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One Hundred Venetian Arias of the Late Seicento in the Bodleian Library

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# ONE HUNDRED VENETIAN ARIAS OF THE LATE *SEICENTO* IN THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY

BY ELEANOR SELFRIDGE-FIELD



The rise of aria books in the later seventeenth century parallels, in an uncanny but apparently accidental way, the rise of journalism. The vast journalistic networks that developed in that century aimed to communicate to readers elsewhere long series of short messages about the events of one place. Coherent accounts on any one subject were rare in the great swirl of items that moved with remarkable efficiency from one power center to another. As a phenomenon, aria books of the later seventeenth century present some similar qualities.

Long series of short excerpts garnered from recent performances, compiled more with a sense of urgency than of purpose, fill many if not most sources of this kind. Readers at a distance that precluded attendance at a performance seem to have been the main constituents of the intended audience. The arias were copied with a haste and randomness of order that suggests that the compilers had no interest in providing a sense of complete works but only in crystallizing specific moments. No country had a monopoly on aria books. Numerous examples containing quotations from English and French works from the middle of the seventeenth century survive. Italian aria books from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as their contents came to be indexed, prove increasingly valuable in preserving extracts from works that are otherwise lost.

The Bodleian Library compilation Mus. Sch. C. 103 contains many useful souvenirs of the Venetian opera seasons of 1686/7 and 1687/8. Most of the identifications have been made recently.<sup>1</sup> The source is really two aria books bound as one. It is an oblong quarto volume of 104 pages and was bound in 1885–86. The first 40 pages, consisting of five gatherings of eight pages each, contain thirty-seven excerpts from Carlo

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<sup>1</sup>The author is grateful to Mr. Peter Ward Jones for advice on this source and encouragement to identify its contents. She also wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the useful comments on the Pallavicino works supplied by Dr. Robin Walton of the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, who has devoted considerable attention to these in the context of broader studies of Pallavicino.

Pallavicino's otherwise lost opera *Elmiro*<sup>2</sup> and two pieces that cannot be identified; there are two musical settings of the first of these, which is at the head of the volume. One copyist and one watermark—with the initials "C H" and crossed hammers—are associated with this part of the source, which appears to have been compiled in 1686/7.<sup>3</sup>

The remaining sixty-four pages, copied in a different hand and arranged in seven gatherings, containing sixty excerpts from six Venetian operas of the 1687/88 Carnival. There is one unidentified aria in this group. The watermark contains the same initials as before but in association with a trefoil.

These specific watermarks cannot be identified. Most watermarks that superficially resemble them are much earlier. One maker in Augsburg used the same initials in 1688, but in combination with different symbols from those found here. It may at least be said that the paper is unlikely to have been Italian, and the script does not seem particularly Italian either. These factors suggest that the transcriptions were made by a visitor to Venice, perhaps one in the service of a foreign dignitary who was repeatedly drawn to Carnival season and its attendant pleasures.

The identified works are distributed as follows:

<i>Elmiro</i>	37 arias (one in duplicate)
<i>Orazio</i>	3 arias
<i>Carlo il Grande</i>	9 arias, 1 duet
<i>L'inganno regnante</i>	13 arias
<i>L'Amazzone corsara</i>	14 arias
<i>Il Gordiano</i>	7 arias, 1 duet
<i>La fortuna tra la disgrazie</i>	12 arias

To assess the value of these contents it is essential to compare these gleanings with a complete list of all the operas presented in Venice in 1686/7 and 1687/8. The works were as shown in Table 1. No scores survive for the starred items.

Table 2 presents the contents of the Bodleian aria book arranged by copyist (hands 1 and 2) and by opera. *Vis-à-vis* these tables, Mus. Sch. C. 103 has some interesting qualities. First, it excludes entirely the four operas given at San Moisè and the one given at the Teatro dei SS. Apostoli. Omitting those, it covers all the remaining operas of 1687/8 but only one opera of 1686/7. A number of the 1686/7 operas are rep-

<sup>2</sup>Both *Elmiro*, *re di Corinto* and *Maurizio*, which are usually listed as works of 1687, had their premières on December 26, 1686, according to weekly news reports found in the Marciana Library, Venice, Cl. It. VI-463(=12107). Written across the top of the first folio of this source are the words "Arie dell' Opera di S. Gio: Grisostomo, Intitulata L'Elmiro Rè di Corinto dell Sigr. Palavic[ino]. This and the second quire both carry the designation "N.3." The heading of "Aria dell Opera di S. Gio. Grisostomo" is found at the start of the fifth quire.

<sup>3</sup>According to the provisional index prepared by Miss Margaret Crum for the Bodleian Library. No exact duplicates appear in the principal relevant source on watermarks, which is Edward Heawood, *Watermarks Mainly of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Monumenta Chartae Papyraceae Historiam Illustrantia), Hilversum, 1950.

**TABLE 1**  
**OPERAS IN VENICE 1686/7–1687/8**

Year	Theatre	Opera	Composer
1686/7	S. Gio. Grisostomo	<i>*Elmiro</i>	Pallavicino
1686/7	S. Salvatore [S. Luca]	<i>Maurizio</i>	Gabrielli
1687	S. Gio. Grisostomo	<i>*Flavio Cuniberto</i>	Partenio
1687	SS. Gio. & Paolo	<i>Gerusalemme liberata</i>	Pallavicino
1687	Sant'Angelo	<i>*Dioclete</i>	Orgiani
1687	S. Moisé	<i>*Zenocrate</i>	Porferi
1687	S. Moisé	<i>Elena rapita da Paride</i>	Freschi
1687 <sup>4</sup>	SS. Gio. e Paolo	<i>*L'inganno regnante</i>	M. A. Ziani
1688	S. Gio. Grisostomo	<i>*Orazio</i>	Tosi
1688	S. Gio. Grisostomo	<i>Carlo il Grande</i>	Gabrielli
1688	SS. Gio. e Paolo	<i>L'Amazzone corsara</i>	Pallavicino
1688	S. Salvatore	<i>Il Gordiano</i>	Gabrielli
1688	Sant'Angelo	<i>*La fortuna tra le disgrazie</i>	Biego
1688 <sup>5</sup>	SS. Apostoli	<i>*La Florida</i>	uncertain
1688	S. Moisé	<i>*La Corilda</i>	Rossi
1688	S. Moisé	<i>*Pena degli occhi</i>	Rossi

resented in other aria books, however. In the Vatican manuscript Barb. Lat. 4140 there are twenty-one arias from *Gerusalemme liberata* and thirty from *Maurizio*, both of which also survive in full scores. Other sources containing arias from *Maurizio* (performances of which continued up to the end of the century) include Barb. Lat. 4139 and 4142 as well as the manuscript G. 78 in the Biblioteca Estense in Modena. Some arias from the 1682 version of *Flavio Cuniberto* are preserved in the Biblioteca Querini-Stampalia in Venice under the designation Cl. VIII, Cod. VII. A full score of the 1677 version of *Elena* survives in Modena. Of the 1686/7 operas, only *Dioclete* and *Zenocrate* are without known excerpts or scores. The 1687/8 operas give a somewhat different profile. Complete scores survive for the two works by Domenico Gabrielli and for Pallavicino's *L'Amazzone*, but no miscellaneous arias from any of the works are known to occur in any source other than the one at hand.

The very generous allocation of arias from *Elmiro* in the Bodleian manuscript probably attests to the high regard in which the work was held. This opera was the subject of a thirty-page scene-by-scene description in the première issue of the monthly journal *Pallade veneta*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>The year is given as 1688 in such sources as Livio Niso Galvani [=Giovanni Salvioli], *I teatri musicali di Venezia nel secolo XVII (1637–1700)* (Milan, 1879 [facs., Bologna, 1969] p. 48), but the libretto is dated 26.XII.1687 and Venetian *avvisi* preserved in the files of the Inquisitori di Stato (B.705, Fasc. 1687) in the Venetian State Archives confirm that the work opened on that date.

<sup>5</sup>Galvani (*op. cit.*, p. 74) cites the work as having been given in the autumn of 1687, but Cl. It. VI-464 (=12108) shows it to have opened during the last week of January 1688.

<sup>6</sup>Further on this source see this author, *Pallade veneta: Writings on Music in Venetian Society, 1650–1750*, a forthcoming publication of the Fondazione Levi, Venice.

**TABLE 2**  
**OXFORD BODLEIAN LIBRARY. MANUSCRIPT MUS. C. 103**

Aria (duet)	Page	Act/Scene	Voice(s)
<b>Hand 1</b>			
<b>Carlo Pallavicino. <i>Elmiro, re di Corinto</i> (1687)</b>			
Se non ti baccio, se non ti godo	17	I, 3	soprano, b.c.
Non partir da questo core	26	I, 4	soprano, b.c.
Mio core habbi costanza	8	I, 5	soprano b.c.
Voglio goderlo sì a tuo dispetto	9	I, 12	soprano, b.c.
Mi tormenta gelosia quando Amor mi da speranza	15	I, 13	soprano, b.c.
Non si sdegni già mai	6	I, 15	soprano, b.c.
Chi disprezza la bellezza non è degno	18	I, 16	alto, b.c.
Chi disprezza la bellezza non è degno	22	I, 16	alto, b.c.
Una voce io sento al core	19	I, 17	soprano, b.c.
Non hai provato ancora quanto sia dolce amor	28	I, 22	soprano, b.c.
Non tanto sdegno e crudeltà	11	I, 23	soprano, b.c.
Questa sì ch'è bizzarria	20	I, 24	soprano, b.c.
La mia cara, la mia bella	33	II, 1	soprano, b.c.
Chi più ti piace	21	II, 2	tenor, b.c.
Per farsi amante d'un bel sembiante	37	II, 2	soprano, b.c.
Pur ch'io goda altri	32	II, 3	soprano, b.c.
Chi per te non sente Amore	7	II, 4	soprano, b.c.
Non mancano mai vaghi a donne belle	36	II, 4	soprano, b.c.
Eccheggia nel mio core	34	II, 6	soprano, b.c.
Pensa o bella che gl'amati	23	II, 7	soprano, b.c.
Tra'l non, e tra'l sì	39	II, 9	soprano, b.c.
Ch'altra bella ti bacci e godi	29	II, 10	soprano, b.c.
Falli vezzi, e dalli bacci	40	II, 10	soprano, b.c.
Io non ti don speranza	35	II, 11	soprano, b.c.
Ho già provato che cose'è amor	27	II, 12	soprano, b.c.
Sei vaga, sei bella, ma non m'innamori	12	II, 15	soprano, b.c.
Vo trovar un amante a modo mio	30	II, 16	soprano, b.c.
Sento già che nel mio seno	24	II, 17	soprano, b.c.
Al goder vogl'esser sola	31	III, 9	soprano, b.c.
Ti prometto d'amar sempre costante	21	III, 7	soprano, b.c.
All'armi, allo sdegno	3	III, 10	soprano, b.c.
Cara speranza, cara speranza	38	II, 12	soprano, b.c.
Dimmi o caro vuoi ch'io bacci	5	II, 13	soprano, b.c.
Lassciati non vorrei	4	III, 15	soprano, b.c.
Io con te non voglio pace	10	III, 17	soprano, b.c.
Non mi dar'esca	16	III, 19	soprano, b.c.
Tu mi conforta	25	III, 20	soprano, b.c.
Chi è servo di Cupido	14	III, 24	soprano, b.c.
<b>Unidentified works in hand 1</b>			
Ho lusinghe, ho vezzi	1		soprano, b.c.

TABLE 2 (*continued*)

Aria (duet)	Page	Act/Scene	Voice(s)
Ho lusinghe, ho vezi	2		soprano, b.c.
Ad'esser fedele quanto mi piace	13		soprano, b.c.
<b>Hand 2</b>			
<b>Carlo Pallivison. <i>L'Amazzone corsara</i> (1688)</b>			
E troppa gran pena l'amar e tacer	42	I, 3	soprano, b.c.
Ne la scola di farsi bella voglio l'anima addottrinar	103	I, 10	soprano, b.c.
Mi da qualche speranza il farel trato Amor	52	I, 12	soprano, b.c.
A chi d'amor mi parla nemica ogn'or sarò	99	I, 15	soprano, b.c.
Amar e non penar possibile non è	101	I, 17	soprano, b.c.
E un rapido baleno quel ben ch'il mondo	100–101	II, 3	soprano, b.c.
Scherzo e rido fra le catene	98	II, 8	soprano, b.c.
Chi vol innamorarsi ci deve ben pensar	104	II, 10	soprano, b.c.
Son tutte mendaci le donne, lo so	97	II, 14	soprano, b.c.
Inganna sì mio cor se mai si può	54	III, 1	soprano, b.c.
Son risoluta non voglio amar	41	III, 3	soprano, b.c.
Belle credetemi l'amar un giovine è vanità	51	III, 4	soprano, b.c.
Mio cor aspetta un poco	53	III, 6	soprano, b.c.
Dove sei, dove t'ascondi	83	III, 14 <sup>12</sup>	soprano, b.c.
<b>Paolo Biego. <i>La fortuna tra le disgrazie</i> (1688)</b>			
Dolce pace del mio core	46–47	I, 9	soprano, b.c.
Prima ch'io t'abbandoni	49	I, 10	soprano, b.c.
Sì rida, sì festeggi, e per le vie	75	I, 12	soprano, b.c.
Dolce bella cara speranza	50	I, 16	soprano, b.c.
Chi attende a femine non ha mai pace	43	I, 17	soprano, b.c.
Voglio sperar un dì che la fortuna	77–78	II, 5	soprano, b.c.
Non n'ingannar, non disprezzar	45	II, 9	soprano, b.c.
Nel mio cor che lieto brilla	56	II, 10	soprano, b.c.
Un pensiero di vendetta mi risveglia	76–77	II, 13	soprano, b.c.
Resisti e non credere al labro di mel	44	III, 2	soprano, b.c.
Goderò quella bellezza	47	III, 5	soprano, b.c.
Se stringo o questa, o quella	48	III, 6	soprano, b.c.
<b>Giuseppe Felice Tosi. <i>L'Orazio</i> (1688)</b>			
No, no, no, no, mio core	65	I, 13	soprano, b.c.
O cara, o dolce, o dolce, o cara libertà	66	II, 43	soprano, b.c.
Bella mia che il sen m'impieghi	57	III, 10	soprano, b.c.
<b>Domenico Gabrielli. <i>Il Gordiano</i> (1688)</b>			
Ardendo, struggendo quest'anima sì va	73	I, 7	alto, b.c.
Bella, non ti doler die, per te gira il Ciel	74	I, 10	alto, b.c.

TABLE 2 (continued)

Aria (duet)	Page	Act/Scene	Voice(s)
Si, si fortuna cieca, si che di te vo ridermi	79	I, 11	soprano, b.c.
Senza penar non si può mai goder	59	II, 9	soprano, b.c.
Pensaci bene che non sei per me	61-62	II, 14	soprano, b.c.
Torniamo a le gioie (duet)	60-61	III, 3	soprano, alto, b.c.
Per te solo riposa quest'alma	80	III, 6	soprano, b.c.
Ti voglio modesta, si, si	62	III, 7	soprano, b.c.
<b>Domenico Gabrielli: <i>Carlo il Grande</i> (1688)</b>			
Dove son l'erbette e fiori	89	I, 3	soprano, b.c.
Caro vezzo/Lusinga amabile (duet)	90	I, 3	soprano, alto, b.c.
Più presto che puoi ritornami in sen	91	I, 3	soprano, b.c.
Più ch'ella mi disprezza	92	I, 9	soprano, b.c.
Tosto baciata e stretta vo stringere	63	I, 12	soprano, b.c.
Vo rapida seguir ch'il core mi rubbò	93	II, 8	soprano, b.c.
Ritorno a' momenti, ardor del mio cor	64	II, 9	soprano, b.c.
Speranza del mio sen te sola adorerò	94	II, 10	soprano, b.c.
Vieni o caro, non tardar	95	II, 17	soprano, b.c.
Scherzi, lusinghe, e vezzi	96	III, 11	soprano, b.c.
<b>Marc'Antonio Ziani. <i>L'inganno regnante</i> (1688)</b>			
Dove sei, dove t'ascondi	83	I, 1 <sup>13</sup>	soprano, b.c.
Al tuo labro non do fede	67	I, 3	soprano, b.c.
Già so che non dura de grandi l'amar	88	I, 9	soprano, b.c.
Corri vola alla vendetta, o tradito amante	86	I, 10	soprano, b.c.
Pensaci bene prima d'amar	85	I, 12	soprano, b.c.
Amar una belta che vive in libertà	70	I, 14	soprano, b.c.
O non si prende moglie, o che si deve amar	84	II, 5	soprano, b.c.
Se non è bella, ell'è così	81	II, 8	soprano, b.c.
Sappi o cor che finse il labro	55	II, 10	soprano, b.c.
Il mio mal è mal d'Amore	82	II, 14	soprano, b.c.
La voglio vincere, o Dio d'Amor	68	III, 1	soprano, b.c.
Luci nere havete vinto	69	III, 4	soprano, b.c.
Più che prego la fortuna ha men pietà	87	III, 16	soprano, b.c.
<b>Unidentified work in Hand 2:</b>			
Se tu non vuoi amar, io voglio amar a fè	102		soprano, b.c.

The author summed up his report, which adheres closely to the information given in the libretto, calling *Elmiro* an "opera così ben portata e cantata che fa parer momenti quell'hore che in udirla si spendono."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>*Pallade veneta*, Gennaro 1687, p. 48.

Because the two unidentified arias in the first hand cannot be matched with any printed librettos of works performed in 1686/7, it is possible that they represent works of a different season, but it seems more probable that they come from a variant version of *Elmiro*. The first of these arias, "Ho lusinghe, ho vezzi," is itself given in two versions (the first set in duple meter in A minor, the second in triple meter in G major) transcribed on both sides of a single leaf. "Ad esser fedele, quanto mi piace" and "Chi è servo di Cupido" (the latter from *Elmiro*) are transcribed on obverse sides of a single folio, suggesting that all the copying in this hand was done at one time. "Al goder vogl' esser sola" appears to be an elaboration of the single line of recitative found in the libretto. Revisions involving rearrangements of scenes and the addition and subtraction of characters could occur on such short notice that in the case of another opera of 1687, *Maurizio*, there are two versions with dedications dated 26 December 1686 that are significantly different.<sup>8</sup> The final unidentified aria in Mus. Sch. C. 103 is near the end of the source among extracts from *L'Amazzone corsara*, but there is no overwhelming case for its origins.

Of Pallavicino's twenty-four operas, eleven others are fully extant, but of the eight given at the Teatro di San Giovanni Grisostomo only *Il Vespasiano* (1678) is a survivor. In the case of Giuseppe Felice Tosi, scores survive for only two of his fourteen operas.<sup>9</sup> The survival statistics of Marc' Antonio Ziani's forty-nine operas, serenatas, and introductions form a noticeable curve: all seven of his stage works from 1674 to 1685 survive, and of the fifteen produced between 1702 and 1714 only three serenatas are lost. But of the twenty-seven works first presented during the intervening period, only *La Rosalinda* (Venice, 1692) and *Il Gordiano Pio* (Vienna, 1700) are survived by complete scores. Miscellaneous arias from *La costanza in trionfo* (1696) are also known.<sup>10</sup> Eleven arias from *Ottone il Grande* (1682) in the Querini-Stampalia collection in Venice represent the only surviving music by Paolo Biego hitherto known.<sup>11</sup> Thus, although the arias from *Elmiro* represent, simply by their bulk, the most important part of the source, the excerpts from the works of Tosi, Ziani, and Biego are welcome increments to lists of known works.

<sup>8</sup>A direct comparison can be made at the University of California at Los Angeles, where the two versions (nos. 333 and 334) are bound side by side in the 1687 volume of Venetian opera libretti.

<sup>9</sup>*Il Celindo* (1677) is in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, and *Amulio e Numitore* (1689) is in the Austrian National Library.

<sup>10</sup>Unidentified manuscripts in the Conservatoire Royal de Musique in Brussels and the Museo Civico Correr in Venice, cited by Theophil Antonicek in his article on Marc' Antonio Ziani in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 1980), 20: 674.

<sup>11</sup>Venice. Biblioteca Querini-Stampalia, Cl. VIII, Cod. IX.

<sup>12</sup>In the 1688 version only. See also Ziani's *L'inganno regnante*.

<sup>13</sup>See also Pallavicino's *L'Amazzone corsara*.