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Some Late Scarlatti Recovered: Part Two of Alessandro Scarlatti's Serenata
Erminia (1723)
Thomas Griffin

During the first decade of the 21st century, in preparation for the 2010 celebration of Alessandro Scarlatti's 350th anniversary of birth, a group of leading musical institutions and individuals in Italy began planning a series of conferences and concerts as well as a comprehensive series of publications dedicated to the composer's work. The success of this undertaking, of course, would depend greatly on government support, in particular the financial backing of institutions in Sicily, the proud island of Scarlatti's birth. In the prosperous early years of that decade a generous level of funding seemed assured. Alas, the financial crash of 2008, even before the recent crippling *austerità*, put an end to many of those ambitious plans. Today Alessandro Scarlatti still remains a major composer of the Italian Baroque without a coherent edition of his works.

Despite the financial setback, several important conferences were held in 2010 (the proceedings of which should soon be available) and the *Istituto Italiano per la Storia della Musica* under the direction of Prof. Agostino Ziino published this writer's edition of Scarlatti's last major work, the serenata *Erminia* from 1723.¹ Edward Dent, in his still useful 1905 study of Scarlatti, spoke highly of it, although

¹ ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI, *Erminia. Serenata*, ed. Thomas Griffin, Roma, Istituto Italiano per la Storia della Musica, 2010. The edition provides the music for part one only of the serenata. The score

the English musicologist thought the serenata «apparently unfinished» since only the music for part one of this large two-part cantata survived.² Evidence that the composer had indeed completed the work emerged later. Around the middle of the 20th century the Neapolitan scholar Ulisse Prota-Giurleo called attention to an extract from the «Gazzetta di Napoli» reporting the serenata's performance in the Palazzo Stigliano at Naples on 13 June 1723.³ It was given in celebration of a noble wedding, that of Lady Maria Luisa Caracciolo, of the Princes of Santobuono, with Don Ferdinando Colonna, the Prince of Stigliano. All the nobles of Naples, including the Austrian Viceroy, attended this *fiesta di gala*. In 1973 this writer discovered a libretto marking the occasion in the Biblioteca Casanatense at Rome, the only exemplar of this print known to have survived. It preserves the poetic text for both parts one and two of the serenata.⁴

Several mysteries still surround Scarlatti's *Erminia*. The libretto, of course, is based on Torquato Tasso's epic *Gerusalemme liberata*. Part one of the serenata expands on an episode often referred to as the *pastorale di Erminia*. Here the beautiful young Moslem princess Erminia disguises herself in the arms of the pagan warriorress Clorinda and flees Jerusalem in search of her beloved Tancredi. In an earlier episode of the poem he took part in the siege of Antioch, where Erminia's father ruled. After its capture Tancredi freed father and daughter, treating them with exemplary courtesy. Erminia in turn dressed Tancredi's wounds and fell hopelessly in love with the Christian knight. Now, wearing Clorinda's armor, the terrified Erminia is hotly pursued by a squad of Christians knights seeking to kill her, until she finds shelter in the woods near the

received a memorable performance by the *Concerto de' Cavalieri* directed by Marcello Di Lisa in the Palazzo Stigliano at Naples in October 2011. Sample pages, the complete libretto, a list of errata, and an introduction to the work with a plea for the discovery of the music of part two may be consulted on the web at [HYPERLINK "http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/main_page/erminia_info"](http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/main_page/erminia_info) www.ascarlatti2010.net/main_page/erminia_info.

2 EDWARD J. DENT, *Alessandro Scarlatti, new impression with preface and additional notes by Frank Walker*, London, Edward Arnold, 1960 (1st ed. 1905), p. 169.

3 ULISSE PROTA-GIURLEO, *Breve storia del Teatro di Corte e della Musica a Napoli nei sec. XVII-XVIII*, in FELICE DE FILIPPIS - ULISSE PROTA-GIURLEO, *Il Teatro di Corte del Palazzo Reale di Napoli*, Napoli, L'arte tipografica, 1952, p. 94.

4 The libretto is printed in the introduction to the edition of *Erminia* and on the web site mentioned above. Alessandro Scarlatti is named prominently in the libretto as composer, but the poet of the text is nowhere named.

river Jordan with a humble shepherd and his family. In this rustic setting she finds some measure of solace, but as part one of the serenata ends she is still tormented by Love.⁵

Since the serenata celebrated a wedding, a happy ending was certainly expected. Tasso's poem, however, fails to provide it. Thus the unnamed poet of Scarlatti's text is forced into greater originality in part two. In several recitative soliloquies Erminia reveals her desperate passion for Tancredi. He is much enamored with Clorinda, however, and begs Erminia's pardon for not returning her love. Finally, at the evidence of such long-suffering, sincere and painful love for Tancredi, his colleague and fellow knight Polidoro berates the hero, reminding him of his duty with a famous line from Canto v of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. «Amor, ch'a nullo amato amar perdona».⁶ Spoken by Francesca da Rimini in Dante, it exemplifies the ideals of the twelfth-century treatise *The Art of Courtly Love* by Andreas Capellanus. The basic premise here, and a truism of *amor cortese*, is that reciprocity in love is obligatory.⁷

At hearing these words the ever courteous Tancredi renounces his love for Clorinda and responds immediately to Erminia's pleas for acceptance. She in turn is overjoyed. The dilemma is resolved and the happy ending of the serenata assured. The old Shepherd too is overcome with joy at this turn of events. He swoons, seeing in a vision his rude countryside transformed into a splendid city, *bella Napoli*, and his rough cottage changed into a glorious abode, the *palazzo Stigliano*. The serenata ends with general rejoicing.

Who could have written such a text in 1723? Although it borrows much from Tasso, and a little from Dante, in many places the libretto demonstrates an admirable command of the poetic conventions employed in early eighteenth-century opera, cantata and oratorio.⁸ Because the young Farinello sang the role of Erminia, Roberto Pagano has suggested that this might be an unrecognized

5 Erminia's final recitative and aria from Part one was edited by Raymond Meyan, *Erminia: Rezitativ und Arie für Sopran, Streicher und Basso Continuo*, Frankfurt, Henry Litoff's Verlag, [1971].

6 Translated by Longfellow as «Love, that exempts no one beloved from loving».

7 The present writer expresses his gratitude to Prof. Agostino Ziino, who recognized this famous literary allusion during the preparation of the *Erminia* edition.

8 In the introduction of the edition, however, I point out a few clumsy passages in the printed text that were evidently amended by the composer. These cases demonstrate that Scarlatti, not the poet, exercised ultimate artistic control over the serenata. They also suggest that the poet may not have been an experienced professional librettist.

text by the young Metastasio.⁹ Both the singer and poet started their meteoric careers in tandem at Naples around this time. But there were many other able writers at Naples who might have provided this libretto. The distinguished poet Silvio Stampiglia, one of the founders of the Roman Arcadian Academy, was then living in retirement at Naples. One might even suspect the Viceroy Cardinal Michele Federico d'Althann as the poet. The «Gazzetta di Napoli» mentions his discreet attendance, in an unofficial capacity, at the performance of *Erminia*. Like Scarlatti and Stampiglia he was a member of Arcadia and must have harbored literary ambitions which could never be revealed publicly because of his status as an aristocrat. In any case, the poet's identity remains to be discovered.

Three manuscript scores for the first part of *Erminia* survive and serve as the basis for the published edition of the serenata.¹⁰ Two scores in Italy are copied by the same hand, and all three sources preserve remarkably complete and similar readings of the music. In Scarlatti's day they would have been called *originali*, fair copies probably made under the composer's direct supervision, and most likely from his autograph, which has not survived. But where is the music for part two? In early 2012 Michael Talbot suggested searching the RISM database of incipits, now online.¹¹ But a search in January 2012 turned up nothing from part two of the serenata. Later that year, however, Agostino Ziino received good news from Jennifer Ward in the RISM office at Frankfurt. While researching records from British libraries newly entered into the RISM database, she came across an aria incipit, *Mentr'ella offesa langue*, attributed to Alessandro Scarlatti in a music manuscript,¹² but not listed in Giancarlo Rostirolla's catalog of Scarlatti's works.¹³ Searching the web for possible clues, Ward found the complete libretto of *Erminia*, online at

9 ROBERTO PAGANO - GIANCARLO ROSTIROLLA - LINO BIANCHI, *Alessandro Scarlatti*, Torino, ERI, 1972, p. 232. Pagano's suggestion, of real merit, is discussed at greater length by this writer in the introduction to the edition.

10 They are preserved in the Library of the Naples Conservatory, in the musical archive at Montecassino, and in the Library of the Royal College of Music at London. Other scores of *Erminia* Part one, of later provenance and almost certainly copied from one of the above, also survive, but were not used for this edition.

11 <http://opac.rism.info>.

12 The British Library (GB-Lbl) Add. 14166, f.81r-83v. HYPERLINK "<http://opac.rism.info/search?documentid=806154101>" <http://opac.rism.info/search?documentid=806154101>.

13 Published in the same ERI 1972 volume containing Pagano's biography of the composer cited above.

HYPERLINK "<http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/>" www.ascarlatti2010.net, and identified a match with aria 38 in part two of the serenata. Informed by Ward of the happy news that some of the music for part two may have survived, Prof Ziino kindly forwarded this information to the present writer. In the mean time Ward received confirmation from her colleague at the British Library that the complete text of aria 38 in the libretto is the same as that in the musical source.

Further searches through RISM online and in the published catalog¹⁴ of the British Library reveal four arias, one duet, and a recitative from *Erminia*. None have been reported in the musicological literature. Manuscripts Additional 14209 and 14166, which preserve these pieces, were part of a large collection acquired by Spencer Joshua Alwyne Compton, Marquess of Northampton (1790-1851), perhaps as early as 1811 or 1812, from the Neapolitan musician and bibliophile Gaspare Selvaggi (1763-1847). Northampton presented this collection to the British Museum in April 1843.

- 1) *Che piacer! Che diletto!*, Add. 14209 f. 92r-99v
- 2) *Quando irato il toro mugge*, Add. 14209 f. 106r-15v
- 3) *Mentre quel solco ara il bifolco*, Add. 14209 f.116r-23r
- 4) *Vado al gregge e meco viene*, Add. 14209 f. 132r-45r
- 5) *Mentr'ella offesa langue. Aria del Cavaliere Alessandro Scarlatti*, Add. 14166 f. 81r-83v

Numbers 1-4 above are all copied by the same hand, while a second hand is responsible for number 5, found in the manuscript identified by Jennifer Ward. Neither of these hands is found among manuscripts close to the composer or his era, and as sources these pieces would not be considered particularly significant except that numbers 1 and 5 preserve the only known music from the second part of *Erminia*.

Of considerable interest is the fact that all these newly recovered pieces were written for the distinguished bass D. Antonio Manna, who sang the role of Pastore, the old Shepherd.¹⁵ While all four soloists in *Erminia* were certainly of the

14 AUGUSTUS HUGHES-HUGHES, *Catalogue of manuscript music in the British Museum*, London, The British Museum, 1906.

15 *Vado al gregge e meco viene* is a duet between Erminia (sung by Farinello) and Pastore (Manna). *Che piacer! Che diletto!*, a recitative and aria that begins with a few words sung by Tancredi, Erminia and Polidoro, is otherwise sung by the Shepherd.

first rank, it is clear that the eighteen-year-old *castrato* Carlo Broschi, called Farinello, who sang the role of Erminia, was the star of the serenata. But in 1723 Broschi must have been known at Naples only as a locally promising soprano. The older bass D. Antonio Manna, called the Abbate Camerino, had a true international reputation and in certain respects a voice equal to Farinello. The D. or Don before his name was in recognition of his status as a priest, having taken orders in 1700. From 1699 through 1704 Manna sang in the Imperial Court Chapel at Vienna. Returning to Italy in 1708, he found employment under Scarlatti in the Royal Chapel at Naples. He is mentioned repeatedly in the «Gazzetta di Napoli», often as singing in the many serenatas heard in the capital.¹⁶ To name only a few of these, in 1716 Manna interpreted the role of Giove in Scarlatti's serenata *La Gloria di Primavera*. He is likely to have sung the role of Providenza in the composer's *Amore, Pace e Providenza* of 1711 and Glauco in *Partenope, Teti, Nettuno, Proteo e Glauco* in 1718.¹⁷ On preliminary page vi of the *Erminia* edition the lowest note of Manna's voice is listed as an E, one ledger line below the bass staff. With the recovery of *Mentr'ella offesa langue* we find this extraordinary voice descending a third lower to C.

It is sobering to think that the very complete and well organized Hughes-Hughes catalog of music in the British Museum appeared in 1906, only one year after Dent's pioneering study of Scarlatti, yet these pieces lay unrecognized until today. Let us hope that, thanks to the continuing effort of the RISM staff and the world-wide availability of this valuable bibliographic service, many more musical treasures are discovered, including the remaining music for Alessandro Scarlatti's last major work, the serenata *Erminia*.

16 See, for example, AUSILIA MAGAUDDA-DANILO COSTANTINI, *Serenate e componimenti celebrativi nel Regno di Napoli (1677-1754)*, in *La Serenata tra Seicento e Settecento: musica, poesia, scenotecnica*, a c. di Nicolò Maccavino, Reggio Calabria, Laruffa, 2007, pp. 116-117 and the index to their magisterial study *Musica e spettacolo nel Regno di Napoli attraverso lo spoglio della «Gazzetta» (1675-1768)*, Roma, Ismez, 2009.

17 Scores for these serenatas are available at [HYPERLINK "http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/"](http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/) www.ascarlatti2010.net.

*Notes on the Sources**Mentr'ella offesa langue*

The key signature appears only on the first page of the aria (f. 81r). It contains five flats, but most are misplaced. Since the note D is almost always prefaced with an accidental throughout the aria, Scarlatti must have indicated a key signature of three flats. Rarely if ever does Scarlatti exceed three flats or sharps in the key signature of his works. The copyist indicates cut time (*alla breve*) at the beginning of the aria, but considering the tempo indication *Andante*, that too must be in error.

Che piacer! Che diletto!

This is the recitative in which the Shepherd swoons, seeing a vision of his rough world transformed into the beautiful city of Naples. The indication [*arpeggiato*] at measure 18, and its cancellation [*semplice*] are not found in the source, but are added in imitation of recitative 26 in part one of the serenata. The capitalization of COLONNA and LEON in the text is not found in the musical source, but follows the usage in the printed libretto.

Quante i boschi han piante

This copyist uses a flat, rather than a natural sign, to cancel a sharp applied as an accidental to an earlier note, for example at measure 95 in the voice part.

38. Aria *Ment'ella offesa langue*

Andante

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Pastore

[Continuo]

Ment'ella offe - sa langue per

le mie ve-ne il sangue si ferma si ferma e ge - la, e il cor mi bat - te mi bat - te in

sen tut-to il san-gue tut-to si fer-ma e ge - la, e il cor mi bat - te mi

bat - te e il cor mi bat - te in

sen mi bat - te in sen.

PART TWO OF ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI'S SERENATA *ERMINIA* (1723)

[Fine]

La tua su-per- ba vi- sta, Si- gnor, for- se lat- tri- sta. En- trò l'o- vil ti ce- la fin -

Da Capo

ché re- spi- ri al- men, ti ce- la Signor ti ce- la, fin- ché re- spi- ri almen fin- ché re- spi- ri almen.

49. Recitativo *Che piacer! Che diletto!*

Erminia Polidoro Pastore

Tancredi
Che, Che piacer! Che di- let- to! Che bel co- stan- te af- fet- to! Qual im- prov- vi- sa gio- in em- pie il cor di con-
[Continuo]

ten- to! Dove son, che ri- mi- ro! Qual novel- le furor m'a- gi- ta e scu- te? Il pet- to in- flam- ma, e in al- to il pen- sier me- na?

Violini I
Violini II
Viola

Oh fe- li- ci mie dol- ci, a- mi- che sel- ve o- ve o- ve son più vost'- er- me al- pi- ne bal- ze? O- ve gl'an- tri so-

[arpeggiato]

lin- ghi e i mu- ti or- ro- ri? Il chia- ro- let- to no- do d'alme ec- ce- les- se so- vra- ne d'al- te- ra ma- o- stà rag- gio in voi span- de,

23

che di ro-mi-te al-pe-stri a-spre con-tra-de fat-te già sie-te il-lu-stre am-pia cit-ta - de. Oh for-tu-na-to mio po-vero al-ber-go, o -

25

vè? o-v'è il ru-stico ovi-le, e'l nu-do sas-so can-gia-to il roz-zo an-gu-sto tet-to in-fran-to? Veggio in ric-ca fas-tosa or-na-ta Reg-gia,

26

in mez-za cui di bian-co mar-mo e-let-to s'er-ge al-te-ra CO-LON-NA, o - ve per dot-ta man scul-to si mi-ra ge-ne-

27

ro - so LE-ON che'l ca - po es-toi-le. Di vir-tù que-sta e di va - lor sostie-ne gli an-ti - chi ec-cel - si si - mu - la - cri e chia-ri,

28

né per re - o tur-bo o in-gor-do tem-po auda-ce fia che for-tez-za man-chi a si bel-la d'on-or al-ta me-mo-ria, e per lei cre - sca al'

mondo e per lei cre - sca al mon - do al mondo o - no-re o - no - re e glo -
 - ria o - no-re e glo - ri - a.

Segue Aria

50. Aria *Quante i boschi han piante*

Allegro

Quan-te i bos-chi han pian-te e fron-de quan-te a-re ne han que-ste spon-de,
 tan-ti pio-va il ciel be-ni-gno lie-ti au-gu-ri al vostro a-mor al vostro a-mor al vostro a-mor.

Quan-te i bo-schi han pian-te e fron-de quan-te a-ro-ne han queste
 spon-de, tan-ti pio-va il Ciel be-ni-gno sie-te gu-gu-ri al vostro a-mor. Quan-te fron-de quan-te a-
 re e tan-ti lie-ti lie-ti gu-gu-ri al vostro a-mor. al-
 vostro a-mor.
 [Fine]
 L'alto germe de-gl'E-ro-i spe-ra il mondo sol da voi che per'

PART TWO OF ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI'S SERENATA *ERMINIA* (1723)

98

mil - le e mil - le lu - stri le - tà fo - sca ac - cen - da e il - lu - stri con vir - tu - de e con va - lor.

99

le - tà fos - ca ac - cen - da e il - lu - stri con vir - tu - de e con va - lor con va - lor

110

Da Capo

con va - lor.

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