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SOMMARI

KATHRYN BOSI, *Leone Tolosa and Martel d'amore: a balletto della duchessa discovered*

The *Balletti delle donne* or *della duchessa* performed by the Duchess of Ferrara Margherita Gonzaga and her ladies-in-waiting at the court of Ferrara in 1580s have raised the interest of music and dance historians since they were first known by Solerti in 1891. Over the past three decades studies have appeared based on a substantial body of archival documents on the performance of the ballets, which present interesting descriptions of the music on texts by Guarini, on the noblewomen of the Este family, who played male roles, and on costumes. The ballets were also examined in the documentary context of the planned representations of Guarini's *Pastor fido*, with particular emphasis on the dance of the *gioco della cieca*. It has been argued that they have played a fruitful role for the prehistory of Italian dance shows and that may have influenced — or been influenced by — almost contemporary performances such as the representations of Mantua, the *ballet de court* of the French court or the *Ballo* of Cavalieri performed for the Grand Duke of Tuscany wedding in 1589.

Despite the importance of *balletti delle donne* in the cultural activities of the Ferrara court, the sources of choreography, poetry and music have always been considered irremediably lost. However, the Author has identified the choreography of a *balletto della duchessa* and the relative text among the manuscripts of the Biblioteca Estense of Modena, although in sources not directly connected to it. The choreography, preserved in the *Alpha* K.2.14 manuscript (a miscellany of manuscripts owned the Marquis Ferdinando Ceppelli's library), is attributed to a certain "LeoneTolosa ebreo". Under the title *Martel d'amore* it includes a dedicatory sonnet that provides evidence of identification with the Duchess's ballet, since it celebrates Margherita as a sun among the minor stars, and enhances singing and dance. The text, which bears the same title, is kept in the manuscript collection of poems *Alpha* T.5.1, which turn out to be by Giovanni Battista Guarini. Starting from the existing documentation, the Author identifies with the *Martel d'amore* of Leone Tolosa the ballet performed by the Duchess of Ferrara and seven other ladies, put into music on the words of Guarini, during the carnival 1582 in Ferrara. The article reviews the extensive contemporary descriptions of the performance of the ballet and examines the choreography in the perspective of the theatrical dance as opposed to that of society, emphasizing at the same time the accentuated emphasis on symmetry.

In his annotations to the edition of the *Pastor fido* of 1602, Guarini left an account of the difficulties found in writing the texts to be sung as accompaniment to the Ferrara ballets, since they had to agree to the demands of music, in turn composed to accompany the choreography. Moreover, Guarini affirmed that "in these dances he had not a single effort to put the words underneath the

notes, but to find out from the movements of the invention dance that he framed them, and had a fairytale face; that is, the beginning, the middle and the end, drawing it from the confused, casual and inconsiderate manner of the master of the dance". Despite the obvious lack of a narrative thread in the choreography of Leone Tolosa, Guarini's text for the *Martel d'amore* nevertheless takes on a tripartite form, with a simple plot. His text is skillfully inspired by the most common choreographic movements: couples who dance together, separate, gather, exchange partners to return, finally, to their original partners, are in fact consistent with this elementary plot of mutual love, of the separation and reconciliation, while geometric shapes, such as circles formed by dancers in the last part of the choreography, are connected to the platonic theories of the spheres. The text of *Martel d'amore*, together with that of Guarini for the other ballet conserved in the same source, presents a remarkable reminiscence of Corisca's monologue in Act I, Scene III of the *Pastor fido*.

The music for the *Martel d'amore*, composed by Luzzasco Luzzaschi or Ippolito Fiorino, has not reached us, but we can very much draw from its structure and that of the text; they show that the music had a symmetrical and tripartite form, with a long central section suffices on the alternation of two musical units: A1, A2, A3 / B1, C1, C1X (*codetta*), B2, C2, B3, C3, B4, C4 / D1, D2, D3, CX1 (*coda*). The contemporary accounts of the ballets together with the text show that the music of *Martel d'amore* had the form of a long polyphonic dialogue sung by 'choirs', with four or six voices, representing nymphs and shepherds, perhaps strategically placed in order to obtain an antiphonic effect, and accompanied by the duke's musicians with strings and keyboard instruments. The inventory of the music of the Este collection of 1625 mentions in fact some different *Dialoghi diversi in musica scritta a penna del Luzzasco in foglio. Libri tredici*. Thirteen books, while an inventory of 1628 lists the *Balletti a 8 et a 12 del Luzzasco*, which could be the same composition.

The discovery of both the choreography and the text of the *Martel d'amore* offers new and significant information on the *Balletto della duchessa or delle donne* performed in Ferrara. Since the descriptions of the ballets performed in 1594 on the occasion of the marriage of Eleonora d'Este and Carlo Gesualdo refer to women dressed as warriors, carrying weapons, some scholars have extended the concept of warlike dance or battle to women's ballets in general, seeing them in a line of continuity with the traditions of Ferrara immortalized by the courtly themes of women warriors in Ariosto's works.

However, the text of *Martel d'amore*, together with that of the other ballet by Guarini, datable to the early 1580s, shows instead that it is about pastoral tales more or less contemporary to *Pastor fido*, and, on closer inspection, connected with this work. The writer believes that the only character of the duchess's ballets of the 1580s derives precisely from the relevant and essential role played by

the texts sung by Guarini in all respects, and that, given the great difficulty in composing these texts to meet the needs of the choreography and dance music, the ballets would almost certainly have lost their lyrics along with Guarini's departure from the Ferrara court around 1588.

The following dance "sung, played and danced" that can be documented is that of Cavalieri for the Medici wedding in Florence in 1589, seven years after the *Martel'amore*. Like the latter, the music of the Grand Duke's dance was composed before the text, as the words were subsequently written to adapt them to music; moreover, its musical elements form a similar symmetrical structure with a central section comprising the alternation of a few simple blocks of material. Choreography, music and text of the *Martel d'amore* differ in style and content from those of the *Ballo del Granduca*, but the underlying principles of composition and structure of the two dances are surprisingly similar. According to the Author, the *Ballo* of Cavalieri was directly directly influenced by the *Martel d'amore* or the other ballets of the Duchess, as a group of Florentines, including Bardi, Antinori and Caccini, visited Ferrara in 1583 and could see, in addition to the others ballets, a representation of the main ballet of the previous year. The *Martel d'Amore* can therefore boast at least part of that role until now reserved for the *Ballo del Granduca*, as a model for that kind of danced and danced dancing of the seventeenth century, which continued to be written and represented next to the court work.

Finally the article presents a biographical note on the choreographer Leone Levi Tolosa "ebreo" (Jewish), which could be identified with the "Leone" involved in the attempt to stage the *Pastor fido* by Guarini in 1584, a role that so far the scholars had in general identified with the 'corago' and Mantua playwright Leone de' Sommi. Archival documents show that Leone Levi Tolosa, a role so far unknown to music and dance scholars, was employed by Alfonso II d'Este as a dance master at the court in the years 1567–1597. After the Este court withdrew to Modena, Leone succeeded his son Moisè Tolosa with the same duties; however Leone continued to teach the noblewomen dance according to the will of the Duke of Modena. The article offers archival news on the role of Leone in the Este court and on his fees. The petitions addressed by Leone and his son Moisè to the members of the ducal family, transcribed in Appendix III (Doc. 30–38), shed new light on the social conditions of Jewish dance teachers in the early modern age.

RODOLFO BARONCINI, *L'ufficio delle Tenebre: pratiche sonore della settimana santa nell'Italia settentrionale tra Cinque e Seicento*

The fact that from the fifteenth-century on, the widespread use of musical instruments in some Northern Italian ecclesiastical chapels rendered liturgical celebrations more magnificent and seductive has been generally acknowledged by contemporary musicological historiography, although this practice has not been sufficiently explored in all its complexity. Less well known is that at the close of the sixteenth-century, such practices became so pervasive that musical instruments were included even in the liturgy of the Holy Week. More precisely, this usage refers to the office of the Matins, and of the Lauds for Thursday, Friday, and Holy Saturday, more commonly called “Tenebrae” for their mournful and penitential tone, which had up to then been free of the presence of any type of musical instrument, including that of the organ. Unpublished documents from a considerable number of northern Italian basilicas and cathedrals show that from 1580-90, the performance of the Tenebrae gradually became more elaborate, adding a certain kind of instrumental coloring; the only permitted instruments were the “viole” (that is, instruments from the violin or viola da gamba families with a middle or low register) and, as a substitute for the organ, spinets, harpsichords and chitarrone. If this particular musical practice can be read as an escamotage—a way of circumventing a prohibition for those liturgies with regard to instruments more customarily used (such as cornetti, trombones and of course, the organ), it is not unreasonable to discern symbolic elements representing the figure of Christ that are connected to traditional devotional music tracing back to at least the late Middle Ages. In any case, the use of viols and of a specific musical register in the triduum of the Holy Week—a practice most widely found in the Po Valley (Bergamo, Brescia, Padua, Venice, etc.)—is also confirmed in the collections of Lamentations and Responsories printed from the early seventeenth-century on. The specific instrumental combinations called for in the *Lamentations* of G.F. Capello (1612), V. Bona (1616), A. Burlini (1614) and A. Mogavero (1623) seem to be a later demonstration of a practice that at the time of publication of Capello’s work, was already twenty years old. This fact could explain the apparently uncommon characteristics of the aforementioned collections and once again, demonstrate how aspects of certain compositions generally cited as innovative were in reality the result of earlier well-established performance practices.

CHRISTINE JEANNERET, *Un cahier d'ébauches autographe inédit de Frescobaldi (F-Pn, Rés. Vmc. 64)*

The extraordinary discovery of an autograph manuscript entirely written down by the hand of Girolamo Frescobaldi (F-Pn, Rés.Vmc.64) allows us to examine the compositional process of the

famous organist of the Vatican Basilica. This small volume contains sketches of composition that do not have any literal concordance with his printed works. The volume is bound in elegant parchment, bearing the coat of arms of a Prince Borghese, probably Marcantonio (1598–1658), nephew of Francesco Borghese, to whom Frescobaldi in 1608 had dedicated his *Fantasie*. The manuscript in question contains five *toccatas*, seven dances and three arias or set of variations. These pieces are written in a hurry, in an extremely personalized handwriting and, sometime, almost illegible. The writing shows the non-didactic destination of these pieces, which can not be easily deciphered by others. Moreover, the presence of numerous similar and amended versions of the same piece confirm that it is the work of a composer and not of a harpsichord teacher. Four *correnti* present some extremely interesting partial concordances with those of the two *Libri di Toccate* (published in 1615 and 1627, and in the 1637 year of re-edition including the *Aggiunta*). Moreover, these four passages likewise present surprising concordances between them. All the pieces in the manuscript are very short but complete, that is to say that they offer one or more harmonized melodic ideas, even when it is often a rudimentary bass, and that all the pieces — with two exceptions that are authentic sketches — are concluded from a double bar. Frescobaldi has certainly used this manuscript during a relatively long period (about 1607–1637). In light of the different concordances, it is to be considered that this is therefore a kind of vademecum preserved and amended by the composer over a long period of time. In this sense, it is not so much a matter of composition sketches, functioning as independent modules. The concordances allow us to formulate hypotheses about the Frescobaldi's compositional procedure that can be defined as a form of centonization. The pieces are reworked, amended and finally assembled and 'composed' — in the sense of composing, 'putting together'. This manuscript contains traces of an intermediate stage of writing (to compose *alla mente* and on the paper) between oral and written. The plurality and variety of the different versions constitute its essential characteristic. In this sense, it obliges us to formulate a notion of evolving work, which seeks its final form in the different assembly procedures.

BIANCAMARIA BRUMANA, «*Ove per gl'antri infausti*». *Miti classici e sventurati amanti in un manoscritto di cantate romane del tardo Seicento*

The discovery of a new seventeenth-century manuscript of cantatas brings new information on the production of composers such as Giovanni Lorenzo Lulier, Carlo Ambrogio Lonati and Cosimo Bani. The manuscript contains twentyfour cantatas of which twenty are for solo voice and four for

two voices and basso continuo. At least nineteen of the authors are identifiable because they are either named in the manuscript or can be inferred from other sources: Antonio Cesti (6 cantatas), Alessandro Stradella (3), Giacomo Carissimi (2), Carlo Ambrogio Lonati (2, one of which is *unicum*), Atto Melani (2), Cosimo Bani (1, *unicum*), Pietro Paolo Cappellini (1), Antimo Liberati (1), Giovanni Lorenzo Lulier (1, *unicum*). The remaining five are anonymous and unique compositions. The precious manuscript is bound in leather with gold embossing and a coat of arms depicting a cock that is not conclusively traceable to a particular family. The manuscript is in the hand of two copyists: the first of whom wrote cantatas 1-13 and 18-24, and the second 14-17. Love is the primary subject of the poetic texts, with numerous references to classical myth: Orpheus (n. 16), Niobe (n. 8), Hero and Leander (n. 1, 6). Cantata n. 15 recounts the story of Olympia and Bireno taken from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. The poet most represented is Giovanni Filippo Apolloni. We can infer from extant biographical information about the musicians and poets in the collection that the manuscript was compiled in Rome in the circle of the Chigi family — particularly the Cardinal Flavio Chigi — during the late seventeenth century, or more precisely, around 1685. It was in fact during this year that the Roman copyist Giovanni Pertica is known to have copied for Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili the cantata *Ove per gl'antri infausti* (n. 1) by Giovanni Lorenzo Lulier, who was in the cardinal's service at the time. The newly discovered manuscript contains the only surviving source for this cantata, which condenses the myth of Orpheus in about sixty verses. Finally, we should note that the first copyist, who never names the composers, seems to have specialized in a type of retrospective repertory from the 1660-70s, while the second scribe copies the work of composers active at the age in which the manuscript was prepared, whose names evidently could not be left out.

MICHAEL TALBOT, *A successor of Corelli: Antonio Montanari and his sonatas*

When Corelli died in 1713, his successor as capo d'istromenti — the person who had the task of recruiting and leading the orchestras employed in Rome for grand occasions — was not his colleague Matteo Fornari or his alleged rival Giuseppe Valentini but instead Antonio Maria Montanari (1676–1737), a violinist who, active in Rome since the early 1690s, had steadily been winning the respect of his fellow instrumentalists despite having virtually no music published and apparently holding no long-standing post in a noble household.

Montanari may have been born in Modena (a set of eight violin concertos by him collected and published by Le Cène c.1731 describes him as “Modenese”), but certainly had some early connection with Bologna. His father is identified in archival documents as Bolognese, and two immature compositions by him – a duet sonata for violin and cello published in an anthology assembled and engraved by Carlo Buffagnotti c.1690 and a primitive concerto (misleadingly entitled “*Sonata a 3*”) preserved in a manuscript of Ottobonian provenance in Manchester – show clear stylistic affinities to the Bolognese, rather than to the Roman, school. It is uncertain whether he ever was, in a formal sense, a pupil of Corelli. Initially known in Rome as “Antonuccio” (but increasingly as “Antonio” or “Montanari” with growing age and experience) and enjoying the patronage of Carlo Colonna, Montanari was a regular player in ensembles specially recruited for church festivals, “academies”, oratorio performances and the like. This activity continued up to the year of his death (the cause of which is given laconically as “pontura” in a remarkably detailed memorial paragraph accompanying a sketch of him by Pier Leone Ghezzi).

In October 1705 Montanari joined the famiglia of Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj, where he was partnered by another violinist, known merely as “Andreuccio (Veneziano)”, and by the cellist Giuseppe Maria Peroni. These three formed a regular concertino comparable with that of Corelli, Fornari and Lulier chez Ottoboni. This service seems to have ended in late 1708 or 1709. Between July 1709 and June 1715 Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni employed a lacchè named Antonio Montanari. Musicians were commonly given generic job-descriptions of this kind in order to be ranked appropriately within the hierarchy of a household, so this person is quite possibly our violinist.

Contemporary testimonies to Montanari’s playing and composition are few. Giuseppe Valentini extolled his playing in a sonnet and dedicated both a trio sonata and a solo sonata to him. The latter was obtained by Johann Georg Pisendel, who took lessons with Montanari in 1717, and was brought back to Dresden together with three sonatas and four concertos by his teacher. Quantz heard Montanari in 1724, praising his playing and orchestral direction but disparaging his compositions. The French savant Charles Hébèrt, writing in 1733, recorded that Montanari was among the violinists who cultivated “enharmonic” intervals, as demonstrated in his performances of Corelli’s music.

The appraisal of Montanari’s compositions has been bedevilled, from the eighteenth century onwards, by confusion with a different composer named Francesco Montanaro, whose op. 1, a set of six violin sonatas, was published by Le Cène c.1725 (in the same publisher’s catalogues the eight concertos by Antonio are similarly labelled “op. 1”, although this description does not appear on the title-page). The biographical information given in reference works from J. G. Walther’s

Musicalisches Lexicon (1732) onwards often attributes to Francesco details that properly belong to Antonio, and different lexicographers and commentators take different views on whether the two men are identical or not. Those — the majority — who consider them identical generally regard Francesco as the correct, Antonio as the incorrect, forename (no attention is paid to the difference in the termination of their respective surnames).

The first assessment of the music (in this instance, Francesco's) was made in 1869 by W. J. von Wasielewski, who found it barren and crude. Arnold Schering, who examined Antonio's concertos, and Andreas Moser, who reviewed both (Francesco's) sonatas and (Antonio's) concertos, were more favourable – especially the second, who described one concerto as almost Bachian. In 2004 there appeared two independent assessments of the concertos, both of which show real enthusiasm for the musical quality and originality displayed in them. Jehoash Hirshberg and Simon McVeigh point to the excellence of their fugal writing, the “inventive and challenging” figuration of the principal part and the flexibility of the tonal schemes, Richard Maunder to the composer's command of long-range tonal planning and even certain premonitions of Beethoven.

Thirteen concertos by Antonio Montanari are extant: eight in the published collection; two more in Dresden (plus a further two also contained in the published set); one in Lund; one in Rostock (a flautino concerto misattributed to Handel but with an incipit identical with that of a concerto appearing under Montanari's name in the Breitkopf catalogues and consistent with his style); and the misnamed Sonata a 3 in Manchester. References to lost concertos occur in the inventory of Le Cène's Nachlaß. The extant sonatas are fewer: seven are attributable to Antonio (rather than Francesco) either because the forename is given or because of a high degree of stylistic and/or contextual conformity. Besides the “Buffagnotti” sonata and the three violin sonatas in Dresden, we find a sonata in Berlin (less distinctive in style than the others) preserved among works for bass viol, an incomplete, probably early, trio sonata for two violins and bass in London that may have been collected by Johann Christoph Pepusch, and a much later trio sonata for two oboes and bass in the Engelhart collection in Lund – this last work may have been specially commissioned by a north European amateur musician. Then there are Francesco Montanari's six sonatas, which need to be compared with the others in order to ascertain whether or not their composer is the same person.

The paucity of these compositions is striking, given Montanari's eminence. It is possible that he deliberately held back from putting his works into circulation or publishing them in order to increase their “scarcity value” and to safeguard his own position as their interpreter (Domenico Scarlatti would provide a parallel case).

Antonio Montanari has a very distinctive idiolect. Right from the start, he favours ultra-high positions (up to the 8th position) on the violin, frequent recourse to double and multiple stopping, a fondness for sequence, a light or altogether absent accompaniment (the D minor sonata in Dresden even ends with a *Giga senza basso*), and tonal schemes that privilege the dominant, marginalizing “peripheral” keys such as the relative minor. His later works employ syncopation, melodic or accompanimental, in interesting ways. Here and there, Vivaldian influence is discernible. Thematic coherence is perhaps the strongest attribute of his music. A review of the individual sonatas identifies the three violin sonatas in Dresden and the trio sonata in Lund as the most impressive works.

The six sonatas published under Francesco Montanaro’s name are weaker in general musical respects and share none of the mentioned idiolectal features. That their composer is, as already suspected, a different person is the inescapable conclusion. This person could have been related to Antonio Montanari (even as a son), but that suggestion must for the moment remain very tentative.

Antonio Montanari’s importance as a “figure” in Rome between Corelli’s death and his own death has to be acknowledged. His unchallengeable position for over twenty years as doyen of the Roman violinists may have deflected the careers of some of his confrères, causing Geminiani, Castrucci and Carbonelli to seek their fortunes abroad, and Valentini to reinvent himself as a composer of sacred vocal music. If some of his sonatas and (especially) his concertos manage to establish themselves in the modern “Baroque” repertory, his name may well soon become much more familiar to us.

PAOLO RUSSO, *Fedra or Aricia? The rationale of the “cagioni episodiche”*

In the première of *Fedra* by Giovanni Paisiello in Naples (1788) the eponymous role was not assigned to a leading singer. The famous Brigida Giorgi Banti and the young Girolamo Crescentini were in fact employed respectively for the roles of Aricia and Ippolito, and the musical numbers were naturally graduated according to these hierarchies. The «episodic reasons» (*cagioni episodiche*) that led the librettist Salvioni not to title the work to the couple of lovers, as he did thirty years before Frugoni in the opera for Traetta, and even before Pellegrin for Rameau, had therefore the upper hand. The study intends to show how in the opera sometimes literary and musical strategies diverge. If Salvioni wanted to stage the tragic catastrophe of a queen whose ancestry was damned by the gods, in the musical performance his *Fedra* instead staged the emotional facets of a brave princess separated from the beloved hero who, in turn, proves its value

military in a heroic feat; on this emotional core then builds large picturesque scenes (consecration, underworld, return to the port) and pantomimic actions (struggle of Teseo with rage, fight of Ippolito with the marine bull). In *Fedra* by Paisiello, therefore, Fedra is reduced to a theatrical expedient: she is the one who triggers and manages the affair, but also the one who appears less in musical terms; his arias intersperse with Aricia's, their accents of fiery and violent fury create contrast with the tenderness and anxiety of the first woman; in short, the queen responds to the need for *chiaroscuro* that Robinson identifies among the main functions of the second parties. We can then understand some of the innovations introduced by Salvioni in the traditional plot: the librettist's attempt to promote Fedra as protagonist of the tragedy would have liked to welcome the terrible theater fashion inoculated in Italy by Alfieri's tragedies as a combination of power and terror but the musical creation of libretto ignores this intention. Evidently in Naples, the interest in reform was directed above all to the integration between pantomime and song, the new setting of musical numbers, in general to put into action the scene of the opera, to put it in an old formulation according Diderot style. In short, unlike what happened at the same time in other parts of Italy, such as Florence and Venice, at San Carlo the poetics of pathetic and natural theater of the Enlightenment were explored with ancestry in Diderot's dramaturgy. To study the variations between Paisiello's work and those on the same subject that preceded it (*Ippolito e Aricia* by Frugoni and Traetta, 1759) and followed it (*Teseo a Stige* by Nasolini, 1791, *Ippolito* by Pietro Guglielmi, 1798; *La Fedra o il ritorno Teseo* by Nicolini, 1804; *Fedra* by Mayr, 1821, and Orlandi, 1823) also allows us to observe how, in the span of just over seventy years, Italian techniques did not only change techniques and compositional forms, but the very idea of situations to put to music. We realize that making Fedra really protagonist would have created another difficulty for Salvioni. The tragic epilogue, the confession and the suicide of Fedra, is necessary and fundamental of the narrable drama, of the myth, but appears accessory and negligible in the musical that in fact does not devote any complex number, and in the last aria rather prefer to give voice to the anxiety of Aricia convinced of the death of Ippolito. Salvioni and Paisiello on the other hand could not have done otherwise: the scene of the confession and death of Fedra made sense, in the tragedy as the logical conclusion of an exemplary story, but in the logic of a musical drama could not have any 'weight': if Salvioni can be seduced by the 'terrible' fascination of the literary subject, he does not yet have the instruments, poetic in the first place, to make it musically relevant. Again, dramatic literary and musical logics diverge. In order for a tragic ending to be accepted in the work, and therefore to become musicable, it was necessary for the death scene to be recognized as an autonomous value in itself, not as a conclusive moment of an exemplary story but as a self-sufficient aesthetic value: this will happen. only a few decades later. At that point, yes, Fedra will

have to be played by the first woman of the cast, while Aricia can be neglected and reduced to a pure name-day, a name mentioned but a virtual character.

MAURO SARNELLI, *Gli affetti di Maometto da Voltaire al melodramma di primo Ottocento*

This essay focuses on the opera *Maometto* by Felice Romani, first performed at the Scala in Milan on 28 January 1817 with music by Peter von Winter. The subject of the libretto was inspired by the tragedy *Le fanatisme, ou Mahomet le prophète* by Voltaire, performed for the first time in Lille on 25 April 1741. *Maometto* is directly based on this French source, notwithstanding the first two prose translations of the work, which appeared anonymously in 1746, by Marchese Alfonso Vincenzo Fontanelli, and in 1752 (a thorough rewriting) by the Jesuit priest Antonio Maria Ambrogio. Romani also made only marginal use of two later blank verse translations by Melchiorre Cesarotti (1762) —whose numerous reprints would later constitute the Italian *vulgata* of the work— and by Agostino Paradisi (1764). By comparing Voltaire's *Mahomet* and Romani's *Maometto*, one can enter into the compositional workshop of the librettist and shed light on the consummate dramaturgic ability present in the treatment of a five-act tragedy with its perfect fidelity to operatic forms that have clearly been coordinated with the musician. Reviewing the individual scenes of the opera, one can see the complex work of synthesis, specularity and invention achieved by the librettist. In *Maometto*, Romani's language —accompanied by the music of the classicist Winter — is not yet “della passione” as will be found in the libretti for Bellini and Donizetti that follow, but rather “degli affetti” that echoes a Metastasian tradition through recourse to contemporary dramaturgic and operatic forms. The essay pays particular attention to the vocal typologies of the first performers of the opera, which were naturally linked the interpretive typologies used to create characters. Beginning with the range of different roles (*soprano lirico di agilità, contralto en travesti, baritenore eroico, basso nobile, basso antagonista vilain, tenore comprimario di mezzo carattere*) these vocal attributes were modeled on the specific characteristics of the chosen singers. The essay ends with a bibliographic note divided into three sections, and two appendices, the first of which offers an intertextual illustration of Romani's adaptation of the original source. The second deals with two performances, those given in Naples at the Teatro San Carlo in the summer of 1817, and in Rome at the Accademia Filarmonica in the autumn of 1826. A third, a “palimpsest” of the opera (by the same Romani, who adapted the subject under the title of *Palmira* with music by Francesco Stabile) was given at the Teatro San Carlo on 3 January 1836.