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SCHULENBURG, CORFÙ  
AND THE DATING OF *JUDITHA TRIUMPHANS*, RV 644

HISTORICAL, LITERARY, AND MILITARY EVIDENCE

Marshal Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg (1661-1747), the dedicatee of Giacomo Cassetti's libretto for the oratorio *Juditha Triumphans devicta Holofernis barbarie*, RV 644, was almost a real-life analogue of the warrior-widow Judith, whose triumphs the work recounts. It was Schulenburg who, in the ostensible cause of defending the Faith in 1716, led the defence of the island of Corfù, a Venetian possession since 1396. In more practical terms the protection of Corfù was undertaken to protect the gateway to Venice's remaining maritime empire, which had now retreated to fit entirely within the Adriatic. After the loss of Crete (1669), a long series of skirmishes kept the Venetians engaged in the Aegean but despite these engagements, they failed to retrieve other lost holdings. Battles for Corinth and the Peloponnese in the 1680s inflicted steady losses. After a war with the Turks began anew at the end of 1714, the Venetians concentrated their weapons on Corfù.

While in Vienna in 1714 Schulenburg was recruited by the Venetian ambassador Pietro Grimani to help the Venetians defend their interests in the Adriatic, which had steadily dwindled over the two decades that had passed since the death of Francesco Morosini, a *doge* but also a vigorous naval leader. The Venetians particularly feared the cunning of Grand Vizier Damar Ali Pascha. By the autumn of 1715 the Turks had captured almost all of the Peloponnese. The Venetians were amassing their weapons of war on Corfù and chose Schulenburg to defend it.<sup>1</sup>

Negotiations that took place in November 1715 led to a Venetian commitment to defend Corfù.<sup>2</sup> On 21 December 1715 the Venetian Senate promoted as his assistants the existing officers Grimaldi "tenente generale", Sala and Giovanni Battista Rossi (the latter two both now ranked "sargenti generali").<sup>3</sup> The Venetians

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<sup>1</sup> On Schulenburg's origins and earlier career see HANS SCHMIDT, *Il Salvatore di Corfù Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg (1661-1747): Una carriera militare europea al tempo dell'Alto Assolutismo*, "Quaderni del Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani", 42 (1991), pp. 3-25.

<sup>2</sup> LUDWIG PASTOR, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, 40 vols, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1899-1953, vol. 33 (1941), pp. 122-123.

<sup>3</sup> A-Wn, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (hereafter ÖNB), *Il Corriere ordinario*, 77, n.7, vol. 20 (1715), issue of 28 Dec 1715, which also notes that on the 31st Schulenburg was to visit the Arsenal

wasted no time in coopting civilian efforts to prepare for battle. Eight or more warships were launched at the Arsenal over the coming months.

The text for *Juditha triumphans*, by Giacomo Cassetti, embeds a certain ambiguity. In paintings of Judith from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the moment frozen in time shows Judith either severing the head of Holofernes or holding the head up to demonstrate her success. There is no sense of contest or uncertainty of outcome. That is essentially true in Cassetti's libretto too, but because music unfolds in time there is a steady build-up of drama, though a clear enough expectation that Judith will prevail. One could certainly make an argument for the possibility that the oratorio was intended for the commencement of the 1716 campaign against the Turks, but that would have meant a performance very early in the year. The galleys sailed early in February.

A much stronger case can be made for the performance of the work to mark Schulenburg's triumphant return, but this occurred much later than other indicators might suggest. There is no definitive proof that Schulenburg and his closest colleagues were present at the performance, but the immense resources that the work required would have been much better justified if they had been in attendance. More significantly, the parallels between Schulenburg's deeds and those of the widow of Bethulia would have been much more clearly perceptible, the emotions of the audience more highly aroused, and the poetic meaning of Cassetti's text thoroughly satisfied after his return to Venice. This study traces Schulenburg's movements throughout 1716 and proceeds on the premise that if Schulenburg's presence was intended, a performance of *Juditha triumphans* cannot have occurred before January 1717, which represents the only indisputable opportunity to bring all the necessary factors into convergence.

The Austrians did not formally take up arms until July 1, 1716, when Prince Eugene of Savoy left Vienna. He steered 65,000 men to Hungary, where according to imperial propaganda they quelled 200,000 Turks. It was a quick war: Eugene wrote to the Pope from the tent of the Grand Visier in late August to inform him of his victory. The imperial forces had returned to Vienna by the start of November, and victory celebrations followed shortly. They were, like the battle

"ove si travaglia incessantemente alla costruzione delle scritte Navi da Guerra [...]." It is important to note that in all uses of weekly news-sheet citations there is an issue date (the date of printing or compilation) and a report date. Report dates normally precede issue dates by three days because reports from Venice were dispatched on Saturdays. Many published compilations were often issued on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, but over time gradually increased the number of issues per week. Each printed news-sheet incorporated reports from many places, each of which carried its own date. News-sheets issued in Rome, the papal states (including Bologna and Ferrara), and the Hapsburg empire were always dated modern-style. Only manuscript news sources were variable in their year indications for January and February. Printers indicated the year only in mastheads and thus tacitly corrected reports originally dated in the more veneto. The *Corriere ordinario* contains a mixture of printed and manuscript materials. Like other manuscript compilations of news it will refer to recent days by name. These dates are easily converted to exact dates with any available historical calendar tool. We use <<http://hcal.ccarh.org>>. Events occurring in Venice will have been reported on the subsequent Saturday.

itself, short and conspicuous. It must be from the Viennese celebrations that the idea that *Juditha triumphans* was performed in November 1716 came about.

Remo Giazotto reports that a censor's permission for Cassetti's libretto was issued on 17 August 1716, alternatively giving 7 August.<sup>4</sup> Mismatched "facts" are a well-known hallmark of Giazotto's works, as we see here. Several exhaustive searches of all likely or even possible sources of the information have failed to disclose this censor's slip or to confirm Giazotto's date(s) for *Juditha triumphans*. Usually these matters can be cleared up consulting the files of Riformatori dello Studio di Padova,<sup>5</sup> but numerous searches of the appropriate *buste* have failed to establish any such credential for *Juditha triumphans*. Giazotto states that he found his information in a "faccio fede" in the files of the Inquisitori di Stato, b. 552, but it turns out to lack not only such a slip but even material of an appropriate date or character.<sup>6</sup> As Giazotto reports the matter the permission was written by Tomaso Maria Gennari,<sup>7</sup> who was a member of the Roman Inquisition.

What makes Giazotto's misinformation so curious is his pompous statement about the importance of his discovery, while at the same time he reveals his own confusion between Giacomo Cassetti, the librettist of *Juditha triumphans*, and other figures with similar names. Giazotto was determined in his narrative to show that Cassetti was secretly intending to become an opera impresario, and we get a whiff of this imagined direction in his statement.<sup>8</sup> In any event the positions of Schulenburg and Pisani were still being attacked on 17 August by the Turks, who on 22 August 1716, **they** departed from Corfù.

Giacomo Cassetti wrote other texts, mainly religious tracts and oratorio librettos for the Pollarolos and others. These include the text for Carlo Francesco's *Rex Regum in Veneta Maris Regia à Regibus adoratus*, for which there is a *licenza* dated 31 December 1715.<sup>9</sup> (The work was performed early in 1716, perhaps for

<sup>4</sup> REMO GIAZOTTO, *Antonio Vivaldi*, Milan, Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1965, pp. 131 (7 Aug) and 295 (17 Aug).

<sup>5</sup> *I-Vas*, Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, Licenze per stampa, Registri 293-295.

<sup>6</sup> Paolo Alberto Rismondo has valiantly rechecked my work and explored other possible routes to the kind of information Giazotto reports but has met with no success in verifying the "August" claim.

<sup>7</sup> Gennari was a Vicenzan who was also the author of some religious tracts (c. 1710-1725). Giazotto's claim is that the permission was granted by Fra Tomaso Maria Gennari (an author of religious texts) on behalf of the Roman Inquisition in Venice. "Padre maestro" Gennari seems to have been well respected in Vicenza in 1720 (cf. G. M. Anti's *La compunzione procurata a penitenti con la sposizione dei sette salmi penitenziali*, which was dedicated to him.)

<sup>8</sup> REMO GIAZOTTO, *Antonio Vivaldi*, cit., p. 295: "Reputiamo doveroso ricordare che l'aver insperatamente ritrovato i cosiddetti documenti della censura patriarcale, significa aver portato in luce le testimonianze più vive, dirette, suggestive sull'attività melodrammatica veneziana di questi anni e su quella del Vivaldi in particolare. Sino ad oggi erano rimaste sconosciute: non se ne sospettava nemmeno l'esistenza." With regard to opera, Giazotto confused Giacomo Cassetti with Cesare Cassetti, and him in turn with a G. B. Cassotti, whom he again incorrectly associates with the Teatro S. Moisè. In short, Giazotto's reference to an August "faccio fede" is simply a red herring.

<sup>9</sup> *I-Vas*, Riformatori dello Studio di Padova, Licenze per stampa, Registro 294. Cassetti wrote several oratorio texts (a few of which were set to music by the Pollarolos but other *ospedali*) and a few religious treatises. One can see the template for *Juditha's* libretto in *Sacrum amoris novendiale in Dei*

Epiphany at the Incurabili). From *Rex Regum* one senses the same sense of militancy as in *Juditha triumphans*,<sup>10</sup> but of course the particulars are entirely different.

The particulars of *Juditha triumphans* as given on the title-page of the libretto bear scrutiny. They read: “JUDITHA TRIUMPHANS | DEVICTA HOLOFERNIS BARBARIE. | Sacrum militare oratorium | HISCE BELLI TEMPORIBUS | A Psalentium Virginum Choro | IN TEMPLO PIETATIS CANENDUM | JACOBI CASSETTI EQ. | METRICE’ VOTIS EXPRESSUM. | Piissimus ipsius Orphanodochii PRAESI-|DENTIBUS ac GUBERNATORIBUS | submissee Dicatum | MUSICE’ EXPRESSUM | *ab admed. Rev. d.* | ANTONIO VIVALDI”.<sup>11</sup> We might consider here what governing bodies could have considered themselves to have jurisdiction over such a text. The governors of the Pietà were not likely to feel so entitled; in the ostensible hierarchy of the institution’s management they served at the pleasure of the *doge*. The Republic (through the office of the Riformatori dello Studio di Padova) would have been flattered by a subject so favorable to Venice’s image. That leaves the religious hierarchy, which was to a slight degree bifurcated by the division of the Inquisition, based in Rome, and the Patriarch, based within walking distance of the Pietà. There could be a nugget of truth on Giazotto’s convoluted trail, but only one, among a wide array of disinformation.

Schulenburg’s movements throughout 1716 and its margins can be traced with relative ease from weekly news reports. Venice was a centre for news distribution. When a military crisis was at hand, reporting on it was generous and widely circulated. Small differences between accounts for the same week are frequent but in most cases they are inconsequential. War fever certainly gripped Venice at the start of the year 1716. Its customary *triduo* (1-3 January), which subsumed the feast of Circumcision, emphasized the piety of Venetians and their

*parituae Virginis gloriam Novem in partus expectatione diebus musice canendum in Pauperum Derelictorum templo. Jacobi Cassetti equitis devotione cordis eductum, Antonii Polaroli numeris armonice modulatum, Venetiis, apud Jacobum Thomasinum, 1716.* This may well correspond to the oratorio for the Derelitti (Ospedaletto) by Antonio Pollarolo described in *Pallade veneta* doc. no. 274, for the week ending 28 March 1716, see ELEANOR SELFRIDGE-FIELD, *Pallade veneta: Writings on music in Venetian Society 1650-1750*, Venice, Fondazione Levi, 1985, p. 284. A less informative identity is given for Cassetti’s *Sterilis faecundum*, also for Antonio Pollarolo, 1717.

<sup>10</sup> The subject of Judith was popular in the oratorio literature (and in painting) or at least a century. Some examples pertinent to Vivaldi’s time and milieu are discussed in ELEANOR SELFRIDGE-FIELD, *Juditha in historical perspective: Scarlatti, Gasparini, Marcello, and Vivaldi in Vivaldi veneziano europeo*, eds Francesco Degradà and Maria Teresa Muraro (“Quaderni vivaldiani”, 1), Florence, Olschki, 1980, pp. 135-153. One more has recently come to light: a modest *La Giuditta* given in the vernacular at the church of S. Leonardo, Padua, under the patronage of Laura d’Este of the Congregazione Annunciata. It had roles only for Giuditta, Ozia, Oloferne, and a Capitano di Oloferne (*I-Mb*, Raccolta Corniani - Algarotti N. 2528). The figure of Judith was also popular in painting and in sculpture.

<sup>11</sup> “JUDITH TRIUMPHANT | AFTER OVERCOMING THE BARBARIY OF HOLOFERNES | *Sacred Military Oratorio* | IN THIS TIME OF WAR | TO BE PERFORMED IN THE CHURCH OF THE PIETÀ | By A Choir and Orchestra Of Maidens | WORDS WRITTEN IN VERSE | by GIACOMO CASSETTI, CAVALIERE. | humbly Dedicated | to the PRESIDENTS AND GOVERNORS | of the same Most Pious Orphanage. | MUSIC COMPOSED | By the Reverend Don | ANTONIO VIVALDI”.

ardent prayers for the survival of the Republic. This focus was highlighted by the exposition of the Pala d'Oro (Venice's gilded reliquary) in St. Mark's.<sup>12</sup>

In a report from 4 January 1716 we read that:

Mercordì mattina primo giorno dell'Anno nuovo, per consagrar alla Maestà Divina le Primizie del medesimo, si fece per ordine Publico nella Chiesa Ducale di S. Marco con li due [giorni] susseguenti l'Esposizione del Venerabile con apparato, e sontuosa Musica; & ad essemplio di Sua Serenità, che vi calò con la Seren[issima] Signoria, e Monsig[nore] Nunzio Ponteficio, vi fù in detti 3 giorni un continuato concorso di Popolo à porgere fervorose Preghiere all'Altissimo, acciò si degni *benedire l'Armi della Seren[issima] Repubblica contro il commune Nemico*: e vi sermoneggiarono tanto la mattina, che nel doppio pranzo li più celebri Sacri Oratori; & hieri sera se ne fece la reposizione con una Processione seguita da Sua Serenità, Seren[issima] Signoria, e Nobiltà tutta à due à due con Candele accese in mano.<sup>13</sup>

The Blessing of the Arms of the Republic that occurred with the intent of quelling "the common enemy" was not a familiar element in this observation. The use of religious orators and processions led by the doge were. The number of candles indicated the importance of the occasion (candle wax was expensive). The Blessing of the Arms paved the way for the conferring of the title of Capitano Generale on Michiel Morosini on 5 January<sup>14</sup> although his occupancy of the position was rescinded a week later, when Andrea Pisani was named to succeed him.<sup>15</sup> Count Giovanni Battista Colloredo, the imperial ambassador to the Venetian Republic, entertained Schulenburg, the papal legate, and Count Ferdinando di Taxis, general of the imperial post, at a *l'autissimo banchetto* on Sunday the 18th.<sup>16</sup> The usual Carnival festivities (from 14 January in 1716) were subdued by a week of extreme cold that saw the entire lagoon freeze and the preferred amusement that of walking on ice between Venice and Mestre.<sup>17</sup> The deep freeze did not prevent the launch on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (a Thursday) of a new "first-class ship" called the Madonna. Its presentation was celebrated with the firing of eighty canons under the supervision of Marshal Schulenburg on the 25th.<sup>18</sup> On the 28th Fra Paolo Spada, who had been delegated by the *Gran Principessa* of Tuscany to serve the Duke of Bavaria, completed 28 days in quarantine at Verona and lent his voice to those of the well-wishers.<sup>19</sup> Both were staying in a palace on the Riva di S. Biagio.<sup>20</sup> The seriousness of this Carnival season is perhaps demonstrated by the fact that two stalwart Arcadians, Scipione Maffei and

<sup>12</sup> Officially observed from nightfall on 31 December to nightfall on 3 January.

<sup>13</sup> *A-Wn*, ÖNB, *Il corriere ordinario* 77, n. 7, vol. 26 (1716), issue of 4 Jan 1716.

<sup>14</sup> *Gazzetta Bolognese*, report of 11 Jan (issue of 14 Jan 1716, p. 4).

<sup>15</sup> *Gazzetta Bolognese*, report of 18 Jan (issue of 21 Jan 1716, p. 4).

<sup>16</sup> *A-Wn*, ÖNB, *Il corriere ordinario*, cit., report of 18 Jan 1716.

<sup>17</sup> *Gazzetta Bolognese*, report of 25 Jan (issue of 28 Jan 1716, p. 4).

<sup>18</sup> *A-Wn*, ÖNB, *Il corriere ordinario*, cit., report of 25 Jan 1716.

<sup>19</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> *Loc. cit.*

Gerolamo Frigimelica-Roberti, entertained at a reception and ballo for Spada on 29 January (in Verona).<sup>21</sup>

Schulenburg was scheduled to sail for Corfù and Cephalonia around the 1st of February. Upon his arrival he would take command of the army in Dalmatia. He reached Corfù by 15 February, after stopping at other islands including Zante. On the 19<sup>th</sup><sup>22</sup> he reported that a fire onboard one of his ships about ten miles from Corfù had resulted in the loss of 50 men, but, he stated proudly, the cannon was rescued! In Venice, where the Duke of Saxony and Prince of Guastalla had joined the festivities, the partying continued.<sup>23</sup>

In general naval battles involving Venetian forces took place in the warmer months of the year because of practicalities. Seas were predictably stormy in the winter. Unsurprisingly, the peak of battle at Corfù came between 25 July and 20 August 1716. Taking nothing for granted, the Venetians continued building and fitting out of new galleys and launching them with great fanfare. In September new troops under Schulenburg's command set sail from Corfù. By 16 September Schulenburg himself had reached the island of Zante,<sup>24</sup> but he did not set sail for Venetian lagoon until mid-November.

Prince Eugene's victory on land occurred on 5 August, but news of the battle of Temesvar was not announced in Venice until 11 October.<sup>25</sup> The reason for the lag in Venice is difficult to understand because a papal party sang a *Te Deum* for the victories in Hungary and Corfù in the Roman catacomb of Domitilla on 7 September.<sup>26</sup> Apparently the celebration was a clandestine affair, which may explain the absence of corresponding news in Venice until, on 21 October, a special mass at St. Mark's celebrated the victory of Temesvar.<sup>27</sup> This news had been received on the 11<sup>th</sup>, when all the bells in the city were rung, while trumpets and drums played and cannons were fired.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile Count Colloredo had sponsored a solemn mass on 27 August at the church of the Carmelitani Scalzi "in rendimento di grazie per la segnalata vittoria ottenuta dalle Armi Imperiali". "Il divertimento della musica nella sua

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, report of 8 Feb 1716.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, report of 7 Mar 1716.

<sup>23</sup> Guastalla would be the dedicatee of *L'incoronazione di Dario*, premiered at Sant'Angelo on 23 Jan 1717.

<sup>24</sup> Letter of 15 Sep 1716, in: A-Wn, ÖNB, *Il corriere ordinario*, cit., report of 10 Oct 1716.

<sup>25</sup> A-Wn, ÖNB, *Il corriere ordinario*, cit., report of 14 Oct 1716.

<sup>26</sup> LUDWIG PASTOR, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, cit., p. 510, says this information was preserved in the catacomb itself. According a dispatch of 31 Ottobre "Domenica [8 ottobre] dopo pranzo si portò Sua Serenità con tutta la Corte alla visita della Chiesa di S. Maria sopra Minerva, per rendere le dovute grazie a Dio [...] in questa Campagna", *Gazzetta Bolognese*, report from Rome of 7 Nov 1716 (issue of 10 Nov, pp. 3-4). (Rome's reports in the *Gazzetta* were issued on a Tuesday.) In Vienna the same issue relates that on the 18th [October] "sotto il Padiglione del Sig. Principe Eugenio con l'intervento di tutta la Generalità [fù] cantato il Te Deum sotto lo sparo di 140. Cannoni, in rendimento di grazie a Dio per la resa di quella Piazza, nel quale furono 136. Cannoni con 10. Mortari."

<sup>27</sup> *I-Rvat*, Archivio Segreto, Nunziatura di Venezia, n. 166 (1716), f. 688, report of 24 Oct 1716.

<sup>28</sup> A-Wn, ÖNB, *Il corriere ordinario*, cit., report of 14 Oct 1716.



Casa" followed it.<sup>29</sup> In November he returned from *villeggiatura* in time to have another solemn mass sung with a *Te Deum* in celebration of the *acquisto* of Temisvar. These events occurred on 4 November, the name-day of the emperor (Charles VII). Mortars were fired while trumpets and tamburi played. *Sinfonie* and *canti* were later sung at Colloredo's palazzo. A special dispensation permitted the wearing of masks for the occasion.<sup>30</sup> The *Corriere ordinario* lists Colloredo's guests as having included the papal legate, Count Taxis, and two of his own sons.<sup>31</sup>

In anticipation of Schulenburg's triumphant return to Venice, the general's brother (a colonel) arrived during the week ending 5 December. Having made several stops in the Adriatic,<sup>32</sup> Schulenburg, Sala, and their troops reached the lagoon on the 6th. The government was just beginning to reconcile accounts for its many galleys and their crews with a view towards another "spring campaign."<sup>33</sup> Like all other passengers arriving at a border of the Republic, Schulenburg and his forces were required to endure quarantine. The term varied from two or five weeks, depending on the currently perceived health threats. It was a Saturday. They were taken to the Old Lazzaretto for the duration on Sunday morning.<sup>34</sup> More ships (the "Vittoria", "Iride", "Crocefisso", and "San Paolo") sailed into the lagoon during the coming week. The San Pio V and San Gaetano were already in port at Malamocco. They were to be relieved of their cargo and weapons at the Arsenal after quarantine. General Emo remained in Zara.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, Colonel Schulenburg, the brother of the *generale di sbarco*, reached Venice at about the same time to await his brother's arrival.<sup>36</sup> These ships arrived just ahead of two weeks of extremely stormy conditions. A "fierissima tramontana" on Sunday the 13th heralded a generous snowfall, which soon impeded further arrivals on the Adriatic. One ship, the *Capitano*, washed up on a sand dune along the Lido during this "rigore del freddo" and owing to a "furiosa tempesta di Mare". Meanwhile, however, some ships of the Armada decided to remain at Corfù for the duration of the winter, while others were stranded on the Istrian coast.

A *Gazzetta* of 19 December noted that Schulenburg remained in quarantine but that "giornalmente passano a ritrovarlo molte persone distinte, & Ufiziali, avendo anco mandato a complimentarlo il Principe di Darmstat, che soggiorna

<sup>29</sup> *I-Rvat*, Archivio Segreto, Nunziatura di Venezia, cit., f. 579v, report of 29 Aug 1716. Other celebrations of victory dotted the Balkans from Zara upwards, while on land the Turks had gathered around Belgrade.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 711, report of 7 Nov 1716.

<sup>31</sup> *A-Wn*, ÖNB, *Il corriere ordinario*, cit., report of 7 novembre [1716].

<sup>32</sup> *Gazzetta Bolognese*, reports of 14 and 21 Nov (issues of 17 and 24 Nov 1716, p. 4 in both cases).

<sup>33</sup> *Gazzetta Bolognese*, report of 5 Dec 1716 (issue of 8 Dec, p. 4). Two weeks later it was reported that the *Fortuna Guerriera* was launched at the Arsenal (14 Dec). By the end of January 1717 six further warships were completed.

<sup>34</sup> *Gazzetta Bolognese*, report of 12 Dec 1716 (issue of 15 Dec, p. 4).

<sup>35</sup> In fact he remained there for the winters: *Gazzetta Bolognese*, report of 16 Jan 1717 (issue of 19 Jan).

<sup>36</sup> *I-Rvat*, Archivio Segreto, Nunziatura di Venezia, cit., f. 789, report of 12 Dec.

ancora qui.”<sup>37</sup> Storms raged on. The *Gazzetta* of 26 December noted the continuation of “li pessimi tempi con incessanti piogge,” causing the retard of all travel. In fact “furious storms” and the “impetuous winds of a scirocco” had caused flooding throughout the city in addition to damage to orchards near Pellestrina and to gardens at Malamocco. The bulwarks protecting the Lido were also ravaged.

By the last days of the year 1716 the Venetian Armada began again to arrive in almost daily installments from the Peloponnese and Saloniki.<sup>38</sup> A great lantern that Venetian government was sending to the cathedral of Santo Spiridion on Corfù was placed on public exhibit in the Piazza. On 3 January 1717 or soon thereafter (reports vary) an exhibition at the Lido of forty “perfect” cannons was planned, with a bomb-throwing contest the following day.

After reporting the arrival on 2nd January of “un Principe giovane della Casa di Prussia con una numerosa Corte” who were staying at the Lion Bianco, a correspondent wrote on the 9th that “Nella mattina di Domenica [3 Jan 1717] passata sortì dal Lazaretto vecchio con tutto il suo seguito d’Uffiziali, e Corte il General Schulemburgo, ch’andò a drittura al suo Palazzo preso à S. Barnaba”.<sup>39</sup> The *Corriere ordinario* of the same date similarly reported that “La mattina di Domenica [3 Jan 1717] sortì poi da questo Lazzareto vecchio il maresciallo Generale Conte di Schulemburgo col Generale Sala, & altri Ufficiali, che vennero dal Levante, doppo havervi terminata la scritta loro contumacia di 28 giorni.”<sup>40</sup>

Schulenburg’s exit from quarantine was laden with patriotic symbolism. It marked exactly one year since the Blessing of the Arms at St. Mark’s. A hiatus in which to glory in the victory is suggested by the announcement of a papal indulgence, which was to commence on 4 January 1717.<sup>41</sup> With the Pope now pleading for the populace to “implorare l’assistenza Divina nei correnti bisogni” [i.e. the “next campaign”], a sombre attitude was expected during the intervening period. The opportunity for the performance of a “sacred military oratorio” between 4 and 16 January was golden. It would have satisfied the ambiguity of the text, which can be read as fantasy or symbolic fact (although there is no evidence that this could have been anticipated): the final outcome of the war against the Turks hung suspended in the balance between last summer’s and next spring’s campaigns.

<sup>37</sup> In the ellipsis the same source claims that Schulenburg would complete his quarantine on Christmas Eve, but all other sources refute this. Thus, according to the *Gazzetta* the isolation period would have amounted to eighteen days instead of twenty-eight, an otherwise uncountenanced deviation from the existing requirement. The prince was the younger brother of Philip of Hesse-Darmstadt, according to a subsequent report. He had arrived *incognito* in October, according to the papal legate’s files.

<sup>38</sup> The Turks meanwhile had passed through the Dardanelles to Constantinople, where they were expected to be preparing for the “next campaign”. Skirmishes persisted in the Balkans but these were rather low key.

<sup>39</sup> *Gazzetta Bolognese*, report of 9 Jan 1717.

<sup>40</sup> *A-Wn*, ÖNB, *Il corriere ordinario*, 77, n. 7, vol. 27 (1717), issue of 9 Jan 1717.



A performance of *Juditha triumphans* in early January would easily have satisfied the pope's mandate "to implore Divine assistance in our current needs". The military exhibitions of these days conjure up images very similar to Cassetti's militant virgins and their bellicose leader, the widow Judith. A January dating (accommodated by the publication date 1716 because of the more veneto and suggested by the Schulenburg's actual anticipated but unrealized availability) would have had the unplanned benefit of attracting the many esteemed visitors who had collected in Venice in anticipation of the now delayed Carnival. A select audience of generals and Venetian nobles would have justified the effort the Pietà invested in the work, perhaps the most opulent one ever given there.

An optimal, even though crowded, date for a performance of *Juditha triumphans* could have been on 3 January. From the point of other constraints it could have been on one of the coming days, but for oratorios a Sunday was always more probable. Oratorios were normally performed after *pranzo*. It was on this date that the Republic presented Schulenburg with a jewelled sword valued at 4,000 ducats. It was said to be "in the same style as one given to the duke of Saxony."<sup>42</sup> The narrative of *Juditha triumphans* would have formed a perfect complement.<sup>43</sup>

#### MUSICAL EVIDENCE

This provisional dating accords well with the musical evidence. It does not disallow the original expectation of a performance in November or December, nor does it disallow a performance to celebrate Schulenburg's return to the lagoon with Schulenburg himself absent due to quarantine regulations. Among Sundays in early December 1716 the 6th or 13th would could have worked, but with the ragged arrival of the many persons being honored and the vicious weather, it would have taken considerably more effort to perform and would probably have reaped a smaller benefit.

The amount of effort required to compose, rehearse, and perform *Juditha* was far greater than that for a *Te Deum*, such as the one sponsored by Colloredo. *Juditha triumphans* employed all the resources available to the Pietà. It would have fit most comfortably into Vivaldi's schedule during Advent or the early January lull. Oratorios were not normally performed while theatres were open, nor in fact

<sup>41</sup> Normally a theatrical indulgence at this point in the year meant a two-week closure of the theatres. While it is not clear that the theatres were entirely closed during this interval, there are no confirmed openings of new works until 17 January, when Lotti's *Alessandro Severo* premiered at San Giovanni Grisostomo. See ELEANOR SELFRIDGE-FIELD, *A New Chronology of Venetian Opera and Related Genres: 1660-1760*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2007, pp. 331-332. An early opening seems to have been intended: a *licenza per stampa* for its libretto was issued on 3 Jan 1717.

<sup>42</sup> *I-Rvat*, Archivio Segreto, Nunziatura di Venezia, n. 167 (1717), f. 22v, report of 9 Jan.

<sup>43</sup> Other details of the comings and goings of notable supporters of the Venetian cause can be summoned, for example that a prince of Hesse-Kassel departed from Venice on the 4th (*Loc. cit.*, f. 24). Some of the others departing over the next week were headed for Mantua, others for Rome.

were they usually performed in the *ospedali* outside Advent (beginning 28 November in 1716, 27 November in 1717) and Lent (from 25 February 1716, 10 February 1717).<sup>44</sup> The complementarity between the opera and oratorio calendars enabled composers such as Vivaldi to manage bilateral activities in both genres.

A dating for the oratorio between early December 1716 and early January 1717 would place it between Vivaldi's *Arsilda* (RV 700; 27 October 1716)<sup>45</sup> and *L'incoronazione di Dario* (RV 719; 23 January 1717).<sup>46</sup> This placement is reinforced by the musical requirements of the three works viewed together.<sup>47</sup> All three have unusual vocal requirements, those of the oratorio being the most extensive. The large roster of unusual instruments<sup>48</sup> served the common purpose of highlighting the meaning (timbral analogy as well as melodic imitation) of the lyrics. In a curious way Vivaldi's marshalling of all the Pietà's resources is almost a parody of the famous *coro* — the *coro di vergini* in the Pietà in whose music the virtuous militancy of the Venetian Republic was best portrayed. The instrumentation of *Juditha triumphans* with respect to that of the two operas is compared in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Comparison of instrumentation, with emphasis on *obbligati*, in *Arsilda regina di Ponto*, *Juditha triumphans*, and *L'incoronazione di Dario*

	Written part	<i>Arsilda regina di Ponto</i>	<i>Juditha triumphans</i>	<i>L'incoronazione di Dario</i>
Bowed strings	Violino 1	x	x	x
	Violino 2	x	x	x
	Viola	x	x	x
	Viola d'amore		x	
	Violoncello	x	x	x
Fretted strings	Treble viol 1		x	x
	Treble viol 2		x	
	Alto viol 1		x	

<sup>44</sup> This was not necessarily the case with all oratorios, only those in the *ospedali*. Many aspects of oratorio substance and performance diverged from those of the *ospedali* at Santa Maria della Consolazione (popularly della Fava), the home of Oratory of San Filippo Neri (see ELEANOR SELFRIDGE-FIELD, *Towards a cultural history of the Venetian oratorio, 1675-1725*, in *Florilegium Musicae: Studi in onore di Carolyn Gianturco*, eds Patrizia Radicchi, Michael Burden, Howard E. Smither, Pisa, ETS, 2004, II, pp. 911-925.

<sup>45</sup> ELEANOR SELFRIDGE-FIELD *A New Chronology of Venetian Opera and Related Genres: 1660-1760*, cit., p. 328.

<sup>46</sup> *Arsilda* was so popular that its production was continued in January up to the opening of *Dario*.

<sup>47</sup> Alone among the works consulted, Reinhard Strohm (*The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi* ("Quaderni vivaldiani", 13), Florence, Olschki, 2008, I, p. 113) is the only one that moots the possibility of this musical alignment.

<sup>48</sup> Further on the instruments see ELEANOR SELFRIDGE-FIELD, *Vivaldi's Esoteric Instruments*, "Early Music", 6, 1978, pp. 332-338. There is much further literature on the *chalumeau*, the *viole all'inglese*, and the *flauto*. See for example COLIN LAWSON, *The Chalumeau in Eighteenth-Century Music*, Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1981; FEDERICO MARIA SARDELLI, *Vivaldi's Music for Flute and Recorder*, trans. Michael Talbot, Burlington VT, Ashgate, 2007; MICHAEL TALBOT, *Vivaldi and the English Viol*, "Early Music", 30/3 (2003), pp. 381-394. The quantity of writings on this subject prohibits an exhaustive list of titles.

	Written part	<i>Arsilda regina di Ponto</i>	<i>Juditha triumphans</i>	<i>L'incoronazione di Dario</i>
	Alto viol 2		x	
	Violone		x	x
Plucked strings	Mandolin		x	
	Theorbo 1		x	
	Theorbo 2		x	
	Theorbo 3		x	
	Theorbo 4		x	
Wodwinds	Chalumeau (claren) 1	x		
	Chalumeau (claren) 2	x		
	Sopranino (flauto all'alto) recorder	x		
	Soprano recorder (flauto) 1	x	x	
	Soprano recorder {flauto} 2	x	x	
	Oboe 1		x	x
	Oboe 2		x	x
	Shawm (salmoe)		x	
Brasses	Trumpet 1	x	x	x
	Trumpet 2	x	x	x
	Corno di caccia 1		x	x
	Corno di caccia 2		x	x
Percussion	Timpani		x	
Basso Continuo	Organo		x	
	Cembalo	x	x	x
	[Strings ad libitum]			

Neither opera had theorboes, but the English viols (*viola all'inglese*) in *Dario* imitated one.<sup>49</sup> *Dario* exhibits a wide range of continuo styles, each one explicitly described in the manuscript. In both *Dario* and in *Juditha* great care is taken to create just the right timbre to enhance the message of the text. *Dario* also shares pairs of oboes and trumpets with the oratorio. It introduces a *fagotto* (absent in *Juditha* and perhaps at the Pietà). Although a popular work, *Arsilda regina di Ponto* lacks the nuances of string playing found in *Dario* and *Juditha*. However, it employs a pair of recorders (including an obbligato for the *flauto all'alto*) and calls for two trumpets. Like *Dario* it requires a pair of *corni da caccia*. All three works clearly specify certain continuo passages explicitly for *cembalo*. Johann Pisendel returned to Dresden with a substantial selection of arias from it.<sup>50</sup> Ryom and

<sup>49</sup> This discussion will be subsumed in a forthcoming article.

<sup>50</sup> Preserved in *D-DI*, 1-F-30, ff. 37-70. In most cases the full scores of Vivaldi's operas are preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Turin (*I-Tn*).

others have called attention to items from *Juditha* that Vivaldi reused in his ensuing years in Mantua, in particular in *Armida al campo d'Egitto* (RV 688-B) and *Teuzzone* (RV 736). The *corni da caccia* heralded his forthcoming departure for Mantua, where brass instruments would more commonly be used in his music.

Vivaldi was of course dependent on the availability of the unusual instruments, but they could be found at the Pietà albeit briefly. One can read (or not) some grand intention in expense lists for instrumental supplies during the surrounding months. Some were perfunctory. Marcolina (4 April 1716) was paid 24 *lire* for *cantini mazzetti*.<sup>51</sup> On 7 June 1716 Onofrio Penati was engaged as an oboe instructor, retrospective to 18 May. He was to be paid 40 *lire* a month.<sup>52</sup> On 20 August he was given 13/22 (*lire di grosso / lire di piccolo*) for one oboe and six reeds, and on 13 September 8/9 for two *flauti cambiati* and 6 reeds.<sup>53</sup> The instrument maker Matteo Sellas was paid on 6 June 1716 and 23 May 1717 for unspecified items.<sup>54</sup> Penati was given further payments of 3/1 on 23 August 1717.

In more symbolic terms, *Juditha triumphans* was a valedictory of sorts for Vivaldi, who would be gravitating towards the Mantuan sphere as soon as Carnival was over. He would not be providing music for forthcoming Easters, Feasts of Assumption, and Christmases. He would not be giving lessons or rehearsing *figlie*, at least not for a number of years. Vivaldi should have been motivated to show off his charges to best advantage. No other work that comes down to us from this era serves that purpose so well.

It could be taken as suggestive of a preoccupation with other consuming work that Vivaldi was not available for Sant' Angelo's second opening (28 December) of the 1716-1717 season.<sup>55</sup> That task fell to Fortunato Chelleri, who provided a recasting of *Penelope* (a work famous among those with long memories for the immortal performance of Margarita Salicola in Carlo Pallavicino's setting of three decades past and her dramatic 'kidnapping' by agents of the Elector of Saxony).<sup>56</sup> Chelleri's setting was so poorly received that the composer was attacked "while handing the Bombace [Anna Vicenza Dotti] to her boat" and the production closed forthwith.<sup>57</sup> In light of the papal indulgence it may not have been destined for many performances; when the theatre reopened the production of *Arsilda* was reinstated.

<sup>51</sup> Perhaps groups ("bunches") of strings for the upper register.

<sup>52</sup> *I-Vas*, Ospedali e Luoghi Pii, B. 690, Notatorio L (1.xii.1715-zugno 1719), f. 30.

<sup>53</sup> PIER GIUSEPPE GILLIO, *L'attività musicale negli ospedali di Venezia nel Settecento: quadro storico e materiali documentari*, ("Quaderni vivaldiani, 12), Florence, Olschki, 2006.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, CD supplement, Materiali documentari, p. 477.

<sup>55</sup> Vivaldi usually avoided commitments to operas that opened between late November and mid-January, as did most composers with obligations to provide music for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany in religious institutions. See ELEANOR SELFRIDGE-FIELD, *A New Chronology of Venetian Opera and Related Genres: 1660-1760*, passim.

<sup>56</sup> ELEANOR SELFRIDGE-FIELD, *A New Chronology of Venetian Opera and Related Genres: 1660-1760*, cit., p. 168.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330. A large Saxon delegation had been visiting Venice since early in 1716. The decision to stage a revival of *Penelope la casta* could have been influenced by the presence of this contingent given the past connections with Dresden and the Saxon court.

## POSTSCRIPTS

Overall the revelries of Carnival 1717 were less compelling than in many recent years.<sup>58</sup> As it rolled on towards an early end, the Venetian galleys were being stocked for the spring campaign. Only in the hindsight do we see the defence of Corfù as decisive. The new Venetian initiative of 1717 had a less fortunate outcome than that of 1716. It was led by Lodovico Flangini, who died near Mt. Athos on 16 June. The Peace of Passarowitz, ending all hostilities with the Turks, was signed a year later, on 21 July 1718. Four months after that (21 November) the fort at Corfù was blown up, killing Pisani and others.

As the war faded, so too did the musical resources of the Pietà. Although the *figlia* Marcolina was paid 12 lire for a violone on 26 February 1718,<sup>59</sup> she was among those dismissed in the annual vote for staff retention on 15 May 1718.<sup>60</sup> Marcolina received eight votes, but nine were required for reauthorization. Two violinists (Rosanna and Susanna), a violist (Maria), a player of the *violone* (Cattarina), and two organists (Giulia and Rosanna) polled more negative votes than positive ones. Several singers received no favorable votes at all and only two survived.<sup>61</sup> There had in parallel been an exodus of *figlie* for marriage in December 1717.

Schulenburg figured once more as a dedicatee, this time at Sant'Angelo in January 1718, for Chelleri's *Amalasunta*. It was a work long delayed from a premier originally intended for the start of 1716.<sup>62</sup> Schulenburg gravitated towards a more leisurely avocation as a collector of Venetian art.<sup>63</sup> The conditions needed for Vivaldi to produce another work comparable in its grandeur to *Juditha triumphans* were not to converge again. We can be sure that as he emerged from

<sup>58</sup> By 23 January (week of 26th) the sons of the Elector of Bavaria, who were traveling from Munich to Rome, stopped en route in Verona but did not come to Venice: *Gazzetta Bolognese*, report of 23 Jan 1726 (issue of 26 Jan, p. 4).

<sup>59</sup> PIER GIUSEPPE GILLIO, *L'attività musicale negli ospedali di Venezia nel Settecento: quadro storico e materiali documentari*, cit.

<sup>60</sup> *I-Vas*, Ospedali e luoghi pii, B. 688, Notatorio L (1.xii.1715-zugno 1719), f. 130v.

<sup>61</sup> *I-Vas*, Ospedali e luoghi pii, B. 688, Notatorio L (1.xii.1715-zugno 1719), ff. 125-130v.

<sup>62</sup> The score for *Amalasunta* had been completed on 2 Dec 1715. Albinoni's *L'amor di figlia* (probably opening around 4 Jan) was the hastily arranged substitute at Sant'Angelo in 1716. Despite a dedication to the Bavarian prince Karl-Albrecht, it did not fare well. The long delay was caused by Chelleri. The composer refused to reset arias for Margarita Gualandi and Costanza Maccari without being paid over and above his generous salary of 400 ducats for the operas *Amalasunta* and its (intended) predecessor, *Alessandro fra l'amazzoni*. See ELEANOR SELFRIDGE-FIELD, *A New Chronology of Venetian Opera and Related Genres: 1660-1760*, cit., p. 343. Changes of personnel resulted from the long delay, not least the departure of Vivaldi for Mantua and of the scenographer Bernardo Canal for Rome. Half of Chelleri's salary had been withheld in 1716. It was claimed by Luigi Riccoboni and Michiel Angiolo Perucci on Chelleri's behalf in 1719 (*Ibid.*, p. 343). Its situation suggests the turmoil that prevailed in Venice during these years.

<sup>63</sup> See HEINER KRELLIG, *Feldmarschall und Kunstsammler Matthias Johann von der Schulenburg: ein unbekannter Bestand von Kunstwerken aus seiner Sammlung in Besitz der Grafen von der Schulenburg-Wolfsburg*, Wolfsburg, Konkol, 2011.

quarantine at start of 1717 Schulenburg would have appreciated the amazing variety of musical timbres in *Juditha* and the carefully constructed allusions of the text, provided of course that he had the opportunity to hear the performance. Doubtless he would also have appreciated the vocal talents of the *figlie* of the Pietà, for Schulenburg seems to have been a connoisseur of singers. Writing from Venice in December 1729, Schulenburg offered a recommendation for the singer nicknamed “Sorosina”, the daughter of the caretaker of the Venetian property of the late King George II of England. After greeting his recipient he wrote:

Per l’antico ossequio, che professo all’E[ccellenza] V[ostr]a, Io me le presento di ritorno dall’Isola di Corfù Fortificata Validamente dalla Repubblica, come antimurale de suoi stati, e dell’Italia tutta. Vivo con ansietà [di] essere onorato dei Venerati comandi dell’E[ccellenza] V[ostr]a, onde dalla ubbidienza possa ella rimarcare la servitù, ed il rispetto mio quanto gli sia verso l’alta di lei Persona.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> *I-Mas*, Potenze esteri, B. 224 (1723-1730), letter of 10 Dec 1729 from Schulenburg to an unidentified “Ill[ustrissi]mo et Ecc[ellentissi]mo Sig[nore] Mio Sig[nore] P[adro]ne Col[endissi]mo,” perhaps the governor of Milan.



Eleanor Selfridge-Field

SCHULENBURG, CORFÙ  
E LA DATAZIONE DI *JUDITHA TRIUMPHANS*, RV 644

Sommario

L'interpretazione più tradizionale di *Juditha triumphans* di Antonio Vivaldi è che l'oratorio rappresenti un'allegoria della lotta che oppose il papato e l'impero ai Turchi e, più precisamente, della difesa dell'isola di Corfù (1716), il cui comando fu affidato al generale di sbarco Marshal J. M. von Schulenburg. Poiché egli è il dedicatario del libretto di Casseti, sarebbe lecito supporre una sua presenza a Venezia in occasione dell'esecuzione dell'oratorio, senonché nessuna delle date sinora ipotizzate coincide con una sua effettiva disponibilità, posto che fra il 1 febbraio 1716 e il 3 gennaio 1717 egli fu impegnato altrove.

Questo studio ricostruisce i suoi movimenti nel corso di quell'anno, facendo emergere come l'assedio di Corfù monopolizzò, in vari modi, la vita della città lagunare, ritardando altresì il suo ritorno a Venezia.

Si ipotizza, infine, che l'esecuzione dell'oratorio vivaldiano abbia avuto luogo il 3 gennaio 1717 o subito dopo.