets were printed in praise of the patrons and singers of *La caduta*,<sup>42</sup> at least four of which, as indicated by the titles, focus on this scene, especially those which praise the performer playing the part of Artide.<sup>43</sup> José María Domínguez Rodríguez has noted that the scene between Mitilene and

<sup>42</sup> Preserved at the Houghton Library of Harvard University, IB6.A100.B675, nos. 59–68, 121, 132. The sonnets provide, for example, the name of the singer playing the role of Mitilene, namely Maria Landini (nos. 60, 66–7), and we learn that the individual playing the role of Mandane, whose name is not given, comes from the Tuscan court (no. 68: ‘O del toscano ciel gloria primiera’).

<sup>43</sup> *A quien representa a Artide en la real fiesta de las ‘Amazonas’ quando duerme* (no. 61; To the one who represents the sleeping Artide at the royal feast of the ‘Amazons’); *A Mitilene, ya enamorada de Artide* (no. 62; To Mitilene, who is by now in love with Artide); *Ad Artide, che si addorme nell’udir*



Artide is very similar to that between Armide and Rinaldo in Quinault and Lully's *Armide*, whose Roman performance in the same year was sponsored by the French Cardinal de Bouillon, based on the libretto translated by Giacomo d'Alibert.<sup>44</sup>

It seems plausible to assume that Monesio's work influenced De Totis's, based on the examples presented so far – thus it is likely that a copy of the libretto had been kept in Rome, and may have been consulted by De Totis – an episode in *La caduta* which is not found in the libretto of *La simpatia nell'odio* but in the Spanish play indicates that De Totis knew Solís's text. It is the episode where Mitilene, absorbed in her implacable military plans, abruptly silences the Amazons who are entertaining themselves with music and songs:

Solís, *Las Amazonas*, II (1657, p. 103)

*Quédase Astolfo dormido, y dicen dentro  
Miquilene, y Iulia, y Amazonas.*

MIQUILENE

Dejad de cantar, villanos!

¿Agora informáis lo limpio

a la ira con la vileza

de esos rumores festivos?

Vive Dios que he de romper

essos instrumentos mismos

que de vuestra voz repiten

o acompañan el delito.

*Salen huyendo Flora, y dos o tres Amazonas,*

*y tras ellas Miquilene [Martesia?] con*

*una guitarra quebrada en la mano.*

De Totis, *La caduta*, II. 8

*Mitilene, Tisbe con accompagnamento di  
fanciulle con varii stromenti, Artide che dorme.*

MITILENE

Tacete, anime vili! E se bramate

d'eccitarmi nel cor spirti festosi,

timpani bellicosi,

oricalchi guerrieri al suon destate.

TISBE

Forse è qualche gran male

questa poca allegria che avete inteso?

Siamo di carnevale,

nè sempre si può star con l'arco teso.

In the Italian reworking of the piece, dramaturgical coincidences aside, the analogy of Mitilene's first verse can clearly be noted, specifically the order 'Tacete, anime vili!' with 'Dejad de cantar, villanos!', and the ironic expression 'spirti festosi' with 'rumores festivos'. In the libretto this is followed by a speech made by the servant Tisbe, which defuses the situation with an extra-theatrical reference to the historical time of the performance, carnival, as a time of year when priorities can be relaxed. Thus far I have examined only some of relevant passages, but a systematic philological study – which I leave to Spanish scholars – will certainly clarify the correlation between De Totis's libretto and his models.

*l'armonia* (no. 64; To Artide, who falls asleep to the sound of the music); *Al merito impareggiabile di chi rappresenta il personaggio d'Artide nell'atto che dorme* (no. 65; To the unparalleled merit of the individual playing the part of Artide in the act where he sleeps).

<sup>44</sup> See Domínguez Rodríguez, 'Mecenazgo musical', i, p. 122. This is the opera that corresponds to the libretto *Armida*. *Opera musicale tradotta dal francese, senza mutar le note del famoso Giovan Battista Lulli* (Rome, 1690; Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale 'Vittorio Emanuele II': 34. I.H.80; described by Franchi, *Drammaturgia romana*, pp. 631–2).

The revision of a libretto intended for the Viennese court twenty-five years earlier for a performance at Palazzo Colonna might be connected with the phenomenon – which remains to be clarified – that operas having their debut in Vienna, or at least passing through there, were presented in the theatre of Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna up to twenty years later. There are no reports of relations between the Colonnas and Leopold's court, but the phenomenon has been tentatively linked to the High Constable's fondness for libretti by Nicolò Minato, who spent twenty-nine years at the Viennese court.<sup>45</sup>

The Colonna family contributed significantly to the new Spanish Empress's journey to Vienna, mostly thanks to Cardinal Girolamo Colonna, who had entered into the good graces of Philip IV while studying in Spain; he was instructed by His Majesty in April 1664 to accompany his daughter Margarita to Vienna. In 1666, while travelling with the Infanta shortly after having celebrated her marriage to Leopold in Madrid, the cardinal died in Finale Ligure. Awaiting the passage of the Empress in Milan, however, was his brother, Lorenzo Onofrio, with his wife Maria Mancini. We do not know, however, if this event was an opportunity to initiate or to strengthen contacts between the Colonna family and the Habsburg court to the extent that it would have promoted the migration of operas and influenced their appreciation. Lorenzo Onofrio himself died one year prior to the performance of *La caduta* and the production of the opera was sponsored by the Spanish ambassador, and thus perhaps the event was a development independent of the theatrical policy of the Colonna family.

Domínguez Rodríguez assumed that the Duke of Medinaceli had chosen to represent *La caduta* at Palazzo Colonna in order to take advantage of the entrepreneurial skills of the Roman family and the complex scenic equipment of their modern theatre, and also that he had personally chosen the Spanish text that would be translated and engaged the librettist, as he had previously done for the first opera that he staged in Rome, *I giochi troiani* (1688). Domínguez Rodríguez also assumed that it was almost certain that Medinaceli took part in the staging of *Las Amazonas* at Madrid in 1681, the same year that the edition of Solís's theatrical works came out, precisely on 9 June, Emperor Leopold's birthday. It was for the same occasion that in 1686, also in Madrid, the play *Los juegos olímpicos* was performed, which the Duke then had turned into the libretto *Giocchi troiani*.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, not only did Medinaceli's first two operas produced in Rome

<sup>45</sup> See N. Dubowy, 'Opere di Draghi in Italia?', in E. Sala and D. Daolmi (eds.), *Quel novo Carlo, quel divin Orfeo*, pp. 225–52, at 228–34, and Tamburini, *Due teatri per il principe*, pp. 133, 419.

<sup>46</sup> See Domínguez Rodríguez, 'Mecenazgo musical', i, pp. 108–11.

curiously originate from texts that were already linked to the Habsburgs from an encomiastic point of view, but it is even more surprising to learn that in Madrid a play was being staged with a dedication to the Emperor which itself had been turned into a libretto for the Viennese court seventeen years earlier, and which the Emperor himself partly set to music.

These coincidences effectively support the symbolic interpretations of the libretto, which in turn contribute to understanding the reasons leading to the choice of the subject matter. For example, the hypothetical parallelism, suggested by Domínguez Rodríguez, between Artide and the ruler in charge – whether Leopold I or Charles II – was very likely designed to honour the greatness of the originating families, the Habsburgs in both cases, likening them to the heroic pair of Thalestris and Alexander the Great.<sup>47</sup> This aspect – as will be seen later – might well be related to the idea of an ‘Amazonian’ element in the Habsburg heritage, as would seem to emerge from the interpretation of a scene from *Adone* by Giovan Battista Marino, discussed below.

V. NAPLES: BARBÒ'S *MITILENE*

Despite the understandable doubts recently expressed by Maria Grazia Profeti, there is another libretto that takes up the subject of Solís's play, although in a much more elaborated version, almost completely modified:<sup>48</sup> *Mitilene, regina delle Amazoni* by the Milanese count Teodoro Barbò,<sup>49</sup> performed in Naples on 6 November 1681, with music by Giovanni Bonaventura Viviani, and staged again in Naples in 1707, with music by Giuseppe de Bottis.<sup>50</sup> A decade earlier Barbò, moreover, was the author

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>48</sup> Profeti, *Commedie, riscritture, libretti*, p. 430, speaks of *Mitilene* as a second libretto on the myth of the Amazons that has nothing to do with Solís's work, nevertheless noting that according to the librettist the core of the narrative is based on Quintus Curtius Rufus. In Garavaglia, ‘Il mito delle Amazzoni nell'opera italiana’, p. 111, I discussed all of the correlations between the libretti of *Mitilene* and *La caduta*.

<sup>49</sup> The author, who is not named in the libretto, has recently been identified by Lanfossi in *Un'opera per Elisabetta d'Inghilterra*, pp. 43–53, who emended the previous attribution to a certain Giulio Barbò (cited by Seifert). He has reconstructed the most extensive biographical profile to date, though only a handful of sources are available. See H. Seifert, ‘Familie Viviani’, in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Personenteil*, xvii (Kassel, 2007), cols. 146–8.

<sup>50</sup> *Mitilene, regina delle Amazoni. Melodrama per musica, rappresentato nel Real Palazzo a 6 di novembre, giorno del compleanno de re nostro signore, consecrato all'eccellentissimo signor marchese de Los Velez, viceré di Napoli* (Naples, 1681; Sartori, *Libretti*, no. 15648; copy consulted: I-Bc, LOR.5565). *Mitilene, regina dell'Amazoni. Drama per musica da rappresentarsi nel nuovo teatro di San Giovanni de' Fiorentini, dedicata all'eccellentissima signora donna Carlotta Colonna, duchessa di Madaloni* (Naples, 1707; Sartori, *Libretti*, no. 15649; copy consulted: I-Bc, LOR.672).

of an opera that presented a proud sovereign who was often portrayed as a warrior queen and referred to as an ‘Amazon’: Elizabeth I of England.<sup>51</sup> The opera, entitled *La regina Floridea* (1670), was also based on a Spanish play, *El conde de Sex* by Antonio Coello (1638), and performed in another city also under Spanish domination at the time, namely Milan.<sup>52</sup> Barbò was bilingual, having been born of a Spanish mother, and therefore his inclination to develop libretti from Spanish works, which he consulted in the original language, comes as no surprise.

The *argomento* of *Mitilene* is structured analogously to Monesio’s libretto: mention is made of Thalestris and Alexander’s encounter, referring back to Quintus Curtius Rufus as the historiographical source, and then fictitious elements are incorporated in the drama, relating to the background and coinciding to a great extent with those in *La simpatia nell’odio*:

1. Thalestris learns from the oracle that she will die during childbirth and that if she gives birth to a boy, it will be the ruin of the kingdom.
2. Thalestris orders Menalippe (her successor to the throne) to kill any male child she may bear, should she die in childbirth.
3. Menalippe, given the beauty of the child that is born, decides to spare him and hand him over to a trusted person, who raises him outside the kingdom.
4. The Sarmatians, whose king died in a war against the Amazons without leaving heirs, on the advice of the oracle name as successor the son of Thalestris and Alexander, who is found in a cave on the borders of the Amazonian kingdom. They call him Armidoro like the deceased king, but are totally unaware of his origins.
5. The new Sarmatian king besieges Themyscira, where Mitilene reigns.

The only variation in *Mitilene* is that Armidoro, the son of the illustrious couple, is appointed king of the Sarmatians in the backstory: this involves eliminating Polidoro and combining the roles of Astolfo and Polidoro into a single character, whose name is reminiscent of the latter. The list of characters and correlations with Monesio’s libretto follow:

<sup>51</sup> See W. Schleiner, “‘Divina Virago’: Queen Elizabeth as an Amazon”, *Studies in Philology*, 75 (1978), pp. 163–80. Furthermore, G. Leti, *Historia, ovvero Vita di Elisabetta, regina d’Inghilterra, detta per soprannome ‘la comedianta politica’*, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1693), ii, p. 550, clearly states that ‘the protestants raise this queen above the heavens, calling her heroine, Amazon, as some of them even have fallen into the indiscretion of calling her “Elisabeth the Great”’ (‘li protestanti inalzano questa regina sopra i cieli con titoli d’eroina, d’amazzone, essendo alcuni caduti fino all’indiscretezza di chiamarla “Elisabetta la Grande”’).

<sup>52</sup> An excellent edition of this opera is now available in *Un’opera per Elisabetta d’Inghilterra*, ed. Lanfossi.

## Amazons from Madrid to Vienna

<p>Barbò, <i>Mitilene</i> (1681)<sup>53</sup></p> <p>MITILENE [S] regina delle Amazoni          IPOLITA [S] amazone [army general]          CAMILLA [S] amazone [army general]          ARMIDORO [S] re de' Sarmati [son of Thalestris and Alexander]          ORMONDO [B] generale d'Armidoro          ARSINDO [T] capitano delle guardie          DORILLO [A] scudiere d'Arsindo</p>	<p>Monesio, <i>La simpatia nell'odio</i> (1664)</p> <p>MENALIPPE [+role of MITILENE]          ASTOLFO [+role of POLIDORO]          AURELIO</p>
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The Queen of the Amazons takes the name of her army general cousin or sister and, like her, falls in love with the son of Alexander and Thalestris: and just as with Armidoro, the roles played by Menalippe and Mitilene in *La simpatia nell'odio* are combined. Ipolita and Camilla, two army generals, are reminiscent of the heroic and proud Mitilene of Monesio's libretto, but compared to the latter they have completely different temperaments and experience very different events (imprisonment and disguises).

The opera begins with a scene that is directly reminiscent of the original theatrical subject: Mitilene approaches the Sarmatians' camp to kill Armidoro in his sleep and as soon as she sees him she falls in love, abandoning her murderous intentions (I. 2); in this case, however, when Armidoro wakes up, the Amazon has already fled in the grip of her inner turmoil (I. 3). Therefore the episode coincides with the central motif of the second *jornada* of Solís's text and the second act of *La simpatia nell'odio* (II. 4) and *La caduta* (II. 8).

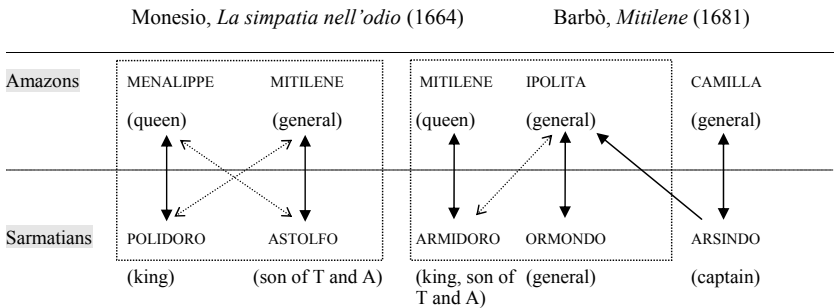
To some extent the end of the play is also reminiscent of the Spanish plot, in the idea of a physical clash between Amazons and Sarmatians, where the former are overwhelmed from a military as well as an emotional standpoint, although in this case it is a personal challenge between Mitilene and Armidoro and not a battle between peoples.

Apart from the initial and final scenes, which from a dramaturgical point of view remain the only strong points of correlation with Monesio's libretto, the rest of the libretto develops by means of different theatrical motifs. It is a typical comedy of intrigue, based on pieces of paper, letters, disguises, portraits and sleep scenes that continually create misunderstandings, misinterpretations, clarifications, recognitions, fits of jealousy, anger, despair and desire for revenge. Mitilene, seduced by Armidoro, and the two Sarmatian officers Ormondo and Arsindo, who are in love with Ipolita, all suspect that Armidoro and Ipolita have developed a romantic relationship; Armidoro swaps clothes with the Amazon Ipolita, his prisoner, to

<sup>53</sup> Vocal ranges drawn from the manuscript score: Naples, Biblioteca del Conservatorio di musica S. Pietro a Majella, 32.2.38.

meet unbeknownst with Mitilene; Ormondo disguises himself as a Moor in the hopes of meeting Ipolita who, out of jealousy, was then imprisoned by Mitilene; in the end they manage to clarify the situation, and Mitilene is defeated in a duel. The couples then rearrange themselves as Mitilene–Armadoro, Ipolita–Ormondo and Camilla–Arsindo. It almost seems that the core of the opera is based on another Spanish play of which we do not currently know the identity, because the specific motifs, linked to the Amazonian world and the satire on gender identity, get a bit lost in relation to the works that have been analysed so far, and in general with those representing the myth of the viragos.

On a more general level, the relationship with the original subject, in addition to the scenes that frame the opera, is confirmed by the strong similarity between the configurations of the characters, in other words by the relations between the interlocutors as generators of action (bold arrows indicate emotional ‘transport’, dotted arrows indicate suspected relationships):



The only differences in *Mitilene*, compared to *La simpatia nell’odio*, are: (a) the third couple, Camilla–Arsindo, comes together at the end, but does not produce a love intrigue since over the course of the drama Arsindo is in love with Ipolita (he only pretends to be infatuated with Camilla in III. 2 in order to meet Ipolita in prison); (b) the suspected betrayals, which only concern the couple formed by Ipolita–Armadoro (or Mitilene–Polidoro in Monesio’s text) and exclude Mitilene–Ormondo (Menalippe–Astolfo).

With *Mitilene*, therefore, Solís’s Spanish subject appeared, though reworked, in an opera intended for Naples, a city under Spanish rule, to celebrate the birthday of the Habsburg Charles II, King of Spain, and was dedicated to the contemporary Neapolitan Viceroy Fernando Joaquín Fajardo de Requesens y Toledo, the Marquis of Los Velez. Moreover, a similar event took place in Naples a couple of years later, with the staging of the aforementioned *Psiche* (1683), based on a libretto adapted from a

play by Calderón, to celebrate the birthday of the Spanish Queen Marie Louise Bourbon-Orléans. Furthermore, regarding dedicatees, there is a curious coincidence concerning the revival of *Mitilene* in 1707: it was dedicated to the Duchess Carlotta Colonna, Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna's niece, owner of the theatre (after his death) where *La caduta* was staged. The dedication stresses the opportunity of devoting an opera on the adventures of an 'Amazon warrior' to a woman who, like the mythical viragos, knows the value of pity and heroism, clearly endorsing the recurrent and privileged relationship between the subject and female patrons.<sup>54</sup>

VI. PADUA-VIENNA: DOTTORI'S *IPPOLITA*

Returning to the Viennese court, a curious fact seems to be connected with Monesio's libretto for *La simpatia nell'odio*: two years before he composed it for Eleonora, the Empress had commissioned another libretto on the Amazons from the Paduan poet Carlo de' Dottori. *Ippolita*, however, focuses on a different episode. It is not based on the legendary encounter between Thalestris and Alexander the Great, as were its predecessors, but the legendary battle between the Greeks and the Amazons at the Thermodon (even though the battle itself is part of the background information and the plot depicts the events in its aftermath, which are probably fabricated).<sup>55</sup> *Ippolita*, which has no connection with the opera of the same title by Giovanni Rabbia performed in Milan in 1670,<sup>56</sup> was never set to music and was published posthumously in 1695 an edition that announces the patron on the title page: 'commissioned by Her Caesarean Majesty the Empress' ('comandato dalla Maestà Cesarea dell'Imperadrice'). Let

<sup>54</sup> The dedication of *Mitilene* (1707) reads: 'It was fitting that this melodrama, which recounts the experiences of a bellicose Amazon, should be dedicated to one who understands the value of pity and every other heroic virtue' ('era debito che questo melodrama, in cui si rappresentano gli accidenti d'un'amazzone bellicosa, si consegnasse a chi [ha] l'idea del valore della pietà e d'ogni altra eroica virtù'). See also Garavaglia, 'Il mito delle Amazzoni nell'opera italiana', pp. 74–5.

<sup>55</sup> *Ippolita. Drama per musica, comandato dalla Maestà Cesarea dell'Imperadrice al signor conte Carlo de' Dottori* (Padua, 1695; Sartori, *Libretti*, no. 13617; copy consulted: I-Mb, Racc.Dram.991). For a literary and dramaturgical commentary on the opera, see A. Daniele, *Carlo de' Dottori: Lingua, cultura e aneddoti* (Padua, 1986), pp. 196–214.

<sup>56</sup> See Garavaglia, 'Il mito delle Amazzoni nell'opera italiana', pp. 90–2. Rabbia's *Ippolita, reina delle Amazzoni* was set to music by Ludovico Busca, Pietro Simone Agostini and Pietro Andrea Ziani. In the Milanese drama, contrary to mythological tradition, it is not Hercules who attacks the viragos in their kingdom, but the Amazonian queen who challenges the Greek hero in Boeotia. The only common dramaturgical element is the fact that they both combine the Pontic episode of the myth of the Amazons with other myths, that of Helen in Dottori's libretto and that of Arianna in Rabbia's. It is nonetheless worth adding that this opera was dedicated to Gaspar Téllez-Girón, Duke of Osuna, and was performed for the birthday of his wife, Feliche de Sandoval, the in-laws of the patron of *La caduta*, the Duke of Medinaceli.

us try to understand what happened to this libretto by examining part of Dottori's surviving correspondence.

In a letter to the Dottori of 17 November 1662, Eleonora wrote: '[To] put your talent to work once again we would kindly like to commission you to compose a play for the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor [9 June 1663], and we will provide you with further information of what we have in mind.'<sup>57</sup> On 18 November, in celebration of Eleonora's birthday, Leopold had organised a play set to music at the Hoftheater of Vienna, based on another 'strong woman' from the seventeenth-century repertory, *Zenobia di Radamisto*, with a libretto by Dottori and music by Antonio Bertali. Dottori therefore received a new commission the day before the staging of his first libretto for the Habsburg court. Eleonora does not refer to the subject of the play, but tells the poet that he will receive precise details on her ideas ('del nostro pensiero'): words which do not allow us to exclude that the subject was chosen by Leopold and Eleonora herself.

The next surviving letter, from Eleonora to Dottori, is dated 21 April, a time when the libretto should have been close to completion, since the premiere was scheduled for 9 June. But something must have gone wrong since the Empress tells the poet that the libretto, for reasons that will be explained to him by the court composer Pietro Andrea Ziani, will be set to music for another occasion, yet to be decided: 'please do not go to any pains to put the finishing touches on the *Ippolita* opera, because (as you have learned from our *maestro di cappella*) it is best to postpone the play for another occasion, and in this case we will have plenty of time to work on the prologue and other things'.<sup>58</sup> The revision of the libretto was therefore brought to a halt at the very last minute, when only the prologue and little else was left to finish. However, it is likely that in one of Dottori's earlier letters (Eleonora cites two of 'the 21st and 30th of the previous month' ('21 e 30 del passato')) he apologized for any delay in the work due to health problems ('ci narrate nell'ultima circa qualche incommodo di salute'); this is why the Empress reassures him, telling him not to worry about not finishing the libretto quickly. *Oronise* was performed in place

<sup>57</sup> '[per] dar nuovo esercizio al vostro ingegno v'incarichiamo benignamente a disporvi alla composizione d'una commedia per il giorno natalizio della Maestà dell'Imperatore [9 giugno 1663], circa di che vi daremo ancora oltiore ragguaglio del nostro pensiero.' Letter preserved in I-Pci, MS B.P. 2167 (*Lettere di principi al conte Carlo de' Dottori*), and transcribed by N. Busetto, *Carlo de' Dottori, letterato padovano del secolo decimosettimo: Studio biografico-letterario* (Città di Castello, 1902), p. 283.

<sup>58</sup> 'non dovete prendervi pena per mettere l'ultima mano all'opera dell'*Ippolita* perché (come intenderete dal nostro maestro di cappella) ha portato il caso che bisognerà che sarà per un'altra occasione, sicché avremo tempo di pensare al prologo e ad altre cose'. Also from I-Pci, MS B.P. 2167, with transcription in Busetto, *Carlo de' Dottori*, p. 283.



of *Ippolita*, on 9 June 1663, at the Teatro della Favorita, based on the libretto by Antonio Draghi and music by Ziani.

The reasons for the decision to postpone setting the work to music, as reported by Ziani, are explained by Dottori himself in a letter of 25 June 1666, sent to Vienna to the Empress's court poet Domenico Federici:

[*Ippolita*] is still slumbering on His Majesty's table and even I myself think that with time it could be happier, more lively, shorter and would require less time [compared to his libretto *Zenobia di Radamisto*, produced 18 November 1662 with music by Antonio Bertali].<sup>59</sup> I stuffed it with too many women, Ziani said, and [in Vienna] there is not even a single one. I turned to castrati, as they are in some sense similar to the Amazons, but was disappointed that I could not find a single one who knew how or wanted to portray a woman warrior. Though I let time pass, I never lost my affection for the play, which received numerous requests from the stages of this country [Italy]. I always turned them down, however, due to the fact that it is a sacred work and must not be desecrated. Moreover, to come down to it, I don't want any other stages than the Imperial one to represent compositions which, in a similar situation, might unfortunately spring from my pen; I have never felt any desire of the sort.<sup>60</sup>

If the libretto was lying on His Majesty's desk it was certainly finished: in fact the posthumous print of 1695 also contains a prologue where mention is made of Leopold's upcoming wedding, which took place by proxy in Madrid in April 1666, thus the *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the libretto.<sup>61</sup> From the prologue we can also deduce that the opera was still intended for the celebration of Leopold's birthday a few years later, to be staged therefore in June.<sup>62</sup> Unfortunately, in June 1664, due to the

<sup>59</sup> *Zenobia di Radamisto. Drama per musica, recitato nel giorno natalizio della sacra cesarea maestà di Leonora, imperatrice per comando della sacra cesarea maestà di Leopoldo imperatore, ed a questa umilissimamente consacrato dal conte Carlo di Dottori* (Vienna, 1662; A-Wn: 79.C.37 M). The source was unknown until Daniele's study, *Carlo de' Dottori*, pp. 195–6, 232–44; he comments on it and provides a modern edition (pp. 247–336). Unfortunately, only the third act of the score has been preserved, also in A-Wn, Mus.Hs.16.530 (see Seifert, *Die Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof*, pp. 262–3, 450).

<sup>60</sup> '[*Ippolita*] dorme ancora sul tavolino di Sua Maestà e pure io credo che questa m'uscisse in tempo più allegro, riuscisse più svelta, più succinta e passeggera. Ci cacciati dentro troppe donne, disse il signor Ziani, e costì non ce n'è pur una. Mi fidai de' castrati, che pur hanno un certo che di simile all'Amazoni, e m'ingannai, non trovandosi eunuco che sapesse o volesse trattar il personaggio di dama guerriera. Io lasciai correr l'acqua, ma non ho perduto l'affetto al drama, dimandatomi più volte dalle scene di questo paese, ma sempre negato, mercè ch'egli è fatto cosa sacra e non deve profanarsi: oltrechè, per dirla, io non voglio che altre scene ché la cesarea vesta alcuna di quelle composizioni ch'in simil aria per disavventura m'uscissero dalla penna; nel che m'assicuro di non aver a sentirme prurito di sorte'; C. de' Dottori, *Lettere a Domenico Federici*, ed. G. Cerboni Baiardi (Urbino, 1971), p. 41.

<sup>61</sup> Dottori, *Ippolita*, Prologue, MERCURIO *in macchina*: 'the good wishes for the next Imperial wedding are made even more beautiful by my announcements' ('degli augusti imenei / le speranze vicine / sorgan più belle a' lieti annunzi miei').

<sup>62</sup> Dottori, *Ippolita*, Prologue, MERCURIO: 'here they are for you, invincible Caesar, the glorious loves of Theseus and Hippolyta; and you deserve an army of Hercules to adorn your birthday with victories' ('ecco tratti per te, CESARE invitto, / d'Ippolita e Teseo gli amori illustri; / e ch'adorni è ben dritto / di palme trionfali / un grand'atto di Alcide i tuoi NATALI').

period of mourning, all performances were cancelled (and Leopold was not even in Vienna); in June of 1665 Cristoforo Ivanovich's *Circe* was staged with music by Ziani, and in June 1666, only a few weeks prior to Dottori's letter to Federici, Federici's *L'onore trionfante* was performed, also set to music by Ziani. It is remarkable that the Paduan librettist was in essence sharing his complaints with his 'competitor', who at the time was nevertheless the court poet and wrote five libretti between 1666 and 1667.<sup>63</sup> From the letter it seems that Dottori was still hoping his *Ippolita* would be produced, but in June 1667 yet another opera was staged, *Semiramide* by Antonio Moniglia, set by Giovanni Andrea Cesti.

The official reason for the lack of singers for Dottori's libretto is the great number of virtuosas it required – Ziani speaks of 'too many women' – seemingly scarce in Vienna at the time. In the libretto's list of characters, there are five parts that could potentially be played by female singers.<sup>64</sup> Certainly *La simpatia nell'odio* required only three (Menalippe, Mitilene and Martesia), but in general five is neither few nor an impossible number to achieve. There is a Venetian opera, for example, also based on the legendary viragos, *Le Amazoni nell'Isole fortunate* by Francesco Maria Piccioli and Carlo Pallavicino (1679), which requires exactly this number.

Curiously, on the other hand, we learn in the same letter that the castrati, who, because of their androgyny 'are in some sense similar to the Amazons', did not know how to or did not want to play the roles of women warriors. This seems an odd assertion, but in fact it corresponds to reality. From the perusal of libretti with Amazons which include the names of the performers it results that the roles of the viragos were almost always performed by women, with the exception of three cases: (a) Camilla in *Mitilene* (1681), (b) when men are dressed as Amazons (Oronte/Orithia in *Talestri*, 1693; Delmiro/Alinda in *Demofonte*, 1698); (c) when the opera is staged in Rome (*Ercole sul Termodonte*, 1723).<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> On Federici's libretti see L. Ferretti, "Musica politica" nei libretti dell'abate Domenico Federici', in E. Sala and D. Daolmi (eds.), *Quel novo Cario, quel divin Orfeo*, pp. 433–58.

<sup>64</sup> Meganira (Queen of the Amazons), Antiope and Ippolita (daughters of Meganira), Orizia ('an elderly foreign woman, accepted among the Amazons') and Cherinta ('the hunchbacked governess of Meganira's ladies-in-waiting').

<sup>65</sup> *Ippolita, reina delle Amazoni* by Rabbia–Busca–Agostini–Ziani (Milan, 1670); *Ippolita* (Angiola Caterina Botteghi). *Talestri innamorata d'Alessandro Magno* by Aureli–Sabadini (Piacenza, 1693); *Talestri* (Maddalena Mignati); *Martesias* (Alba Fiorita Chelleri); *Oronte/Orithia* (Francesco Antonio Pistocchi). *Demofonte* by D'Averara (Milan, 1698); *Orizia* (Anna Maria Lisa); *Delmiro/Alinda* (Giovanni Battista Roberti). *Demofonte* by D'Averara (Florence, 1699); *Orizia* (Maria Caterina Gosterin); *Delmiro/Alinda* (Francesca Vennini). *Mitilene, regina delle Amazoni* by Barbò–De Bottis (Naples, 1707); *Mitilene* (Margarita Salvagnini), *Ippolita* (Diana Lucinda Grifoni), *Camilla* (Domenico Ghezzi). *Alessandro fra le Amazoni* (Venice, 1715); *Talestri* (Diamante Scarabelli); *Camilla* (Costanza Maccasi). *Ercole sul Termodonte* by Bussani–Rampini

## Amazons from Madrid to Vienna

Still, the sneaking suspicion remains that the lack of virtuosas was simply an excuse<sup>66</sup> not to stage a libretto that perhaps did not particularly appeal to Eleonora or Ziani as much as *Zenobia*, or that Ziani, whose appointment was a result of both Draghi and Dottori's efforts, happened to prefer Draghi, to whom he assigned, in fact, the libretto that would replace *Ippolita*, namely *Oronise*.<sup>67</sup> When it comes down to it, if it were only a matter of finding a couple of virtuosas it would have been possible, as was often the case, to ask for musicians from the Italian courts – a simple solution for a Gonzaga and for a court that certainly did not have any economic problems – unless, of course, the castrati were much more appreciated in Vienna than female singers, but this is a hypothesis that has yet to be proven.

### VII. VIENNA: THE AMAZONS AS AN ALLEGORY OF FEMALE POWER

*Ippolita* (1662) and *La simpatia nell'odio* (1664), two operas based on the subject of the Amazons written within a couple of years, both commissioned or dedicated to a Dowager Empress, Eleonora: the emphasis on the subject is undeniable. The two Viennese libretti therefore seem to be the result of a deliberate choice, especially if we consider that they occur very early in the process of establishing this subject in Baroque operatic repertory. Furthermore, though these libretti were developed in Italy, they were not intended for Italian theatres – as one would expect – but for a foreign court.

Until the 1670s, the only known operas were produced in Venice, where the Amazons play the role of single lovers of the unfaithful Theseus, completely decontextualized from the matriarchal society they belong to, a context which represents, however, a true ideological challenge to the current morality: *L'incostanza trionfante* by Francesco Maria Piccioli and Pietro Andrea Ziani (1658) and *Elena* by Nicolò Minato and Francesco Cavalli (1659) come to mind. In the libretti intended for Vienna, on the

(Padua 1715): *Hippolita* (Orsola Sticotti). *Ercole sul Termodonte* by Salvi–Vivaldi (Rome 1723): *Antiope* (Giovanni Ossi), *Ippolita* (Giacinto Fontana, il Farfallino), *Orizia* (Giovanni Dreyer); *Martesia* (Girolamo Bartoluzzi, il Regiano). Information taken from Appendix 3 of Garavaglia, 'Il mito delle Amazzoni nell'opera italiana'.

<sup>66</sup> The suspicion that it was just an excuse was cautiously raised by Daniele, *Carlo de' Dottori*, p. 197.

<sup>67</sup> In some of the letters written by Ziani to Vienna we learn just how ruthless the competition and envy between the Italian artists in the Viennese court was, and how much the composer admired Draghi, Ivanovich and Federici as librettists. The letters are transcribed in S. M. Woyke, *Pietro Andrea Ziani: Varietas und Artifizialität im Musiktheater des Seicento* (Frankfurt, 2008), pp. 197 (doc. 47), 203–5 (docs. 57–9). Unfortunately these letters make no mention of Dottori.

other hand, the viragos belong to a nation that is militarily opposed to another (the Greeks or Sarmatians), which is certainly a more appropriate subject for a monarchical government, such as the Habsburg Empire, rather than a Republic, such as Venice, and recurring in Italy only following the aforementioned Milanese *Ippolita* (1670).<sup>68</sup>

Before the 1670s, apart from the Viennese libretti, the authentic Amazonian subject is found only in a trilogy of musical performances. *Gli applausi festivi* by Pietro Paolo Bissari and Johann Kaspar Kerll was performed – yet again – in a court on the other side of the Alps, Munich, precisely in September 1662, thanks to another Italian sovereign, the Electress Henrietta Adelaide of Savoy. The Amazons also appear in a ‘drama guerriero’, *Antiopa giustificata*, a kind of tournament-opera, loaded with scenic effects, that was organized for the birth of her first son Max Emanuel.<sup>69</sup> It would almost seem that Eleonora’s choice to commission *Ippolita* in November 1662 from Dottori was a sort of symbolic entertainment challenge between the two Germanic courts. Moreover, Henrietta Adelaide herself was the daughter of the first of two Savoy women rulers of the seventeenth century, Christine Marie of France, who only a few years earlier, in 1659, held a masquerade entitled *Les Amazones*,<sup>70</sup> the verses of which establish a direct link between the representation of the Amazons and the legitimacy of female power in an exemplary fashion. And about a decade later, the Electress Henrietta had *La giostra delle Amazoni* (1670) staged in Munich in celebration of the birthday of her husband, Ferdinand Maria.<sup>71</sup>

In Vienna, we discover another coincidence of dates: in 1662, the year in which Eleonora commissioned *Ippolita* from Dottori, she also instituted a female order of knighthood for the ladies of the court, called ‘Schiave della virtù’, and propagandised it with a text that was published in Venice in 1664,<sup>72</sup> the same year in which Monesio wrote *La simpatia nell’odio*.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> An aspect that I dealt with in Garavaglia, ‘Il mito delle Amazzoni nell’opera italiana’, and summarized in the preliminary conclusions, at pp. 256–8.

<sup>69</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 94–5, 140–1.

<sup>70</sup> Preserved in Turin, Biblioteca Reale, Misc. 304/7. The text is transcribed in *Repertorio di feste alla corte dei Savoia (1346–1669), raccolto dai trattati di C. F. Menestrier*, ed. G. Rizzi (Turin, 1973), pp. 52–5.

<sup>71</sup> See Garavaglia, ‘Il mito delle Amazzoni nell’opera italiana’, pp. 30–2. Domenico Ghisberti, *La giostra delle Amazoni. Anacronismo famoso, comparso tra le feste natalizie del serenissimo Ferdinando Maria, duca dell’una e l’altra Baviera ... per comando della serenissima duchessa elettrice consorte Enrietta Adelaide, principessa real di Savoia, etc.* (Munich, 1670).

<sup>72</sup> *L’ordine delle Schiave della virtù, sotto l’augustissima protezione dell’imperatore Leopoldo I, istituito dalla sacra real maestà dell’imperatrice Eleonora l’anno 1662* (Venice, 1664). This booklet has rarely been mentioned in the critical literature and has never been examined, not even in recent studies on women.

<sup>73</sup> This female order is also mentioned in the collection of equestrian and military orders by F. Bonanni, *Catalogo degli ordini equestri e militari: Esposto in immagini e con breve racconto* (Rome, 1711), no. 131.

Even Dottori was aware of the event – perhaps because he spent time in Vienna between May and July of 1662 – as we can deduce from his ode entitled *La virtù regina, ovvero Le Schiave della virtù*<sup>74</sup> through the reference made to Eleonora, in the dedication to *Zenobia di Radamisto*, as ‘incomparable Princess, who claims that the title of “Slave of virtue” is tantamount to that of three crowns’.<sup>75</sup>

The programmatic objective is made very clear in the preface of the pamphlet, dated 1664:

the vast talent of this great lady wished to give a sign of her affection to the Germanic ladies, and because she has virile and lofty spirits, she ordered a moral discourse to be written on the order itself. This serves to show that even today there are women who are skilful in understanding letters and arms: thus they, like men, may establish orders for ladies and achieve honours.<sup>76</sup>

Therefore Eleonora’s moral and political programme is clear. Like all women regents, she had lost her husband. Ferdinand III died in 1657, and the heir to the throne was Leopold, barely eighteen years old. In the early years of his reign, the government was officially led partly by Eleonora, and, as a woman, she was probably anxious to legitimize her political role: I believe this was what led her to found the female order. Moreover, the tone, contents and rhetorical organisation of the text are the very same that fostered seventeenth-century feminist literature, in the great cultural debate known today as the *Querelle des femmes*, which developed from the end of the sixteenth century in conjunction with a long and exceptional series of queens and regents.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Printed in C. de’ Dottori, *Opere . . . cioè odi, sonetti, drammi, lettere, orazioni. Parte prima. Consacrate alla sacra cesarea real maestà di Leopoldo I* (Padua, 1695), pp. 211–15. In a letter to Domenico Federici, Dottori also refers to a Latin eulogy, of Sept. 1666, written ‘for the glory of the Slaves of virtue, the immortal title of Our [Empress]’ (‘a gloria delle Schiave della virtù, titolo immortale della Nostra’); C. de’ Dottori, *Lettere a Domenico Federici*, p. 67.

<sup>75</sup> *Zenobia di Radamisto*, p. [3]: ‘incomparabile principessa, che agguaglia al titolo di tre corone quello di Schiava della virtù’. The dedication is transcribed by Daniele, *Carlo de’ Dottori*, p. 249.

<sup>76</sup> *L’ordine delle Schiave della virtù*, p. [5]: ‘la vastità dell’ingegno di questa gran dama ha voluto dare un segno del suo affetto alle dame della Germania; e perché ha spiriti virili e sollevati, ha comandato che si formi un discorso morale sopra all’istess’ordine. Questo non serve per altro che per mostrare ch’anco oggi vi sono donne che in lettere ed armi sono capacissime per l’intendimento: onde possono instituire, a guisa degl’uomini, ordini di dame e contribuire onori’.

<sup>77</sup> Tommaso Campanella, for example, is well aware of the unusual concentration of women in power in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in both *Città del sole* of 1602 (‘Women reigned in this century; [in questo secolo regnarò le donne’) and in the *Articoli prophetales* (1600–9) (‘Nowadays . . . women have taken power’; ‘Di questi tempi . . . le donne hanno preso il potere’), as indicated by L. Bolzoni, ‘Campanella e le donne: Fascino e negazione della differenza’, *Annali d’italianistica*, 7 (1989), pp. 193–216, at 209–10.

In this genre of polemical literature, first one had to set forth the thesis being defended: if men are superior to women in military and intellectual arts, it is only because they are allowed to lead a public life and continuously have the opportunity to learn and improve their skills, opportunities which, on the other hand, are precluded to women:

Furthermore, women cannot be defined as inferior to men in the exercise of virtue, both in arms and letters. Many women know that men have more skill and intelligence, and because they exercise public power they have the opportunity to improve. Women, held on the sidelines and relegated to the management of the household and the procreation of children, are thus deprived of learning and disinclined to the valour of warfare. They do not lack courage and talent; they are simply deprived of power. Many rightly bemoan their state . . . Mars was not miserly in providing them with a virile chest and spurring them to heroic actions: this is why you see so many Palladian warrior women. Yes! even today there are excellent Dianas in hunting and highly learned Minervas in the academies.<sup>78</sup>

Secondly, one had to prove that reality and history contradicted the platitude of male superiority by listing a whole series of examples of strong women from the past (Camilla, Semiramis, Tomyris, and of course Zenobia, the subject of Dottori's libretto), epic-chivalric literature (Clorinda) and – indeed – from mythology:

There are also numerous other women who have lived through the hardships of military life and, always invincible and glorious, have come out victorious. But overcome by men and ceding to their sensuous desires, they have been deprived of the opportunity of reaching glorious goals and have remained inexperienced in the use of arms . . . may malicious people meet an army of bellicose Pallades or a team of Amazons to restrain their pride, and they will soon realise whose right hands are striking them.<sup>79</sup>

In the structure of the discourse, one then honed in on the fundamental political objective: you cannot deny women the same skills, at least potentially, as men:

<sup>78</sup> *L'ordine delle Schiave*, pp. 9–10: 'Né il sesso donnesco può dirsi quasi essere inferiore nell'opre della virtù all'uomo, e nell'armi e nelle lettere. Conobbero molte che, se quello e di forze e d'ingegno sopra di loro è dotato, non per altro gl'avviene, ché col publico esercizio perfeziona se stesso. La donna tenuta abietta per gl'affari domestici dell'economia della casa e per la procreazione della prole, resta orbata di scienze ed aliena dal valore dell'armi. Non gli manca per questo il cuore o l'ingegno, se gl'è levato il potere. Meritatamente molte deplorano il proprio stato . . . A queste . . . Marte mostrossi avaro in darle petto virile ed animarle all'impresie: onde si vedono tante Pallade guerriere. Sì sì, che vi sono oggi anco in veste di donna perfettissime Diane per le cacce e dottissime Minerve dell'Accademie.'

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23–4: 'si numerano anco dell'altre, che vissero ai disagi della milizia e sempre invitte e gloriose riportorno la palma, ma superate dall'uomo e cadute alle voglie sensuali di quello, furno prive di far altri acquisti di glorie e restorno invalide al governo dell'armi . . . incontrino pur i maldicenti di loro un esercito di Palladi bellicose e una squadra d'Ammazzone, per reprimere il loro orgoglio, che ben s'avvedranno da quali destre riceveranno i colpi'.

## Amazons from Madrid to Vienna

therefore, who will deny that this gender [women], just as the Caesars and sovereigns, cannot establish equestrian orders, of both men and women, not only for the conservation of the realm and individuals, but also for the universal good? In fact, as we have seen, many women have helped their kingdoms by fighting.<sup>80</sup>

Finally, the theoretical model imposed throughout the text is applied to the specific case of Eleonora:

For all these reasons and more . . . Eleonora Gonzaga of Austria . . . to demonstrate how much she appreciates virtue and how much she appreciates that women, and the great ones, must present themselves particularly to the world as such, found an honourable and virtuous way . . . to achieve the effect, based on the principle that women must not let themselves be outdone by men in learning virtue, since women can also crown themselves, like men, with the halo of letters and triumphs in arms. And if they cannot [achieve this] in the public ranks of hostile enemies, [they must do so] at least by proving to have manly strength and courage, and pursue universal vengeance against the infidels of the Catholic Church.<sup>81</sup>

Unjustly excluded from holding main positions of power, they have no option but to devote themselves to the defence of the Catholic religion, a defence which nevertheless maintains the characteristics of a military metaphor and links itself to the heroic and war-like image of the virgin martyrs of the Old Testament.<sup>82</sup> Eleonora herself, in her final speech 'to the ladies, to explain to them why this order has been instituted', shares her thoughts on the equality/inequality of the sexes: 'A man can take pride in being the most perfect of the human race and a woman, who is the man's companion, should not be inferior to him, since many women have equalled men in heroic actions and letters.'<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, in describing the order of the Slaves in a list of the equestrian orders in 1672, Bernardo Giustiniano curiously compares Eleonora's valour to that of Alexander the Great and implicitly underlines how the Empress

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39: 'chi dunque negherà che questo sesso non possa, a guisa de' Cesari e regi, istituire ordini equestri, e d'uomini e di donne, non solo per la conservazione dell'imperio e dell'individuo, ma anco per il bene universale? Mentre tante donne col guerreggiar hanno apportato giovamento ai regni, come s'è visto.'

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40: 'Dati tutti questi motivi e per ogn'altra causa . . . Eleonora Gonzaga d'Austria . . . per anco mostrare quanto amatrice sii della virtù e quanto ami che le dame e grandi debbano con modo particolare farsi conoscere per tali nel mondo, ha ricercato un mezo onorato e virtuoso . . . per ritrarne l'effetto, avendo per fondamento che la donna non debba lasciarsi superare un punto dall'uomo negl'avvanzi della virtù, potendo al pari di lui coronarsi dell'aureola per le lettere e per i trionfi dell'armi. E se non può nelle pubbliche schiere de' nemici ostili, almeno nella fortezza e intrepidezza d'animo col mostrarsi virile, per cercarne la vendetta universale contro gl'infedeli della Chiesa cattolica.'

<sup>82</sup> See Garavaglia, 'Il mito delle Amazzoni nell'opera italiana', pp. 53–6.

<sup>83</sup> *L'ordine delle Schiave*: 'alle dame, per significarle il motivo che ha avuto per l'instituzione di quest'ordine' (p. 54); 'Vanta l'uomo la perfezione nel genere umano, né la donna, che gl'è compagna deve esserle inferiore, se tante gl'han pareggiati nell'imprese di guerre e nelle composizioni di lettere' (p. 56).

founded her order on the basis of the many ‘Amazons’ that have honoured the feminine sex over the centuries: ‘with the spirit of a Macedonian ... she [Eleonora] took pride in passing on the honoured memory of the endeavours of the feminine sex to posterity; and while this sex passed on its Amazons over the centuries, she established the incorruptible memory of so many goddesses in the year of eternity itself’.<sup>84</sup>

One can therefore understand how the Amazons should symbolically represent the possibility of redemption, at least in part, of the ‘sesso donnesco’, especially for regents who had to guide young sovereigns such as Leopold, who were not particularly gifted with virtues which at the time were considered purely ‘masculine’. In the report drawn up by the Venetian ambassador Alvise Molin, the young emperor, while practising ‘riding and hunting’, ‘has no inclination for arms, because his education was more religious than military and kept him distant from this discipline’ (27 September 1661);<sup>85</sup> and a report by Giovanni Sagredo asserts that ‘the people want to see him as martial as he is pious and religious, so that he can prove to be equal to his competitors of about the same age, the King of France and the Sultan of Constantinople’ (2 May 1665).<sup>86</sup>

The legendary viragos return to the Viennese stages only a few years later, with *Il pomo d'oro* by Francesco Sbarra and Antonio Cesti (1667):<sup>87</sup> the end of the second act, as stated in the *azioni* of the libretto, includes a ‘tourney of armed maidens dressed as Amazons, in honour of Pallas’ (II. 13–14), a scene of which an engraving by the court set designer Lodovico Ottavio Burnacini has survived (see Figure 3). The staging of *Il pomo d'oro* was intended to inaugurate the new Theater auf der Cortina and at the same time celebrate the wedding of Leopold to the Spanish Infanta (December 1666), but delays in concluding the construction of the theatre have led to the assumption that the opera, although ready in 1667, was performed for the new Empress only in July 1668. The hypothesis is confirmed in the stage direction of scene I. 13 – ‘this is followed by the duel

<sup>84</sup> B. Giustiniano, *Istorie cronologiche della vera origine di tutti gl'ordini equestri, e religioni cavalleresche, consagrate alla sacra maestà cattolica di don Carlo II, monarca delle Spagne* (Venice, 1672), pp. 412–21, at p. 416: ‘con animo di Macedone ... piacquegli d'eternare tra i posterì l'onorato ricordo dell'eroiche azioni del sesso femminile; e se questi in ogni secolo tramandò le sue Amazoni, fisse ella nell'anno dell'eternità stessa l'incorrutibile memoria di tante dive’.

<sup>85</sup> ‘alla cavallerizza e alla caccia ... non inclina all'armi, perché l'educazione più religiosa che militare gli n'ha tenuta lontana l'applicazione’. *Die Relationen der Botschafter Venedigs über Deutschland und Österreich im siebzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. J. Fiedler, 2 vols (Fontes rerum Austriacarum: Österreichische Geschichts-Quellen. Abt. 2, Diplomataria, 26–7; Vienna, 1866–7), ii, pp. 48–9.

<sup>86</sup> ‘li popoli lo vorrebbero altrettanto armigero quanto è pio e religioso, acciò potesse far fronte agl'emuli suoi, dell'età quasi medesima, re di Francia e sultano di Costantinopoli’. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>87</sup> *Il pomo d'oro. Festa teatrale rappresentata in Vienna per l'augustissime nozze delle sacre cesaree reali maestà di Leopoldo e Margherita. Componimento di Francesco Sbarra, consigliere di Sua Maestà Cesarea* (Vienna, 1668).





Figure 3 Francesco Sbarra and Antonio Cesti, *Il pomo d'oro*, II. 13–14; engraving by Lodovico Ottavio Burnacini

that the young women perform on Pallas's birthday, as is the custom<sup>88</sup> – in which he alludes to the sovereign's birthday by identifying her with the Greek goddess of war, depicted in the engraving as the arbiter, *in macchina*, of the bout.

The obsession with having Amazons appear in court performances had already infected Eleonora's aunt, Eleonora I Gonzaga, who preceded her on the throne of the Holy Roman Empire and, in turn, was left the widow of Ferdinand II of Habsburg. In 1650 it was she who convinced her stepson Ferdinand III, after the death of her husband in 1637, to marry her niece, to ensure the prestige of the House of Gonzaga. In 1626, for the wedding between Duke Adam Paul von Slavata and Princess Maria Margarethe von Eggenberg, Eleonora I had the ladies-in-waiting appear dressed as Amazons, on wagons wielding swords and spears, having them simulate a tournament that turned into a dance, in which she herself participated.<sup>89</sup> A few years later, in February 1629, an 'operetta' set to

<sup>88</sup> 'segue l'armeggiamento delle donzelle conforme erano solite fare nel giorno natalizio di Pallade'. *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> We have been so informed mainly by two *avvisi* of 3 June, reported by Seifert, *Die Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof*, pp. 592 and 604. The first, sent by Giovanni Altoviti to Florence, says that 'eighteen ladies-in-waiting in Amazonian dress performed a dance that initially appeared to be a tournament, because they appeared with armour, wielding swords and spears, and, after raising a few spears and a few sword fights they performed a beautiful dance, and everything

music was performed,<sup>90</sup> with verses by Cesare II Gonzaga, Prince and Duke of Guastalla, and Amazonian dances. And as we learn from the diary of the Austrian Cardinal Ernst Adalbert von Harrach, another Amazonian dance, along with a dance for knights, was held in the court in March 1639 for the Carnival celebrations.<sup>91</sup>

There is a final aspect which is quite curious in this network of recurrences and symbolic references to the Amazonian subject. In the same years as the dance performances organised by Eleonora I, Giovan Battista Marino inserted a heroic episode in *Adone* (1623) which symbolically indicates the Amazons as the founders of the Spanish royal house (canto XX, ottave 388–404).<sup>92</sup> In a final tournament, in honour of the death of Adone, two armed knights face each other, one of which is actually a woman in disguise, Austria, who in the end, upon revealing her true identity, falls in love with her contender, Fiammadoro (an episode recycled from Tasso's *Tancredi* and *Clorinda*). Marino describes Austria as the daughter of the proud Tigrina, queen of the Amazons and descendant of Penthesilea, who, having fallen in love with Austrasio, violates the laws of the Amazon nation and marries him after he rescues her from the amorous clutches of the tyrant Argamoro: Austrasio himself underlines the absurdity of the Amazonian law, 'against [the laws of] the sky, the world and nature' ('contraria al cielo, al mondo ed a natura'), which had always driven the viragos to 'want them to dread and detest the wonderful

was invented by the Empress' ('18 dame di corte in abito d'Amazzoni han fatto un balletto ch'in principio ebbe quasi apparenza di torneo, perché comparvero con armatura e con picca e spada e, doppo alcune levate di picca e qualche combattimento di spada fecero un vaghissimo ballo, e tutto è invenzione dell'Imperatrice'); I-Fas, *Mediceo del principato*, Relazioni con stati esteri. The second, sent by Vincenzo Zucconi to Mantua, announces that 'to make the celebration [the wedding] even more excellent, my lady the Empress had her ladies-in-waiting appear dressed as Amazons, armed with corselets, morions, spears and daggers, and arranged like a tournament they performed a dance which came out beautifully' ('per rendere la festa più riguardevole, l'imperatrice mia signora fé comparire le sue dame in forma d'amazone, armate di corsaletto, morione, lancia e stocco, e in forma di torneo fecero un balletto che riesci bellissimo'); Mantua, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Gonzaga, C-1371.

<sup>90</sup> *Avviso* sent by Niccolò Sacchetti to Florence (21 Feb. 1629): 'Sunday . . . evening an enchanting operetta set to music was performed, composed by don Cesare, which included various dance pieces performed by fourteen Amazons, oddly dressed, among which the Archduchesses, who as the heads of the group, led the dancing' ('Domenica . . . la sera poi fu recitata in musica un'operetta molto graziosa, composta da don Cesare, la quale fu intarsiata da diversi balletti ballati de' quattordici Amazzoni, vestiti bizzarramente, fra le quali erano anche le arciduchesse, che come capo de schiera, guidavano il balletto'); I-Fas, *Mediceo del principato*, Relazioni con stati esteri); Seifert, *Die Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof*, p. 604; see also *ibid.*, pp. 29, 434.

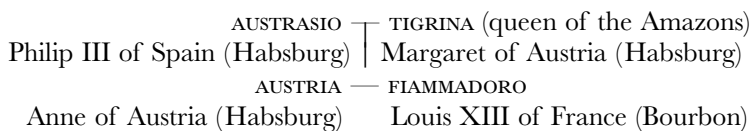
<sup>91</sup> In *Die Diarien und Tagzettel des Kardinals Ernst Adalbert von Harrach (1598–1667)*, ed. K. Keller and A. Catalano, 7 vols (Vienna, 2010), ii, p. 406, it reads: '16. [March 1639] . . . The court in Vienna organised, on the Monday of the carnival, two public dance performances with twelve Amazons and fourteen knights' ('16. [martius 1639] . . . In Vienna fecero in corte, il lunedì di carnevale, due balletti pubblici, di 12 amazzoni ed 14 cavalieri').

<sup>92</sup> See G. B. Marino, *L'Adone*, ed. G. Pozzi, 2 vols (Milan, 1988).

## Amazons from Madrid to Vienna

pleasure of honest embraces' ('voler che s'abborrisca e si detesti / il bel trastul degli abbracciari onesti').<sup>93</sup> Even here it is not difficult to notice the analogy between the events of the couple composed of Tigrina and Austrasio and those experienced by Menalife and Polidoro, or Miquilene and Astolfo from Solis's *Las Amazonas*, according to the common narrative model in the representation of Amazons: they discover sexual desire and let themselves be 'tamed', abandoning the battlefield and their matriarchal customs for the secondary role of wife.<sup>94</sup>

There is more: according to Giovanni Pozzi, the Marinian passage alludes, for political and encomiastic purposes, to the French–Spanish wedding which took place in 1615 between Anne of Austria and Louis XIII de Bourbon, the dedicatees of the poem.<sup>95</sup> The poet himself, in the initial allegory of the canto, expounds how Austria and Fiammadoro represent the Spanish and French houses respectively through their insignias. From this perspective it is possible to read behind the genealogy of the characters cited by Marino a reference to the succession of contemporary rulers, as outlined here:



If Austria and Fiammadoro refer respectively to Anne of Austria (the name is also a reference) and Louis XIII of France, Tigrina and Austrasio, as the parents of the Austria, must refer to Margaret of Austria and Philip III of Spain, also parents of the future King of Spain, Philip IV, and grandparents of the Emperor Leopold.

This brings us to three important aspects of our discussion. First, the viragos, belonging to a remote society (located outside the Eurocentric world), and the conflicts they represent are also a metaphor for the political-cultural encounter that occurs in mixed marriages between different lineages. Secondly, although Austria is Amazonian through her mother, she is certainly no longer identified as such for belonging to a female society, but

<sup>93</sup> Marino, *Adone*, ottave 427–8. For a thorough examination of the Marinian episode see B. Collina, 'Metamorfosi di un'Amazzone nel XX canto dell'*Adone*', *Studi secenteschi*, 35 (1994), pp. 123–43.

<sup>94</sup> This narrative model, on a general scale, was dependent on how strong women were represented, according to the aforementioned motif of the 'Diana complex'. When applying it to the specific case of the Amazons reference can be made the precedents *Hercole* by Giraldi Cinzio (1557), regarding the Italian literary scene, and Lope's plays with regard to Spanish theatre. See B. Collina, 'Metamorfosi di un'Amazzone', pp. 129–30, and Trambaioli, 'La figura de la Amazona'.

<sup>95</sup> See G. Pozzi, 'Guida alla lettura', in Marino, *L'Adone*, ii, p. 65.

only ‘as an individual . . . although she is living in a mixed society, of which she acknowledges and partially accepts the rules, she is still a warrior not for her own personal cause – to defend a kingdom, along with its dignity and exclusively female power, such as the Amazons – but at the service of something or someone else, like any self-respecting epic hero’.<sup>96</sup> In these same terms, from a male perspective, replacing Austria with Anne of Austria probably led to the creation of the ideal model of queens and rulers, who often had to replace or substitute for their male spouses who were not able to rise to the occasion: therefore they had to possess virile virtues, and at the same time be cleansed of the subversive social-political values associated with the myth, in order to accept the restrictions of the patriarchal model.

Finally, with this symbolic interpretation, Marino seems to suggest, though metaphorically, the idea of an Amazonian component in the Spanish Habsburg dynasty, represented by its Austrian branch of women. In this regard, a few decades after *Adone* – but during the same years as Solís’s play – on the age-old question of whether the Amazons existed or not, the Spaniard Baltasar Gracián wrote in *El Criticón* (1651–7): ‘Not only did they once exist, but in reality and in deeds they still exist. Is Anne of Austria, the Queen of France, not an Amazonian woman, just as were all the Spanish Infantas that crowned that kingdom with happiness and offspring?’<sup>97</sup>

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*Translated by Katherine Kamal*

<sup>96</sup> Collina, ‘Metamorfosi di un’Amazzone’, p. 141.

<sup>97</sup> B. Gracián, *El Criticón*, in id., *Obras completas*, ed. E. Blanco (Madrid, 1993), i, pp. 251–2: ‘No sólo que las hubo, sino que las hay de hecho y en hechos. ¿Y qué, no lo es hoy la serenísima señora doña Ana de Austria, florida reina de Francia, así como lo fueron siempre todas las señoras infantas de España que coronaron de felicidades y de sucesión aquel reino?’

APPENDIX

*La simpatia nell'odio, ovvero Le Amazoni amanti. Opera tragicomica per musica di Giovanni Pietro Monesio, alla sacra imperial maestà dell'imperatrice Leonora*

[Dedica:] Si come con altra penna io mi figuro di non vergare i fogli che con quella imprestatami dall'ali di quella grand'aquila imperiale, che se ha doppie luci da contemplare il sole, ha duplicati anco i rostri da insanguinare quella luna a cui fissa lo sguardo idolatra l'ottomana cecità, così la mia musa, beneficata dalla real munificenza di Vostra Maestà non riconosce altro Apollo che la Maestà Vostra medesima. Onde se tutto ciò che questa detta e quella scrive, in riguardo de' miei grandissimi obblighi, vien destinato, anzi dovuto al virtuoso compiacimento di Vostra Maestà; io col presentarle quest'opera delle Amazoni, ultimo parto sudato del mio debole ingegno, potrei dire di fare un dono alla Maestà Vostra di ciò ch'è suo. Ma per renderla meritevole di qualche applauso, che da se stessa conosce di non poter conseguire, io ho preso ardire di porle in fronte il glorioso nome di Vostra Maestà, i cui clementissimi raggi non solo potranno felicitare le di lei fortune col farle acquistar maggior luce, ma sapranno anco far ammutire le lingue più malediche de' zoili invidiosi. Supplico dunque riverentemente la Maestà Vostra a degnarsi di riceverla sotto la sua benignissima protezione e di gradire con gli atti della sua generosa magnanimità gli umilissimi ossequi, coi quali la porgo a Vostra Maestà, a cui profondissimamente mi prostro.

Roma, primo agosto 1664.

Umilissimo, divotissimo ed ossequiosissimo servo  
Giovanni Pietro Monesio

[Dedication:] Since I cannot imagine writing with any pen other than this one given to me from the wings of the great imperial eagle, that, besides two sets of eyes to contemplate the sun, has two beaks to make the moon bleed, upon which Ottoman blindness fixes its idol-worshipping gaze, thus my muse, benefiting from the royal munificence of Your Majesty, does not recognize any Apollo other than Your Majesty Herself. Therefore, everything Your Majesty dictates and writes about my duties is intended for, or rather, is due to Your virtuous satisfaction; with the presentation of this opera on the Amazons, the latest accomplishment of my humble talent, I could say that I offer Your Majesty what belongs to Her. In order to make it worthy of applause, which it cannot achieve alone, I have decided to dedicate it to the glorious name of Your Majesty, whose merciful rays will not only bestow success on the play by providing it with more light, but will also silence the most malicious tongues of the envious Zoilos. Therefore I reverently beseech Your Majesty to receive it under Your gracious protection and to accept, with Your generous magnanimity, my most humble respects, which I offer to Your Majesty, to whom I deeply bow.

Rome, 1 August 1664

Most humble, most devoted, most obsequious servant  
Giovanni Pietro Monesio