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CORELLI, POLITICS AND MUSIC DURING THE VISIT OF PHILIP V TO NAPLES IN 1702

JOSÉ MARÍA DOMÍNGUEZ



ABSTRACT

This article discusses and places in historical context a newly discovered set of letters between Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni and his agent in Naples during the visit of King Philip V of Spain to the city in 1702. These letters, in part transcribed in an Appendix, clarify several details concerning Corelli's visit to the city and confirm that he was accompanied by the violinist Matteo Fornari as well as by a third musician, the cellist Pippo Amadei, instead of G. L. Lulier, as hitherto supposed. With new facts that augment information already known from other sources, such as the correspondence of Cardinal Francesco Maria de' Medici, the article sheds new light on disputes that occurred at this time between other musicians and their patrons, such as those involving G. B. Stuck and the Giudice family. Considering these facts in the wider context of the War of the Spanish Succession, I argue that Corelli's visit was the subject of significant political calculations on the part of Cardinal Ottoboni and members of the Spanish and Neapolitan nobility.

At the end of November 1699 the castrato Francesco Maria Ballerini was engaged in the performance of a chamber serenata at the Viennese court in which the Emperor Leopold I as well as other high-ranking persons took part. The singer, who was working as a spy for Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (1667–1740), as his letters sent to Rome reveal, suddenly realized that the serenata and similar performances provided unique opportunities to approach and influence the Emperor in favour of the Cardinal's political interests. Ballerini, in fact, suggested this to the Cardinal in a letter in which he also reported details of the serenata performance: 'La Maestà sua sonò il cembalo e ne' concerti il flauto' (His Majesty played the harpsichord and in the concerts [meaning during the instrumental sections of the work], the recorder).¹ A little more than two years later, in February 1702, while King Philip V was preparing his visit to Italy, someone asked him whether he desired to have any musicians accompany him during the journey. The king answered that the only music he wished to hear was the sound of trumpets, drums and cannons.² At this time Corelli was often playing before Clement XI at the Apostolic Palace in Rome, and the violinist was being groomed to perform as the Pope's musician in the event of a likely visit of Philip to the Eternal City.³ Leopold, Philip and Clement were to play leading roles in the War of the Spanish Succession. Music was for them a significant means of fashioning and affirming their very different and contrasting images: those of performer,

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1 Archivio Storico del Vicariato di Roma, Fondo Ottoboni, volume EEE, letter of 28 November 1699.

2 The Duke of Parma's ambassador in Madrid reported the anecdote in a letter preserved in the Archivio di Stato di Napoli, Archivio Farnesiano, busta 48/1, f. 625v.

3 See below and Document 4 in the Appendix.



warrior and holy supplicant. The function of music as an 'instrument of prestige and cultural propaganda'⁴ and of musicians as representatives of their respective patrons became a visible topic of diplomatic concern during Philip's sojourn in Naples between April and June 1702.

It is well known that Corelli travelled to Naples to play before the king on that occasion. The facts surrounding this episode are known thanks to a reference in the *Diario della città di Napoli* and to an anecdote reported by Charles Burney.⁵ The discovery of a richly informative set of letters between Cardinal Ottoboni and his Neapolitan agent Nicola Rocco allows us to revisit this episode and establish some hard facts. These letters, now preserved in the Fondo Ottoboni of the Archivio Storico del Vicariato di Roma (I-Rvic), provide a detailed description of the king's visit and pay particular attention to the movements of Corelli and his colleagues in the city. In addition to the letters by Rocco, a single letter by Tomaso d'Aquino, Fifth Prince of Castiglione (1669–1721), addressed to Ottoboni is preserved in the Fondo. In this letter Castiglione begs the Cardinal to allow Corelli to travel to Naples. There are also several unsigned drafts presumably containing Ottoboni's answers or responses to these letters.⁶ A transcription of the most important passages referring to Corelli is given below in the Appendix. Information found in these sources suggests that the purpose of Corelli's journey to Naples was as much political as musical, and that it was closely related to the interests of certain Neapolitan noblemen, especially with regard to Cardinal Ottoboni's problematic neutrality at the outbreak of the war.

On the new king's arrival in Naples, the local aristocracy immediately began to organize entertainments to occupy Philip's spare time. Perhaps they were unaware of the king's lack of interest in music, or perhaps they sought to soften his image as a warrior. The personal taste of the monarch was, in any case, of small consequence. Music was little subject to the rules of ceremony (and thus open to manipulation). It could be used to construct an attractive image of the king and to project this before a vast throng of noblemen who came to Naples from all parts of Italy to see him. Of course, the royal visit enhanced and reinforced the role of Naples as a political theatre. At Naples Philip appeared not just as King of Spain, but more specifically as King of Naples, and it was the local nobility who wished to entertain him and, at the same time, to construct his image, or at least influence his behaviour, according to their wishes and taste. To this end the most famous musicians of Italy were invited to Naples. Not by chance was Corelli among them. This task was well within the reach of local resources. Thanks to the recent patronage of Luis de la Cerda y Aragón, Ninth Duke of Medinaceli (1660–1711), who had been viceroy from 1696 to 1702, Naples then ranked among the first cities for opera in Italy.⁷ But before delving more deeply into matters musical, let us consider briefly the larger political context of the royal visit in order to have a better understanding of the information on Corelli reported in Ottoboni's letters.

In November 1700 Charles II, last of the Spanish Habsburg monarchs, died without issue. Shortly before his death he had declared Philip of Anjou, grandson of the French Bourbon King Louis XIV, his heir; but

4 Lorenzo Bianconi and Thomas Walker, 'Production, Consumption and Political Function of Seventeenth-Century Opera', *Early Music History* 4 (1984), 282.

5 On the information provided by the *Diario* and Burney see Peter Allsop, *Arcangelo Corelli: New Orpheus of Our Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 55–56. The first scholar to clarify the dates of the composer's stay in Naples was Mario Rinaldi in *Arcangelo Corelli* (Milan: Edizioni Curci, 1953), 248, according to Miguel Ángel Marín, 'La recepción de Corelli en Madrid (ca. 1680–ca. 1810)', in *Arcangelo Corelli fra mito e realtà storica: nuove prospettive d'indagine musicologica e interdisciplinare nel 350° anniversario della nascita*, ed. Stefano La Via, Antonella D'Ovidio and Gregory Richard Barnett (Florence: Olschki, 2007), volume 2, 590–593. See also Roberto Pagano, *Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti: Two Lives in One*, trans. Frederick Hammond (New York: Pendragon, 2006), 97–100, originally published in Italian as *Scarlatti Alessandro e Domenico: due vite in una* (Milan: Mondadori, 1985).

6 The volume containing the letters concerning Corelli is labelled TTTT. There is no catalogue describing the contents of the Fondo, although a summary description (reporting only a vague title and dates) is available at the Archive.

7 On the role of Medinaceli and the renewal of Naples as an operatic centre no longer dominated by imports from Venice see Lorenzo Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 197–198, originally published in Italian as *Il Seicento* (Turin: Edizioni di Torino, 1982).



this decision was unacceptable to the Austrian Habsburgs, who quickly declared war on France. Spanish territories in Italy were the main focus of the struggle, and among these the Kingdom of Naples was of the greatest importance. In September 1701 there was an uprising in Naples (*congiura di Macchia*) against Medinaceli and the Bourbons, led by the local nobility (*baronaggio*) in support of the Habsburgs. Medinaceli was able to foil the revolt, after which he instituted severely repressive measures against the Neapolitan barons. Louis XIV, who made all the important decisions for his young grandson Philip, was unhappy with this turn of events and soon relieved Medinaceli of command at Naples. Louis seems to have had two objectives: to avoid further animosity between the Neapolitan barons and the Spanish regime, and to halt the spread of authoritarianism in the *regno di Napoli*.⁸ A new Viceroy, Juan Manuel Fernández Pacheco, Duke of Escalona and Marquis of Villena (1650–1725), was appointed and arrived there at the end of February 1702.

Military operations by Austrian troops to the north and the refusal of the Pope to recognize Philip as the new King of Naples were only two of the issues that motivated the royal visit to Italy. It was, as we shall see, a very risky undertaking. As far as music is concerned, we are well into an epoch dominated by the spread of opera on the Venetian model throughout Italy and much of Europe. Although this model of operatic production embraced a strong impresarial or contractual, even capitalistic, component, individual musicians normally worked under the sponsorship of wealthy aristocrats whose patronage reflected their 'good taste and knowledge'.⁹ In other words, musicians were seen as totems of their protectors. Consider, for example, how closely the names Scarlatti and Corelli at Rome were linked to those of Christina of Sweden or Ottoboni, as well as to other aristocratic families such as those of Odescalchi, Barberini and Colonna, and to various ambassadors, princes and dukes of the northern states in addition to the Viceroys of Naples.

How, then, did the new Viceroy and the Neapolitan nobility prepare to entertain their young sovereign? A glimpse at Ottoboni's letters will provide the answer. Viceroy Escalona decided to produce an opera to be performed for the king: *Tiberio imperatore d'Oriente*, a work already heard at Venice with a libretto by Giovanni Domenico Pallavicini and music by Francesco Gasparini.¹⁰ Alessandro Scarlatti set it to music for the production at Naples. On 12 March 1702 Castiglione sent a letter from Naples to Cardinal Ottoboni in Rome seeking to engage Corelli to take part in the performance of this opera (see Document 1 in the Appendix). According to this letter, the excellence of the violinist would enhance the performance. In the letter it was pointed out that the request stemmed from Escalona himself. The prince also promised the Cardinal that a letter by the Viceroy would soon be sent with the formal petition. Finally, Castiglione revealed that the poet Silvio Stampiglia was also involved in the operatic production. Stampiglia, the letter says, would suggest that Corelli be accompanied by an 'altro virtuoso Matteo' – a reference to Matteo Fornari, pupil and friend of Arcangelo, who eventually travelled to Naples, as confirmed by subsequent letters. Stampiglia had previously served Ottoboni at Rome and now had close ties with the authorities at Naples, where, working as a court poet, he had provided opera librettos during the rule of Medinaceli. His last five dramas before 1702 had premiered at the San Bartolomeo Theatre. The presence of Stampiglia's name in the prince's letter suggests that the poet may have made contributions to the royal opera, perhaps by adapting the Venetian libretto to the requirements of Naples. The letter from the Viceroy promised to Ottoboni never arrived, provoking a diplomatic row that almost prevented Corelli's visit. Before considering in further detail the political consequences of Corelli's journey, we should review the information provided in the correspondence.

8 Giuseppe Galasso, *Napoli spagnola dopo Masaniello: politica, cultura, società* (Florence: Sansoni, 1982), 629.

9 Claudio Annibaldi, 'Towards a Theory of Musical Patronage in the Renaissance and Baroque: The Perspective from Anthropology and Semiotics', *Recercare* 10 (1998), 174.

10 The details of the libretto are taken from Lorenzo Bianconi, 'Funktionen des Operntheaters in Neapel bis 1700 und die Rolle Alessandro Scarlattis', in *Colloquium Alessandro Scarlatti. Würzburg, 1975*, ed. Wolfgang Osthoff (Tutzing: Schneider, 1979), 101–102.



The negotiations with Ottoboni to clarify the details of the trip were carried out during April. The fact that the request for Corelli's services was not made by the Viceroy himself provoked bitter disappointment with Ottoboni (whether real or feigned, we do not know). Thus the cardinal purposely delayed his answer to Castiglione in order to underline his anger. Castiglione's role in these negotiations is a new fact revealed in these letters. Several reasons may explain why the Viceroy asked Castiglione to mediate in this affair. First, Escalona was newly arrived at his post in Naples and may not have known much about the persons involved. Secondly, Castiglione was, like Cardinal Ottoboni, a member of the Arcadian Academy.¹¹ Thirdly, Escalona and the prince were close friends: the new Viceroy became, in fact, a guest of the prince after his arrival in Naples.¹²

King Philip entered Naples on 17 April, when the details of Corelli's visit were still under negotiation. The musician's arrival in the city must have taken place around 1 May.¹³ A letter by Nicola Rocco written on 6 May (see Document 6 in the Appendix) contains the first reference confirming that 'Corelli [sic] e suoi compagni sono continuamente a palazzo sino alla mezza notte' (Corelli and his colleagues are constantly in the royal palace until midnight). The same letter reveals that certain details of the operatic production were arranged to suit Corelli's requirements. The premiere was to take place two days later in the royal palace.¹⁴ The correspondence also confirms that the third musician accompanying Arcangelo and Matteo Fornari was the cellist Pippo Amadei – not Giovanni Lorenzo Lulier, as erroneously supposed hitherto.¹⁵

These letters show that Nicola Rocco closely supervised the activities and movements of the three musicians in the city. In fact, Rocco seems to have reported every issue that arose concerning the musicians, suggesting that their behaviour and treatment at Naples reflected upon the status of their Roman patron. For instance, Pippo Amadei was involved in an argument with another cello player, Giovanni Battista Stuck, who at the time was a chamber musician in the service of the Count and Countess of Lemos.¹⁶ The

11 Anna Maria Giorgetti Vichi, *Gli Arcadi dal 1690 al 1800: onomasticon* (Roma: Arcadia Accademia letteraria italiana, 1977), 175. On the life and training of Castiglione see Jorge Fernández-Santos, "'Sin atender a la distancia de payses...': el fasto nupcial de los príncipes de Feroletto entre Nápoles y Mirándola', *Reales Sitios* 43/167 (2006), 29–49.

12 The prince offered Escalona his palace at Santa Lucia while the former Viceroy prepared his departure; the fittings and adornments put in place for this occasion were so lavish that everyone in Naples visited the palace 'per goder la vista della preziosità degli apparati, la rarità delle pitture, la prodigiosa quantità degli argenti e di tutte l'altre inestimabili masserizie e suppelletti' (to enjoy the view of the precious decorations, the rare paintings, the huge amount of silverware and all the rest of the priceless furniture), as reported by the *Gazzetta di Napoli* on 24 January 1702 (there is a copy of this issue in the Archivio di Stato di Napoli, Archivio Caracciolo di Santo Buono, Ambascerie e vicereame del Perù, busta 32, unknown to Ausilia Magaudda and Danilo Costantini, *Musica e spettacolo nel regno di Napoli attraverso lo spoglio della 'Gazzetta' (1675–1768)* (Rome: ISMEZ, 2011)).

13 Michael Talbot, 'Corelli, Arcangelo', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), volume 6, 459.

14 On the date of the premiere see Maria-Louise Catsalis, 'Clori, Dorino e Amore by Alessandro Scarlatti: A Serenata for Philip V?', in *Responsabilità d'autore e collaborazione nell'opera dell'età barocca: il pasticcio. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi*, ed. Gaetano Pitarresi (Reggio Calabria: Laruffa, 2011), 69, which in turn cites the classic study by Thomas Griffin, 'The Late Baroque Serenata in Rome and Naples: A Documentary Study with Emphasis on Alessandro Scarlatti' (PhD dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1983), 364–365, which also establishes the chronology of other musical performances for the king given on 19 April and 1 May.

15 Pagano, *Alessandro and Domenico*, 99; Talbot, 'Corelli, Arcangelo', 459.

16 According to the libretto for the opera *Rodrigo in Algeri* (1702). The Countess was Catalina Lorenza de Mendoza Silva Haro y Aragón (1669–1727). The Count was Ginés Fernández de Castro (1666–1741), who had been in charge of the Galleys of the Kingdom since 1698, when the couple arrived at Naples. He enjoyed the rank of Grandee of Spain and was the descendant of two Viceroys. The reference in *Rodrigo in Algeri* is reported in Barry Kernfeld and Julie Anne Sadie, 'Stuck [Stück], Jean-Baptiste ['M. Baptiste', Baptistin, Batistin]', in *The New Grove*, second edition, volume 24, 619–620. Further information on the music promoted by the pair is found in Ausilia Magaudda and Danilo Costantini, 'Rappresentazioni operistiche di Silvio Stampiglia nella *Gazzetta di Napoli*, con particolare attenzione al periodo del viceré Medinaceli', in *Intorno a Silvio Stampiglia: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Reggio Calabria, 5–6 ottobre 2007)*, ed. Gaetano Pitarresi (Reggio Calabria: Laruffa, 2010), 189n–190n.



dispute between the two musicians caused grave problems for Rocco, who wrote an extensive letter to Ottoboni explaining the details of the affair, which can be summarized as follows (see Document 7).

Stuck, referred to in the letters as 'Battestino Violoncello', had been summoned from a distant city expressly to play for Philip V. The countess desired that he be the only solo cellist heard in the opera. In order not to flout the wishes of the countess, Rocco decided that Pippo Amadei would not perform at all in the theatre. But since this might be seen as a slight to Pippo's patron, Ottoboni, Rocco solved the dilemma by ensuring that Ottoboni's musician was the only solo cellist in the king's chamber, thereby guaranteeing that Battestino would not perform there. Thus, as Rocco underlined in his letter, the 'sense of decorum and respect for him who sent the musician' (that is to say, for Ottoboni) was successfully preserved ('e poi Pippo suona alla camera del Rè, che è quello che sostiene il decoro, e la stima di chi l'ha inviato'). In the chamber, as at court and in the public theatre, the king was offered music in a ritualized setting. This was not simply for the experience of listening, as the venue provided an opportunity to present musicians to the king as tokens of respect. The status of the musician's patron may well have been of greater importance than the genre of music performed or the ability of the performer. The letter, dated 6 May, confirms that there were two concerts in the king's chamber after the arrival of the musicians from Rome. The first was on the very night of their arrival,¹⁷ and the second on Thursday 4 May. A musical source today preserved in the library of the Royal Palace in Madrid, and containing French editions of chamber music (both vocal and instrumental) by Corelli (1708), Stuck (1711) and the Neapolitan Michele Mascitti (1707),¹⁸ may well reflect the repertoire performed privately for the king on occasions such as these.

Why, then, was the Countess of Lemos so determined to have Stuck as the only cello soloist in the opera? The Count of Lemos, with his wife, arrived during the summer of 1698 in Naples, where he assumed the post of General of the Galleys.¹⁹ At Naples the couple promoted an intense level of musical activity, both in private and in public, as a means of securing their status among the local nobility. In addition to employing musicians, the countess was the dedicatee of *Il prigioniero fortunato* (Franco Maria Paglia and Alessandro Scarlatti, San Bartolomeo, December 1698). The pair also hosted a number of serenatas and other musical events, such as academies and comedies.²⁰ Descendants of a distinguished noble family, the Counts of Lemos were among the first to be awarded the rank of Grandee of Spain. Their political aspirations were high, and their patronage of the arts at Naples was clearly intended as a demonstration of their rank. In 1700 the count sought to succeed Medinaceli as Viceroy of Naples in the eventuality that the latter was sent to Rome on a special embassy to make obeisance to the new pope, Clement XI Albani.²¹ The stubborn insistence by the countess that her cellist alone be heard as soloist in the opera must certainly be seen as an

17 It may refer to the serenata performed on 1 May in the Belvedere of the Royal Palace. See the *Giornale del viaggio d'Italia dell'invitissimo e gloriosissimo monarca Filippo V* (Naples: Niccolò Bulifoni, 1703), 43; see also Griffin, 'The Late Baroque Serenata', 364–365.

18 The source is described in Marín, 'La recepción de Corelli en Madrid', 612–613.

19 Several details concerning their presence in Naples are referred to in various unpublished sources: for instance, in the Archivo Ducal de Medinaceli (Toledo), Archivo Histórico, leg. 1, r. 2, letter 155; Archivo Ducal de Alburquerque (Cuéllar) 107, no. 4; Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza (Toledo), Osuna, cartas 252, document 101.

20 On the theatrical and musical activity of the counts in Naples see Benedetto Croce, *I teatri di Napoli: secolo XV–XVIII* (Naples: Luigi Pierro, 1891), volume 1, 182–184, and, more recently, Magaudda and Costantini, *Musica e spettacolo*, 77–78, with further references to José María Domínguez, 'Mecenazgo musical del IX duque de Medinaceli: Roma-Nápoles-Madrid, 1687–1710' (PhD dissertation, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2010), which contains a 'musical biography' of the Count in volume 2, 630–631.

21 In a letter to the Duke of Infantado dated 26 November 1700 Lemos writes: 'no pudiendo dejar de encargarte pases tus buenos oficios con estos señores del gobierno para que en caso de pasar mi virrey a Roma a la embajada de obediencia al nuevo pontífice del nuevo rey de España, se me dé el interim de este gobierno' (I do ask you to negotiate with those gentlemen of the government so that the post of Viceroy *ad interim* will be conferred upon me, in the event that the current Viceroy goes to Rome to present the embassy of obedience before the Pope on behalf of the new King of Spain); Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza (Toledo), Osuna, cartas 156, document 16.



attempt by her to call attention to the distinguished presence of the Lemos family at Naples. Evidently, her initiative succeeded, for soon after the dispute between the two cellists the count was appointed Viceroy of Sardinia by the king in person.²²

The same letter dated 6 May (Document 7 in the Appendix) reveals several other issues that deserve comment. Most of the nobles named there by Rocco must have heard the performances at Naples given by Corelli and his colleagues. Their names open up new paths for research on the reception of this music later in Spain and in other parts of Italy. Escalona and his son, Mercurio Antonio Fernández Pacheco, Count of San Esteban de Gormaz,²³ were supporters of the Counts of Lemos. On the other hand, Urbano Barberini, Prince of Palestrina (1664–1722), a well-known music patron, was able to persuade Rocco to come to an agreement with the countess in order to preserve Ottoboni's dignity.

Another detail worth noting is the obedience of Corelli to the commands of Rocco. According to the letter, the controversy surrounding Amadei provoked a refusal on the part of Corelli to play in the opera (probably in solidarity with his colleague). Eventually, Corelli acceded to Rocco's orders and took part. Rocco, however, may have exaggerated his role in this affair, perhaps hoping thereby to gain the esteem of Ottoboni.²⁴ Certainly, the details reported by Rocco need to be evaluated with caution. Much of what he reports is contradicted by the account of Corelli's sojourn in Naples given by Burney, who, of course, simply repeats an anecdote provided by Geminiani several decades after the events in question. According to Burney, the king fell asleep during one of the adagios played by Corelli, and then retired before the end of the performance.²⁵ But on the evidence of these letters, Philip showed a great interest in the musician. On 13 May Rocco emphasizes, in fact, that the king wanted Corelli to accompany him back to Madrid, together with other virtuosos, who included Fornari and Amadei (see Document 8). The letter reports this as a topic of great interest at Naples ('si stà notte e giorno meditando sopra questo articolo'). Rocco also confirms that the previous day Corelli had sent to Ottoboni a selection of arias from *Tiberio imperatore d'Oriente*, and that the complete score would be sent the following evening.

On 16 May another dilemma involving the three musicians motivated a new letter to the Cardinal (see Document 9). Writing very late at night ('tardissimo'), Rocco reports that Monsignore Giudice – probably Niccolò del Giudice (1660–1743), nephew of Cardinal Francesco del Giudice (1647–1725), who was at the time in Palermo – asked Arcangelo to play at a party at which 'diverse dame' (several ladies) were present. The festivities would take place in the palace of Domenico del Giudice, Prince of Cellamare, the father of the priest. Corelli, in turn, asked permission of Rocco before answering Giudice. But the agent was afraid that the Viceroy would take offence if Corelli played for persons other than the king. Not having clear instructions from Ottoboni, Rocco ordered the musicians to attend the party but to refuse to play. They should make it known that they were in Naples only to serve the king. The musicians obeyed this command, and after hearing their explanation Giudice decided in turn to consult another famous music patron invited to the feast, Cardinal Francesco Maria de' Medici (1660–1711). This Cardinal almost certainly knew Corelli from Rome, and Giudice may have thought the Cardinal had some influence with the violinist. De' Medici, however, declined to involve himself in this matter. 'E così li detti SS.ri virtuosi sono stati un poco colà senza suonare, e poi, mandati con la carrozza a casa.' (And thus all the said virtuous gentlemen were there for a little while without playing, and then were sent back home in their carriage.) The very fact that they were provided with a carriage while in Naples confirms the high status enjoyed by Corelli and his colleagues.

22 The appointment took place on 29 May, according to the *Giornale del viaggio* published by Bulifoni (see note 17), 152.

23 Not to be confused with Count Santisteban, who had previously served as Viceroy at Naples but was now returning as a member of the king's retinue.

24 Rocco may well have succeeded in this, as evidenced by his admission to the Arcadian Academy (his name is listed in Vichi, *Gli Arcadi dal 1690 al 1800*, 86). Some time after 1702 Rocco secured an ecclesiastical post in Pozzuoli. A few of his activities as a protégé of Ottoboni in 1704 are revealed in Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Segreteria di Stato, Spagna, volume 192, f. 440.

25 The complete passage is quoted in Pagano, *Alessandro and Domenico*, 98.



De' Medici was certainly conscious of the delicate diplomatic significance of the presence at Naples of the three musicians.²⁶ His disinclination to act on behalf of Giudice and to encourage the musicians to play at this festive gathering was in itself an act of personal diplomacy calculated to preserve Ottoboni's good will. In fact, as soon as Ottoboni received Rocco's letter, the Cardinal wrote back to de' Medici thanking him for the protection of the musicians, an act that Ottoboni understood as a personal courtesy.²⁷ Within this dense network of musical patronage Corelli would have been aware of the protection extended by de' Medici towards various musicians. Among them must have been Alessandro Scarlatti. After Cardinal de' Medici left Naples, Scarlatti sent him a letter in which the composer lamented not having had the opportunity to meet him personally, given the short time the Cardinal had spent in the city.²⁸ Scarlatti may have had hopes of following Medinaceli to Madrid at the end of his term as Viceroy.²⁹ But as this plan seemed uncertain, the composer surely turned his attention to other patrons in Italy, especially to Ferdinando de' Medici, as discussed by Roberto Pagano.³⁰ When the political situation in Naples quickly unravelled soon after Philip's visit to the kingdom, Scarlatti may well have envied the secure patronage enjoyed by Corelli in Rome.

One of the ladies mentioned by Rocco who attended the party at the Cellamare palace was Anna Camilla Borghese Giudice (died 1705). She may well have been the person who suggested that Corelli and his colleagues play at this event. Surely she heard the violinist in April 1697, when he played a 'dolcissima

26 On the personal musical taste of the Cardinal and his use of patronage as a mean of self-promotion see Francesca Fantappiè, 'Dalla corte agli impresari. Giovan Battista Tamburini: strategie di carriera di un contralto tra Sei e Settecento', *Musica e Storia* 17/2 (2009), 293–352.

27 'Mi scrive l'agente mio di Napoli le abbondanti grazie che l'*Eminenza Vostra si era disposto farmi* nelle contingenze delli tre miei virtuosi, che suppongo del tutto liberi da ogni soggettione, anzi a momenti li attendo in questa casa di ritorno' (my agent in Naples informs me about the abundant graces that *Your Eminence was ready to make me* regarding the problems of my three musicians, whom I suppose completely free of any duty [in Naples], and indeed I look forward to having them back in this palace very soon). My italics. Letter by Ottoboni from Rome, 3 June 1702, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato 5843, cited in Francesca Fantappiè, "Un garbato fratello et un garbato zio": teatri, cantanti, protettori e impresari nell'epistolario di Francesco Maria Medici (1680–1711) (PhD dissertation, Università di Firenze, 2004), volume 2, 709.

28 'Altezza Reverendissima: quella fortuna che non mi fu conceduta di poter rassegnare il mio profondo rispetto a Vostra Altezza Reverendissima ne' pochi giorni ch'ella onorò questa capitale, mi do l'ardire di procurarla a queste mie debolissime fatighe, che le consagro in ossequioso tributo, come ho fatto del mio core. Vostra Altezza Reverendissima si degni di concederle un guardo benigno e tanto basterà per farmi considerare in quel vantaggio invidiabile d'essere, come inchinandomi umilmente alla di lei grandezza, baciando il lembo della sacra porpora, mi sottoscrivo, di Vostra Altezza Reverendissima, Napoli 8 giugno 1702' (Most Reverend Highness: the fortune that was not conferred upon me of showing you my profound respect for Your Most Reverend Highness during the few days that you honoured this city in person, I dare to confer to these my very weak efforts [in reference to a piece of music that he is attaching to the letter as a present to Medici], which I dedicate to you as a devoted tribute rising from my heart. May Your Most Reverend Highness deign to reply with a mild look, as this will be enough to consider me as belonging to Your Most Reverend Highness –an enviable advantage– as I do confirm myself bowing to your magnanimity and kissing the sacred purple hat, Naples, 8 June 1702), Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato 5783, cited by Fantappiè, "Un garbato fratello et un garbato zio", volume 2, 296.

29 'Scarlatti non parti poi a codesta volta [probably Florence], come doveva succedere, ma bensì tornò mercoledì in poste a Napoli, avendo avuto avviso che la sua moglie stava male, però con intenzione di tornar con l'istessa diligenza a questa volta, per *proseguire il suo viaggio costi e poi a suo tempo in Spagna*' (Scarlatti has not travelled to that city [probably Florence] as was supposed to happen, but on the contrary he went back to Naples last Wednesday with the mail carriage, as he was informed that his wife was ill; nonetheless he intends to return here with the same carriage in order to *continue his travel there* [to Florence] *and then to go to Spain at the established time*), Letter by Paolo della Stufa from Rome to Cardinal Medici, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato, 5844, cited by Fantappiè, "Un garbato fratello et un garbato zio", volume 2, 721. My italics.

30 Pagano, *Alessandro and Domenico*, 111ff.



sinfonia' during a visit by the Pope to the Borghese estate at Carroceto.³¹ A letter from her to Cardinal de' Medici in September 1702 evokes the stay of the Cardinal at the Cellamare palace during the visit of the king. It also suggests that she may have played a role in the affair concerning the Roman musicians.³² Again, as in the case of the Counts of Lemos and that of de' Medici, it is clear that any gesture by the nobility at Naples during the king's visit, even one involving musicians, might take on profound political significance. King Philip appointed Giovanni Battista Borghese (1639–1717), a relative of Anna Camilla, as Ambassador Extraordinary to the Holy See in Rome precisely during this time. This was an honour not to be put at risk on account of music. Undoubtedly, Rocco and the Ottoboni musicians were well aware of these circumstances and likewise took care not to endanger the Cardinal's reputation.

In the next letter, dated 23 May, Rocco explained that the long-awaited letter from the Viceroy to Ottoboni would never be sent. According to Rocco, Escalona was 'un sig.re assai bene e ha molto del filosofo' (a very distinguished gentleman with much of the philosopher about him) – perhaps an oblique allusion to his forgetfulness. In any case, a letter of thanks would be written by the Viceroy's son Mercurio Antonio following the departure of Corelli. In addition, the letter reported that the rumours that Corelli would follow the king to Madrid had ceased. There are also hints in it that Ottoboni had written in the meantime with instructions concerning the Giudice affair. The letter confirms that that very day, 23 May, Rocco sent Corelli 'e suoi compagni' (and his companions) to the Cellamare palace. The agent, too, was to attend in order to thank Giudice for his kind treatment of the musicians on 16 May. The letter finally confirms that everything was arranged for the musician's departure for Rome, following immediately upon the king's departure from Naples.

In his letter of 30 May (see Document 11) Rocco reported that the last performance of the opera would take place the next day. Shortly after this performance the musicians would depart for Rome, with the permission of Prince Castiglione, who, it seems, had also had the pleasure of hearing Corelli in his own palace, probably that very night of 30 May. The king left Naples on 2 June,³³ and the three musicians may have departed at the same point. The following day Rocco wrote his last letter to the Cardinal (see Document 12), giving details of yet another controversy involving the musicians. Just after their departure a request from the Viceroy had arrived, asking that Corelli play for him in the Royal Palace. But it was too late: the three were already on their way back to Rome. The letter closes with a suggestion that the sudden departure of the musicians was due to Amadei, who wanted to leave as soon as possible, even though this might cause great displeasure to Castiglione and to the Viceroy's son. Perhaps by this time the musicians felt more comfortable playing their instruments than performing the role of diplomats.

Ottoboni's protection of Corelli suggests how important the composer and his music were considered to be by the Pope and the government of the Papal States. In addition to his work as composer, conductor and performer, this was surely one of the main reasons for Corelli's enduring legacy. We have already seen that Corelli performed before Innocent XII at a visit to the Borghese palace at Carroceto. An anonymous Roman diary tells how in February 1695 the Pope attended the Forty Hours ceremony in the Basilica di San

31 Fabrizio della Seta, 'I Borghese (1691–1730): la musica di una generazione', *Note d'archivio per la storia musicale* 1 (1983), 161.

32 'Con eccessi di più compita generosità si compiacque Vostra Altezza onorare questa sua casa nella dimora che fece in Napoli, et ora con atti di eccessiva compitezza mi fa partecipe de' sue riveritissime grazie col suo stimatissimo foglio' (with an excess of the most polite generosity, Your Highness was pleased to honour this palace during your visit to Naples, and now, with acts of the greatest courtesy, you make me enjoy your most venerated favours with your much appreciated letter). Anna Camilla also confirms that she had received the libretto of the opera performed at Pratolino and adds: 'la di cui composizione essendo bellissima e tutta spirito, suppongo che con la musica si sarà resa singolare' (whose text being most beautiful and very witty, I suppose that together with the music it will become a unique opera). Naples, 28 September 1702. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato, 5843, cited by Fantappiè, "Un garbato fratello et un garbato zio", volume 2, 711.

33 *Giornale del viaggio*, 178–181.



Lorenzo in Damaso, and at the moment when the Pope knelt, 'the great violinist Arcangelo started a resounding, harmonious symphony of his, which lasted for the whole time during which the Pope prayed'.³⁴ Perhaps it was a movement from his Sonatas Op. 3. Clearly, both Corelli's music and the composer himself were understood as representative of the papacy. And this fact may help explain both the importance of, and the controversy surrounding, Corelli's visit to Naples.

An even deeper understanding of Ottoboni's concerns in this matter may be achieved by revisiting the events of 15 April. On that day Ottoboni sent two letters: one official, replying to Prince Castiglione (Document 4); and a second unofficial, addressed to Rocco (Document 5). The latter was instructed to spread the word in Naples about the true reasons for Corelli's delayed arrival in the city. The letter addressed to Castiglione explained the delay by adducing two alleged reasons: the first was the necessity of having Corelli ready at the service of the Pope for a possible visit by Philip V to Rome (which was rumoured, but not yet confirmed). The other reason for the delay was Corelli's delicate health. In his letter to Rocco, however, Ottoboni explained in great detail the long process involving a number of subtle points of diplomacy that led to his final decision. As noted above, Ottoboni's delay in sending Corelli to Naples was, at least in part, due to the bitterness he felt that the Viceroy had failed to write a personal letter of request. In this letter the Cardinal demonstrates true affection for his violinist, calling him 'il primo virtuoso del mondo' (the best virtuoso player in the world). This sentiment may also have played a part in his reluctance to send Corelli to Naples. Evidently, the Cardinal doubted that Corelli's presence would produce a performance any more distinguished than one led by a Neapolitan musician. Corelli, without his Roman ensemble, would experience serious problems controlling the orchestra; the musical cohesion characteristic of his Roman band would be impossible to achieve. The Cardinal may have identified Corelli's style with a particular Roman method of performance not known at Naples. Ottoboni must certainly have been acquainted with the work of Alessandro Scarlatti, and perhaps the Cardinal anticipated the difficulty Corelli would experience performing the Sicilian's music. Indeed, one is led to wonder whether the anecdotes recounted by Burney (referring to Arcangelo's surprise at hearing the technical finesse of the Neapolitan violinists and to Corelli's faults as he started playing in C major an aria written in C minor) had some basis in fact.

In any case, the Cardinal reveals that even Emperor Leopold I had asked permission to have Corelli play in Vienna. Ottoboni's refusal to let him go on that occasion did not cause any resentment or charges of political disloyalty towards the Habsburgs. The Cardinal was thus surprised to learn that on this new occasion talk of 'riflessioni di stato' (political considerations) was heard at Naples. This was the actual reason that forced the Cardinal to act against his will, eventually sending Corelli to serve the king. Ottoboni did not want 'to lose one's good reputation because of a violin sonata' ('perdere tutta la buona opinione di se stesso per una sonata di violino'). The Cardinal's behaviour reflects the wisdom of an experienced diplomat. At the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession, when the official position of Rome concerning the conflict was as yet undecided, Ottoboni must have felt a posture of ambiguous neutrality his safest choice. The French party clearly distrusted the Cardinal. The friendship between Ottoboni and Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani (1653–1710), both Venetians, was viewed with suspicion in Paris, especially as Grimani was allegedly involved in a failed conspiracy to kill Philip V during his visit to Naples.³⁵ In this context, the request for Corelli's attendance at Naples may have been meant as a test of Ottoboni's loyalty to the Bourbon cause.

34 Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Fondo Bolognetti, volume 78, f. 238, published in Luca Della Libera and José María Domínguez, 'Nuove fonti per la vita musicale romana di fine Seicento: il *Giornale* e il *Diario di Roma* del Fondo Bolognetti all'Archivio Segreto Vaticano', in *La musique à Rome au XVIIe siècle: études et perspectives de recherche*, ed. Caroline Giron-Panel and Anne-Madeleine Goulet (Rome: Publications de l'École française, 2012), 121–185.

35 A letter by the *abate* Melani sent to Rome from Paris on 31 July 1702 reads: 'Io non dico che rompa l'amicizia col signore cardinale Grimani, ma che se ne allontani dolcemente più che può, mentre è stato fin supposto che Sua Eminenza abbia avuto mano nel disegno orribile tramatosi in Napoli di attentare alla vita del Re di Spagna' (I do not mean that you break your friendship with cardinal Grimani, but rather that you detach yourself from him as discreetly as you can, while it has been supposed that His Eminence has taken part in the horrible plan plotted in Naples against the life of the King of Spain), Archivio Storico del Vicariato di Roma, Fondo Ottoboni, volume letter V.



To summarize, two points emerge clearly from a reading of these documents. First, they permit the identification of specific individuals who heard Corelli's music in Naples. These people were, in all likelihood, involved in the reception of Corelli's works in early eighteenth-century Madrid. Noblemen such as Escalona, his son and the Counts of Lemos should be added to the list of Spaniards already known to have been patrons of Corelli earlier in Rome,³⁶ such as Medinaceli³⁷ and Juan Francisco Pacheco, Fifth Duke of Uceda (1649–1718).³⁸ A Spanish account confirms that the entire entourage of the king heard Corelli in the performance of the royal opera *Tiberio*.³⁹ Second, the presence of Corelli at Naples and the performances he gave there were directed not only towards the king, but also towards an audience of aristocrats, many of whom customarily patronized musicians not just for their personal pleasure, but also as part of a programme to achieve their political aspirations. Corelli did not travel to Naples at the behest of his patron Ottoboni, as suggested in Burney's account of this episode. These letters demonstrate that Corelli went to Naples only with the reluctant permission of his patron. The need for the trip arose from the interests and insistence of the Spanish and Neapolitan nobility, who wished to enhance the image of their new monarch according to a long-standing code of aristocratic conduct and humanistic patronage, and this despite the personal taste of Philip. Corelli's presence at Naples may well have held greater significance from a ceremonial, symbolic and political point of view than from a strictly musical perspective. Let us recall that Clement XI Albani had recently refused to bestow upon Philip V the investiture of Naples, an act that would have placed Rome among those states clearly favouring the Bourbon cause – but in fact in a position very unfavourable to the actual political interests of the papacy. In a certain sense, Corelli's appearance at Naples must have evoked the harmony (or disharmony) of interests between a king and a pope who in reality were profoundly divided by the 'sound of trumpets, drums and cannons'.

36 On Corelli's performances for the Spanish institutions in Rome see Marín, 'La recepción de Corelli en Madrid', 583–588.

37 Further unpublished notices regarding the links between Corelli and Medinaceli while the latter was ambassador to the Holy See in Rome (1687–1696) are included in Della Libera and Domínguez, 'Nuove fonti per la vita musicale romana di fine Seicento'.

38 On Uceda, together with reference to Corelli, see Anna Tedesco, 'Juan Francisco Pacheco V duca di Uceda, uomo politico e mecenate tra Palermo, Roma e Vienna nell'epoca della guerra di successione spagnola', in *La pérdida de Europa: la guerra de sucesión por la monarquía de España*, ed. Antonio Álvarez-Ossorio, Bernardo García and Virginia León (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2007), 491–548.

39 On 8 May, 'a las 6 de la tarde pasó al salón donde se hizo una ópera, y estuvo toda alrededor con bancas y sillas a donde estaban todas las señoras, y detrás los caballeros. Y Su Majestad estuvo en camón con celosías y estaban los grandes, gentilhombres, mayordomos. Y así que Su Majestad se sentó, se abrió la celosía y besaron la mano todas las señoras. Y así que acabaron de besarla, se volvió a cerrar y se dio principio a la ópera y se acabó a las 9' (at six in the evening [the king] entered the room where an opera was to be performed, and there were around him many benches and chairs where all the ladies were, and the gentlemen behind them. And His Majesty was seated on a throne closed by lattices and the grandees, gentlemen and stewards were around him. And as soon as His Majesty was seated, the lattices were opened and the ladies kissed his hand. And as soon as they had finished kissing, it was closed and the opera began, and it finished at nine). Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza (Toledo), Osuna, cartas 198, documents 40–42.



APPENDIX

Transcription of passages relating to Corelli in the letters at the Fondo Ottoboni from the Archivio Storico del Vicariato di Roma, volume signature TTTT. The most common abbreviations have been preserved.

Document 1. Naples 12 March 1702

From: Principe di Castiglione

To: Ottoboni, Rome

È così grande l'occasione della venuta del Re mio sig.re in questo regno, che tra gl'apparati di tutte le altre cose opportune al suo real servizio non è da tralasciarsi anco quello di tener divertita sua Maestà in quelle ore che saranno di suo riposo: fra gli altri divertimenti ha il sig.r vicerè disposto un'opera in musica con tutta la magnificenza possibile, e perche contribuirebbe senza dubbio moltissimo a farla spiccare la virtù del famoso Arcangelo del violino, io devo supplicar l'Em.za V.ra a degnarsi di mandarlo qua per questa occasione. Il sig.r Vicerè ne resterà all'Em.za V.ra con infinita oblig.zne come glielo attesterà S. E. medesima, e spero che Sua M.tà gliene avrà ancora particolar gradimento. Il Sig.r Silvio Stampiglia che renderà questa all'Em.za V.ra proporrà anco all'istesso sig.r Arcangelo la convenienza da condurre seco l'altro virtuoso Matteo, se così sarà di suo gusto. Ed io supp.do all'Em.za V.ra a compatirmi l'onore de' suoi comandi li bacio divotam.te le mani.

Document 2. Naples 8 April 1702

From: Nicola Rocco

To: Ottoboni, Rome

Devo umilis.te rappresentare all'Em.za v.a ciò che questo signor Principe di Castiglione avanti ieri con gran passione mi espresse. Egli si lagna non aver ricevuto risposta d'una sua lettera, nella quale spiegava all'Em.za V.a il desiderio del sig.r Vicerè di avere qui per la venuta di Sua Maestà il sig.r Arcangelo del violino, et avendoli io replicato che poteva stare si fosse dispersa la lettera, mi soggiunse non potersi dubitare del recapito perche lo Stampiglia, a cui esso l'aveva consignata, l'assicurò nel suo ritorno da Roma di averla data in proprie mani di V.a Em.za, alla quale io non basto a significare l'inquiet.e del Sig.r Principe per la mancanza di d.a risposta, con tutto che da me le si fossero addotti così e raggioni per minorarli il sentimento e consolarlo. Quello che più mi preme ponere in notizia dell'Em.za V.a si è che tanto da Sua Ecc.a il S.r Vicerè, quanto dal d.o Ecc.mo sig.r Pnpe. s'apprenda non volersi concedere detto virtuoso domandato per servizio del Rè, e perciò non si sia risposto, e si passa a riflessioni di stato, lo che è un mero sproposito.

Intanto parendo alla gran mente dell'Em.za V.a dissingannare meglio che non ho saputo far'io desti signori togliendoli (con scrivere ad ambedue) ogni argomento di dispiacere, me ne rimetto alla sua prudentissima risoluzione, e con il più profondo rispetto, all'Em.za V.a me inchino.

Document 3. Naples 8 April 1702

From: Nicola Rocco

To: Ottoboni, Rome

Per la venuta di Sua Maestà si continuano le prevenzioni e si prepara un drama essendosi fatto venire il Branswich da Genoa et altri da Milano.



Document 4. Rome 15 April 1702

From: Ottoboni

To: Principe di Castiglione, Naples

Se il sig.r Stampiglia che tempo fa mi ha presentato la lettera di V. E. in data delli 12 marzo passato averà rappresentati all'E. V. li sentimenti con li quali l'ho ricevuta, sono sicuro che non anderanno a mio carico le tardanze della mia risposta, ma perche il sudetto non deve fra di noi fare autorità, prenderò io tutto il pensiero d'assicurarla del mio rispetto e della stima, che faccio, di quanto mi viene da lei ricordato, massime in ciò che riguarda il reale compiacimento di S. M. Catt.ca.

Il sig.r Arcangelo Corelli e gl'altri due del mio concertino sarebbero a quest'ora in Napoli e nell'anticamera di V. E. per sentire li di lei ordini, se il primo non dovesse aver riguardo alle sovrane disposizioni di S. S.tà alla quale ha l'obbligo di servire in quante funzioni si fanno nel palazzo apostolico, e per questo destramente ho procurato sin hora di aver qualche lume, ma piùttosto hanno servito le mie diligenze a scoprire i disegni che si facevano sopra il sudetto virtuoso per valersi di lui col dubbio che S. M. venga in Roma, che a mettermi in piena libertà di consigliarlo a muoversi per cotesta volta. Non mi diffondo ancora nelli motivi particolari della poca salute di questo virtuoso; ch'in mille occasioni lo hanno forzato a non uscire da questa città benché replicatamente chiamato, e desiderato da molti sovrani, come pure della necessità ch'io stesso ho procurata di lasciarlo in Roma, nel tempo che mi sono portato in Venetia mia patria per il medesimo impedimento; perche il rischio della propria salute sarebbe con troppa gloria scordato per l'onore di presentarsi a piedi della M. S. e di poter far pompa delle proprie virtù alla presenza di così gran monarca. Ho voluto rendere V. E. pienamente informata di quanto occorre in tal proposito acciò ella consideri se il servitio del Pontefice e la gracile complessione del sig.r Corelli siano impedimenti sufficienti a render v. e. [=problematic reading] e lui intieramente discolpati. E quando dalla sua somma prudenza, me ne fussero suggeriti de maggiori, non mancherò di riceverli con tutta la stima e di fortificarmi con loro per l'effeto che si desidera. Tanto mi converrebbe rispondere al'altro personaggio che l'E. V. mi nomina nella di lei carta se di lui fussi stato favorito del medesimo comando, adrittura, ma perche non me ne veggo honorato non mi trovo neppure in altro obbligo che di rendere a lui tutte quelle sincere notizie che porta seco il presente affare, nel quale certamente provo maggior passione di quella ch'io possa esprimere e possa comprendere l'E. V.

Si compiacca dunque honorarmi di qualche nuovo lume per mia quiete e governo perche non posso fermare la mia agitatione sin tanto che da V. E. o non venga assicurato ch'io non comparisca manchevole o pure che mi si dia il modo perche S. M. resti servita, nel quale caso non ho dubbio ch'un signore suo pari troverebbe tutte le più obbliganti sicurezze per la brevissima dimora costì di questo virtuoso, e per tutto ciò che meno potesse pregiudicare al buon servitio di N.ro. Sig.re et alla di lui poca salute. Con che le bacio di tutto cuore le mani.

Document 5. Rome 15 April 1702

From: Ottoboni

To: Nicola Rocco

Nelle due lett.re scritte da V. S. a mons.r Sergado et a me vi sono motivi così gelosi e riguardevoli che non voglio con altro carattere che con il proprio rendere a lei la risposta non solo per una istituzione [istruzione? distinzione?] ma per quelli ancora si averano seco occasione di parlare della materia.

Resto sorpreso che si voglia mescolare il nome venerabile di S. M. C. in proposito d'un professore di musica e che a tal riflesso si voglia mettere in equivoco il mio ossequio per la corona, quando le prove di esso sono più numerose delli giorni che regnò il mio Alessandro VIII di che ne restano infinite riguardevoli memorie ancora fresche, ed utili, e se il sig.r duca di Medinaceli le avesse registrate ne avrebbe meglio informato il sig.r Principe di Castiglione, e S. Ecc.za non sarebbe partito da cotesto governo senza darne



qualche segno di gratitudine a chi è stato il primo canale per conseguirle, et un mezzo che a lui steso non ha portato alcun pregiudizio. Ma giacchè un cardinale della mia qualità è chiamato in giudizio a render ragione così d'aver tardato a rispondere come d'aver proposti degl'impedimenti alla missione d'Arcangelo dirò che a Stampiglia ho prontamente nell'atto di ricever la lettera del sig.r Principe risposto queste formali parole: Sig.r Silvio, per qualche tempo non risponderò a S. E. perché non sò che misure mi prendere in questo proposito; mentre se il Rè viene a Napoli, il Papa farà li suoi preparamenti per riceverlo a Roma, né vorrà privarsi d'Arcangelo, ch'è il primo virtuoso del mondo, et il primo fondamento per tutte le funzioni di musica che si destinassero di fare per trattenere la M. S. Con questa risposta si partì da me e senza più farsi rivedere ha fatta una partenza da par suo a cotesta volta, pubblicando per altro a tutta Roma la mia risposta che l'ho risentita in bocca di molti. Dunque del primo articolo del mio processo spero d'essermi facilmente sbrigato e difeso con tutto il carattere di cavaliere come professo d'esserlo.

Quanto alla poca salute d'Arcangelo è tanto vero ch'alle mie villeggiature dell'autunno lo faccio venire verso il fine del mese per la sua infermità, che come è nota a tutti l'obbliga a tenersi vicino un professore pratico d'essa, che le assiste indefess.te [=indefessamente] senza del quale il povero huomo andrebbe a rischio di perder la vita, essendo a lui tra le altre cose d'evidente pregiudizio lo stare in piedi, e perciò V. S. si figuri se io che l'amo quanto un fratello ho giusta passione di metterlo in simile azardo per il quale riflesso infinite volte lascio di servirmi di esso.

Discendo poi infine al grand'onore ch'il sig.r Vicerè mi fa di permettere al sig.r principe di Castiglione di farmi sapere che sarà di gusto di S. E. ch'io mandi Arcangelo a Napoli, e confesso a V. S. che in ciò ne provo una ben giusta compiacenza. Ma perche il sig.r duca di Medinaceli che lei sa benissimo ch'era tanto buon amico mio tanto mio confidente e che a me per una bontà professa tanta tenerezza non mi ha ancora scritto d'essersi mosso per Spagna, mi par impossibile che tuttavia l'Ecc.za sua non dimori in cotesta città, e però sono compatibile se forse tutta essa resto in qualche inganno; ma quando ancora questo impossibile fusse successo V. S. deve riflettere ch'io non posso scrivere al S.r Vicerè se prima S. E. non mi fa conoscere lui stesso che gradisce la mia servitù e la mia corrispondenza, nel qual caso vedrà l'E. S. con che buon cuore incontrerò tutte le occasioni di servirlo.

Ritornando poi ad Arcangelo, dico a lei che per un'opera non servirà niente meglio lui d'ogni altro virtuoso, anzi, che lontano da quelli suoi allievi di Roma, non averà nè obediencia nè unione per comparire come fa qui, e se non fosse per far servire a S. M.ta in camera di qualche concertino per altro, mi creda che torrebbe il vantaggio del solo nome, e non altro. Ma quando abbia a ardere il mondo e quando un servitore della corona come sono io habbia a perdere tutta la buona oppinione di se stesso per una sonata di violino, dica pure con confidenza al s.r Principe di Castiglione che farò ogni sforzo per che il Papa non impedisca il mandar Arcangelo, e che mi raccomanderò a S. E. acciò almeno me lo rimandi più presto che può perche veda in questo che faccio un sacrificio della più cara cosa che habbia appresso di me in questo genere, e lui ancora della maggiore che habbia in questo mondo, che vuol dire della propria vita.

Per altro V. S. sapprà che non mi sono nuove queste querele, mentre l'Imperatore ancora mi ha messo in angustie per averlo per brevissimo tempo, e pure sono stato forte, né per tal causa mi hanno tacciato di poco amorevole della casa d'Austria, che vuol dire, che i Principi non mettono mai in prospettiva di ragion di stato i loro divertimenti né confondono gl'huomini di professione venale con quelli che per loro genio et ossequio volontario professano la dovuta venerazione alle loro sacre persone; e poi, don Nicola mio, questo tirar per forza le genti fuori di casa loro non è cosa molto praticabile. Riceverà V. S. la risposta per il s.r Principe di Castiglione, che ho voluta fare di mio proprio carattere perche S. E. conosca la stima che faccio di esso, e però lei nell'atto di presentarla dirà il di piu che di anteriormente leggerà nella presente con pregar cotesto sig.re a credermi desiderosissimo della di lui corrispondenza e della di lui buona grazia.



Document 6. Naples 6 May 1702

From: Nicola Rocco
To: Ottoboni, Rome

Il sig.r Coreli [sic] e suoi compagni sono continuamente a palazzo sino alla mezza notte, regolandosi il tutto con la consulta di detto s.r Corelli nell'apparecchio dell'opera che si rappresenterà lunedì, e con il solito rispett.mo ossequio all'Em.za V.a me inchino.

Document 7. Naples 6 May 1702

From: Nicola Rocco
To: Ottoboni, Rome⁴⁰

Qui si è incontrato che la S.ra Contessa di Lemos aveva stabelito che sonasse a Palazzo et al Teatro nell'opera solamente Battestino Violoncello fatto venire a più chiamate da fuori, onde per non questionare con una dama giovane, figlia e moglie di grande e che si ritrovava troppo impegnata perche il suo Battestino avesse il primo luogo nell'orchestra si è stimato bene di non far sonare in detta opera il s.r Pippo, espediente preso da me come il meno azzardoso, e fare come si fece la prima sera e il passato giovedì, che al Rè, e nelle sue camere soni solamente il s.r Pippo, non comparendovi affatto Battestino. V.a Em.za si degni credermi che ho troppo spirito per [non] combattere dove vi è qualche remota speranza di vincere, ma in questo caso dove il s.r Viceré, il S.r Conte di S. Stefano, suo figlio, il s.r Principe di Castiglione non hanno stimato ragionevole di attaccarsi, si perche il Battistino si era fatto venir da fuori, sì anco perche vi era passato per causa del medesimo altro impegno che aveva obligato il s.r duca d'Ascalona ad andare a sossegare la detta s.ra Contessa, e pregarla di farlo sonare e sì ancora per non pregiudicare alle superiori emergenze, non si è stimato bene portar più avanti, et in altra forma, l'affare sopra del quale volsi sentire il parere del sig.r Principe di Palestrina, che applaudi alla sua resolutione di non farlo nemeno comparire nel tempo che si fa l'opera, tanto la prima volta, che si recita a Palazzo, quanto di poi che si porta al Teatro. Mi sono disteso in questo perche credo che il Pippo possa scrivere con un poco di malinconia per altro l'Em.za V.a lo compatisca, e creda che non vi si pone niente del nostro onore a cedere ad una dama che aveva occupato un luogo, e bisognava usarle una scortesia se volevamo farci sedere un'altro. Il sig.r Arcangelo ha pure fatto le parti che dovea onoratissimamente, anzi, tampoco voleva sonare egli, se io non glie l'ordinava precisamente; non volendo dar pabolo a mal affari, e poi Pippo suona alla camera del Rè, che è quello che sostiene il decoro, e la stima di chi l'ha inviato. In somma, V.a Em.za mi onori credere che quando ella fusse stata qui, non avrebbe fatto diversamente et io se vi conoscessi minimo pregiudizio, sarei ricorso a sua Maestà, o ne l'avrei rimandati tutti tre per le Poste. Mi sono dilungato più che pensava in questo negozio perche dubito che non li possa venire rappresentato dal s.o Pippo diversamente, però quando io non meritassi fede, la dovette al s.r Principe di Palestrina, che è stato della mia opinione.

Document 8. Naples 13 May 1702

From: Nicola Rocco
To: Ottoboni, Rome

Li ss.ri Arcangelo e colleghi sono continui nel servitio di S. M. et onorati di tutti questi grandi che ammirano la sublimità della loro virtù, la quale non mi piacerebbe che fusse di tanta eccellenza che affettionasse il genio del Rè, che intende portar seco una scelta di virtuosi per portarli al suo servitio in Spagna, et ho penetrato che non sarebbe impossibile che la M. S. cercasse per capo di detti virtuosi il s.r Corelli e con

⁴⁰ Dated and addressed identically to Document 6, but extracted from a separate letter.



esso, gli altri due, essendomi stato detto con titolo di somma segretezza che l'istesso monarca ne volesse scrivere all'Em.za V.a la quale può degnarsi di credere che qui si stà notte e giorno meditando sopra questo articolo. E spero dal sig.r Iddio che Sua Maestà resti contenta e sodisfatta d'una special rassegnazione di V.a Em.za al suo Real servitio, e l'Em.za V.a non resti priva d'huomini così rari

Il detto sig.r Arcangelo, ieri per il procaccio mandò all'Em.za V.a una scelta d'ariette dell'opera e la mandò franca scritta al libro di detto procaccio al numero 40 et questa sera li manda l'opera istessa in un piego. Lui, e li ss.ri Matteo [Fornari] e Pippo sono in pena per ritrovarsi lontani dal servitio dell'Emza. V.a

Document 9. Naples 16 May 1702

From: Nicola Rocco

To: Ottoboni, Rome

Doppo scritta altra umilissima mia all'Em.za V.a ho avuto motivo di replicarli con questa quello che è occorso questa istessa sera. Si degni l'Em.za Vostra d'intendere come verso un' hora di notte ha mandato qui mons.r Illmo. del Giudice pregando il s.r Arcangelo che con li suoi compagni fusse andato alla sua casa, che è l'istessa del sig.r Pnpe. di Cellamare suo fratello, dove erano diverse dame, acciò avesse favorito suonare. Il detto S.r Arcangelo ha voluto sentire il mio parere, et io l'ho detto che poteva benissimo andare con li sudetti SS.ri suoi compagni, ma prima avesse posto in consideratione a S. S.ria Ill.ma, che loro erano venuti per servitio di Sua Maestà (che Dio guardi) acciò non si fusse trascorso in qualche errore, parendo al mio basso intendimento che ove è per il mezzo un sì gran Monarca, non siano da trascurarsi le minime cose. È dunque andato il s.r Arcangelo et avendo detto il concertato a detto Prelato, questi ha aspettato l'Em.mo de Medici per prenderne il parere, ma l'Em.za Sua non ha voluto entrarvi, e così li detti SS.ri virtuosi sono stati un poco colà senza suonare, e poi, mandati con la carrozza a casa. Sig.re Em.mo, quando l'Em.za V.a voglia che li d.i SS.ri suonino ad'altra parte vi è il dubbio che o il S.r Vicerò o il figlio non passi a qualche doglianza, che non mi pare molto improprio. Tuttavia io non ho la gran comprensiva dell'Em.za V.a e però tutto umiliato attendo li suoi river.mi oracoli, li quali quando siano per l'affirmativa si potrà passare una parola al S.r Pnpe. di Castiglione, al S.r Vicerò o al Capitano delle Guardie suo figlio e poi mandarli dove piacerà, dovendo starsi con la grande attentione dovuta a S. M. per la quale l'Em.za V.a è stata ricercata di detti virtuosi, e per servire la quale l'ha inviati. V.a Em.za compatirà la fretta con che si è scritta questa, che è tardissimo e me l'inchino profondamente.

Document 10. Naples 23 May 1702

From: Nicola Rocco

To: Ottoboni, Rome

Il sig.r vicerò è un sig.re assai bene et ha molto del filosofo, onde non ha scritto, ne scriverà; lo farà bensì il s.r conte di Santostefano suo figlio, il quale come accennai, mi disse che avrebbe rese le gratie all'Em.za V.a allorchè si partirebbe da qua il sig.r Arcangelo. E questo sig.r Conte è in posto di Capitan della Guardia di Sua Ecc.za suo padre, onde ha tutto il carico dell'Opera, e dell'Orchestra, e sempre che S. M. che dio guardi, vuol essere servito in materia di musica, questo sig.re da il principio et il fine all'attione, sì che andrà bene che da lui si scriva all'Em.za V.a

Ritorno al S.r Corelli e compagni. Questi sospirano l'ore, e non veggono il momento della loro partenza essendo pur troppo innamorati dell'Em.za V.a, che antepongono ad ogni loro immaginabil vantaggio il servire la medesima, sì che quando sarà compita l'opera, o per meglio dire, quando S. M. sarà partita, finita o non finita la recita, loro se ne verranno a volo, essendo cessato il sospetto che la M. S. li volesse condur seco, avendo distrazioni di tanta gloria, che non mi pare si pensi alla scelta mentionata, e poi allora fu fatta qualche pratica con il dovuto rispetto per non farli partire dal servitio di V.a Em.za

Hoggi istesso ho mandato il s.r Corelli [sic] e suoi compagni da Mons.r del Giudice al quale sarò ancor io quando potrò per ringraziare S. S.ia Ill.ma dell'atto di moderazione che fu fatto quella sera



Document 11. Naples 30 May 1702

From: Nicola Rocco
To: Ottoboni, Rome

With the permission of prince of Castiglione, the musicians will depart for Rome on the next Thursday 'già che mercoledì sarebbe stata l'ultima recita'. He adds that 'in ringraziamento del favore [Castiglione] mi disse che l'avessi mandati li detti virtuosi il dopo pranzo come feci'.

Document 12. Naples 3 June 1702

From: Nicola Rocco
To: Ottoboni, Rome

La partenza troppo sollecitata del sig.r Arcangelo quanto è stata di stima dell'Em.za V.a per la sostanza tanto altresì non ha giovato nè a lui, ne a me, per le dimostrazioni apparenti. Appena era posto in calesse egli con suoi compagni che venne un tedesco della guardia del Sig.r Vicerè a chiamarlo che si portase a palazzo. A me fu di gran sentimento il ritrovarsi partito, perche certamente il sig.r Corelli avrebbe riportato l'aggrado delle sue fatiche, et io non avrei inutilmente (dentro questi tanti imbarazi che sono stati per la partenza del Rè) chiesto le sodisfationi, e le gratie dovute all'Em.za Vostra.

Io voglio credere che questa sera se ne scriva all'Em.za V.a da S. Ecc.a e dal S.r Conte di S. Stefano suo figlio, ma quando non sia, mi usi l'Em.za V.a la pietà di credere che salvo il decoro della mia carica, non ho lasciato di tentare tutte le strade per insinuare le convenienze dovute . . .

Io tralascio questo discorso per non travagliare l'Em.za V.a. Dico solamente che il s.r Principe di Castiglione mi ha mandata l'acclusa che cotesti SS.ri virtuosi, li hanno usato violenza per partire, che il S.r Corelli per aderire al s.r Pippo ha mancato a Castiglione a S.Stefano et a se stesso. Dico al S.r Pippo perche questi aveva più voglia dell'altri di ritornare in Roma a precipitio.