

## Thomas Griffin

### The *Avvisi di Roma* in Munich

In his *Mémoires* Philippe Emanuel Marquis de Coulanges wrote the following about the summer of 1690 in Rome:

When it became very hot, the evenings, which begin after the ringing of the twenty-fourth hour, that is to say, at sunset, become much more amusing than the promenades [during the day]. One prolonged them into the night as long as one could; one walked about the streets and squares dressed as lightly as one wished and the season demanded; one stopped and rested next to some fountains to enjoy the coolness; one entered the places where tea, chocolate, coffee, and ices—more delicious in Italy than in France—are sold. There also one could keep abreast of the news, true or false, that was purveyed. The air resounded with various songs and with the sound of guitars, of harps, and of other instruments. Sometimes one encountered serenatas by fine voices with a good *sinfonia*. Thus one rested from the heat that one experienced during the day, and one was well at ease on retiring to find one's bed, unless the memory of some stroke of good fortune returned to trouble the repose that one sought there.<sup>1</sup>

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1        Quand les grandes chaleurs furent venues, les soirées qui commencent après les vingt-quatre heures sonnées, c'est-à-dire au soleil couché, devinrent bien plus divertissantes que les cours. On les prolongeait dans la nuit le plus que l'on pouvoit, on se promenoit dans les rues et dans les places, vêtu aussi légèrement qu'on vouloit et que le saison le demandoit; on s'arrêtoit et l'on se repositoit au bord des fontaines pour y prendre le frais; on entroit dans les lieux où se débitent le thé, le chocolat, le café et les eaux glacées, plus délicieuses en Italie qu'en France. L'on pouvoit aussi prendre part aux nouvelles vraies ou fausses qui s'y débitent. L'air retentissoit de différentes chansons et du bruit des guitares, des harpes et autres instruments. Quelquefois on rencontroit des sérénades de belles voix et d'une bonne symphonie.

Coulange raises at least four interesting topics, but we will leave unconsidered his allusion to romantic encounters and his astonishment at the availability of iced drinks during the warm months of summer. Of more interest is the music he may have heard and the manner in which news was purveyed at Rome around this time.

By the middle of the seventeenth century printed news sheets (*avvisi a stampa*) were commonly produced and sold to the public in many of the major cities of Italy. Rome, in fact, had been one of the pioneers in the production of such publications. Notable sets of weekly *avvisi* printed in the Eternal City have survived from as early as 1593-1600 and 1623-1650.<sup>2</sup> Wherever these early predecessors of the modern newspaper were produced, they always required a license from the local authorities. The printed *Gazzetta di Napoli*, for example, bore the words “*Con Licenza de Superiori e Privilegio*” on the first page of each issue, testifying to the fact that the contents had been approved by censors appointed by the Viceregal government and the Church.<sup>3</sup>

Despite some early success at Rome on the part of publishers, Papal authorities were normally suspicious of journalists. As early as 1572 Pius V produced a *Constitutio*

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C'est ainsi ch'on se repositoit de la chaleur ch'on avoit éprouvées pendant le jour, et l'on étoit fort aise, en se retirant, de retourner son lit, à moins que le souvenir de quelque bonne fortune ne vînt troubler le repos qu'on y cherchoit. *Mémoires de M. de Coulanges: ses inédites de Madame de Sévigné*, ed. M. DE MONMARQUÉ, Paris, J.J. Blaise, 1820, pp. 250-52.

2 A. BERTONE PANNAIN, S. BULGARELLI, L. MAZZOLA, *Il giornalismo romano delle origini (sec. XVI-XVII)*, Mostra bibliografica. Roma. 1979, pp. 13-14.

3 Regarding the *Gazzetta di Napoli* see the magisterial study by AUSILIA MAGAUDDA, DANILO COSTANTINI, *Musica e spettacolo nel Regno di Napoli attraverso lo spoglio della “Gazzetta” (1675-1768)*, Rome, ISMEZ, 2009.

*contra scribentes, exemplantes et dictantes monita vulgo dicta gli Avvisi et Ritorni* which was confirmed later that year by his successor Gregory XIII.<sup>4</sup> By the second half of the seventeenth century Rome was without a licensed, printed news sheet. Probably the best legitimate source of news for Coulange and his compatriots would have been the so-called *Foglio di Foligno*.<sup>5</sup> Sold weekly in the Eternal City and available since 1677, it was printed to the north, in Foligno, still within the Papal States, and consisted of brief accounts of news from various cities, including Rome.

A more likely source of news for Coulange, however, would have been the manuscript *avvisi di Roma*. The production, sale, even possession of these documents was banned. But based on the many sets that have survived, they must have been much in demand and easily obtained. Certainly reading the manuscript *avvisi* was more entertaining than the perusal of officially sanctioned news sheets. The authors of the *avvisi di Roma*, almost always anonymous, sometimes display a wit akin to Pasquino. Indeed, the “scribblers” who gave voice to Pasquino may have been, at least in some cases, the same as those who composed the manuscript *avvisi di Roma*.<sup>6</sup>

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4 JOHANN PETITJEAN, *Mots et pratiques de l'information: Ce que aviser veut dire (XVIe-XVIIe siècles)*, *Mèlanges de l'Ecole française de Rome*, 122-1, 2010, p. 113.

5 News of musicological interest from this set of *avvisi* is reported by ORIETTA SARTORI, *Notizie di interesse musicale in un antico periodico a stampa: il 'Foglio di Foligno'*, «Esercizi, Musica e Spettacolo», VII-VIII (1997-98), pp. 87-119.

6 See, for example, the scathing wit displayed by the author of the Munich *avvisi* while reporting on the Roman serenatas of 1677, in THOMAS GRIFFIN, *Alessandro Scarlatti e la Serenata a Roma e a Napoli, La Musica a Napoli durante il Seicento: Atti del Convegno di Studi Napoli, 11-14 aprile 1985*, a cura di DOMENICO ANTONIO D'ALESSANDRO, AGOSTINO ZIINO, Roma Torre D'Orfeo, 1987, pp. 352-53.

Since the days of Alessandro Ademollo<sup>7</sup> to the present, music historians have found much of value in the *avvisi*, while art historians have explored them at even greater length than musicologists. Yet few bibliographic tools to control this mass of material exist. Perhaps the greatest number of *avvisi di Roma* are found in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV) and in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV). But important collections have survived also in other Roman institutions<sup>8</sup> as well as in many of the Italian State Archives (Venice, Florence, Modena, Genoa, Pesaro,<sup>9</sup> et.al.). Certainly vast collections of *avvisi* have been preserved outside of Italy as well, such as the one described below.

The Manuscript Division of the Bavarian State Library in Munich owns seven large codices made up of Italian diplomatic correspondence originating in various cities and dating from 1593 to 1715. The seven codices are identified by the call numbers Codex Italicus 192 – 198 and preserve a total of 3,641 folios. The vast majority of these letters originated in Rome and consist of brief summaries of recent events or, as most Italian archivists call such documents, *avvisi di Roma*.

The Bavarian State Library's collection of *avvisi di Roma* is far from complete. Letters

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7 ALESSANDRO ADEMOLLO, *I Teatri di Roma nel secolo decimosettimo*. 1888; rpt. Bologna: Forni, 1969.

8 A notable study of *avvisi* in the Biblioteca Nazionale, Rome, is available in GLORIA STAFFIERI, *Colligite fragmenta: La vita musicale romana negli "Avvisi Marescotti" (1683-1707)*, Lucca: LIM, 1990. *Avvisi* extracts from MS 402 in the *Istituto Storico Spagnolo*, Rome, of musical interest are available on the internet at [http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/main\\_page/avvisi](http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/main_page/avvisi) .

9 A particularly revealing account of the Roman carnival of 1711 is made possible by comparing information from the Munich *avvisi* with that found in a second set at Pesaro, in TERESA GIALDRONI, *Spigolature romane: la musica a Roma attraverso avvisi e dispacci del Fondo Albani dell'Archivio di Stato di Pesaro (1711)*, «*Analecta musicologica*», 36, (2005) pp. 371-401.

for many years are entirely lacking, and only those years in red are represented by a complete set of weekly *avvisi*.

#### D Mbs Codex Italicus 192-198

Cod. Ital. 192	1671, 1676, 1677
Cod. Ital. 193	1681, 1682, 1683
Cod. Ital. 194	1684, 1685, 1686
Cod. Ital. 195	1687, 1688, 1697
Cod. Ital. 196	1698, 1699, 1700, 1701, 1702
Cod. Ital. 197	1703, 1704, 1705, 1706
Cod. Ital. 198	1707, 1708, 1711, 1712

These documents first came to this writers attention in a 1960 article by Rudolf Ewerhard, in which the author cited a contemporary account of the performance of Handel's Easter oratorio *La Resurrezione* in the Roman residence of the Marquis Francesco Maria Ruspoli in 1708.<sup>10</sup> Ursula Kirkendale also cited this document in her first major study of the Ruspoli documents that appeared in 1967.<sup>11</sup>

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10 RUDOLF EWERHARD, *New Sources for Handel's La Resurrezione*, «Music and Letters», XLI, 1960, pp. 127-35.

11 URSULA KIRKENDALE, *The Ruspoli Documents on Handel*, «Journal of the American Musicological Society», 20, 1967, pp. 222-73.

Kirkendale referred to the document as a note by the Bavarian ambassador, but in fact the *avviso* was not the result of any Bavarian diplomatic initiative at Rome. The entire collection of *avvisi* was in the possession of the Palatine Electoral Library at Mannheim until that library was transferred to Munich in 1803-1804. Because no court was located at Mannheim until 1720, it is very doubtful that these letters were originally dispatched from Rome to that German city. In fact, there is evidence that most of the *avvisi* for the period 1698 – 1712 were sent to the small town of Matelica in the Italian Marches addressed to a certain Commendatore Federigo Pietro Vettori. What role Vettori may have played in the theater of Roman diplomacy is as yet unknown. Nor is it known how or when these *avvisi*, all anonymous, made their way to Mannheim.

Although the Munich *avvisi di Roma*, like many other *avvisi* collections, preserve much information of interest to musicology, it should be understood that they were in no way primarily concerned with matters musical. In their preparation the writers of these *avvisi* betray great haste. For the most part, the *avvisi* consist of brief accounts of recent events arranged in chronological order, as well as reports of the rumor and gossip then current at Rome. Because the social life of Rome often functioned as a mirror to the ever-shifting sands of politics and diplomacy, the anonymous writers of these *avvisi* paid a great deal of attention to it. In this way many conspicuous social gatherings came to be carefully scrutinized; and since many of the leading social and political figures of Rome were also important patrons of music, the *avvisi* mention, at least in passing, hundreds of occasions upon which music was heard.

Here is an alphabetical list of all the names of patrons of music in Rome mentioned in the Munich *avvisi*. Below each name is one or more stars, each representing a single

instance when this name appears as the sponsor of a musical performance.

Acciajoli, Card. Niccolò [Decano del Sacro Collegio]

\*

Adriani, Cav.

\*

Albani, D. Anibale [Nipote di Clemente XI]

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[Albani], D. Maria Bernardina [Cognata di Clemente XI]

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Albert, Cont d'

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Ansaldi, [l'Auditore]

\*

Barbarini, Card. Carlo

\*

[Barberini, D. Taddeo or D. Urbano] Principe di Palestrina

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[Barberini] Principessa di Palestrina

\*

Bolognetti, Conte

\*

Bonelli, Duca di

\*\*

[Borghese] Principe di Rossano

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Buglione, Card. [Emmanuel Théodose de la Tour D'Auvergne, Card. Bouillon]

\*\*

Butij, Signori

\*

Capranica, Pompeo

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Carpegna, Madama

\*

Castelforte, Marchese

\*

Cesarini, D. Gaetano

\*

[Cesi] Duca di Acquasparta

\*

Chigi, Duchessa

\*

Christine [Regina di Svetia]

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Colonna, Card.

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Colonna, Contestabile [Lorenzo Onofrio]



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Corsini, Marchese

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Corsini, Monsignore [Tesoriere]

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Del Carpio, Marchese [D. Gaspar de Haro y Guzman, Ambasciatore di Spagna]

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Del Giudice, Card.

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Dufrano, Marchese

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[Forbin-] Janson, Card. [Ambasciatore di Francia]

\*\*

Grimani, Card. Vincenzo [Ambasciatore Imperiale]

\*\*

Lamberg, Conte Leopold [Ambasciatore Imperiale]

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[Moglie di Conte Lamberg]

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Maccarani, Marchese Silvio

\*

Maldacchini, Card.

\*\*

Maria Casimira [Regina di Polonia]

\*\*\*\*\*

[Melo e Castro, André de] Residente di Portogallo

\*

Morosini, Giovanni Francesco [Ambasciatore di Venezia]

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Odescalchi, D. Livio [Nipote di Innocenzo XII]

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Omodei, Card.

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Ottoboni, Card. Pietro

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Pamphilj, Card. Benedetto

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[Pamphilj] Principe di Valmonte

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Priè, Marquis de [Ambasciatore Imperiale]

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Riccardi, Marchese Francesco

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Rospigliosi [Famiglia]

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[Rospigliosi] Duchessa di Zagarola

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Ruspoli, Francesco Maria

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Santacroce, Marchessa

\*

Savelli, Prencipe

\*

Sobieski, Prencipe Alessandro [Figlio di Maria Casimira]

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Strozzi, [Prencipessa di Forano]

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Tassi, Prencipe [D. Miguel de Tassis, Marqués de Paul]

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[Torralua, D. Alonso de] Agente di Spagna

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[Trémouilles-Noirmentiers, Marie Anne de la] Duchessa di Bracciano,

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Vaini, Priore

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Most of these names are already well known. Pietro Ottoboni, for example, who dominates this list with thirty-nine stars, has received considerable attention as patron of the arts. Similarly, the careers of the Marquis and Prince Francesco Maria Ruspoli and of Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj have been the focus of substantial scholarly inquiries.

The importance of Queen Christine of Sweden in the artistic life of Rome is, of course, well understood. Because Christine died in 1689, her name does not figure in these *avvisi* as prominently as does that of Baroque Rome's second Queen, Maria Casimira of Poland. In these documents the widow of Jan Sobieski emerges as a potent force in Roman artistic and social life soon after her arrival in 1699.

When a musical performance is mentioned in these *avvisi*, the patron of the work is very often named. The same, however, cannot be said of the singers and instrumentalists who performed the work, and only on rare occasions is the composer of the work identified by name. Nevertheless, the names of a few composers are found in the Munich *avvisi*.

Amadei, Filippo

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Bencini, [Pietro Paolo]

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Cesarini, [Carlo Francesco]

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[Corelli], Arcangelo

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[Handel], "Virtuoso Sassoné"

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Melani, Alessandro

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Scarlatti, [Alessandro]

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Stradella, [Alessandro]

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The list indicates that Corelli was the best known musician in Rome around the turn of the century. The *avvisi* suggest that Arcangelo was known primarily as a musician or performer rather than as a composer, as his name usually appears in connection with the performance of his famous band of strings.<sup>12</sup> In most cases the reader of the *avvisi* is left uncertain how much of Corelli's own music was heard on the occasion reported.

On at least one occasion, however, these documents leave no doubt that an instrumental work by Corelli was given. An *avviso* dated April 11, 1702, reports the following musical event which took place on the Monday of Holy Week, presumably in the Cancelleria.

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12 An *avviso* extract from MS 402 in the *Istituto Storico Spagnolo*, Rome, reports an unfortunate accident that befell Corelli while playing in the orchestra of the Teatro Tordinona in January 1697, fols. 62v-63r: *Mercordi precipito dalla soffita del Teatro di Tore di Nona un uomo che in luogo di mettere il piede su li Navicelli lo mise su le tavole false, e diede sul Tavolato dell'orchestra e resto immediatam,te morto, feri un Giovane, si come Archangelo del violino leggiermente nella mano per il che non pote suonare un arieta solo.*

La medesima sera [10 aprile] dal Sig.nore Card.inale Ottoboni fù fatta la solita Accademia con nobilissima Audienza, e vi furono avanti cantate due delle prime lamentationi della settimana tradotte in Volgare, le parole di S.ua Em.inenza, la musica di Scarlatti, con un superbissimo concerto di Bassi, contrabassi, Viole, e Violini composit.ione di Arcangelo, e poscia vi furono recitate bone Poetiche compositioni da Varij Virtuosi.<sup>13</sup>

On the same evening the usual academy with a very noble audience was held by Cardinal Ottoboni. And at the beginning two of the first Lamentations for Holy Week were sung, the words as translated into the vulgare tongue [i.e., Italian] by His Eminence [Cardinal Ottoboni], and the music by Scarlatti, with a most magnificent concerto of basses, contrabasses, violas, and violins, the composition of Arcangelo. And then fine poetic compositions were recited by various learned men.

Although it is impossible to identify the specific concerto heard on this occasion, the *avviso* leaves no doubt that Corelli was its composer.

This is the first of six instances when Alessandro Scarlatti is named in these *avvisi*. In early January of 1702 Scarlatti was granted ten months leave of absence from his post as master of the Royal Chapel of Naples. Edward Dent suggested that political disturbances in Naples resulting from the struggle between Habsburg and Bourbon factions induced the composer to leave with Florence as his immediate destination.<sup>14</sup> In light of the above, however, it seems more likely that Scarlatti had intended to spend the

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13 D Mbs Cod. Ital. 196, fol. 490r.

14 EDWARD J. DENT, *Alessandro Scarlatti*, preface and additional notes by Frank Walker. 1905; rpt. London: Edward Arnold, 1960, pp. 69-70.

first few months of his leave, at least through Easter of 1702, in Rome. But Scarlatti never left Naples that January. His leave was quickly canceled when word arrived in Naples of the impending visit of Philip V, the new Bourbon King of Spain. And thus the performance of Scarlatti's Italian Lamentations took place in Rome without the composer present.

Interestingly, there are two other references in these *avvisi* to a set of Italian Lamentations by Scarlatti and Ottoboni. It would appear that four years later the composer and poet/patron once again collaborated on a fuller realization of these Lamentations. An *avviso* dated Rome, March 30, 1706, reports the following:

Lunedì sera [29 marzo] dal Sig.*nore* Card.*inale* Ottoboni in bene accomodato lugubre Teatro, tutto illuminato con ben' lavorati fanali di Alabastro di Volterra fece cantare cioè la prova di un' Oratorio in haver tradotte di sua composit.*ione* le Lamentationi di Geremia Profeta à modo tale, che lo Scarlati compositore della musica si fece rendere sempre più ammirabile, in materia si malinconia, ridotta in devota allegria, con infinitissima lode, e gran' applausi de' nobile Uditorio, e d.*etto* Oratorio lo fà cantare mercoledì santo à sera.<sup>15</sup>

On Monday evening [March 29] in his well-furnished, solemn theater, completely illuminated and decorated with alabaster of Volterra worked into the form of linnet drapery, Cardinal Ottoboni had the rehearsal of an oratorio sung, which consisted of his translation of the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah in such a way that Scarlatti, the composer of the music, rendered them even more admirable by setting them to such melancholy material that they evoked devout happiness, infinite praise, and great

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15 D Mbs Cod. Ital. 197, fol. 366r.

applause in the noble audience; and the said oratorio is to be sung on Wednesday evening of Holy Week [March 31].

A week later another *avviso* confirms the fact that these Italian Lamentations were heard on Wednesday of Holy Week:

Mercoledì [31 marzo] sera dal Sig.nore Card.inale Ottoboni fù fatto cantare per la seconda volta il suo Oratorio delle Lamentationi di Geremia Profeta ridotte in lingua volgare, vi hebbe nobilissimo Uditorio, e vi fu ancora la S.ignora D.onna Maria Bernardina cognata del Papa [...]<sup>16</sup>

On Wednesday evening Cardinal Ottoboni had his oratorio, a rendition of the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah in the vulgar tongue [i.e., Italian], sung for the second time. There was a most noble audience, and Donna Maria Bernardina, the Pope's sister-in-law, was again there.

The work by Scarlatti mentioned in the three *avvisi* extracts above was without doubt the *Oratorio per la Passione di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*, sometimes referred to as *Culpa, Poenitentia et Gratia*. From printed *libretti*, which lack the name of the poet and composer, as well as from other documentary sources we know that it was performed in

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<sup>16</sup> D Mbs Cod. Ital. 197, fol. 367r.



the Cancelleria, Rome, during Lent of 1706, 1707<sup>17</sup> and 1708.<sup>18</sup> A bilingual (Latin-Italian) libretto from 1725 appears to document a final performance of the work in the Archiconfraternita del Santissimo Crocifisso, Rome, during the last year of the composer's life.<sup>19</sup> The *Oratorio per la Passione* is usually regarded as a Roman work, even as a late Roman work. After studying one of the surviving manuscript scores of the oratorio, Edward Dent regarded it as an authentic work by Scarlatti that might have been reworked by a younger composer, perhaps by his student Johann Adolf Hasse.<sup>20</sup> Yet the *avviso* from Munich cited above indicates the *Oratorio per la Passione* began life at Naples as early as 1702. It may very well have been revised several times between 1702 and 1725.

The chronicle of musical events that can be established from documents such as *avvisi di Roma* will normally identifies many more performances than can be associated with surviving scores. But in a few anomalous cases more scores for a given period seem to have survived than recorded musical performances. For example, seven serenatas by

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17 After reading the 1707 libretto the literary critic Guido Pasquetti characterized Ottoboni's poetry as a “dialogo insipido tra la Colpa, il Pentimento e la Grazia,” in: *L'Oratorio musicale in Italia: storia critico-letteraria*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1906, p. 298.

18 The details of these performances are summerized in SAVERIO FRANCHI, *Drammaturgia romana: Repertorio bibliografico cronologico dei testi drammatici pubblicati a Roma e nel Lazio*. Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1988.

19 The libretto is preserved in the Biblioteca Casanatense, Rome, Vol. Misc. 740/6. Alessandro Scarlatti is named as composer in it, although the name of the poet, Card. Pietro Ottoboni, is not given. The libretto itself is undated, but is bound among other *libretti* certainly heard in 1725.

20 Dent, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-15. The score is preserved in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Dresden, 2122 D/5. The manuscript can now be viewed on the internet at <http://digital.slub-dresden.de/ppn334590108>

Alessandro Scarlatti are preserved in scores bearing the date 1706.<sup>21</sup> Yet fewer serenata performances are recorded in the Munich *avvisi di Roma* for that summer. Perhaps this surplus of scores for 1706 indicates that a collected edition—a sort of selected works—by Scarlatti was underway that year at Rome, perhaps to mark the composer's induction into Arcadia. Unfortunately, the financial records (*giustificazioni*) of Scarlatti's most important patrons at Rome in this period (Pamphilj, Ottoboni, Ruspoli) reveal nothing in this regard.<sup>22</sup>

Does this mean that our existing chronology of musical events at Rome is far from perfect? In some cases this must still be true, especially in regard to the performance of serenatas and other minor dramatic works. Except in extraordinary cases, such performances were not, as a rule, commemorated with the publication of a libretto. Unless recorded in documents like *avvisi* these works would have left little if any trace for the historian

Detailed examinations of other sets of *avvisi di Roma* are certainly still needed and

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21 A detailed examination of the sources for Scarlatti's serenatas as well as many more extracts from the Munich *avvisi di Roma* are found in THOMAS GRIFFIN, *The Late Baroque Serenata in Rome and Naples: A Documentary Study with Emphasis on Alessandro Scarlatti*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 1983. A number of interesting hypotheses and observations in this regard are found in NICOLÒ MACCAVINO, *La serenata a Filli 'Tacete aure tacete' e le altre serenate datate 1706 di Alessandro Scarlatti*, *La Serenata tra Seicento e Settecento: Musica, Poesia, Scenotecnica. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Reggio Calabria, 16-17 maggio 2003)*, II, Reggio Calabria, Edizioni del Conservatorio di Musica "F. Cilea", 2007, pp. 451-522.

22 In addition to these three patrons, this writer has examined the 1706-07 *giustificazioni* for the Roman Colonna family in Subiaco. No indication that the Colonna paid for the copying or editing of these scores was found.

may, with luck and patience, resolve many problems like that of Alessandro Scarlatti's 1706 serenatas. The application of modern technology in libraries and archives can facilitate undertakings of this sort in ways unimaginable only a few years ago. As scholars we should encourage librarians and archivists to make historical documents such as *avvisi di Roma* available online, similar to the way that the Biblioteca Casanatense has made the printed *Diario di Roma* accessible worldwide.