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Administration and innovation at Turin's Teatro Regio: producing *Sofonisba* (1764) and *Oreste* (1766)

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Abstract: Opera seria underwent more change in the latter part of the eighteenth century than is commonly recognized, but the nature of the change often had as much to do with practical considerations as with aesthetic ideology. This essay focuses on Turin's Teatro Regio, which in the 1760s imported two particularly innovative operas, *Sofonisba* and *Oreste*, and retained some "progressive" features while discarding others. This essay demonstrates the importance of extra-musical factors in decisions regarding production.

Opera seria in eighteenth-century Italy has been dismissed as conservative and resistant to change without due consideration of the extent to which external factors shaped its development.[1] Turin's Teatro Regio presents a valuable example of the influence that mid-century reform efforts exerted on opera seria in one of the most renowned Italian cultural centers of the day. Turin's experience producing innovative operas illustrates that the history of opera seria as a genre was influenced as much by practical considerations as by aesthetic ones. The Regio drew praise from the time of its opening in 1740. Joseph-Jérôme Le François de La Lande remarked that it was "the best designed, the best planned, and the most complete that is to be found in Italy; it is the most richly and nobly decorated that there is in the modern style".[2] The theatre soon became internationally known for its lavish and spectacular productions of opere serie. Starting around mid-century, innovations began appearing in opera seria at other cultural centers in response to calls for a reform of the genre, and proponents of operatic reform advocated de-emphasizing the role of the virtuoso singer in the interest of greater dramatic unity, calling for increased spectacle designed to delight the eye.[3] Responses to this call took different forms, from the French-inspired Italian operas of Tommaso Traetta and Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni in Parma, ornamented with chorus, ballet, and fantastic stage machinery, to the *drammi in azione* of Mattia Verazi and Niccolò Jommelli in Stuttgart

[1] Philip G. Downs, for example, writes, "Italy itself resisted the kind of modifications that were being made to the opera seria by Italians in foreign lands." *Classical Music: The Era of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York, 1992), 178.

[2] "le plus étudié, le mieux composé, le plus complet qu'on voie en Italie; c'est le plus richement et le plus noblement décoré qu'il y ait dans le genre moderne." Joseph-Jérôme Le François de La Lande, *Voyage d'un Français en Italie* (Venice, 1769), quoted by Luciano Tamburini, *L'Architettura dalle origini al 1936*, Storia del Teatro Regio di Torino 4 (Turin, 1983), 62.

[3] Francesco Algarotti's *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica* (1755) was the most wide-ranging of the contemporary critiques of the "abuses" that required reform. For other secondary literature see Margaret Butler, "Operatic Reform in Turin: Aspects of Production and Stylistic Change in the 1760s", Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University (2000), published Turin, 2001. The present article is a slightly revised version of Chapter 3 of the dissertation.

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and Mannheim, with emphasis on multiple ensembles, complex action, and heightened drama. The works of Christoph Willibald Gluck and Ranieri de' Calzabigi in Vienna most closely expressed the reformist ideals of an organic unity of poetry and music.

Turin stood in close geographical proximity to all these major operatic centers. Its theatre shared with theirs the finest composers, singers, dancers, choreographers, and designers of the age; it was thus exposed to and participated in many of the cross-currents of innovation that influenced opera seria at mid-century. For example, in the mid-1760s the directorship of the Regio imported two of Mannheim's most innovative librettos: Mattia Verazi's *Sofonisba* and his *Ifigenia in Tauride*, the latter retitled *Oreste* in Turin. The retention or omission of the innovations in the original librettos was largely dependent on practical considerations, outlined below. Fortunately, operatic production in Turin is amply documented by archival collections pertaining to the Nobile Società dei Cavalieri, the theatre's administrative body. This group, composed of about forty Piedmontese noblemen, had been created by Vittorio Amadeo II di Savoia in 1727 to manage the entertainment in all of the city's theatres.[4] The membership elected Directors, who oversaw the sectors of Music, Dance, Scenography, Costume Design, and Libretto. Materials recording the Directors' meetings reveal their decision-making process, their priorities regarding production, and the practical circumstances they faced. Their account books present detailed lists of the production expenses for each carnival season, and many surviving contracts for composers, singers, copyists, and other personnel offer evidence regarding the rehearsal process.[5] Together with scores reflecting Turinese performances and multiple exemplars of printed librettos, this material offers a multi-faceted view of the functioning of one of the most important Italian theatres in the eighteenth century.

Sofonisba and *Ifigenia in Tauride/Oreste*: original and revised versions

Mannheim's court poet, Verazi, introduced strikingly new structural innovations in these librettos,[6] and their Turinese settings were among the most successful operas performed at the Regio during the century. *Sofonisba*, a *tour de force* of pageantry, stage spectacle, and innovation, was originally written for the Mannheim Hoftheater in

[4] On the Nobile Società dei Cavalieri, see Marie-Thérèse Bouquet, *Il teatro di corte dalle origini al 1788*, vol. 1 of *Storia del Teatro Regio di Torino*, ed. Alberto Basso (Turin, 1976), 109–26, and "Fortune e miserie di cavalieri e di impresari", in *L'Arcano incanto*, ed. Alberto Basso (Milan, 1991), 183–201.

[5] This material is conserved at the Archivio Storico della Città di Torino in collections entitled *Libri Ordinati*, and *Libri conti della Nobile Società dei Cavalieri*, and *Carte sciolte* (hereafter referred to as ASCT, *Ordinati*; *Libri conti*; and *Carte sciolte*).

[6] His innovations were to play an important role in the transformation of the genre a few decades later. See Marita Petzoldt McClymonds, "Mattia Verazi and the Opera at Mannheim, Stuttgart, and Ludwigsburg", *Studies in Music from the University of Western Ontario*, 7 (1982): 104–07; *idem*, "Transforming Opera Seria: Verazi's Innovations and Their Impact on Opera in Italy", in *Opera and the Enlightenment*, ed. Thomas Bauman and Marita Petzoldt McClymonds (Cambridge, 1995), 119–32.

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1762 and set to music by Traetta, who had been active in the highly publicized and successful French-inspired reforms in Parma a few years earlier.[7] *Sofonisba*'s success in Mannheim earned it a revival there just one year later.[8] The Directors of Turin's Nobile Società dei Cavalieri took note of the work's triumphs, unanimously chose the libretto for the second opera of carnival season 1764, and then commissioned Baldassare Galuppi to set it to music.[9]

The opera's plot involves a Roman invasion of Africa. After an extensive ordeal involving broken alliances and amorous intrigue, the Romans emerge victorious; to avoid becoming a slave to the enemy, Sofonisba, the wife of the African king, commits suicide. The libretto's tragic ending with Sofonisba's on-stage death stands in stark contrast to the genre's conventional *lieto fine*. Other unusual aspects of the dramaturgy include the focus of the plot on a married couple (rather than on the conventional pair of lovers) and a singing role for their child. The opera's unconventional structural components comprise a complex quintet finale, a trio "of diminishing forces,"[10] in which two characters exit leaving the third on stage to close the ensemble and the act alone, and two choruses integrated into the action of the scenes. The second of these is an extensive ensemble with stage action prescribed by the libretto.

Theatres usually revised imported librettos. The principal alterations in the Turin revision of *Sofonisba* indicate that Turin adopted the second Mannheim version of 1763. Elements absent in both the Turin version and the second Mannheim version[11] include a scene containing gladiatorial games and the on-stage death. Some changes to the Mannheim text indicate a move away from Verazi's innovations; for example, several arias were added. In addition, Verazi's original aria texts, frequently lengthy and dramatically intense, were changed to more traditional poetry. The arias for the child and the quintet finale were deleted, the latter replaced with a traditional *coro*. The quintet finale, an important innovative feature, was deleted. However, many of the most experimental elements were retained, including the strong opening scene with pantomime that links the overture to the beginning of the work,

[7] Daniel Heartz, "Operatic Reform at Parma: *Ippolito ed Aricia*", in *Atti del convegno sul settecento Parmense nel 2º centenario della morte di C. I. Frugoni* (Parma, 1969), 271–300.

[8] Mattia Verazi, *Sofonisba* (Mannheim, 1762), D-HEu, G 2811/3, vol. 13. Verazi, *Sofonisba* (Mannheim, 1763), D-MHrm, Mh 1722. Regarding this opera see Nicole Baker, "Italian Opera at the Court of Mannheim, 1758–1770", Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles (1994), chapter 6 and 216–74, 1762 libretto cited on 228. I have not had the opportunity to examine the 1762 libretto, and have relied on Baker's description.

[9] ASCT, *Ordinati*, vol. 5, 222, 2 April 1763, ". . . si è unanimente aderito a questo proposizione." [Mattia Verazi], *Sofonisba* (Turin, 1764). Librettos consulted: ASCT, Coll. Simeom L-68; I-T, Strona-Cravero, uncatalogued; I-Tci, L.O. 208; I-Tn F XIII 521/4, F VII 364/4, Coll. Collegio San Francesco 433/2; US-Wc, Schatz, 3470. Score consulted: I-Tf 1 V 18-19-20.

[10] The phrase is Marita McClymonds's: "Mattia Verazi and the Opera at Mannheim" (see n. 6). Ensembles of this type, from which characters gradually depart, were to become a frequent occurrence in Verazi's later librettos.

[11] Mattia Verazi, *Sofonisba* (see n. 8).

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and the innovative trio that closes Act II. Sofonisba's powerful cavatina, in which she expresses her grief over her forced abandonment of her child, and the subsequent tragic ending were left intact. Perhaps most interestingly, the choruses were first eliminated and then reinstated (see below). Although not experimental, the strongest feature of the libretto – its many opportunities for spectacular display – was fully preserved. The enormous cast includes fourteen different groups of soldiers, warriors, pages, handmaidens, slaves, sailors, footmen and gladiators, many of whom dance in pantomime ballets. Military trophies, rustic altars, funeral pyres, festively illuminated and decorated boats, and live horses adorn the stage. *Sofonisba* met with great approval in Turin: it was among the works to receive twenty-eight performances, an honor accorded only the most popular operas at the Regio during the 1760s.[12]

As they had done with *Sofonisba*, the Directors of the theatre mounted a production of *Ifigenia in Tauride* two years after its Mannheim première in 1764.[13] With twenty-two performances, the second opera of the 1765–66 season was a great success, although it did not quite rival *Sofonisba*'s popularity.[14] It was set in Mannheim by the court composer Gian Francesco De Majo, whose name was linked with experimental works elsewhere; in Turin it was retitled *Oreste* and set by Carlo Monza.[15] The libretto derives from Euripides's *Iphigenia in Tauris*, a popular operatic subject in the eighteenth century.[16] Ifigenia is a high priestess in Diana's temple in Tauris. Her brother Oreste is continuously tormented by the Furies for having killed their mother. He arrives in Tauris with his friend Pilade, where he must do penance by finding the statue of Diana and returning it to Greece. Ifigenia eventually recognizes Oreste, and he and Pilade attempt to escape the tyrannical king Toante, who demands that the intruders be sacrificed. Apollo descends and resolves the conflict among the mortals.

[12] ASCT, *Libri conti*, vol. 46, 6; *Sofonisba* opened on 2 February and closed on 6 March, 1764.

[13] Verazi, *Ifigenia in Tauride* (Mannheim, 1764). Exemplar consulted: US-Wc, Schatz 5856.

[14] The invasion of Turin by the French forced the cancellation of a new setting of *Oreste*, planned for 1792. Another resetting of the libretto was planned for 1798, but Metastasio's *La clemenza di Tito* (set to music by Ottani) was performed instead. See Viale Ferrero, *La Scenografia. Dalle origini al 1936*, Vol. 3 of *Storia del Teatro Regio di Torino* (Turin, 1980), 295 (see n. 4); Basso, *Il Teatro della città*, Vol. 2 of *Storia del Teatro Regio di Torino* (Turin, 1976), 45 (see n. 4).

[15] [Verazi], *Oreste* (Turin: Stamperia Reale, 1766). Librettos consulted: ASCT, coll. Simeom L-71; I-Tci, L.O. 220; I-T Fanan, 7974; I-Tn, coll. Collegio San Francesco 442/2; I-Tn, F VII 365/4; I-Tn, F XIII 491/5; I-T Provincia, P-1, 107/1; I-T Strona-Cravero, uncatalogued; US-Wc, Schatz 6611. None of the exemplars contains textual printing variants. The manuscript score for the Turin production (I-Tf, 1 V 15-16-17) corresponds with the libretto.

[16] The numerous reform librettos on *Iphigenia in Tauris* were influenced by the popular 1757 drama by Guimond De la Touche. De la Touche, "Iphigénie en Tauride", *Répertoire générale de Théatre Français*, vol. 31 (Paris, 1818), cited in Julie E. Cumming, "Gluck's Iphigenia Operas: Sources and Strategies", in *Opera and the Enlightenment* (see n. 6), 238. The following summary is drawn from Julie E. Cumming, s.v. "Iphigenia in Tauris", *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*.

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Marco Coltellini wrote an early reform libretto on the topic for Traetta at Vienna in 1763,[17] which was the first full-length Viennese opera to incorporate French elements – chorus, ballet, scene complexes involving multiple characters and stage action, and ensembles – into an Italianate dramaturgical format. The work was highly successful and influential in Italy. Coltellini's version of the story was praised by the reform-minded librettist Calzabigi, who claimed that it exemplified "the new plan of musical drama".[18] Although no direct evidence exists, it is very possible that Coltellini's and Traetta's *Ifigenia in Tauride* inspired the choice of subject for Verazi's and Majo's opera of the same title.[19] In contrast to the classic restraint of Coltellini's version, Verazi's emphasizes the visually striking and emotionally compelling aspects of the plot, including the death of Toante. The dramatic intensity of Verazi's libretto is enhanced by numerous scenes of elaborate spectacle, including a storm, a battle, and a shipwreck landing. Like *Sofonisba*, *Ifigenia in Tauride* contains an action-filled opening scene linking the overture to the opening recitative, and a tragic finale culminating in the death of a central character.

Ifigenia in Tauride is long and complex, consisting of ten scenes per act and twenty-five musical numbers, including full-length arias, cavatinas, ensembles, and choruses. It requires extremely large forces: three separate choral groups, and sixteen different groups of supernumeraries, many of which are on stage simultaneously. Although there are many full-length solo arias, the role of the solo singer is clearly de-emphasized by the numerous ensembles interwoven into the fabric of the drama. Another progressive feature is the occasional suspension of the Metastasian exit convention, by which Verazi facilitates smooth transitions between scenes. Ensembles and choruses occur more frequently in *Ifigenia in Tauride* than in *Sofonisba*: the libretto includes two trios, four scenes with chorus, a quartet and two duets. The trios and quartet use "diminishing forces". One of the duets is unconventional on two counts: in an age when duets were usually sung by the leading couple, it is assigned to Oreste and Pilade, and it is momentarily interrupted by a third character, Ifigenia.

Ifigenia in Tauride was more heavily revised for Turin than *Sofonisba*, but the changes in both operas reflect administrative concerns and illustrate the priorities of Turin's Cavalieri with regard to production. The Turinese *Oreste* retained both the lavishness and dramatic force of Verazi's *Ifigenia in Tauride* and several of its innovations, in spite of many alterations: the greatest of which was the deletion of

[17] The following summary is drawn from Daniel Heartz, "Traetta in Vienna: *Armida* (1761) and *Ifigenia in Tauride* (1763)", *Studies in Music from the University of Western Ontario*, 7 (1982): 65–88; idem, s.v. "Traetta, Tommaso", *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*; and Marita P. McClymonds, s.v. "Ifigenia in Tauride" (i), *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. See also *idem*, "Coltellini, Traetta, and the Revitalization of Opera Seria", in *Austria 996–1996: Music in a Changing Society*, ed. Walter Kreyszig, in preparation.

[18] Cited in Heartz, "Traetta in Vienna" (see n. 17), 80.

[19] See Corneilson "Opera at Mannheim 1770–1778", Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina (1992), 99–100; and David DiChiera, "The Life and Operas of Gian Francesco de Majo", Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles (1962), 113–49. This work is discussed at length in Baker, "Italian Opera at the Court of Mannheim" (see n. 8), chapter 7.

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the many ensembles and choruses.[20] The recitatives were shortened, changed, and telescoped in almost every scene, but the texts of the dramatically strong solo scenes were not changed.[21] No significant changes were made to the visual elements of the stage spectacle in Turin. The riveting opening and closing scenes were preserved, including the opening scene's pantomime, and although the choral poetry was absent, the groups that sang the choruses were present in *Oreste* and performed the same stage action.

Turin's *Oreste* featured an important innovation that did not originate with the Mannheim production. The *entr'acte* ballets in Turin were traditionally independent from the acts of the opere serie they ornamented. But the choreographer Giuseppe Salamoni linked both the text and the content of the ones in *Oreste* to the action of the opera *Enea nel Lazio* (1760) – an innovation reflecting Viennese practice.[22] Furthermore, *Oreste*'s final ballet portrayed the destruction of Toante's temple, continuing the action that occurred in the opera's final scenes.[23]

Less progressively, *Oreste* included several new arias, some replacing the deleted ensembles;[24] the role of Oreste was thus greatly enhanced. In the original libretto, Oreste sings two full-length arias and a cavatina, and participates in both duets. In Turin, he sings the two original full-length arias and cavatina, two additional full-length arias (one of which is part of an added scene) and one added cavatina. The text of one of his original arias is lengthened as well. These enhancements of the role, and the change in the opera's title, suggest that the libretto was chosen specifically to showcase the leading singer: Giovanni Manzuoli. One of the era's greatest soprano castrati, Manzuoli was the most highly acclaimed singer the Regio engaged during this period. He sang the leading roles in Turin in both 1763–64 and 1765–66. The great successes of both seasons were certainly due at least in part to his presence: an appreciative Turinese audience member described him as "perhaps the best soprano [castrato] ever heard before in the theatre: one could equate his vocal talents with those of Somis on the violin."[25]

[20] Other minor changes involve the shortening of recitative texts, additions of arias and scenes, and variants in aria texts.

[21] Examples of these include Oreste's first accompanied recitative and aria during which the Furies torment him, and Ifigenia's "ghost scene" and aria that close Act II, during which she feels herself shadowed by spirits.

[22] Butler, "Operatic Reform in Turin" (see n. 3), chapter 3.

[23] Turin libretto, ballets listed on a single unnumbered leaf at the end. The final ballet of *Sofonisba*, entitled "Le Allegrezze per le vittorie di Scipione" (Turin libretto, 55) was also associated with the opera's subject, although it was not linked with the final scenes in the same way. On ballets at the Regio see Alberto Testa, "Cronologia dei Balli, 1740–1936", in Marie-Thérèse Bouquet, Valeria Gualerzi and Alberto Testa, *Cronologie*, vol. 5 of *Storia del Teatro Regio di Torino* (Turin, 1988) (see n. 4), 313–453.

[24] Several scenes were added to the Turin revision as well. These include I, 11 and 12 (18–19) and II, 9 (34–35).

[25] [Pietro Pariati], *Arianna e Teseo* (Turin: Gaspare Bayno, 1764), I-Tn, coll. Collegio San Francesco 433/1, manuscript annotation. The violin concertos and sonatas of Giovanni Battista Somis, Turinese composer and violinist, were internationally known; see Glenn Eric Burdette, "The Violin Sonatas of Giovanni Battista Somis (1686–1763), including an Edition of Opus 3", Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati (1993).

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The changes to both librettos – especially the inclusion or elimination of choruses – are better understood in the context of the habitual practices of Turin's Directors and the larger constraints under which they worked. The production issues most relevant to this discussion are the ways in which singers, composers and copyists were hired and employed, and the number and timing of rehearsals.

Singers

Throughout the century, the Directors at the Regio routinely hired solo singers for an entire carnival season, and they contacted composers only after most of the singers were engaged. First hired for a given season were the singers of the first rank, who sang roles of the same rank in both operas of a season. They were chosen approximately a full year before the first opera of the season went into production, and well before most of the other decisions were made. The first opera of 1763–64, *Arianna e Teseo*, opened on 26 December 1763; Manzuoli may have been hired as much as a year and a half before this date. Camilla Mattei, the soprano, was hired on 19 March 1762. Most of the other singers were hired between January and March of 1763. For the 1765–66 season, Manzuoli was clearly the opera's focal point, as evidenced by the early date on which he signed his contract for the season: 6 July 1764, approximately a year and a half before the opening of the first opera of the season. Indeed, he was in such great demand that in January 1765 Monsieur Pitt of London's Royal Theatre asked the Cavalieri to release the singer from his Turinese contract so that he might perform in London in 1766 – a request the Directors denied.[26]

Hiring the remaining singers for the 1765–66 season seems not to have been done exactly according to rank, in contrast to the practice followed in earlier seasons.[27] The Directors had already hired the tenor Gaetano Ottani in 1764 for two successive seasons.[28] Next to be chosen after Manzuoli was the *seconda donna*, De Grandis, who was hired in mid-April 1764. In early June, Giuseppina Maker, the *prima donna*, was sent a contract that her father returned in early July. Antonio Priori

[26] ASCT, *Ordinati*, vol. 6, p. 53, 27 January 1765: "Il Signor conte di Bardassano avendo riferto che il Sig. Cav. Raiberti ha communicato lettera di Mons. Pitt, il quale richiede gli SSri Direttori di lasciare in libertà il musico Manzoli per cantare sul Teatro di Londra nell'anno 1766 . . . determinato rispondere . . . che come si tratta di servire la Real Corte, non si può ne si deve aderire all'istanza del prefato Mr Pitt." A copy of the response sent to Pitt follows soon after this entry: 54, 2 February: "Risposta alla richiesta per il Musico Manzoli . . . la nostra Società non può dispensarsi della di lei persona per l'anno prossimo venturo, che è gradita da S.M., dalla Reale Famiglia, dalla Corte, e da tutto il Pubblico, quindi si attende infallantemente al suolito tempo." This request must have come on the heels of Manzuoli's great success in London in the previous season, where, at the King's Theatre, he drew a "universal thunder" of applause. See Kathleen Hansell, s.v. "Manzuoli", in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. On Manzuoli in London see also Elizabeth Gibson, "Italian Opera in London, 1750–1775: Management and Finances", *Early Music*, 18 (1990): 47–59. The "Mons. Pitt" mentioned in this entry was probably the same "Guglielmo Pitt" to whom Algarotti addressed his *Saggio sopra l'opera in music* (see Algarotti, Saggi, 147).

[27] Contracts for Manzuoli, Ottani, Priori, Melano, Maker (Maccherini), and Degrandis are located in ASCT, *Carte sciolte* 6247 (1765–66 season).

[28] Hiring dates for this season are located in ASCT, *Ordinati*, vol. 6.

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Table 1. Payments to singers and composers, 1763–64 and 1765–66[64]

	1763–64
	Arianna e Teseo
	Sofonisba
Singers:	Giovanni Manzuoli, *primo uomo*, zecchini 1,150 (*c.* lire 10,886.13.4)
	Camilla Mattei, *prima donna*, zecchini 450 (*c.* lire 4,260)
	Domenico Panzacchi, *tenore*, zecchini 320 (*c.* lire 3,029.6.8)
	Angiolo Monanni (detto Manzolino), *sec. uomo*, zecchini 170
	Cecilia Grassi, *seconda donna*, zecchini 200 (*c.* lire 1,893.6.8)
	Giuseppe Vignati, *terzo uomo*, zecchini 50 (*c.* lire 473.6.8)
Composers:	Giuseppe Pasqua, zecchini 150 (lire 1,420)
	Baldassare Galuppi, luggi d'oro 100 (lire 1,662.10)
	1765–66
	Alessandro nell'Indie
	Oreste
Singers:	Giovanni Manzuoli, *primo uomo*, zecchini 1,150 (lire 10,886.13.4)
	Gaetano Ottani, *primo tenore*, lire 2,600
	Antonio Priori, *secondo uomo*, zecchini 160 (lire 1,514.13.4)
	Giacomo Mellano (detto Calcina), *secondo tenore*, lire 600
	Giuseppina Maker, *prima donna*, zecchini 360 (lire 3,408)
	Marianna DeGrandis, *seconda donna*, zecchini 160 (lire 1,514.13.4)
Composers:	Antonio Sacchini, lire 946.13.4
	Carlo Monza, lire 757.6.8

[64]With four exceptions, payments given here are drawn from contracts located in ASCT, *Carte sciolte* 6247. The amount to be paid to each individual is given in the body of the contract, which is usually followed by a paragraph confirming the receipt of the same amount, lire equivalence for payments in other currencies, the individual's signature, and date of receipt. Fees from the contracts conflict at times with those given in Bouquet, *Il teatro di corte* (see n. 4), 310–11 and 316–18 for *Sofonisba* and *Oreste* respectively. In cases for which contracts are unavailable (Giovanni Manzuoli and Angiolo Monanni, for 1763–64 and Antonio Sacchini and Carlo Monza for 1765–66), I have quoted fees from Bouquet (lire equivalent for Manzuoli taken from contract of 1765–66, for which he earned the same fee). Fees from contracts correspond with those reported in the *Libri conti* for the seasons in question.

signed his contract in late July and the Turinese singer Melano signed his in early November. Most of the lead singers, then, were in place five months before opening of the first opera of the season.

Consistent with eighteenth-century practice, Turin's star-caliber singers earned exorbitant sums. Payments to singers and composers for the 1763–64 and 1765–66 seasons are given in Table 1. Giovanni Manzuoli earned 1,150 zecchini for 1763–64, slightly more than 10,000 lire. Camilla Mattei, an internationally known soprano, earned 450 zecchini, or approximately 4,260 lire. By contrast, Galuppi, despite his reputation as one of the era's great opera composers, received only a small fraction of this: 1,662 lire – which was, nevertheless, the highest sum paid to any composer in Turin in this decade.

The singers' contracts indicate the month during which they were to arrive in Turin and the length of their stay, which lasted through the run of the second opera. Most of the singers were required to be present by the middle of November, a little over a month before the opening of the first opera of a season. Contracts throughout the 1760s reveal a correlation between a singer's renown and the lateness of the date that he or she was allowed to arrive in the city. For example the well-known Ottani was to arrive by the end of November for the 1764–65 season,

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but the even more popular Manzuoli was given until the beginning of December. We might surmise on the basis of the previous season that the terms were the same for that year as well.[29] This would have put him in Turin only two or three weeks before the opening of the season.

Composers

The Directors routinely hired the most sought-after composers of the era for second operas of carnival seasons and allotted a considerable length of time to search for them. Librettos might be chosen around the time that composers were hired, but only rarely does a composer's contract indicate the title of the work he was to set.

The amount of time allotted for the selection of composers for 1763–64 reflects their relative popularity. The Directors needed over a year to complete the search for Galuppi for *Sofonisba*, but only seven months to find a composer for the first opera. Clearly they anticipated that a search aimed at composers with international reputations, such as Traetta, Galuppi, and Johann Christian Bach (the three composers considered for *Sofonisba*), would take longer than one focused on lesser-known composers like Giuseppe Pasqua, the composer of the first opera of the season.[30] The Directors sent Galuppi his contract in early April 1763 and selected the libretto for *Sofonisba* shortly thereafter.[31]

Selection of composers for 1765–66 seems to have been the opposite of the norm. Turin's first choice of the composer for the second opera of 1765–66 was Carlo Monza, *maestro di cappella* at Milan, who, although respected, did not enjoy the international reputation of Traetta, Jommelli, or Galuppi. The Directors might have chosen a lesser-known composer for this opera because of Manzuoli's high payment. Or perhaps the hiring of Antonio Sacchini to compose the first opera of the season influenced this decision. Sacchini, an important Neapolitan composer, had been recommended to the Società by Ottani. Sacchini's reputation was greater than Monza's, as the disparity in pay for the two composers suggests: Monza earned L 757.6.8, while Sacchini was paid L 946.13.4. The Directors initially contacted Monza in April of 1765, approximately eight months before the opening date of the opera that he was to compose.[32]

The time frame for submission of the finished score was dictated to the composer in his contract. Galuppi's contract required him to send the completed score for the

[29] Manzuoli's contract for 1763–64 is missing from ASCT, *Carte sciolte* 6247.

[30] ASCT *Ordinati* vol. 5, 214, 26 February 1763. The entry states that Traetta is unavailable for the next carnival season, and therefore Galuppi and Bach will be contacted. The date on which Traetta was initially contacted is unknown. They received Galuppi's acceptance on 9 April 1763, and approached Pasqua about a month later, on 10 May.

[31] The order of entries in the *Ordinati* (vol. 5) is as follows: 31 March 1763 (p. 216), the contract was sent to Galuppi; 2 April 1763 (p. 222), two days after Galuppi's contract was sent, *Sofonisba* is unanimously selected; 23 April 1763 (p. 223), Galuppi signed and returned his contract. The contract was actually received on 9 April; document in ASCT, *Carte sciolte* 6247. The dates of the entries in the *Ordinati* do not necessarily reflect the exact dates upon which the events referred to in them occurred.

[32] ASCT, *Ordinati*, vol. 6, 64, 10 April 1765.

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first two acts by the end of October 1763 and to bring the third with him when he arrived in the city no later than the end of December. Composers were to remain in the city and to play the harpsichord for the opening performances.

Copyists

For second operas of carnival seasons, the copyists were to receive the composer's score for an opera's first two acts within thirty days before the first performance (or "as soon as possible", a marginal annotation on the contract), and the third act at the first performance of the first opera – which occurred approximately twenty to thirty days before the opening of the second. The copyists were to prepare copies of parts for the instrumentalists "by the first rehearsal", and for the singers "according to custom".[33] Although we do not know when the singers would have received their music for a second opera of a season, it would not have occurred more than thirty days before opening because of the copying schedule. In fact, the singers probably received their parts much later, since the copyists could not begin to copy a composer's original score until he sent it – around thirty days before opening. For the 1763–64 season, then, the singers would have been preparing the music for *Sofonisba* while performing almost nightly in *Arianna e Teseo*, which opened on 26 December and ran for twenty-seven performances, the longest run of any first opera of the season during the second half of the century.[34]

Rehearsal periods

For second operas of carnival seasons, presumably some private rehearsals with the composer and singers occurred between the composer's arrival in Turin and the end of January. However this probably did not occur daily, since the singers were performing nightly in the season's first opera. The contracts for most of the singers in both seasons indicate that they were to arrive in Turin around the middle of November, a little over one month before the opening of the first opera of the season. From this point on, they would presumably have been completely occupied with rehearsals for the first opera.

In Turin, the first opera of a season opened on 26 or 27 December, and the second around mid-January – earlier or later depending on the success of the first work.[35] Performances were given daily with the exception of Fridays and occasionally Tuesdays. Most operas received about twenty performances, but the most popular received up to twenty-eight. Depending on the success of the first opera,

[33] "per la prima prova" . . . "secondo il Consueto." ASCT, *Carte sciolte* 6244, contract for Francesco Antonio and Giuseppe Antonio Le Messier and Giuseppe Chiaves, copyists, 28 April 1759.

[34] First operas averaged between fifteen and twenty performances; see Bouquet *et al.*, *Cronologie* (see n. 23), 75–77.

[35] The *Libri conti* give the dates on which operas opened. A chronological list of operas at the Regio including opening dates is found in Bouquet, *et al.*, *Cronologie*, 75–92. For information on the Regio's performance schedule see Bouquet, *Il teatro di corte* (see n. 4), chapter 3.

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then, as much as two weeks or as little as a few days might remain between the closing of the first opera and the opening of the second.

Arianna e Teseo's success must have shortened the amount of available rehearsal time for *Sofonisba*. While the archival documents are generally silent regarding specific rehearsal days, the Directors discussed the production of *Sofonisba* in more detail than other operas. Rehearsals involving multiple personnel occurred during a very brief period of only five days before opening. One document, for example, notes as follows:

> The following rehearsals, for music, scenes, and ballets, have been planned:
> Monday, rehearsal of the music at 5:30, without supernumeraries.
> Ball at the Teatro Carignano [that evening].
> Tuesday evening, staging of the supernumeraries, and rehearsal of scenes.
> Wednesday morning, rehearsal of music.
> After lunch, rehearsal of scenes.
> Ball at the Teatro Carignano [that evening].
> Thursday, run-through of the opera.
> Friday after lunch, rehearsal of scenes.
> That evening, general rehearsal of the ballets.[36]

The opera opened on the following night, Saturday, 4 February.

Short rehearsal periods were not unique to the second operas of the seasons, however. With Sacchini's *Alessandro nell'Indie*, the first opera of the 1765–66 season, for example, the composer was to send the completed score of the opera to Turin in October, but in fact he declined to send "the most important arias", preferring to wait and compose them in Turin "to better adapt them to the abilities of the singers".[37] And this schedule was not unique to this season. The composer arrived in Turin a month before opening bringing with him the third act of the opera. At least some of the singers would already have arrived by then. Presumably preparation of all music began at that time, which by now might have been a week or two before opening of the first opera. When the first opera opened, there remained only about a month before the second opera opened. Since the first opera was performed almost nightly on the Regio stage, most rehearsals for the second

[36] ASCT, *Ordinati*, vol. 5, 250, 28 January 1764. (Also quoted in Bouquet, *Il teatro di corte* [see n. 4], 218; rehearsal schedules for three additional operas are transcribed on 217–19.) Although it is impossible to determine exactly what occurred at these rehearsals from the terminology in this list, presumably "prove di scene" involved staging, while "prove di musica" might have involved only musical preparation of recitatives, arias, and ensembles. Choruses and instrumental pieces such as the overture and the opera's single march might have been reserved for the rehearsals at which the supernumeraries were present, since these involved stage action. During carnival season, masked balls were given at the Teatro Carignano; these appear in this list presumably because they would have involved the orchestral musicians.

[37] ASCT, *Ordinati*, vol. 6, 50, 22 December 1764: "Risposta al Sr. Ottani cui si disse . . . che (Sacchini) dovesse dare almeno per tutto ottobre tutta l'Opera per intiero scritta in Torino, e che dovesse in persona trovarsi in Torino li 22 novembre del 1765"; ". . . Sacchini . . . intende riservarsi i pezzi d'arie più importanti, e comporli poi in Torino per adattarsi meglio all'abilità de' primi soggetti."

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opera must have taken place elsewhere. The solo singers probably did not rehearse on stage until several days before opening at most.

Elimination of choruses and ensembles, and their reinstatement in *Sofonisba*

As mentioned above, the Regio's Directors eliminated the choruses in *Oreste*, and first eliminated but then restored them in *Sofonisba*. Although the records are silent on the subject of *Oreste*'s choruses, summaries of the Directors' meetings refer several times to the choruses of Verazi's original libretto for *Sofonisba*, and reveal that they presented significant practical problems:

[3 January 1764] The Marchese di Barolo [the Director of Music], having stated the necessity of various choruses in Sofonisba, has been authorized to provide twelve musicians for the choruses, providing that the cost does not exceed L 2 for each musician.[38]
[17 January 1764] The Marchese di Barolo having reported the difficulty in finding the number of musicians necessary for the choruses with respect to the established payment, it has been decided that the choruses will be eliminated.[39]
[21 January 1764] At the suggestion of the Marchese di Barolo, it has been decided to present the choruses in the second opera with the total of twelve [singers] provided that it does not exceed an onorarium of L 2 for every performance.[40]
[16 March 1764] Payment of L 50 has been sent . . . to Giuseppe Andriolo for having provided, directed, and assisted with the choruses of the second opera of last carnival [season].[41]

The choruses were thus included in Turin's initial version of the libretto, but were cut when Giuseppe Andriolo, the musician assigned the task of procuring the choral singers, could not find sufficient performers. After the choruses were cut, the decision to reinstate them occurred sometime between 17 and 21 January; thus the singers, ten rather than twelve as originally planned, must have been found within this period.[42]

Andriolo's difficulty in procuring choral singers in Turin attests to the practical difficulties choruses posed for Italian theatres. The management of the Teatro San Carlo in Naples confronted similar obstacles: this theatre lacked the trained personnel required to sustain the regular inclusion of choruses until later decades. Yet Turin's management produced choruses in *Sofonisba* and in many operas there starting around mid-century in spite of financial and logistical hindrances.[43] This

[38] ASCT, *Ordinati*, vol. 5, 247.
[39] ASCT, *Ordinati*, vol. 5, 248.
[40] ASCT, *Ordinati*, vol. 5, 249–50.
[41] ASCT, *Ordinati*, vol. 5, p. 254.
[42] ASCT, *Libro Mastro*, vol. 46, 18, payment to Giuseppe Andriolo for L 560, "... per aver provisto dieci persone cantanti nel cori della seconda opera di Sofonisba a L 20 per cadun esecuzione."
[43] Choruses appeared as early as 1750, in the festa teatrale *Il Vittorio d'Imeneo* (set by Galuppi). Works of the 1760s to include choruses were *Ifigenia in Aulide* (1762), *Sofonisba* (1764), *L'Olimpiade* (1764), and they appeared in four operas in succession from 1775–77: *Cleopatra*, *Sicotencal*, *Calipso*, and *Gengis-Kan*.

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testifies at least to the Directors' commitment to the enhancement of stage spectacle, and possibly to their sympathy for reform-inspired innovation. It was the Director of Music who urged the inclusion of choruses in *Sofonisba*; he seems to have understood the integral role they played in the drama. The preservation of this innovative element of Verazi's libretto in Turin rested on the influence of this individual, and it is interesting to gauge his power on the basis of this event.

By the time the choral singers for *Sofonisba* were finally hired, there may have been as many as eighteen or fewer than fourteen days to instruct them in their music, to stage them, and to provide costumes for them – an extremely brief period considering the number of individuals involved and the nature of their participation in the opera's action. Moreover, the rehearsal schedule indicates that they had no more than four rehearsals on stage (and perhaps fewer, since the schedule does not specifically mention them). How the choral singers were eventually located is unknown: the Società Directors did not raise their payment. The identity of the choristers is also unknown, but if Turin followed the practice of Florence in the 1770s – where choruses consisted of shopkeepers and their assistants – they may have been amateur musicians.[44] If so, Turin's Directors might not have thought them deserving of higher payment.

The manuscript score for the opera reflecting the Turinese production transmits the choral pieces intact, thus corroborating the archival evidence.[45] Galuppi's musical setting of Verazi's poetry for the choruses very likely reflects both the limited ability of the choral singers and the brief time in which the pieces were written and taught to them: harmonically simple, limited in range, and with conjunct melodies, the choruses are appropriate for singers of limited musical knowledge. Moreover, each choral movement accompanied stage action – another advantage of, and perhaps a reason for, the stylistic simplicity of the choral music.

Two unpaginated, printed leaves inserted in some exemplars of the libretto further attest to the reinstatement of the choruses and reveal other changes to the opera that may have been made at the last moment. Together they produce a vivid picture of the vast amount of work accomplished by many people immediately before the performance.[46] The first added leaf (Fig. 1 [recto] and Fig. 2 [verso]), appears in four of the five exemplars conserved in Turin and contains material from Verazi's original libretto: the choruses of Acts I and II and a description of the stage

[44] "Passing through Florence on his way north [Antonio Salieri] found the manager of the principal house just ready to bring out his *La fiera di Venezia* [performed in Florence in 1779]. . . . [At the beginning of the rehearsal] not a chorus singer was to be seen. "Why are they so late?" asked Salieri. "Because the shops are not yet shut", was the answer. The explanation was that most of the Italian choruses then were made up of shopkeepers and their assistants who, not knowing one note from another, learned their parts by rote . . ." Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *Salieri: Rival of Mozart*, ed. Theodore Albrecht (Kansas City, Missouri, 1989), 67.

[45] Score preserved in I-Tf, I V 18-19-20. This score was produced by the Turinese theatre copyists and can be taken to reflect Turinese practice.

[46] I am grateful to the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino for permission to reproduce these pages in my dissertation, from which this essay is drawn.

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MUTAZIONE NELL' ATTO I.

Pag. 13.

Magnifico Padiglione militare aperto, che lascia vedere interamente più indietro il Campo de' Romani. Ponte militare nel mezzo sul fiume Amsaga. Roghi più avanti per la combustione de' Guerrieri estinti nella battaglia.

Pag. 14. *Dopo seduto Scipione, si aggiunga subito:*

CORO de' Guerrieri Romani.

Morendo rinasce
A vita migliore
Chi sempre vivendo
Calcato d'onore
Ha il retto sentier.
Ma muore nascendo
All'ozio chi nasce,
Chi vive al piacer.

Mentre cantasi il Coro, alcuni de' Guerrieri Romani mettono il fuoco ai Roghi. Si alzano quindi due Are rustiche, e si adornano di varj Trofei militari, nel tempo che cantasi dagl' istessi Romani il seguente

CORO.

Fig. 1: Added leaf (recto) in Turin libretto of *Sofonisba*.

setting in Act I.[47] For Act I there are two sections of verse to be set to music, separated by a direction indicating the use of the stage setting.[48] The chorus in Act II scene 4 very likely followed an added march, and music for a march occurring in Act II appears in the score of the Turinese production.[49] Certainly both the setting and the stage directions given in the leaf evoke a procession for which a march would have been necessary.[50]

The second added leaf (Fig. 3), found in one of the libretto exemplars examined, indicates the addition of one aria and the revision of another.[51] First, a few lines of

[47] "Funeral pyres a bit further downstage for the incineration of the warriors killed in battle." These leaves were added after printing, collating, folding, and stacking of the gatherings, but presumably before binding.

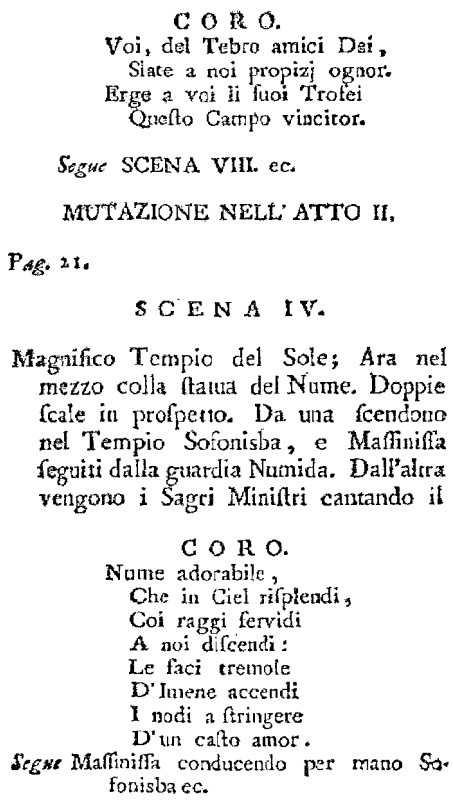
[48] "While the chorus is sung, some of the Roman warriors set fire to the pyres. Afterwards these become two crude altars, and they are adorned with various military trophies, at the same time that the following chorus is sung by the same Romans."

[49] I-Tf, I V 19, unnumbered page with heading: "Atto 2° Marchia."

[50] "Magnificent temple of the sun; altar in the middle with a statue of the god [of the sun]. Two staircases at the rear. From one descend Sofonisba and Massinissa to the temple followed by the Numidian guards. From the other arrive the sacred ministers singing the chorus."

[51] I-Tn, Coll. Collegio San Francesco 433/2. Text appears on recto only. The verso leaf is blank.

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CORO.
Voi, del Tebro amici Dei,
Siate a noi propizj ognor.
Erge a voi li ſuoi Trofei
Queſto Campo vincitor.

Segue SCENA VIII. ec.

MUTAZIONE NELL' ATTO II.

Pag. 21.

SCENA IV.

Magnifico Tempio del Sole; Ara nel mezzo colla ſtatua del Nume. Doppie ſcale in proſpetto. Da una ſcendono nel Tempio Soſonisba, e Maſſiniſſa ſeguiti dalla guardia Numida. Dall'altra vengono i Sagri Miniſtri cantando il

CORO.
Nume adorabile,
Che in Ciel riſplendi,
Coi raggi fervidi
A noi diſcendi:
Le faci tremole
D'Imene accendi
I nodi a ſtringere
D'un caſto amor.

Segue Maſſiniſſa conducendo per mano Soſonisba ec.

Fig. 2: Added leaf (verso) in Turin libretto of *Sofonisba*.

recitative and an aria for Siface are added to the end of Act II scene 9. Then a variant text is given for Cirene's aria in Act III scene 1.[52] While the addition of arias is a commonplace in opera seria, Siface's aria may have had particular significance: this role was sung by Angiolo Monanni, known as "Manzolino".[53] This nickname is a diminutive of Manzuoli, the singer of the role of Massinissa, and Monanni's voice teacher. In Turin star-quality singers had the power to influence even the choice of the operas they were to sing – in an earlier season, when the leading singers preferred the roles in one opera over those of an opera already chosen, the Directors decided in favor of the work preferred by the singers.[54] Manzuoli, as a star of the highest caliber, must have been in the position to exert considerable influence over his own arias, and it is not unlikely that he urged the addition of an aria for his

[52] The presence of both of these arias with text as indicated on the added leaf is evidence for Turinese provenance.

[53] Bouquet, *Il teatro di corte* (see n. 4), 310 n. 258.

[54] Caterina Gabrielli and Giuseppe Aprile, two of the era's leading singers, were engaged for Turin's 1761–62 season. The *Ordinati* report that the Directors decided to present *Demetrio* instead of *Catone in Utica* – the work originally planned as the first opera of the season – because these singers preferred the roles in the former to those in the latter. ASCT, *Ordinati* vol. 5, 86, 22 January 1761.

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ATTO II.

Scena IX. a carte 30. ſi muti così

Soſ. Ma . . .
Sif. Non perdiam, Regina,
Col garrire i momenti. Un punto ſolo
Del mio, del tuo deſtino oggi decide:
Si ſecondi la ſorte or che ci arride.
Deh ſe nel petto, o cara,
Non hai di ſaſſo il core,
Idolo mio, deh ſenti
Del mio martir pietà.
Penſa fra tanto affanno,
Che volano i momenti,
E che ſi perde intanto
La noſtra libertà.
Deh ec.
Vieni ec.

ATTO III.

Scena prima ſi muti così l'aria di Circne.

Ah di pietà v'accenda
Una tradita amante;
Mi baſta, che ſi renda
L'ingrato al primo amor.
Bramo vendetta, è vero,
Di così grave eccesſo;
Ma poi non voglio oppreſſo
L'idolo del mio cor.
Ah ec.

Fig. 3: Added leaf in Turin libretto of *Sofonisba*, showing added and revised arias.

student. Moreover, the score mentioned above includes an aria for Massinissa not present in the libretto or in the added pages.[55]

Ifigenia in Tauride's choruses differ significantly from *Sofonisba*'s, which might explain their omission. Although the singers of the two choral pieces in *Sofonisba* perform stage action, the poetic structure of their pieces, like their music, is simple, and the movements are relatively self-contained. By contrast, Verazi constructed *Ifigenia in Tauride*'s four choruses so that they sometimes function as independent units, but sometimes the choral singers interact with the principal characters. The larger number of scenes involving choruses, the more complex structure of the poetry, and the more extensive involvement of the choral singers in the drama, would have posed unusual challenges to Turin's performing forces, never part of the standing company and surely quite various as to training. These challenges would have seemed especially severe in 1763–64, when rehearsal time for *Sofonisba* was especially limited. Also, since most traveling virtuosi did not usually rehearse with the other singers in a production, complex ensembles such as these would have

[55] "Cara se le mie pene", I-Tf I V 19, fols. 1r-6v, copy labeled with singer's name on vocal line (not that of the character as in other arias). Textually equivalent to copy at I-Tci, Mus. Ms 53, which carries an attribution to the composer and the name of the character on the vocal line.

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Table 2. Items and additional expenses required for *Sofonisba* (ASCT, *Libri conti*, vol. 46, pp. 18–25). Costs in lire (L)

Expense	Cost
Payment to the Galliari brothers, scenographers L 5300 payment for entire season; half for *Sofonisba*	L 2,650
Payment to three brass players for having performed on stage "alli Trombetti Sig. Giuseppe e Giov. Olliva e Giuseppe Bottero per aver suonato sul palcho nel corzo della 2nda opera".	L 120
Payment to fourteen footmen for assistance with horses "al S.gr Veglio per no. 14 palafrenieri che hanno servito a cavallo"	L 395
Payment to a designer for feathers for the horses "al Steffano Bona per le piume e egrete per li cavalli"	L 128
Payment to a sergeant, three drummers, and ninety-eight soldiers who served as supernumeraries "un sarg.te e 3 tamburri e 98 soldati che hanno fatte le comparse"	L 957
Payment to designers for enabling supernumeraries to scale the wall "alli Tapissieri Ducotto Resca, e Salomone per aver fatto le comparse a dar la scalata"	L 46
Payment to leading dancers for having performed in battle scenes [to the leading dancers] "per aver servito nelle battaglie del dramma"	L 144
Payment to a soldier and drum player from the Royal Militia for the fireworks during the battle scene "un soldato, e tamburro dell'Artiglieria per li fuochi della battaglia"	L 149
Payment to the boy who portrayed Sofonisba's son "a Giuseppe Clara per aver rapp.to nella seconda opera il figlio di Sofonisba"	L 28
Subtotal of expenses:	L 4,617
Reimbursement to Giuseppe Andriolo for payment to choral singers ("a G. Andriolo per aver provisto dieci persone cantanti nei cori della 2.a opera")	L 560
Payment to Giuseppe Andriolo for having prepared the choral singers ("a G. Andriolo per aver provisto, ammaestrato, ed assistito alli cori")	L 50
Payment to Marino (costume designer) for the choral singers' costumes ("al Sr. Marino per li abiti de cori della 2nda opera")	L 250
Payment for the choral singers' boots ("per i stivalli per i cori")	L 125
Total expenses for the choruses:	L 985
Total of extra expenses including the choruses:	L 5,602

been outside their experience.[56] Mannheim, on the other hand, had a much larger number of choral singers at its disposal: its production of *Ifigenia in Tauride* called for thirty-six singers, twelve on each part.[57] In addition, Mannheim's singers were members of a standing company and probably did not often accept commitments that entailed their presence elsewhere, thus allowing for more rehearsal time.

Production costs

In addition to the logistical difficulties posed by complex choruses, they represented an extra expense. Not only were the singers themselves paid, but Andriolo was paid for selecting and preparing them, the costume designer was paid extra for improvements made to the chorus members' two costumes – presumably one for each act – for each of the ten singers. And their boots were a separate expense. While the payment of 2 lire per choral singer per performance is admittedly slight, the total paid to the ten choristers fell roughly between the fee paid for a single

[56] Principal singers did not generally rehearse with other singers. Pietro Metastasio himself once complimented the soprano Anna de Amicis on doing so. Metastasio, *Tutte le opere*, IV, ed. Bruno Brunelli (Milan, 1954), 397, letter of 15 July 1765.

[57] Baker, "Italian Opera" (see n. 8) 311.

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season to singers of second and third ranks. Although the Società's Directors did favor choruses initially – probably for their contribution to the opera's spectacular effects[58] – extra financial resources for higher payment to the choristers might have been difficult to come by two weeks or so before opening.

Expenses for the choruses came on top of extra costs for spectacle in these operas. Table 2 shows the extraordinary expenditures for *Sofonisba*. The Galliari brothers, from the internationally renowned family of stage designers, were required to produce extremely elaborate sets.[59] Several brass players were apparently requested to play on stage at some point, a service for which they were paid extra. The live horses specified by the libretto required personnel to manage and adorn them: the fourteen footmen and the member of the costume staff who provided feathers for the horses' costumes were paid. A sergeant, three drummers, and ninety-eight soldiers rounded out the ensemble of supernumeraries, constituting a vast expense. The breaching of the city wall in the opera's opening scene involved special fees: payment was made to the decorators who provided the means for the soldiers to scale the wall, to the two solo dancers featured in the scene, and for actual fireworks, presumably representing spectacular battlefire. For providing the latter, a soldier and a drummer from the royal artillery were paid for each of the performances and a single rehearsal. Although small in comparison, special payment was made even to the child who portrayed the role of Sofonisba's young son. The *spese straordinario* for *Sofonisba* amounted to slightly more than Camilla Mattei's salary for the entire season.

Ifigenia in Tauride's choruses would have been even more expensive than *Sofonisba*'s, since the elements of spectacle were even more elaborate in Turin's *Oreste*.[60] Lists of supernumerary groups appear in the Mannheim librettos for both operas (fourteen groups in *Sofonisba* and sixteen in *Ifigenia in Tauride*), but they are absent from the initial pages in librettos for the Turin productions. Nevertheless, the collective characters the groups portray are named in the scenes in which they appear in Turin. Each individual in these large groups had a different costume, which must have presented a considerable expense.

The extremely elaborate stage designs and scenografic effects in *Oreste* must have significantly taxed the Directors' resources and limited what they were able to spend on other elements of the production. The expenses specifically pertaining to enhanced stage spectacle recall those of *Sofonisba* (see Table 3). Both librettos call for extensive participation of soldiers, frequently on horseback, and noises of

[58] When discussing production considerations for *Ifigenia in Aulide* (1761), the Directors decided to include choruses "per maggiore ornamento". ASCT, *Ordinati*, vol. 5, p. 116, 25 May 1761.

[59] Their high fee, L 5,300, included their payment and reimbursement for materials for the season.

[60] The Galliaris in Turin reproduced Quaglio's elaborate designs for *Ifigenia in Tauride* with only a few changes. At times the Turin libretto for *Oreste* describes the scenes in slightly less detail. The last design in Act I ("Cortile nella regia") was cut in Turin; instead of four scene settings in Act I there are three as in the other acts. In the Mannheim production the fire in Toante's temple begins the during the final scene. In Turin, it begins at the end of the scene and continues during the final ballet.

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Table 3. Items and additional expenses required for *Oreste* (ASCT, *Libri conti*, vol. 50, pp. 57–58)

Payment to Carlo Calcina (detto Mellano) for machine for thunder "per saldo della formazione della macchina del tuono"	L 130
Payment to military drum player for materials associated with thunder "al tamburro dell'artiglieria per cera, 90 macopata, e due Bachette per il tuono"	L 216
Payment to an individual who directed four soldiers in producing the effect of thunder "G. Batta Crivello per aver fatto condurre il tuono con quattro soldati dell'Artiglieria a ss. 6.8 cado che sono L 1.13.14 per caduna delle 4 prove"	L 43.6.8.
Payment to eleven footmen who served as supernumeraries "a undeci Palafrenieri che hanno fatto da comp.^{se}"	L 242
Payment to Baldassare Armano for dancing during the two operas of the season "per il regalo di aver ballato nelle due opere oltre la sua obbligazione"	L 300 (for both operas)

thunder, which undoubtedly occurred in the battle scenes. The account books for the season that included *Oreste* record payments to several individuals for their involvement in producing noises of thunder (consistent with the frequency with which this effect is called for in the libretto). Carlo Calcina was paid for having created a machine for the thunder; the drum player in the military was paid for various materials required for it; and an individual was paid for assisting four soldiers who produced the effect for performances and for four rehearsals. Eleven footmen were paid for their participation as supernumeraries, probably for on-stage assistance with the live horses. A dancer received extra payment for dancing at some point during opera, probably at least in the pantomime of the opening scene.[61] This scene, with its violent storm, shipwreck, and battle, and the closing scene with its destruction of the temple by fire, must have been among the most costly in the opera.

Not only were the expenses for *Oreste* already vast without the choruses, but several earlier operas almost in succession had included choruses, and it is possible that the Directors took particular notice of the expenses incurred in these productions. Finally, the exorbitant fee to be paid to Manzuoli alone for this season might have prompted them to exercise cost-cutting measures.

Conclusion

Turin's experience producing innovations pioneered at Mannheim sheds light on the practical problems that many Italian theatres likely encountered when producing innovative works – which suggests why many of the reform-inspired innovations were largely absent from opera in Italy at mid-century. For instance, Venice's Teatro Vendramino di San Salvatore was the only other Italian theatre to mount a production of *Sofonisba*, and all of the choruses and ensembles were eliminated from that production.[62] The same situation occurred in the single Italian production of *Ifigenia in Tauride*, and no other Italian theatre attempted Turin's *Oreste*.

[61] His payment of L 300 includes extra dancing he apparently did during both operas of the season. He was paid separately for the *entr'acte* ballets.

[62] Mattia Verazi, *Sofonisba* (Venice: Modesto Fenzo, 1764), US-Wc, Schatz 1251.

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Turin's Teatro Regio stands apart from other Italian theatres in its interest in the innovations for which Verazi was known. It possessed a management favorably inclined toward innovation, and a theatrical facility that was among the best equipped in Italy at this time. While the Regio resembled other Italian theatres in its privileging of star singers, the works it imported from Mannheim, complete with structural innovations, played a crucial role in transforming the genre.[63] The elimination or preservation of both operas' innovative features can be attributed to circumstances surrounding production in Turin, rather than to conservative tastes. The evidence from *Sofonisba* and *Oreste* demonstrates the importance of a broader context for the study of opera seria, which ultimately leads to a more accurate assessment of the circumstances under which the transformation of this genre occurred.

[63] With regard to the calls for operatic reform, Bruce Alan Brown has noted that "... only with the right combination of artistic talent, material circumstances, and effective management could any theater afford to listen to such basic criticism". Brown, *Gluck and the French Theater in Vienna* (Oxford, 1991), 9.

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