

Mythology in the Service of Eulogy: The Serenata *Andromeda liberata* (1726)

MICHAEL TALBOT

The importance of mythological subjects in the history of early opera and its cognate genres can hardly be exaggerated. During the first sixty or so years of its existence opera relied more heavily on classical mythology than on any other source for its plots and characters, and even after subjects drawn from classical or mediaeval history and literature had grown more popular, *opera seria* retained to the end its fondness for the Greek and Roman tales of gods and heroes.

The lure of the ancient world was founded on the perception of educated society that this was a parallel world in which everything that had happened and would happen in the modern world was foreshadowed. Indeed, until the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution had not proceeded far enough to shake the vision of classical times as a golden age begging to be recovered. Because it was parallel rather than identical, the ancient world provided perfect cover for topical reference in allegorical form. Contemporary issues of politics, religion and social ethics that might be *risqué* or even taboo if discussed in the open under their true names could be debated more safely within the framework of the retelling of a myth or of an episode in Greek or Roman history.¹ For this particular purpose, myth was even better than history, for it was more pliable and more universal in its reference.

Certain myths proved a particularly fertile source for the imagination of librettists. The story of Orpheus perhaps occupies the top spot, but that of Perseus and Andromeda comes not far behind. Table 1 (see p. 151) lists pre-1750 musical and non-musical dramatic works in Italian based on the Perseus-Andromeda legend.²

¹ Thus Metastasio, shortly to become Caesarean poet in Vienna, impartially debates the rival merits of monarchy and republicanism in *Catone in Utica* (Act 2, Scene 10) under the cloak of an argument between Caesar and Cato. Bizarre though this may seem today, British school students as recently as fifty years ago continued to observe the convention of substituting Greek or Roman counterparts for modern politicians or military men when composing their “proses” (translations from English into the classical language).

² The table, which does not pretend to completeness, omits treatments of the subject in vocal chamber music. The sources of information are various, including the second edition of the *New Grove*, London 2001, the *Drammaturgia di Lione*

The outline of the legend is simple. Cepheus (Cefeo), King of Ethiopia, and his wife Cassiopeia (Cassiope) have a daughter, Andromeda. Cassiopeia boasts of Andromeda's beauty, arousing the jealousy of the Nereids (the fifty sea nymphs charged to protect sailors), who complain to Poseidon. The god responds by sending a sea monster to ravage Ethiopia. Cepheus learns from the Oracle of Zeus that Poseidon will be placated only if Andromeda is sacrificed to the sea monster. Andromeda is bound, naked, to a rock and awaits her fate. Providentially, Perseus (Perseo), the heroic son of Zeus and Danaë, arrives in Ethiopia, fresh from slaying the Gorgon Medusa and capturing her head, which turns to stone everyone who sets eyes on it. He falls in love with Andromeda at first sight and persuades both her and her father to agree to their marriage if he can rescue her from the monster. This he duly does, with the help of Medusa's head, and the story ends happily. Some versions of the legend include the figure of Andromeda's uncle, Phineus (Fineo), who is also in love with her and is killed by Perseus in self-defence.

Needless to say, in dramatic treatments of the story much extra invented detail was added. The unfortunate end of Phineus was at odds with the convention of the *lieto fine*, so it sometimes happened that he stayed alive and became reconciled with Perseus.

The second and third columns of the table define the dramatic genres into which the works fall. The second column classes them according to broad type (as play, opera, serenata etc.), while the third column gives the librettist's description, which in most instances is more relevant to the separate literary contribution than to the work's character as a musical entertainment.

Six works in the table are identified as serenatas. A serenata was a dramatic cantata for two or more voices, usually with orchestral accompaniment, which was performed in celebration of an event such as a birthday, name-day, birth, wedding, treaty or visit by an eminent person. Such works, comparable in length to an oratorio and often divided into two parts, were rarely staged, although they could be sung in costume against a scenic background. As in oratorios, the singers read their parts from the music and remained stationary. The venue was usually not a public theatre but the *palazzo* or the garden of the person who had commissioned the serenata.³ Attendance was by invitation, and the guests were often presented with a libretto that doubled as what we would today call a souvenir programme. By the eighteenth century, the style of serenatas was little

Allacci accresciuta e continuata fino all' anno mdccv, Venice 1755, and Claudio Sartori's *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1750. Catalogo analitico con 16 indici*, 7 vols, Cuneo 1990–1994.

³ My article "Serenata" in the *New Grove* provides a fairly detailed introduction to the genre.

different from that of opera, although their celebratory, eulogistic tone debarred them from expressing the more violent emotions.

I first came across the serenata *Andromeda liberata*, the nineteenth work in the table, nearly twenty-five years ago, when I was researching an article on the cultivation of the serenata in Venice.⁴ The volume containing it lies in the library of the Conservatorio Statale di Musica “Benedetto Marcello”, Venice.⁵ I made a note of the title of the cover, as transcribed in Table 2 (see p. 152), which identified clearly the genre (serenata) and the date of performance (18 September 1726) but, unhelpfully, mentioned the names of neither librettist nor composer. My cursory look at the score left me no wiser about its paternity. However, I found a description of a serenata in a contemporary inventory of serenatas in the Museo Civico Correr, Venice, that seemed to match the Conservatorio score.⁶ The twenty-ninth item in this list runs as follows:

1... [i. e., date unknown] Vincenzo Casoni fece un Intreccio sonico musicale cantato nell'Accademia de Nobili nella Contrada de SS:ⁱⁱ Appostoli p[er] divertimento del Cardinale Ottoboni, à 5. voci.

“Vincenzo Casoni” is obviously Vincenzo Cassani, a prominent Venetian librettist of the second and third decades of the eighteenth century. “Intreccio sonico musicale” is evidently a corruption of “Intreccio scenico-musicale”, an original expression already used by Cassani to describe the librettos of two of his serenatas, both set to music by Benedetto Marcello: *Arianna* (1727) and *Psiche* (date unknown, but probably from the 1720s). The use of this “librettist’s” description implies that the text was published, as those of both *Arianna* and *Psiche* were, and offers hope for the future discovery of a libretto. The body that sponsored the performance was evidently a society (*accademia*) of nobles whose clubhouse (*casino*) was situated in the parish of SS. Apostoli. The last two parts of the description make the connection with the serenata in the Conservatorio watertight: *Andromeda liberata* is indeed for five voices, and its text does indeed refer to Ottoboni, albeit under the cover name of Perseo.

The above information and the deductions therefrom were clear to me in 1982 when I published the article on Venetian serenatas.⁷ The vital information still lacking was, of course, the identity of the composer, without which deeper investigation seemed to hold little attraction.

Renewed interest in the work was kindled spectacularly in 2003 by the French scholar Olivier Fourés, who discovered that one aria with obbligato

⁴ Published as *The Serenata in Eighteenth-Century Venice*, *R. M. A. Research Chronicle* 18, 1982, 1–50.

⁵ Shelfmark: Ms. Correr (Carminati), Busta 9.6.

⁶ Shelfmark: Ms. Cicogna 2991/II/57.

⁷ See note 3. The score and the inventory are listed separately with a cross-reference on p. 39 as nos. 73 and 75.

violin, “Sovente il sole”, was identical with an aria by Vivaldi preserved separately in the Venice Conservatorio.⁸ This aria had been discovered independently by Paul Everett and Berthold Over in the 1980s, and Over had published an introductory article on it.⁹ Although the aria does not carry an inscription to any composer, the fact that it is in Vivaldi’s handwriting and reveals countless instances of his idiolect (i.e., features peculiar to his musical language) leaves the attribution in no doubt. From that moment, it became clear that *some* of the serenata was by Vivaldi – although exactly how much remained to be discovered.

Fourés followed this discovery with another. He found a second unattributed aria in the Conservatorio that matched one in the *Andromeda liberata* score. This was “Un occhio amabile”, in which the singer is accompanied by obbligato cello and continuo alone. The separate score is clearly a composition manuscript (i.e., a first draft), since it is very untidy and contains several corrections arising from changes in intention. To identify the composer, one therefore needed merely to identify the hand responsible for the aria. I was fortunate to be able to do this some months later, when I found a composition manuscript of a serenata by Giovanni Porta, Vivaldi’s colleague at the Ospedale della Pietà, with identical graphical, notational and stylistic features. This was *Il ritratto dell’eroe*, a serenata performed, also in Ottoboni’s honour, by the all-female choristers of the Pietà in the same year, 1726.¹⁰

The establishment of the authorship of two arias confirmed what was already emerging from a consideration of the heterogeneous style of the serenata: it is a *pasticcio* – more exactly, a collective work pieced together from the contributions of a number of different composers. Just as the offering to Ottoboni is sponsored by a consortium of nobles, the Accademia dei Nobili, so, too, the musical tribute involves several participants. This feature, very unusual for a serenata (although common enough in opera), responds to an unusual feature of the occasion – it is not a single individual who wishes to honour Ottoboni: it is the city and republic of Venice herself.¹¹ It would have made perfect sense to recruit the cream of Venice’s musicians to collaborate in a common enterprise to symbolize the unanimity of the city’s welcome to Ottoboni – which is the main theme of the serenata itself. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Vivaldi’s aria employs obbligato violin and Porta’s aria obbligato cello, for these

⁸ Shelfmark: Ms. Correr, Busta 127.55.

⁹ Ein unbekanntes Vivaldi-Autograph im Conservatorio ‘Benedetto Marcello’, *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani* 13, 1992, 5–15.

¹⁰ Stockholm, Statens Musikbibliothek, no shelfmark.

¹¹ One cannot discount, of course, the factor of haste. The words and music of serenatas often had to be put together in a great hurry, so the parcelling out of responsibilities may have been designed to save time.

were two instruments played with distinction by their respective composers. Vivaldi and Porta therefore had the chance to appear before Ottoboni simultaneously as performers and as composers, paying a double tribute.

At this point, it will be useful to explain why Ottoboni's visit was such a landmark. Created a cardinal at the age of twenty-two in 1689, Pietro Ottoboni, the scion of a prominent noble Venetian family (his father Antonio, a notable poet, sat for many years on the governing board of the Ospedale della Pietà), made his home in Rome and gradually advanced up the ecclesiastical ladder. In 1709 he accepted the position of Protector of the Affairs of France at the Vatican (a quasi-ambassadorial post), thereby gravely infringing Venetian law, which rigorously forbade nobles to hold posts on behalf of foreign states. Ottoboni refused to give up the post, as a result of which he and his family were banished from Venice, had their name erased from the Golden Book (the official register of the nobility) and had their property confiscated. For almost a decade France and Venice froze their diplomatic relations. In the early 1720s the breach was repaired, and the French court sent an ambassador once more to Venice. The way was now free for Ottoboni to be forgiven and return in glory to his native city, an event that occurred in the second half of 1726. His visit was a feast of reciprocal compliments and favours. He gave a serenata in his newly restituted *palazzo* in honour of the Venetian nobility (*La Fenice*, by Giovanni Costanzi, his *maestro di cappella*, who accompanied him on his visit), and received in return Porta's *Il ritratto dell'eroe*, a two-voice cantata, *Fuga di Teseo*, by an unknown composer, and *Andromeda liberata*. A regatta was held in his honour. By special permission of the Council of Ten, Venice's premier theatre, S. Giovanni Grisostomo, opened out of season on 20 September for a gala opera, *Imeneo in Atene*, whose music was written by Nicola Porpora, a rising Neapolitan composer newly arrived in Venice.¹²

The text for *Andromeda liberata* includes a couple of references to these other works. Before we consider the text in detail, it will be useful to return to consider Cassani's authorship further.

As a dramatic poet, Cassani has a number of fingerprints. First, he likes to vary the metre of his arias very widely and has a special fondness for arias that use two or more metres. The most distinctive feature of his verse is, however, his readiness to employ end-rhyme *between* lines belonging to different semistrophes of a *da capo* aria rather than *within* the same semistrophe, as traditional usage favours. One takes for granted the mandatory "key" rhyme that unites the last line of the two semistrophes,

¹² On Ottoboni's triumphant return to Venice, see Michael Talbot, Vivaldi and a French ambassador, *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani* 2, 1981, 31–41, and the same author's introductory essay accompanying the facsimile edition *Antonio Vivaldi. Le sonate "di Manchester"*, *Vivaldiana* III, Firenze 2004.

but beyond that, they normally employ rhyme independently. Cassani, however, favours such rhyme-schemes as ABBC | ADDC or even ABCD | ABCD.¹³

The ABCD | ABCD rhyme-scheme found in no fewer than three arias in *Andromeda liberata* corresponds exactly to one in Cassani's opera *Romolo e Tazio* (1722), and very nearly to the ABCD | ABED plan of one aria in *Psiche*. ABBC | ADDC arias exist in the operas *Il tiranno eroe* (1710) and *Romolo e Tazio*, and in the serenatas *Il nome glorioso in terra, santificato in cielo* (1724), *Arianna* (1727), *Psiche* and *Andromeda liberata*. Table 3 (see p. 153) provides some illustrations.

Given the near-certainty of Cassani's authorship, one is tempted to suggest that *Andromeda liberata* forms, together with *Arianna* and *Psiche*, a "triptych" of *intrecci scenico-musicali*. All are of similar length, employ five solo voices plus chorus, and are on Greek mythological subjects. There are obvious differences, too. The second two had music supplied by a single composer, Benedetto Marcello, who was doubtless a member of the academy, and have no obvious topical reference. It is nevertheless possible to visualize *Andromeda liberata* as the expected serenata performed periodically (annually?) under the auspices of the Accademia dei Nobili, but this time with an encomiastic purpose and entrusted to several composers.

The plot is very simple.¹⁴ In an introductory speech Perseo, having slain the monster, confesses his pleasure at having silenced the Nereids (for which read those members of the Venetian nobility who instigated his exile). Meliso (a renamed Cefeo) congratulates him and expresses joy at the imminent wedding, in which sentiment Cassiope concurs. These two characters must represent the Venetian government. Andromeda (Venice), however, does not react with the same unmixed pleasure at her rescue: her existing love for Daliso (a renamed Feneo) makes her unwilling to marry Perseo. Daliso may be an allegory for Venice's recent ally, the Hapsburgs (with whom they had been allied in a war against the Ottomans). It may be significant that in Mantua the imperial governor, Prince Philip of Hesse-Darmstadt, is often referred to by the name of "Daliso" in cantatas and serenatas of the same period.¹⁵ A later reference in *Andromeda liberata*

¹³ Similar schemes such as AB | AB and ABC | ABC occur frequently in very short aria texts, but once the number of lines in the semistrophes rises above three, they become very rare.

¹⁴ The complete text is transcribed in an appendix (see pp. 155–159).

¹⁵ See Michael Talbot, Vivaldi's 'Academic' Cantatas for Mantua, in: *300 Let/ Years Academia Philharmonicorum Labacensium 1701–2001: Zbornik referatov z mednarodnega simpozija 25. in 26. oktobra 2001 v Ljubljani / Proceedings of the International Symposium held in Ljubljana on October 25th and 26th 2001*, ed. I. Klemenčič, Ljubljana 2004, 157–170.

to Daliso seeking refuge on Venice's shores may allude to this prince's frequent visits to Europe's capital of pleasure.

Perseo is surprised and piqued at Andromeda's revelation and prepares to leave for good. Cassiope restrains him. Daliso then arrives in person to pour out his love for Andromeda. Meliso laments the ruin of his plans. Cassiope pleads with Andromeda to transfer her affections. She responds by asking for time. Explaining her dilemma, she pays tribute to the hero who saved her (the word "eroe" in the score, which replaces an earlier, deleted word, is obviously a last-minute change aimed at making allusion to the title *Il ritratto dell'eroe*), but confesses that Cupid has caused her to fall in love with Daliso. On that indecisive note, the first part closes.

Andromeda, still wavering, discusses the situation with Daliso. He declares that he intends to cede her to Perseo, whose merit is greater. Meliso announces that preparations are in hand for the wedding. His use of the word "Imeneo" is a fleeting allusion to the opera *Imeneo in Atene*, which had just come to the end of its run. Andromeda arrives to express her concurrence: her reluctance was, she claims, merely a device to test Perseo's fidelity. In the first line of her aria she inserts the word "Fenice" (Phoenix) – a clear reference to the serenata *La Fenice*, to which Ottoboni had recently treated the Venetian nobility. Perseo vows loyalty to Andromeda in the couplet:

E Arcadia scorderà che il ciel destina And Arcadia will discover that Heaven
che tu sia la mia sposa e mia regina. destines you for my spouse and queen.

"Arcadia" represents here the Arcadian Academy in Rome, of which Ottoboni was a member and patron, and by extension the Vatican. Taken at face-value, this is a declaration that in future Ottoboni will regard his ties to Venice as stronger than those to Rome.

Meliso calls everyone to proceed to the sacrifice to the Gods in the temple (meaning the celebration of Mass, in which Ottoboni was extremely active throughout his Venetian sojourn). It remains for Daliso to return and give his blessing to the couple.

Discounting the linking recitatives, the serenata consists of nineteen closed numbers (eleven in the first part, eight in the second), the first of which is a two-movement *sinfonia*. The vocal numbers comprise fourteen arias (two of them without *da capo*), a duet and three choruses, two with solo participation. Table 4 (see p. 154) outlines their plan. It will be noticed that the opportunity to sing arias is distributed more evenly than in most operas. In serenatas, the voices tend to sing in "rounds", so that the number of arias allotted to each character remains approximately (some-

times, literally) equal. Andromeda and Cassiope are sopranos; Perseo and Meliso are altos; Daliso is a tenor.

Before taking the question of musical authorship further, we should return to discuss the manuscript and Table 2 (see p. 152). The preparation of the manuscript was the work of four hands. Those identified in the table as “Scribe 8” and “Scribe 9” (following a classification system devised by Paul Everett) are well known to students of Vivaldi and described elsewhere.¹⁶ The scribes identified in the table as “x” and “y” are not recorded in the literature. The four copyists were evidently colleagues in a *copisteria* acting under the direction, it would seem, of Scribe “y”, who started off the second contribution of Scribe 8, when the latter resumed work on f. 97, and made small additions to the work of his colleagues at certain points in the manuscript. Scribe 9 was initially given the first part of the serenata (gatherings 1–14) on which to work, and Scribe 8 the second part (gatherings 15–27).¹⁷ The two copyists probably worked in parallel. At f. 81 Scribe 8 broke off and was replaced first by Scribe “y” and then by Scribe “x”. Scribe 8 then resumed work, Scribe “y” making sure that he started at the right place; this released Scribe “x” to relieve Scribe 9. The above reconstruction of the *modus operandi* is conjectural, but probably illustrates accurately enough how labour was divided in a large *copisteria*. No effort is made to allow a single copyist to complete a single musical number. No. 14 (Meliso’s aria “Dalle superne sfere”), for instance, is shared between three copyists. On the other hand, copyists always complete the gatherings that they start, perhaps in order to simplify the calculation of their payment.

The inscription “P[ri]mo” at the top of the cover, incidentally, is probably short for “originale primo”, or “first score” – it was common in performances of dramatic works to employ two full scores, one used by the composer and the other by a harpsichordist.

There is therefore no relationship between the identity of the copyists and that of the composers, which, except in the case of the two arias already discussed, has to be worked out from the properties of the music. In Table 4 (see p. 154) the key sequences inserted between the numbers in the first column (capitals for major keys, lower case for minor keys) are those of the connecting recitatives. The recitatives are written in a uniform, stylistically rather neutral way – presumably by those who had the task of assembling and co-ordinating the serenata. In a few instances, the key in which a recitative closes is exactly the same as that of the closed

¹⁶ Paul Everett, Vivaldi’s Italian Copyists, *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani* 11, 1990, 27–86, especially 53–54.

¹⁷ A gathering is a detachable bibliographical unit, usually taking the form of a collection of “nested” bifolios. The most common gathering in quarto format is one of four folios (i.e., two nested bifolios).

number that follows (shown in the fourth column). This is a very conservative feature – Vivaldi, for instance, always makes the two keys different. Of course, this could have occurred spontaneously if the compilers of the serenata composed the recitative before receiving the aria in question and verifying its key. That there was more than one composer employed for the recitatives is suggested by an interesting notational discrepancy. In most of the serenata “falling fourth” (over dominant harmony) and “falling fifth” (over tonic harmony) vocal cadences at the end of phrases, normally coincident with the end of lines, are notated literally in “real” sounds. However, the same two types of cadence occurring in the recitatives lying between nos. 5 and 8 are notated in a conventional stylized manner, in which the penultimate and final notes are written at the same pitch; in performance, the higher pitch is substituted for the first note as an *appoggiatura*. We can rule out any thought that the copyists made editorial alterations to the text. This is not what they were paid to do – and, in any case, the same copyist, Scribe 9, was responsible for cadences following both conventions.

Which composers form the “shortlist” from which the likely composers of the closed numbers are taken? Given the time of year – well before the opening of the autumn season – we can probably exclude those who were not normally resident in Venice. We can also ignore the many composers whose activity did not extend beyond church music. This leaves, first, the *Primo maestro* of S. Marco, Antonino Biffi, who was concurrently *Maestro di coro* at the Ospedale dei Mendicanti, and the first organist of the ducal church, Antonio Lotti. Biffi, a priest, was inexperienced in opera, and Lotti, formerly very active, was no longer so, but neither man, one feels, would have turned up his nose at the opportunity to contribute to a serenata. Antonio Pollarolo, Giovanni Porta and Nicola Porpora were the *Maestri di coro* at the Ospedaletto, the Pietà and the Incurabili, respectively. Then there were Venice’s great *dilettanti*: Benedetto Marcello, whose connection with Cassani has already been mentioned; Tomaso Albinoni, a workhorse of the Venetian stage and also a collaborator with Cassani; and the promising young composer Giovanni Francesco Brusa, a protégé of Vivaldi. Brusa was later to forsake music for a couple of decades, re-emerging only in the 1750s, but in the Venice of the mid-1720s his was a name to watch. Finally, of course, we have Vivaldi himself, at the height of his international fame. Only the previous year, a correspondent of the *Mercure de France* had extolled him as “Le plus habile compositeur qui soit à Venise”.¹⁸

The two-movement *sinfonia* and the three choruses are hard to place in stylistic terms. They all have an almost Handelian feel, augmented, in

¹⁸ October 1725, page 2418.

the first case, by light mimicry of the *stile francese* in obvious homage to Ottoboni's post.¹⁹ The sinfonia employs a pair of horns in F, which are treated in a rousing, if not particularly sophisticated, manner.²⁰ One hesitates to guess who the composer might have been, but Porpora is by far the strongest candidate.²¹

One would expect the arias to reveal the musical personality of their respective composers more strongly, and such is indeed the case. Four arias are ascribable without reservation to Albinoni, since they bear the unmistakable imprint of his idiolect, perhaps the most distinctive of any in that period:

3	Cassiope	“Quando chiudere pensai”
5	Perseo	“Non ha tranquillo il cor”
6	Cassiope	“Si rinforzi in te la spene”
17	Cassiope	“Con dolce mormorio”

In “Quando chiudere pensai”, the opening of whose first vocal period is shown as Example 1, the tell-tale features are (a) the constant movement between root-position and first-inversion chords, and the harmonization, with a six-three chord, of the linking note in the bass, (b) the extremely linear and repetitive (even hypnotic) vocal line, and (c) the constant intertwining of the principal part (voice doubled by first violin) and a non-imitative accompanying line.²² The pre-cadential Lombardic rhythms in each of the

¹⁹ The first movement of the sinfonia employs *saccadé* rhythms, while the second movement is in minuet tempo and rhythm. Porpora uses a rhythmic and melodic style very close to that of this movement for the aria opening *Imeneo in Atene* (British Library, Add. ms. 14,113), in what is evidently a parallel case of homage. Interestingly, the first chorus (no. 2) echoes the thematic substance and minuet style of the sinfonia finale, which suggests that its composer is the same person.

²⁰ The parts are described as *Tromba prima/seconda* at the head of the score, but between the staves the copyist has inserted the words “2 Corni da Caccia”. This probably does not mean that trumpets and horns should play alongside each other, presumably an octave apart. It is much more likely that *tromba* denoted from the start *tromba da caccia* (a synonym for *corno da caccia*), and that the added line was intended merely to supply clarification.

²¹ Porpora is known to use the designation “*tromba da caccia*” in his autograph manuscripts – for example, those of his serenata *Angelica* (Naples 1720) and opera *Meride e Selinunte* (Venice 1727) in the British Library (Add. mss. 14,120 and 16,111, respectively). The term was commonly employed by Neapolitan composers, including Pergolesi in *L'Olimpiade* (1735), Domenico Scarlatti in *La contesa delle stagioni* (1720) and Paradies in *Il decreto del Fato* (1740), but never gained currency in Venice among native composers.

²² Compare the aria “Pensa che sei” from Albinoni's opera *Statira* (1726), of which an extract is quoted in Michael Talbot, *Tomaso Albinoni: The Venetian Composer and His World*, Oxford 1990, 241.

final two bars are Albinoni's sole concession to Neapolitan modernity; otherwise, this aria could have been written by him ten years earlier.

Example 1. Tomaso Albinoni: "Quando chiudere pensai", bars 8–15.

8

VI 2

Cassiope/VI 1

Basso

Quan - do chiu - de - re pen - sa - i

10

la - mia vi - ta con gl'af - fan - ni, men - se - ve - ro il

13

ciel - pro - va - i, par -

Perseo's "Non ha tranquillo il cor" is a typically Albinonian *giga* (notwithstanding its "Largo e spiccato" tempo marking), and could be compared with the 12/8 finale of his concerto in D major with two oboes Op. 7 no. 8 (1715). The "darting" interjections of the unison violins during the vocal periods, which are mostly accompanied by continuo alone, are highly characteristic of him. This aria also makes use of a *Devise* – a preliminary, motto-like statement of the voice's opening phrase. This feature was very popular in vocal music around 1700 but had fallen from favour by the 1720s. Albinoni

was the only composer who, to my knowledge, still used it frequently. In Cassiope's "Rinforzi in te la spene", which likewise uses a *Devise*, the opening theme is shared by a known aria by Albinoni. This is "Laudes crucis at tollamus", contained in a motet (probably a *contrafactum* of secular music, not necessarily arranged and assembled by Albinoni himself) in Pécs, Hungary.²³ Examples 2a and 2b show the ritornellos introducing the "sacred" aria and Cassiope's aria, respectively.

Example 2a. Tomaso Albinoni: "Laudes crucis at tollamus", bars 1–3.

Andante

Example 2b. Tomaso Albinoni: "Si rinforzi in te la spene", bars 1–3.

The final aria, "Con dolce mormorio", is in Albinoni's beloved siciliana rhythm. The extract shown as Example 3 contains the short orchestral interlude or ritornello closing the main part of the second vocal period and the coda that follows it. Note (a) the elaborately reduplicative cadence of

²³ Pécs, Cathedral Archive (Székesegyházi Kottatár), A. 35. The first line of the three-movement motet is "Exsultemus in cruce Domini nostri". Reinhard Strohm informs me that the same musical incipit is found in Albinoni's aria *Un'aura lusinghiera*, from the opera *Eumene* (1717), preserved in the manuscript X.128 in the library of the Paris Conservatoire.

the ritornello (a regular feature of Albinoni's late style) and (b) the isolated quadruplet groups in the vocal line. The latter are a peculiarity of this composer and arise from a wish to keep the melodic line perfectly conjunct, even when this entails fitting in an extra note.²⁴ The richness of the harmony and texture in this extract reminds one of the slow movements of Albinoni's Op. 9 concertos (1722).

Example 3. Tomaso Albinoni: "Con dolce mormorio", bars 30–35; continued.

The image displays a musical score for Example 3, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system includes staves for Violin I (VI 1), Violin II (VI 2), Viola (Vla), Cassiope, and Basso. The second system continues the score with staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cassiope, and Basso. The music is in G minor and 3/4 time. The vocal line (Cassiope) has lyrics: "can - to. spie-ghi col can - - -". The score features a ritornello and a vocal line with lyrics. The first system starts at bar 30 and ends at bar 32. The second system starts at bar 33 and ends at bar 35. The score includes a variety of rhythmic values and melodic lines, with some quadruplet groups in the vocal line.

²⁴ A similar instance from a cantata is illustrated in Talbot, op. cit. (n. 22), 140 (ex. 29).

Example 3. Tomaso Albinoni: “Con dolce mormorio”, bars 36–38.

36

- to tut-ti, j sen-si d'a - mor. spie - ghi col can-

It is perhaps significant that all three arias for Cassiope were written by the same composer, Albinoni. The thought then arises: could it be that each character's arias were assigned to a single composer and that this is how the labour of composition was divided? Such a procedure would have had the logic of allowing the composers to coach the respective singers for their arias in one-to-one fashion. The allocation of Perseo's two arias to Albinoni and Vivaldi, respectively, shows that this *modus operandi* cannot have been inviolable, but might it nevertheless provide a starting point for further investigation?

In fact, the arias for Andromeda, Meliso and Daliso do indeed fall into neat stylistic groups. We know that one aria for Andromeda, “Un occhio amabile”, is by Porta. All the others, including the cavata-like aria “Madre, lascia ch'io senta in prima la libertà”, are close in style.²⁵ Porta's musical language can be described, using today's jargon, as “Vivaldi-lite”. This is a pared-down version of Vivaldi's language, lacking all the interesting and idiosyncratic traits.²⁶ It is capable of moments of great beauty, albeit of a rather conventional kind. This ultra-short aria, shown as Example 4,

²⁵ A cavata is a setting in aria style, often with contrapuntal interaction between voice and bass, of one or two lines of recitative verse. It is often employed in situations, such as the end of a composition, where ordinary recitative carries insufficient weight.

²⁶ Porta's style is examined in Faun Tanenbaum Tiedge and Michael Talbot, *The Berkeley Castle Manuscript: Arias and Cantatas by Vivaldi and His Italian Contemporaries*, *Studi vivaldiani* 3, 2003, 33–86, especially 62–65.

does its composer credit. Connoisseurs in the original audience may have relished the subtle pun on the word “risolverò”, which in several of its statements is set to a suspension and its resolution. The exuberance of the opening aria of the second part, “Lo so, barbari fati”, which adds pairs of horns and oboes to the orchestra, is almost Vivaldian.

Example 4. Porta (?): “Madre, lascia ch’io senta in prima la libertà”, complete.

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a vocal line for Andromeda and a bass line for Basso. The time signature is 3/8. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the vocal lines.

System 1: Andromeda: Ma-dre, la - scia ch'io sen-ta in pri-ma il co - re, in li-ber - tà. Basso: (bass line)

System 2: Andromeda: e poi ri - sol - ve - rò, ri - sol - ve - rò, e poi - ri - sol - ve - rò, ri sol - ve - rò. Basso: (bass line)

System 3: Andromeda: - rò, ri - sol - ve - rò. Ma-dre, la - scia - ch'io sen-ta in pri-ma il co - re, in Basso: (bass line)

System 4: Andromeda: - li - ber - tà. e poi ri - sol - ve - rò, ri - sol - ve - rò, ri - sol - ve - rò. Basso: (bass line)

Daliso’s arias are written in an old-fashioned style with contrapuntal pretensions and an adventurous handling of dissonance. “Se una sorta di stralli Amor avesse” adds a second (tenor) viola to the orchestra (something that Vivaldi, for example, largely gave up after *L'estro armonico*, Op. 3,

of 1711) and allows the violins to engage in fugal interplay. The later aria, “Peni chi vuol penar”, is even more intensely contrapuntal, as Example 5 demonstrates. One’s suspicion initially falls on Lotti. Marcello would have been a possibility, but his familiar trademarks (the use of supertonic chromatic harmony, wide leaps and figures based on broken chords) are missing. However, Lotti’s textures in his secular (as opposed to sacred) vocal music tend to be much thinner. A better candidate would be Antonino Biffi, who died in 1732. The bass’s descent in a chain of thirds (F–D–B–G#–E) against ostinato figuration centred on a single note (D) in bars 4–6 matches closely a similar progression found in an identical context close to the start of a *Credo* in D minor by Biffi.²⁷ The progression is not so common as to make the coincidence insignificant.

Example 5. Biffi (?): “Peni chi vuol penar”, bars 1–3; continued.

The musical score consists of five staves. The top two staves are for Violin I (VI 1) and Violin II (VI 2), both in treble clef. The third staff is for Viola (Vla) in alto clef. The fourth staff is for Daliso in treble clef, showing a whole rest. The fifth staff is for Basso in bass clef, featuring a descending chain of thirds (F-D-B-G#-E) against an ostinato figure on D. The score is in common time (C) and shows the continuation of bars 1-3. A small number '6 5' is visible at the bottom right of the Basso staff.

Meliso’s arias are the only ones written in a fully *galant* Neapolitan style. They possess not only the outward appurtenances (Lombardic rhythms, etc.) of the new style but also its tendency towards pithy, generally quadratic, phrase-structure. Such a violin line as the one shown in Example 6, taken from the opening ritornello of “Dalle superne sfere”, could not, in 1726, have been written by any Venetian composer except, possibly, the young Brusa. Its *strepitoso* quality and the characteristic form of final cadence employed soon became commonplace, also for Venetian composers, but were at the time very novel. By elimination, one has to propose

²⁷ London, Royal College of Music, MS 48.

Example 5. Biffi (?): “Peni chi vuol penar”, bars 4–7.

4

7

8

Pe-ni chi vuol penar, chi vuol penar, pe-ni chi vuol penar.

Porpora as its composer. The superficially busy, but in reality very bland, musical language of both arias fits him perfectly.

Example 6. Nicola Porpora (?): “Dalle superne sfere”, opening (violin part only).



The duet for Andromeda and Perseo “Sposo amato / Cara sposa”, one of the highlights of the score, is hard to attribute to a composer. It reminds me of Albinoni’s duets, such as the three in his comic intermezzi *Pimpinone* (1708), in the fluent and transparent contrapuntal interaction of its two vocal parts. Albinoni’s authorship would also coincide neatly with his composition of one of Perseo’s arias. Nevertheless, I find no irrefutable signs of his idiolect in this movement, so caution is in order. The opening of its first vocal section, shown as Example 7, illustrates what a fresh, attractive piece it is. The syncopation for “stringo” (“I clasp”) in bars 18–19 is a delicious effect treated more extensively in the second vocal period.

Example 7. Tomaso Albinoni (?): duet “Sposo amato / Cara sposa”, bars 10–24.

15

- ples-so strin-go,al pet-to, strin-go,al pet-to,il mio te - so-ro, strin - - - go.
 in que-sto,am - ples-so _ strin-go,al pet-to, strin-go,al pet-to,il mio te-

20

strin - go,al pet - - - to,il mio _____ te - so-
 - so - ro, strin - - - go. strin - go,al pet - to,il mio te - so-

One cannot, of course, omit to discuss Vivaldi's aria, which is the indisputable high point of the serenata. Effortlessly, just by being himself, Vivaldi achieves a sweet intensity that outclasses anything else in the serenata and lingers in the memory. It is hard to put one's finger on the reason for this superiority. His music possesses the classic quality of *sprezzatura* – the ultimate concealment of art by art. It can impress even when not trying overtly to impress but merely going through the composer's normal routines.

A recent commercial recording by Deutsche Grammophon of *Andromeda liberata*, stimulated by Vivaldi's association with the work, proves that this is music well worth resuscitating, even if the idea of a pasticcio is not entirely welcome to our composer-fixated age.²⁸ In turn, this unexpected

²⁸ Reference no. Archiv 00289 477 0982. The performers are the Venice Baroque Orchestra and La Stagione Armonica, directed by Andrea Marcon.

public interest has led to a decision to publish a facsimile edition of the score in the series *Drammaturgia musicale veneta*. I will then have the opportunity to return to the music and see whether I can make further headway with the identification of the composers.

As a contribution to the study of mythology as a stimulus and resource for musical creation, *Andromeda liberata* is very marginal. It is typical of its genre in that it plays fast and loose with mythology, ignoring much of the canonic story and taking what is left down unfamiliar paths. The story itself is squeezed dry: what remains is simply a set of names and a modicum of plot elements. It is relegated to the status of an *objet trouvé*, to be coaxed into whatever shape the occasion and the music demand. Andromeda's vacillation (including the specious reason she gives for it subsequently) and Daliso's gracious admission of defeat really belong to the world of *opera seria*, not to mythology.

But we should not for a moment be shocked by the distortions suffered by the ancient story. This was, after all, only ephemeral entertainment provided during a public reception for an honoured guest. Worse happens in other serenatas. The far-fetched nature of the allegory (Ottoboni as Perseo, Andromeda as Venice, Daliso as Austria etc.) is in itself an expected ingredient of a *jeu d'esprit* that it would be pedantic to dissect too thoroughly. And the music, thankfully, is genuine enough.²⁹

²⁹ I should like to acknowledge here the kind help of Olivier Fourés, Reinhard Strohm, Graham Sadler, Carlo Vitali and Marco Bizzarini in the preparation of this paper. Colin Timms very kindly read the completed paper and made valuable suggestions.

Table 1: Italian-language dramatic works before 1750 based on the Andromeda-Perseus legend, ordered chronologically

title	genre	other description	author	composer	place	date
<i>Andromeda</i>	play	tragicommedia boschereccia	D. Guazzoni		Venice	1587
<i>L'Andromeda</i>	opera	tragicommedia [per] musica	R. Campeggi	G. Giacobbi	Bologna	1610
<i>L'Andromeda</i>	intermedio	favola marittima	J. Cicognini	D. Belli	Florence	1618
<i>Andromeda</i>	opera	favola	E. Marigliani	C. Monteverdi	Mantua	1620
<i>L'Andromeda</i>	opera	dramma per musica	B. Ferrari	F. Manelli	Venice	1637
<i>L'Andromeda</i>	opera	fiesta teatrale	A. Pio di Savoia	M. Rossi	Ferrara	1638
<i>Perseo</i>	opera	dramma	B. Gessi	?	Bologna	1642
<i>Andromeda</i>	play	favola	F. Vulpiani		Macerata	1643
<i>Il Perseo trionfante</i>	opera	dramma musicale	G. Bartolommei	?	Florence	1656
<i>L'Andromeda</i>	opera	dramma	C. Bassi	T. Tortona	Piacenza	1662
<i>Il Perseo</i>	opera	dramma	A. Aureli	A. Mattioli	Venice	1665
<i>Il Perseo</i>	opera	dramma musicale	A. Amalteo	A. Draghi	Vienna	1669
<i>Andromeda</i>	opera?	dramma	O. Bellia	?	Palermo	1691
<i>Il Perseo</i>	opera	dramma	P. J. Martelli	pasticcio	Bologna	1697
<i>Andromeda</i>	serenata	componimento per musica			Venice	1700
<i>Andromeda</i>	serenata	poemetto drammatico	P. Bernardoni	A. M. Bononcini	Vienna	1707
<i>Andromeda</i>	play	tragedia	V. Gravina		Naples	1712
<i>Andromeda</i>	serenata	poemetto drammatico	P. Parati	M. A. Ziani	Vienna	1714
<i>L'Andromeda</i>	opera	dramma per musica	G. di Rosa	D. Sarri	Naples	1721
<i>Andromeda liberata</i>	serenata	intreccio scenico-musicale	V. Cassani	pasticcio	Venice	1726
<i>Le nozze di Perseo e d'Andromeda</i>	serenata	azione drammatica	A. Marchi	G. M. Orlandini	Florence	1738
<i>Perseo</i>	serenata	fiesta di camera	G. C. Pasquini	L. A. Predieri	Vienna	1738

Table 2: Bibliographical Summary

The manuscript of *Andromeda liberata* comprises a card (*cartoncino*) cover enclosing 112 folios of musical notation. The format is oblong quarto, and the paper is Venetian (featuring the characteristic *tre mezze lune* watermark), with ten pre-ruled staves per page.

Title on cover

[top left-hand corner] P:^{mo} | [lower, centred] Andromeda Liberata | Serenata in Musica 1726 18 7bre

Structure

Part I:

folios	gatherings	musical numbers	hand
1–42	* + 1–9	1–7i	Scribe 9
43–60	10–14	7ii–11	x

Part II:

61–80	15–19	12–14i	Scribe 8
81–92	20–22	14ii–14iii	y
93–96	23	14iv–16i	x
97–100	24	16ii–18i	Scribe 8 (y starts him off)
101–112	25–27	18ii–19	y

Note: “7i” means “no. 7, first portion”.

Gathering Numbers

gathering number	folio	gathering number	folio
unnumbered	1r	14	59r
[1]	7r	15	61r
2	11r	16	65r
3	15r	17	69r
4	19r	18	73r
5	23r	19	77r
6	27r	[20]	81r
7	31r	[21]	85r
8	35r	[22]	89r
9	39r	23	93r
10	43r	24	97r
11	47r	[25]	101r
12	51r	[26]	105r
13	55r	[27]	109r

Table 3

<i>Andromeda liberata</i>	<i>Romolo e Tazio</i>	<i>Psiche</i>
Quando chiudere pensai la mia vita con gl'affanni, men severo il ciel provai, parve un'ombra il mio timor.	A Pace ogn'un grida B con mesti accenti; C Roma l'implora, D che in duol si sface.	A Sta palpitante B nel seno il core C senza speranza D d'aver mai pace.
Madre afflitta sospirai, e ne' miei più fieri danni quel sollievo ritrovai che mi tolse al mio dolor.	A A tante strida B che intorno senti, C Signor, tu ancora D rispondi pace.	A Pur sono amante B del traditore, C se ben mia morte D tentar gli piace.
<i>Andromeda liberata</i>	<i>Il tiranno eroe</i>	<i>Il nome glorioso in terra</i>
Ruscelletti limpidetti, che d'intorno a questi fiori mormorate i vostri amori, l'aspro mio duol ad ogni fior narrate.	A Allora che spira B secondo a lui 'l vento, B a uscir non sia lento C dal porto il nocchiero.	A Qual passato freddo verno B se ne va la rondinella B quando vien la stagion bella C al boschetto onde parti.
Vezzosetti, ritrosetti, non fermate i vostri umori; tra l'acerbi miei dolori perché col pianto mio li avvelenate?	A Che in van poi sospira D nel grave soggiorno D che faccia ritorno C il vento primiero.	A Così di morte a scherno D al tuo torni almo paese D ove agl'occhi tuoi distese A la sua luce il primo di.

Table 4: *Andromeda liberata*: List of closed numbers

Parte prima

1	Sinfonia	Staccato con spirito / Allegro	F ?
F→a			
2	Coro, Meliso	In queste sponde	D ?
B _b →a			
3	Cassiope	Quando chiudere pensai	A Albinoni
e→B _b			
4	Andromeda	Un occhio amabile	g Porta
d→c			
5	Perseo	Non ha tranquillo il cor	E _b Albinoni
c→D			
6	Cassiope	Si rinforzi in te la spene	D Albinoni
G→e			
7	Daliso	Se una sorta di strali Amor avesse	G ? Biffi
C→d			
8	Meliso	Ruscelletti limpidetti	F ? Porpora
d→g			
9	Andromeda la libertà (cavata)	Madre, lascia ch'io senta in prima	d ? Porta
a→F			
10	Andromeda	Mi piace e mi diletta	F ? Porta
g→d			
[9 bis	Andromeda la libertà (cavata)	Madre, lascia ch'io senta in prima	d ? Porta]
11	Coro	Dall'alto seggio	B _b ?

Parte seconda

F→a			
12	Andromeda	Lo so, barbari fati	F ? Porta
F→e			
13	Daliso	Peni chi vuol penar	a ? Biffi
C→d			
14	Meliso	Dalle superne sfere	C ? Porpora
e→C			
15	Andromeda	Chi è Fenice ad ogni foco	F ? Porta
d→A			
16	Perseo	Sovente il sole	e Vivaldi
b→d			
17	Cassiope	Con dolce mormorio	B [♯] Albinoni
d/D→G			
18	Andromeda / Perseo	Sposo amato / Cara sposa	G ? Albinoni
19	Coro, Daliso	Riconosco in voi	D ?

Appendix: The text of *Andromeda liberata*

The text presented below is transcribed from the underlaid text of the score of the serenata. Its spelling and punctuation have been normalized and modernized following conventional criteria. A few small corrections have been made in places where the original appeared defective.

Andromeda
Cassiope
Meliso
Perseo
Daliso

Parte prima

Per	Popoli, amici, in questo fausto giorno in cui veggio abbattuto delle Nereidi suore il fiero orgoglio io non cerco gli applausi e non li curo; basta che le superbe di Andromeda che vive la difesa e il mio amor piangan deluse: disdegnose e confuse mirino in seno a Teti, cangiato in duro scoglio il ministro crudel della vendetta. Che più dunque s'aspetta? Sciolgansi questi lacci della bella innocente. E ravvisi ogni ninfa, ogni pastore, di Perseo fortunato nel braccio invito l'amoroso core.	Coro	Viva Perseo, viva!
		Mel	Tosto risponda dal bosco amico, dal colle aprico eco giuliva.
		Coro	Viva Perseo, viva!
		Cas	O di Giove e di Danae inclita prole, in me vedi una madre per man del tuo valor serbata in vita; al tuo trionfo applausi deggio anch'io, or che dal tuo valor rimiro e sento cangiato in sicurezza il mio spavento.
			Quando chiudere pensai la mia vita con gl'affanni, men severo il ciel provai, parve un'ombra il mio timor.
Mel	Signor, l'ira del fato fiaccasti col valor della tua destra; opportuno soccorso al comune dolor silenzio impose; io non credea già più su questi campi lieto condur la greggia, né rallegrar col canto il regio armento; or tua mercé mi sembra men grave il peso di canuta etade, e parmi che risorga in me vivace la già perduta e sospirata pace.		Madre afflitta sospirai, e ne' miei più fieri danni quel sollievo ritrovai che mi tolse al mio dolor.
		And	Sciolta dai ceppi e già sottratta a morte, io dovrei al tuo amor la sua mercede; ma sappi, Perseo, sappi che di mia libertà questi che il cielo mi lascia tua mercé miseri avanzi rendono la mia vita dello stesso morir meno gradita.
Mel	In queste sponde, in lieti cori, ninfe e pastori cantino il gaudio che in noi s'avviva.	Per	Nulla adunque tu apprezzi del mio provido amor le prove e il merto?

And Gratitudine il vieta.
 Per E chi fia mai
 che tenda nuove insidie alla mia pace?
 And Una fiamma vivace
 che Daliso gentil nel cor m'accese
 più misera mi fa di quel che fui.
 Per Spietata, vanne a lui,
 ch'è immerso in mille oggetti
 nulla cura il tuo amore.
 And O non lo sa o non lo crede il core.

Un occhio amabile
 che mi piagò,
 labbro adorabile
 che mi allettò,
 tutta mi tolgono
 la libertà.

Né fia possibile
 che il suo rigor
 renda insoffribile
 il mio dolor
 perché non perdonano
 la sua beltà.

Per O ingrata, se potesti
 obliare sì presto
 il mio amor, la mia fede, il tuo dovere!
 Ah non più, non più mai
 sarà ch'io ti rivegga; il ciel ch'è giusto
 punirà l'error tuo.
 Io misero e tradito,
 abbandonato amante,
 fuggirò questo cielo,
 lascerò queste arene.
 Lasso, che fia di me, che fia s'io parto?
 Vo' vedermela a fronte;
 vo' ch'ella sappia almeno
 il mio fiero tormento,
 che l'amo ancora; e poi m'andrò contento.

Non ha tranquillo il cor
 chi vive amante,
 né sa che sia dolor
 chi amor non prova.

Se poi l'amato ben
 si fa incostante,
 è un male che il peggior
 non si ritrova.

Cas Signor, quale improvviso
 dolor t'ingombra l'anima?
 Per Giusta cagion mi sforza a piangere sempre.

Andromeda infedel uscita appena
 dalle mani di Cloto
 con gl'occhi e [con la] lingua
 parlò sì che potea
 disperar ogni amante.
 Cas Andromeda infedel? Perseo, t'inganni.
 Per Testé mi disse che Daliso accende
 un foco in lei maggior d'ogn'altro foco.
 Cas Mal credi se ciò credi.
 Tu suo sposo esser dei,
 e questi furo i giuramenti miei.

Si rinforzi in te la spene
 di quel bene
 che felice ti può far.

Col piacere che mi fingo
 mi lusingo
 di dar fine al tuo penar.

Dal Da ch'è il destin mi trasse,
 sventurato Daliso, a queste spiagge
 in traccia di fortuna più felice,
 cercai tra questi colli e queste selve
 all'afflitto mio cor pace e conforto.
 O quante ninfe io vidi
 languir d'amore e sospirar tradite;
 altre in lieta sembianza
 soffrir tacendo le cocenti fiamme;
 ebbi pietà di loro, e anch'io talvolta
 penai al lor penar, piansi al lor pianto.
 Poi colto anch'io nella più verde etade
 allora ben conobbi
 che amore è un misto de piaceri e pene,
 ma sempre il male è assai maggior del bene.

Se una sorta di strali Amor avesse,
 e questa ognor gradita,
 o che felice vita
 sarebbe quella di chi vive amante!

Ma se [or] pietosi or fieri egli li vibra,
 come essere può mai
 che sempre molti guai
 si possa nell'amar esser costante?

Mel O vicende funeste de' mortali!
 La gioia che pareammi così bella
 cangia sembriante, e d'improvviso male
 l'anima riempie, che non ben l'intende.
 Miseri, a quale stato
 siamo condotti? E quale orrendo fine
 ci minaccia il cielo, onde
 sdegni e furore ogni valle risuona?

Mythology in the Service of Eulogy: The Serenata *Andromeda liberata*

- Invan si spera, e invano
e si priega e si piange. O tempi, o sorte!
Perseo giura vendette, e niega ingrata
Andromeda la fede alle promesse.
Questa nuova sciagura,
che mi sembra un fantasma, un
sogno, un'ombra,
d'eccessivo dolor l'anima ingombra.
- Ruscelletti limpidetti,
che d'intorno a questi fiori
mormorate i vostri amori,
l'aspro mio duol ad ogni fior narrate.
- Vezzosetti, ritrossetti,
non fermate i vostri umori;
tra gl'acerbi miei dolori
perché col pianto mio li avvelenate?
- Cas Figlia, non più dimore.
O torna a' lacci e alla primera sorte
o in Perseo riconosci il tuo consorte.
- And Madre, lascia ch'io senta in prima
il core in libertà,
e poi risolverò.
- Cas Troppo ingrata mi sembri
e spergiura mi fai, se lo rifiuti.
- And Mi piace e mi diletta
l'eroe che mi salvò,
ma più quella saëtta
d'Amor che mi piagò.
- Cas Al talamo di Perseo
la ragione ti chiama, e ormai io veggio
in periglio l'onor, se non risolvi.
- And Madre, lascia ch'io senta in prima
il core in libertà,
e poi risolverò.
- Coro Dall'alto seggio
a noi discenda
pronubo e placido
dei numi il re.
- Dal vostro amore
sui nostri altari
a lui si giuri
onor e fé.

Parte seconda

- And Che sarà, cuore afflitto?
Speri giammai per te propizia stella?
Ah! che ben io m'avveggo
che tra spene e timor ten' stai sospeso,
perché forse non sai, povero core,
che chi è nato al penar vive al dolore.
- Lo so, barbari fati,
che perfidi al mio ben voi v'opponete
si crudeli e fieri.
- Se meco congiurati
e privi di pietà che siete,
il cor lo sa solo, severi.
- Dal La tua nemica sorte
tanto m'afflige e tanto,
ché se ben tu non vedi
quest'occhi a lagrimar, ne scopri il pianto.
- And Ah Daliso, Daliso! Se tu avessi
questa del mio dolor pietà che dici,
tanto ver me crudele non saresti.
- Dal Già nemico d'Amor amar non voglio;
Andromeda, lo sai: ama, ch'è giusto,
il tuo Perseo fedel, che ben lo merita.
Io parto.
- And Almeno non partir sì presto.
Odi pria che tu parta
quanto caro mi sei, quanto mi piaci.
- Dal Se da me spero amore,
la speranza è un deliro.
- And Tiranno! In questa guisa
l'amor mio tu disprezzi?
- Dal Bella, con tal rigore
della mia libertà serbo il piacere.
- And Piacer che troppo è fiero
a quest'alma, o Daliso, che in te vive.
- Dal Ma piacer, che mi giova?

- And Arder mi sento
di sdegno e di furore.
Dal Già te lo dissi, ancor non voglio amore.
- Peri chi vuol penar,
ch'io lungi dall'amor vo' viver sciolto.
- Non vo' sentir nel petto
le smanie dell'affetto
né il core a sospirar nel duolo absorto.
- Mel Pria che la dea triforme
giunga a tentar del mezzo ciel la metta
vedrem compiute le comuni brame.
Giorno più fortunato
sperar non lice; a noi
se ne venga Imeneo, e in seno ai sposi
sparga fecondo e lieto gigli e rose,
né mai destino audace
avveleni il piacer, turbi la pace.
- Dalle superne sfere,
lieto Imeneo, discendi,
e tu, notte, distendi
il vel ch'asconde il di.
- Su, dillo, alato Amore,
che unisti core a core,
se colpo più felice
dalla tua destra usci.
- And Hai già vinto due volte, o Perseo amato:
pria mi togliesti le catene al piede,
poscia costante amore
per man di bella fé la diede al core.
- Per Dunque più non t'accende
quella fiamma onde pria n'ardea il core?
- And Questa è la mia vendetta: il dissi, è vero;
ma sol per prova della tua costanza.
- Per Il timor, la speranza,
la gelosia, l'amore
mi fecero soffrir pene di morte.
- And Godi or della tua sorte,
e a chi t'ama e ti sprezza [*recte*, prezza?]
costante adorator serba la fede.
- Chi è Fenice ad ogni foco,
farfalla ad ogni lume
mal intende quel piacere
che sa dar la fedeltà.
- D'ogni bella farsi gioco,
ingannare per costume
- è lo stesso che volere
mendicar la crudeltà.
- Per Pria che del sole i rai
tornino ad indorar sul sangue il mondo,
vedrai le nostre faci in nobil gara
ad infiammarsi il petto.
- And Tu pure del mio affetto
scoprirai le finezze
per compiere l'onor di questo giorno.
- Per E Arcadia scorderà che il ciel destina
che tu sia la mia sposa e mia regina.
- Sovente il sole
risplende in cielo
più bello e vago,
se oscura nube
già l'offuscò.
- E il mar tranquillo
quasi senz'onda
talor si scorge
se ria procella
già lo turbò.
- Mel Perseo, Andromeda, amici: è tempo ormai
ch'andiamo al tempio, dove
sull'are preparate
il grande sacrificio, si consumi,
e rendasi l'onor ai sommi déi,
cui del nostro gioir devesi il merto.
- Cas Andiam, Meliso; da sì lieti auspicii
sperar mi giova per favor de' numi
il ciel ognor sereno,
la greggia lieta e il praticel più ameno.
- Con dolce mormorio
chiaro sen' corra il rio,
e l'ussignol volando
di verde fronda in fronda
tutti i sensi d'amor spieghi col canto.
- Si accenda ogni desio
del faretrato dio,
e l'aura sussurrando
più placida e gioconda
accesca il mio piacer, compensi il pianto.
- Dal Perseo, ché tardi più? Vedi gli allegri
cori di ninfe e di pastori accolti
per accrescer la pompa a' tuoi trionfi.
Andromeda, tra noi
non v'è chi più di me goda in mirarti

Mythology in the Service of Eulogy: The Serenata *Andromeda liberata*

	fatta sposa di Perseo e fuor d'affanni.	Dal	Riconos[co] in voi più bello
And	Se dei gravi miei danni tanta pietate avesti, e me'l ricordo, credere non ti posso bugiardo adorator di mia fortuna.		il godimento, né rio tormento vi tolga dal goder.
	Andianne, Perseo, al tempio ivi si chiuda in presenza dei numi e'l voto e'l giorno.	Coro	A trionfar si vegga il vero affetto, e sia l'oggetto del nostro bel piacer.
Per	Chiudasi, e quindi nasca l'augurio fortunato d'un amore tra noi sempre beato.		
		Dal	Del lungo amar sia questa la mercede. Già della fede non lice più temer.
And	Sposo amato,		
Per	Cara sposa,		
a 2	In questo amplesso stringo al petto il mio tesoro.		
		Coro	Dunque fia ver che un fido e vero amante, s'egli è costante, al fin giunge a goder.
a 2	Dal piacer che sento in esso puoi saper quanto t'adoro.		

POVZETEK

Klasična mitologija in antična zgodovina sta priskrbeli večino vsebin italijanskih glasbenodramskih del 17. in 18. stoletja. Vendar pa se liki in dogajanja velikokrat razlikujejo od tistih v izvirnih literarnih ali zgodovinskih delih. Da bi se vsebina bolje prilagajala zahtevam druge zvrsti, so lahko predelani do take mere, da je izvirnik komajda še prepoznaven. V nobeni zvrsti ni to tako očitno kot pri serenati (ali dramatski kantati), katere najpogostejši namen je bila obeležitev kakega slavlja, na primer ob rojstvu ali poroki.

Knjižnica beneškega Conservatorio Statale »Benedetto Marcello« hrani rokopisno partituro petglasne serenate z naslovom *Andromeda liberata* (*Osvobojena Andromeda*) neimenovanega avtorja in z datumom 18. september 1726. Iz datuma na rokopisu in vsebine libreta lahko sklepamo, da je bila serenata poklon beneškemu plemstvu, ki ga ponazarja lik Andromede, in kardinalu Pietru Ottoboniju, ki ga pooseblja Perzej. Kardinal je bil od leta 1726 po dolgem obdobju izгона spet dobrodošel v svojih rodnih Benetkah in je mestu zato namenil vrsto zabav. Ohranjen je zgolj najosnovnejši obris izvirnega mita: ostal je le klin, na katerega je libretist lahko obesil lik junaka – Ottobonija kot Perzeja.

Iz zaznamka v sodobnem rokopisnem seznamu serenat bi lahko sklepali, da je bil libretist tega dela Vincenzo Cassani. V prid tej identifikaciji govori tudi obstoj podobnega Cassanijevega besedila za serenato iz istega časa in ponavljanje določenih pesniških idiosinkrazij.

Zanimivo je tudi, da je glasba te serenate verjetno delo različnih skladateljev. *Andromeda liberata* je v tem pogledu edinstvena, saj ne poznamo nobenega drugega primera pasticcio serenate. Morda razloga za vključitev več skladateljev ne gre iskati toliko v prihranku časa kot v želji, da bi bila serenata dejansko kolektivni poklon beneških glasbenikov. Eno arijo z obligatno violino je nedvomno napisal Antonio Vivaldi, ki je verjetno tudi igral solistični part. Druga arija (z obligatnim čelom) je izpod peresa Giovannija Porte, ki je bil »maestro di coro« (zborovodja) v zavetišču Pietà. Štiri arije so verjetno delo Tomasa Albinonija (ena od teh ima isti incipit kot neka njegova na drugem mestu ohranjena arija). Avtorstvo preostalih arij, ansambelskih točk in celotnega recitativa bo treba še ugotoviti, čeprav se nekaj možnih imen že ponuja (Porpora, Biffi).

Nedvomno bo v prihodnosti še veliko priložnosti za natančnejšo analizo *Osvobojene Andromede*. Pred kratkim je založba Deutsche Grammophon izdala zvočni posnetek te serenate in v zbirki *Drammaturgia musicale veneta* je v pripravi faksimilna notna izdaja s spremnim komentarjem avtorja tega besedila. Delo bo odličen uvod za nadaljnje preučeva-

nje zvrsti serenate, jezika beneške vokalne glasbe dvajsetih let 18. stoletja, ustaljenih formul, ki so jim sledila besedila serenat, in ne nazadnje uporabe in zlorabe mitoloških motivov.