

PROFECTIO MOYSIS IN AEGYPTUM (1784) A “FAKE” NEAPOLITAN ORATORIO?

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Izvleček: Izvod rokopisa oratorija *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* z letnico 1784, ki se danes nahaja v I-Mc, ima na naslovni strani pripis, da gre za pasticcio »slavnih neapeljskih mojstrov«. Ta vir je najverjetneje ponaredek, ki ga lahko povežemo s tremi neneapeljskimi skladatelji. Neapelj je v tem kontekstu zlorabljen zgolj iz tržnih razlogov.

Ključne besede: oratorij, ponaredek, Neapelj, Andrea Favi, Benetke

Abstract: One manuscript of an oratorio in I-Mc dating from 1784 is described, on its title page, as a pasticcio by “celebrated Neapolitan maestri”. I suggest that the source is actually a forgery and linked to three non-Neapolitan composers. The inference is that it was associated with Naples purely for marketing reasons.

Keywords: oratorio, forgery, Naples, Andrea Favi, Venice

When the twenty-six-year-old Giovanni Battista Pergolesi died in 1736, “all Italy manifested an eager desire to hear and possess his productions”.¹ From the 1750s until the beginning of the following century Pergolesi’s fame reached mythical proportions, to the extent that

directors of opera companies were tempted to put on works by less popular composers under his name, and publishers who came into possession of manuscripts attributed to him were not always inclined to question their authenticity, but rather to put them on the market and reap the profits.²

Also,

unscrupulous copyists and publishers wrote Pergolesi’s name on compositions by obscure musicians to sell them – so to speak – at a profit on account of the added value that the attribution of any music to Pergolesi would automatically ensure.³

Numerous studies by such scholars as Helmut Huckle, Francesco Degrada, Barry S. Brook and Claudio Toscani, among many others, have purged Pergolesi’s catalogue

¹ Burney, *General History*, 2:922.

² Walker, “Two Centuries of Pergolesi”, 298.

³ Degrada, “False attribuzioni e falsificazioni”, 99 (see also 102–103). All the translations, unless otherwise specified, are mine. Much discussion has arisen about the misattributions in the Pergolesi catalogue and the myth that grew up around the composer: it would be an impossibility to quote all the relevant literature here.

of several misattributed pieces. Pergolesi's case is emblematic of this phenomenon of misattribution, which actually affected eighteenth-century Neapolitan music as a whole. Since being "Neapolitan" was seen as a seal of musical excellence, operatic troupes active throughout Europe teemed with singers explicitly described in the relevant librettos as "Neapolitan", even though Neapolitan they were not.⁴ Similarly, on the title pages of countless musical sources the inscription "napoletano" placed beneath the composer's name stands out.

One manuscript transmitting a Latin oratorio of 1784 entitled *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum*, preserved in Biblioteca del Conservatorio Statale di Musica Giuseppe Verdi in Milan (hereafter, I-Mc; with shelfmark M.S. MS. 249-1), raises eyebrows for similar reasons. The copyist writes on the title page that the oratorio is a *pasticcio* by "celebrated Neapolitan *maestri*" (see Figure 1), yet many of its features appear to argue against the reliability of this information. In the present article I subject various characteristics of this hitherto unnoticed "Neapolitan" source to critical scrutiny, arriving at the conclusion that this could well be an instance of musical forgery in relation to attribution. Starkly contradicting its alleged "Neapolitan-ness", evidence of different kinds seems to provide a link between the oratorio and late eighteenth-century Venice, Forlì and Bologna, one bringing into play Ferdinando Bertoni (1725–1813), a composer born in Salò, a town near Brescia on the Venetian *terraferma*, Pietro Terziani (1765–1831), a maestro of Roman origin, and the musical activities of the Forlivese musician Andrea Favi (1743–1822) and his collaborators.⁵ This in turn provides strong evidence to suggest that the manuscript was associated with "celebrated Neapolitan *maestri*" for reasons similar to those that brought about the "eager desire to [...] possess [Pergolesi's] production", which endured throughout the last half of that century.

The Oratorio in Northern Italy during the Eighteenth Century

To gain a better understanding of this article, it may be useful to give some information regarding the oratorio in Northern Italy during the eighteenth century. Four were the

⁴ This is the case, for instance, with the *commedia dell'arte* actress and singer Rosa Costa. At the outset of her career she was active as an actress in the Venetian *commedia dell'arte* company in the Teatro San Luca: "Rosa Costa: She acted in the company of comedians attached to the Teatro S. Luca in Venice [...]. Besides acting in comedies, she was also able to sing" ("Rosa Costa: Recitava nella comica compagnia del teatro di S. Luca in Venezia [...]. Oltre il recitare nelle commedie, possedeva ancora l'abilità di cantare"); see Bartoli, *Notizie istoriche de' comici italiani*, 1:187. Some years later, we find her playing roles in Neapolitan *commedie per musica*. Their librettos describe her as "Napoletana", even though she was probably a native of Venice. For instance, in the libretto for Gioacchino Cocchi's *La Matilde* (Naples, Fiorentini Theatre, 1739; a copy is preserved in Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense [I-Mb], Racc. Dramm. Corniani Algarotti 3363), Costa is described as "Neapolitan, a singer in the service of His Excellency the Duke of Montemar" ("Napoletana, virtuosa dell'ecc.mo signor Duca di Montemar").

⁵ On Bertoni, see Truett Hollis, "Bertoni, Ferdinando (Gasparo)"; on Terziani, see Gmeinwieser, "Terziani, Pietro".

cities important for the development of the oratorio in that region: Bologna, Modena, Florence and, above all, Venice. In Bologna, oratorio performances were sponsored mainly by the Oratorians of San Filippo Neri. Oratorio performances, which were given in both sacred and secular contexts, marked a variety of occasions throughout the year, especially during Lent. The oratorios performed in nearby Modena were closely related to those given in Bologna, as many of the same composers were active in both centres. In Florence the Oratorians were sponsoring oratorio performances since the 1650s. The oratorio composers active in Florence were mostly local (Veracini, Arrigoni, Redi and others).⁶

Oratorio performances in Venice began as early as 1667 at the church of Santa Maria della Consolazione, better known as “Santa Maria della Fava”, thanks to the sponsorship of the Oratorians. With some interruptions, oratorio performances at the Fava continued throughout the eighteenth century. At mid-century the Church of Santa Maria della Fava hired Neapolitans such as Francesco Feo and Leonardo Leo as oratorio composers.⁷ From 1677 onwards, the city’s four *ospedali* began to produce oratorios as well.⁸ By the 1740s, the *maestri* who composed them (Gasparini, Vivaldi, Pollaro, Lotti, Hasse, and others) defined the features of mid-century Venetian oratorios, which continued to act as reference points throughout the century.⁹ A late eighteenth-century Venetian oratorio was a fully-fledged musical and dramatic work in operatic style, structured in well-defined recitatives and arias. The poetic style of librettos – either in Italian or Latin – was similar to that of opera seria; most of arias were in *da capo* form; the overall character was heroic, akin to that of contemporary *drammi per musica*. Denis and Elsie Arnold define this type of oratorio an “oratorio serio”,¹⁰ because of its obvious similarities to opera seria. To describe the relationship between this type of oratorio and opera seria, they wrote, in relation to the first, that

there can be no “exit” convention; the vanity of singers need not be taken so seriously; the complications of the opera plots are much reduced, partly by the nature of the subject, partly by the fact that the two-part oratorio is perforce simpler than the three-act opera. The usual complaint that there is no development of the characters becomes irrelevant when the main *raison d’être* becomes a religious lesson.

The 1784 *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* is a fully fledged oratorio serio. The only element of this oratorio that deviates from the genre’s description by the Arnolds is the presence of arias with modified *da capo* sections, that is, with the section A’ written in full.

⁶ Smither, “Oratorio”. For more information on oratorio, see the bibliography therein.

⁷ Arnold and Arnold, *Oratorio in Venice*, 1–18, 36–76.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 20–35.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 70–76.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

The Source

This oratorio serio source comprises a full score, made up of 107 folios bound in stiff cardboard covers, and a set of separate parts for instrumentalists and singers;¹¹ the two handwritings of the two sources, free from erasures, are neat. The handwriting of the full score is that of Andrea Favi (see below); that of the separate parts is that of the copyist “Delta”, one that appears regularly in the manuscripts of the Dono Villa, the library collection that includes the source here examined (see below).¹² The title page of the full score, reproduced in Figure 1, clearly describes the oratorio as a *pasticcio* by Neapolitan composers.



Figure 1

Profecio Moÿsis in Aegyptum, fol. 1r (I-Mc, M.S. MS. 249-1; courtesy of I-Mc).

¹¹ Individual parts: Cantus 1 (Sephora): 9 fols.; Cantus 2 (Elcane): 4 fols.; Alto (Jethro): 9 fols.; Tenor (Moyses): 9 fols.; Bass (Labanus): 7 fols.; Violin 1: 15 fols. (2 copies, 15 + 15); Violin 2: 15 fols. (2 copies, 15 + 15); Oboe 1: 7 fols.; Oboe 2: 7 fols.; Horn 1: 5 fols.; Horn 2: 5 fols.; Viola 1: 13 fols.; Viola 2: 13 fols.; Bass: 13 fols.

¹² Vaccarini, “Il fondo Villa”, Appendix 3.

Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum	The Journey by Moses to Egypt
Actio Sacra	A Sacred Opera
Musicis modulis exornarunt nonnulli ex celebrioribus Magistris Neapolitanis	Some of the most celebrated Neapolitan maestri embellished [this text] with music
1784	1784

The spine of the same manuscript, reproduced as Figure 2, includes similar information, albeit without mention of the oratorio’s alleged Neapolitan origin. Its word “centone”, indeed, directly translates into ‘patchwork’, ‘pasticcio’.



Figure 2
Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum, spine.

Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum is based upon the biblical book of the Exodus and tells the story of the exodus of Moses and his followers out of Egypt. Leaving aside a chorus of shepherds, the characters of this one-act oratorio number five: Moysis (tenor), Sephora (his wife, soprano), Jethro (Sephora’s father, alto), Elcane (Sephora’s sister, soprano) and Labanus (one of Jethro’s relatives, bass). The arias include highly virtuosic passages; the orchestration, which reflects the traditions of late *Settecento* Italian opera, is rich, including besides strings and continuo two horns and two oboes.

The source forms part of the *Dono Villa* (Villa Donation), a specific library collection preserved in I-Mc that was donated by Count Carlo Villa to the institution in 1840.¹³ A substantial portion of the *Dono Villa* is made up of scores of oratorios and other pieces, some of which were originally performed in the *ospedali* of eighteenth-century Venice. The oratorios of the *Dono Villa* that appear to be connected with the Venetian *ospedali* are chronologically listed in the Table.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 25.

Table

Venetian oratorios in the Dono Villa. The information in the Table is taken from Gillio, *L'attività musicale negli ospedali di Venezia, Materiali documentari* (CD-ROM).

Title	Composer	Date	Shelfmark in I-Mc
<i>Davidde penitente</i>	Ferdinando Bertoni	1775	M.S. MS. 36-1
<i>Esther</i>	Giuseppe Schuster	1781	M.S. MS. 238-1
<i>Absalom</i>	Domenico Cimarosa	1782	M.S. MS. 85-1
<i>Abramo</i>	Francesco Bianchi	1783	M.S. MS. 39-1
<i>Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum</i>	Various Neapolitan Maestros	1784	M.S. MS. 249-1
<i>Balthassar</i>	Ferdinando Bertoni	1784	M.S. MS. 35-2/3
<i>Agar fugiens in desertum</i>	Francesco Bianchi	1785	M.S. MS. 38-1
<i>Ninive convertita</i>	Pasquale Anfossi	1787	M.S. MS. 7-1
<i>Susanna</i>	Giuseppe Gazzaniga	1787	M.S. MS. 108-1
<i>Joas re di Giuda</i>	Francesco Bianchi	1790	M.S. MS. 37-2
<i>Gerico distrutta</i>	Pasquale Anfossi	1791	M.S. MS. 9-1
<i>Sisara</i>	Johann Simon Mayr	1793	M.S. MS. 188-1
<i>Nuptiae Ruth</i>	Ignazio Girace	1793	M.S. MS. 122-1
<i>Tobiae matrimonium</i>	Johann Simon Mayr	1794	M.S. MS. 187-1.bis
<i>David in spelunca Engaddi</i>	Johann Simon Mayr	1795	M.S. MS. 185-1

Let us now subject some features of this group of manuscripts to scrutiny in pursuance of the hypothesis that *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* has nothing to do with Naples, despite the inscription in Latin on its title page.

Binding, Cover and Watermarks

The cardboard covers and stitching of the full score appear to be original; in other words, Villa seemingly came into possession of these scores and donated them to the Milanese Conservatory without altering their original physical qualities. The features that point to this kind of pristine source are, as argued by Marina Vaccarini, two: a small orange label on the spine, and the manner of stitching within grey cardboard covers.¹⁴ Many of the full scores of the oratorios listed in Table share the orange label and the same type of binding with cardboard covers – features suggesting that the binding took place at the time of copying (as opposed to later) and in the same *copisteria*. Figures 3a and 3b reproduces for comparison the cardboard covers of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* and *Davidde penitente* by Bertoni.

¹⁴ Other sources in the Dono Villa, in contrast, betray traces of nineteenth-century rebinding. Vaccarini, “Il fondo Villa”, 35–38, Appendix 2.

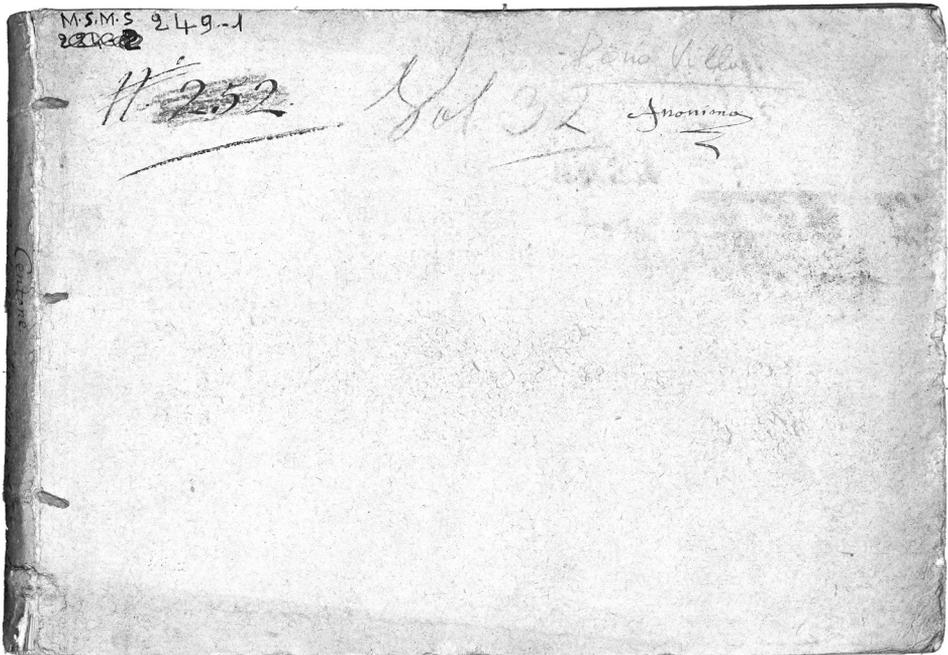


Figure 3a
Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum, cardboard cover.

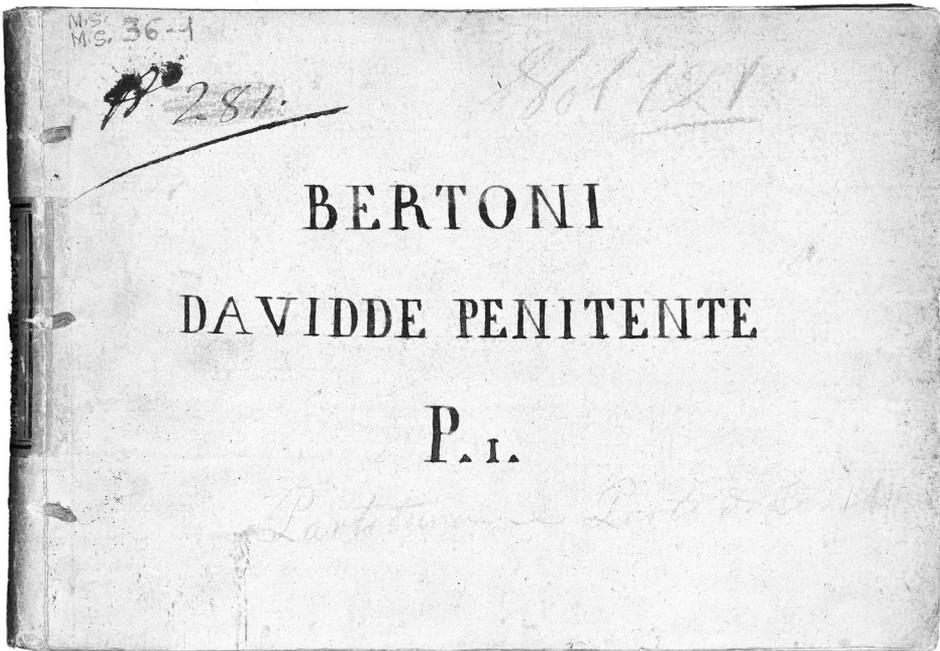


Figure 3b
Davide penitente, cardboard cover of Part I (I-Mc, M.S. MS. 36-1; courtesy of I-Mc).

Even though *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* lacks the small orange label, the cord used for the binding of the two full scores displays identical features: this cord is visible at only three points but reveals identical manufacture, shape and design.¹⁵ Similarly, the cardboard cover of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* – though bearing no title – mirrors that of *Davidde penitente*, which strongly suggests that the two scores originated in the same *copisteria*.

One principal watermark recurs throughout the full score and separate parts of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum*: three crescents (“tre mezze lune”). All the manuscripts listed in Table have this same generic watermark. The identical form of watermark seen in these manuscripts immediately points to an origin in the same city or at least the same geographical area. Indubitably, the three crescents watermark is linked to the paper’s manufacture within the Republic of Venice and very often to its use by the busy *copisterie* of its capital.¹⁶ However, Venetian paper circulated widely in the Republic and contiguous regions. So the shared watermarks do not provide quite enough evidence for it to be absolutely certain that the score of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* originated in the same copy-shop in Venice. To nail down the origin of these sources other elements need to be taken into consideration.

The 1772 *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* by Ferdinando Bertoni

Pier Giuseppe Gillio’s fundamental work on the Venetian *ospedali* provides important clues to the origin of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum*. Gillio records that an oratorio by Ferdinando Bertoni entitled *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* was performed at the Ospedale dei Mendicanti on 22 July 1772.¹⁷ The text of the matching libretto, printed by Angelo Pasinelli in Venice and preserved in Venice, Biblioteca di Studi Teatrali della Casa di Carlo Goldoni (hereafter, I-Vcg; shelfmark: Correr 12 B 4/1), is identical with the underlaid text of the “Neapolitan” *oratorio centone* of 1784.¹⁸ At first glance this literary concordance would strongly suggest that the 1784 *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* was the same oratorio performed at the Ospedale dei Mendicanti on 22 July 1772 and penned by Ferdinando Bertoni rather than a “patchwork” of Neapolitan arias.

Moreover, oratorios and other musical compositions were commonly revived, even after the passage of several years, at the Ospedale dei Mendicanti: *Bethulia Liberata* by Felice Alessandri (1780) was repeated in 1781 and 1782;¹⁹ the cantata *Canticorum Sponsa*

¹⁵ The small orange label could have come unstuck. See *ibid.*

¹⁶ Talbot, *Sacred Vocal Music*, 122.

¹⁷ Gillio, *L’attività musicale negli ospedali di Venezia*, Materiali documentari (CD-ROM), no. 69 of the Mendicanti chronology.

¹⁸ In 1772 the roles were taken by the following singers: Laura Risegari (Moyses), Antonia Lucovich (Sephora), Teresa Almerigo (Jethro), Francesca Tomii (Elcane), Jacoba Frari (Labanus). See p. 2 of the matching libretto.

¹⁹ Gillio, *L’attività musicale negli ospedali di Venezia*, Materiali documentari (CD-ROM), nos. 84, 93 and 101 of the Mendicanti chronology.

by Bertoni (1777) was reprised seven years later, in 1784;²⁰ and many similar cases are documented in Gillio's fundamental study. This, together with the fact that Bertoni was in Venice both in 1772 and in 1784,²¹ further suggests that the 1784 *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* was a revival, twelve years later, of the eponymous oratorio premiered in 1772. The stylistic closeness of the arias in the 1784 source of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* to the idiom of Bertoni during those years and, more generally, to late eighteenth-century Venetian oratorio serio, seemingly lends further corroboration to the hypothesis.²² But the case of the 1784 source of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* is many times more complex than may at first appear.

Andrea Favi and the Forlivese Connection

Marina Vaccarini provided strong evidence in her article of 2013 on the Dono Villa to suggest that the 1784 source of the *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* was put together by one precisely identifiable musician: Andrea Favi (1743–1822). Born in Forlì, near Bologna, Favi was *maestro di cappella* at the local Duomo and concertmaster of the city's theatre.²³ In 1789 he composed for the Oratorio dei Mendicanti the oratorio *Abigail*, through which he came into contact with Teresa Almerigo, one of the singers who had participated in the 1772 premiere of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum*. Favi, therefore, had connections with both Venice and Forlì.²⁴

Among his various activities as a busy church musician Favi appears to have arranged for Forlì some Venetian oratorios performed earlier at the Venetian *ospedali*. The case of the 1787 source in the Dono Villa for Giuseppe Gazzaniga's oratorio *Susanna* typifies the procedures adopted by Favi. As shown by Vaccarini, Gazzaniga's Latin oratorio *Susanna* was performed in Venice in 1788, as stated in the libretto preserved in I-Vcg, Correr Oratori 59 F 9. But the language of the underlaid text in the matching manuscript score in the Dono Villa (I-Mc, M.S. MS. 108-1) is Italian. A libretto in Italian for an oratorio of 1788 entitled *Susanna* is preserved in I-Mc, Libretti V. 71; the text it contains is identical with the underlaid words for the Italian *Susanna* in I-Mc. The two sources are obviously connected. The title page of the libretto reads as follows:

Susanna, sacra rappresentazione per musica, Daniel. Cap. XIII, Forlì 1788, Per Barbiani stamp. con approv.

²⁰ Ibid., nos. 77 and 107 of the Mendicanti chronology.

²¹ Truett Hollis, "Bertoni, Ferdinando (Gasparo)".

²² See Arnold and Arnold, *Oratorio in Venice*, 36–76. I do not wish to use stylistic features for my argument here. On this matter, and speaking of Pergolesi, Degrada indeed writes that "attributions based exclusively on stylistic analysis have led [...] to laughable results in that attributions that are in other ways certain have been put in doubt, while works that are certainly not by Pergolesi have been added to his catalogue". Degrada, "False attribuzioni e falsificazioni", 109.

²³ Schmidl, *Supplemento al Dizionario universale*, 292.

²⁴ Vaccarini, "Il fondo Villa", 47–48.

Susanna, a sacred play for music taken from chapter XIII of the Book of Daniel, Forlì 1788, printed by Barbiani with [official] approval.

The connection provides strong evidence in favour of a belief that the Italian version of Gazzaniga's *Susanna* was performed in Forlì in 1788. The handwriting of this Italian source has been identified with that of Andrea Favi on the grounds of its similarity to that of an autograph letter by this musician to Padre Martini (27 July 1778) preserved in Bologna, Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna (hereafter, I-Bc), with shelfmark I.7.31.²⁵ Favi's changes to these Venetian oratorios include, besides the translation into Italian, the addition of cadenzas and instrumental sections, the replacement of arias and modifications to the orchestration.²⁶ Favi, or whoever copied the music for him, often employed, as his starting point for these *pasticci*, scores copied in Venice, into which he opportunely inserted additional or replacement gatherings.

At first glance, these last compelling pieces of evidence might seem to suggest a definitive answer: notwithstanding the fact that the 1772 libretto and the 1784 musical manuscript share a Latin text, the 1784 *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* is a *pasticcio* based on Bertoni's eponymous work of 1772, as arranged by Favi for his chapel in Forlì, that also includes arias by Neapolitan *maestri*. However, a closer look reveals other points of interest that greatly complicate the matter. Whereas it is reasonable to conclude that *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* was performed in Forlì in 1784, it remains puzzling why this manuscript was ever labelled a "Neapolitan" *centone*. Moreover, Favi's *pasticci* usually exhibit significant textual differences between the Venetian libretto and the score performed in Forlì. This situation does not apply, however, to the case of the present *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum*.

The Aria by Pietro Terziani

To my knowledge, there are no musical sources of the original 1772 version of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum*. It is therefore impossible to ascertain the extent to which Favi modified the original oratorio, especially since the manuscript source does not betray major editorial interventions (such as insertions and/or deletions of gatherings). But close examination of the musical incipit of the arias provides some clues.

Sephora's opening aria, "Prata, sylves, ameni colles", is apparently by a Roman composer, Pietro Terziani. It appears, in adapted form and scored for soprano, tenor and organ, as a piece entitled "Exaltabo te Domine" (serving as the Offertory in a Mass) preserved in Rome, Archivio capitolare della Basilica papale di Santa Maria Maggiore (I-Rsm), shelfmark: 111/39, and in Rome, Archivio musicale della Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano (I-Rsg), shelfmark: ms. mus. A.1438. Whereas the date of composition of the piece is uncertain, the name of the composer attracts notice. Both Roman sources attribute the piece to Pietro Terziani. Born in Rome in 1765, Terziani studied under Giovanbattista

²⁵ Andrea Favi to Padre Martini, 27 July 1778, I.7.31, I-Bc.

²⁶ Vaccarini, "Il fondo Villa", 48–50.

Casali in the same city. He was a pupil, between 1780 and 1784, of Carlo Cotumacci and Giacomo Insanguine at the Sant'Onofrio conservatory in Naples; but then returned to his home town to study the strict *a cappella* style of composition under his first *maestro*. In 1784 he was admitted to both the Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna and the Congregazione di Santa Cecilia in Rome. He left a large number of sacred compositions, which he used in the course of his duties as *maestro di cappella* in various Roman churches (San Giovanni in Laterano, Chiesa del Gesù, Sant'Ignazio di Loyola, San Silvestro). He died on 5 October 1831 in Rome. He was also active in Venice in 1788 as a composer of operas.²⁷

The link between the 1784 score of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* and Terziani, a member of the Accademia Filarmonica in Bologna, attracts attention. In the already mentioned Italian libretto of 1788 for Gazzaniga's *Susanna*, a certain Ottaviano Brusatori, a local monk from Forlì, wrote a dedicatory *sonetto* for Gazzaniga. The composer Francesco Bianchi had previously composed a cantata for solo tenor for the same "Brusatori" (preserved in I-Mc, Mus. Tr. ms. 177). Gazzaniga and Bianchi were members of the Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna, and both therefore had connections with personalities of the local Forlivese/Bolognese *milieu*, such as Brusatori. On the basis of this evidence Vaccarini argued that "this passage of scores [between Venice and Forlì/Bologna] revolved around the Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna".²⁸

The fact that the 1784 *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* includes a piece by Terziani, a member of the Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna, is therefore not surprising. It further confirms Vaccarini's conclusion that these sources should be viewed in relation to the documented passage of scores between Venice and Forlì/Bologna that were adapted by Favi and his collaborators. In the light of all of this evidence, and especially given the fact that the words of the 1784 source coincide with the text of the 1772 libretto, the 1784 source for *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* could have come about in two contrasted ways. According to the first scenario, Favi, following his usual *pasticcio*-making procedures, took the 1772 score by Bertoni and reworked it by inserting arias by other composers (such as Terziani); according to the second, very different scenario Favi, starting from solely the 1772 Venetian libretto, composed and/or compiled the oratorio from scratch, including pre-existing arias by other composers (who included Terziani).²⁹ In the first scenario, the oratorio would be a work based on Bertoni's original version but including individual pieces by different composers (Terziani, perhaps Favi himself, plus others); in the second, it would be a *pasticcio* made up of pieces by Terziani and other *maestri*. Neither case

²⁷ Gmeinwieser, "Terziani, Pietro".

²⁸ Vaccarini, "Il fondo Villa", 50.

²⁹ This would not be surprising. In a letter dated 3 February 1765 Pietro Morandi, a composer, bookseller and distributor of the printed editions by Alessandri and Scattaglia, wrote to Padre Martini to ask him for an oratorio libretto with the text of which he could compose an oratorio for his local chapel (Pietro Morandi to Padre Martini, 3 February 1765, Carteggi, I.14.39, I-Bc). In a second letter, dated 31 March 1765, Morandi expresses his gratitude to Martini for having sent him the requested libretto (Pietro Morandi to Padre Martini, 31 March 1765, I.014.041, I-Bc). According to Vaccarini, Morandi, who was a member of the Accademia Filarmonica (Sechi, "Morandi, Pietro Maria"), seems to have had connections with the above-mentioned Forlivese/Venetian *milieu*. Vaccarini, "Il fondo Villa", 50.

provides for any connection with Naples or “celebrated Neapolitan composers”. Despite his four-year period spent under Cotumacci and Insanguine at Naples, Terziani was a Roman composer: so why did Favi state that the 1784 *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* was a *pasticcio* of pieces by “Neapolitan” composers? As I will suggest, this rebranding could perhaps be linked to a desire to increase the source’s marketability.

A Musical Souvenir?

Different types of evidence suggest, indeed, that at least some of the oratorio manuscripts preserved in the Dono Villa were intended as copies for the luxury book market. The overall features of some of the oratorio sources in the Dono Villa are typical, indeed, of luxury music manuscripts. Not only are they devoid of erasures and signs of usage, but the covers often sport richly decorated friezes executed by different engravers from the Venetian/Florentine areas, such as Alessandri & Scattaglia, Marescalchi & Canobbio, Antonio Zatta, Ranieri Del Vivo, Gaetano Barchesi, Giovanni Chiari, Giuseppe Benedetti, Luigi Guidotti and Antonio Giuseppe Pagani.³⁰ Figure 4 reproduces the luxury cover of *Abramo* by Francesco Bianchi, which includes, beneath the ornamental frieze, the following inscription:

Si vendono a Venezia da Alessandri e Sca[t]taglia all’Insegna della B. V. della Pace sul Ponte di Rialto presso de’ quali si trova ogni sorta di musica vocale e instrumentale.

[These volumes] are sold in Venice by Alessandri and Scattaglia at the sign of Our Lady of Peace on the Rialto Bridge; here, you can find all kinds of vocal and instrumental music.

Innocente Alessandri (1741–1803) and Pietro Scattaglia (1739–1810; his surname also found as Scattagia and Scataglia) were booksellers, engravers and printers active in Venice during the second half of the eighteenth century. They opened their shop at the Rialto around 1770 and worked there up until the end of the century. They sold their own engraved products and handled the distribution of musical editions by other publishers. From 1776/1780 onwards they published luxury printed editions of music single-handedly during a period when such activity was far from common.³¹

A further clue to this suggestion is provided by a rare source preserved in the Biblioteca Civica of Belluno (I-BEc, shelfmark: Miari AM.ms99), which seems to establish a link

³⁰ The realisation of neat copies of separate parts, which do not bear signs of practical use, should not come as a surprise. There are indeed many sources of this kind. For instance, consider the separate parts of Giovanni Paisiello’s *Nina*, preserved in Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek - Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek (D-DL), with shelfmark Mus.3481-F-513a; of Johann Adolf Hasse’s *Demofonte*, in the same library, with shelfmark Mus.2477-F-57a; of one opera overture by Tommaso Traetta in I-Mc, Nosedà Q.26.1; and of many others in other libraries.

³¹ Antolini, *Dizionario degli editori musicali italiani*, 40–43. The original Italian sentence does not specify what “could be purchased” in the Rialto shop of Alessandri e Scattaglia; there is also evidence suggesting that they sold blank decorated title pages to be used for music manuscripts.



Figure 4
Francesco Bianchi, *Abramo*, cover of Part II (I-Mc, M.S. MS. 39-1).

between copyist “Epsilon”, whose handwriting appears throughout the oratorios of the Dono Villa,³² and the Venetian *copisteria* of Alessandri & Scattaglia. The source’s unusual title, written down by its owner, reads as follows:

[Two] finales, one by Sig. Domenico Cimarosa, and the other by Sig. Pasquale Anfossi; these were bought by me, Domenico Parron, for a total of 7.10 *lire* from a stall on the Rialto bridge, on 14 February 1799 [...].³³

The decorated title page of the second piece of this source has the same legend as that seen in Figure 4 (“Si vendono a Venezia da Alessandri e Scattaglia [...]”). The fact that Domenico Parron bought “on the Rialto bridge” a musical manuscript that contains the phrase “are sold [...] on the Rialto bridge” suggests to me that the stall where he found his two finales was that of Alessandri & Scattaglia. Therefore, the copyist “Epsilon”, who executed one of the two finales in the manuscript “bought on the Rialto”, was connected to the Rialto shop of Alessandri and Scattaglia. These dealers must therefore have sold – alongside

³² Vaccarini, “Il fondo Villa”, Appendix 3.

³³ “Finali, uno del sig.r Domenico Cimarosa e l’altro del sig.r Pasquale Anfossi, comprati sopra un bancheto al Ponte di Rialto da me Domenico Parron il tutto per lire 7.10. Li, 14 febraro, l’an[n]o 1799 [...]”.

printed music, books and engravings – luxury manuscript copies of music produced by them and embellished with their own decorative friezes.

The fact that at least one of Favi's frequent collaborators – copyist "Epsilon" – could be connected to the trading activities of one of the *copisterie* appearing in the Dono Villa suggests that Favi himself was involved in this commerce network. Two are, indeed, the types of sources materially executed by Favi: fair copies devoid of erasures and signs of usage, such as *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum*; and working scores, which are Venetian originals that have been modified, through the insertion and deletion of gatherings, by Favi.³⁴ This last type of source would evidently reflect the work of revision that Favi carried out on the original oratorios for his productions in Forlì; the first would coincide with the fair copies – including parts – of the working scores. The hypothesis is that the fair copies mentioned above were intended for the luxury trade. The status of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* would, therefore, be that of a fair copy of a lost working score.

Perhaps, Venetian *copisterie* saw to the production of luxury manuscript copies of the Venetian oratorios as revised and performed in Forlì (but concealing their real nature as *pasticci*) because of the fact that they knew that such works enjoyed great popularity. For instance, eighteenth-century grand tourists enjoyed attending the performances of the *figlie di coro*. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, in his *Italienische Reise* (1813–1817), recalled his Venetian sojourn of 1786, describing the performances at the Mendicanti in the following words:

With my plan in my hand I endeavoured to find my way through the strangest labyrinth to the church of the Mendicanti. Here is the conservatorium, which stands in the highest repute at the present day. The ladies performed an oratorio behind the grating, the church was filled with hearers, the music was very beautiful, and the voices were magnificent. An alto sung the part of King Saul, the chief personage in the poem. Of such a voice I had no notion whatsoever; some passages of the music were excessively beautiful, and the words, which were Latin, most laughably Italianised in some places, were perfectly adapted for singing. Music here has a wide field.³⁵

Similar in spirit was the account of the musical activities in the Venetian *ospedali* offered by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1743:

A kind of music far superior, in my opinion, to that of operas, and which in all Italy has not its equal, nor perhaps in the whole world is that of the *scuole*. The *scuole* are houses for charity, established for the education of young girls without fortune, to whom the republic afterwards gives a portion either in marriage or for the cloister. Amongst talents cultivated in these young girls, music is in the first rank. Every Sunday the church of each of these four *scuole*, during vespers, mottettos or anthems with full choruses, accompanied by a great orchestra, and composed and directed by the best masters in Italy, are sung in the galleries by girls only [...]. I have not an idea of anything so voluptuous and affecting as this music: the richness of the art, the exquisite taste of the vocal part, the excellence of the voices, the justness of the execution, everything in these delightful

³⁴ Vaccarini, "Il fondo Villa", 40–50.

³⁵ Goethe, *Goethe's Travels in Italy*, 62–63.

concerts concurs to produce an impression which certainly is not the mode, but from which I am of opinion no heart is secure. Carrio and I never failed being present at these vespers of the Mendicanti, and we were not alone. The church was always full of the lovers of the art, and even the actors of the opera came there to form their tastes after these excellent models.³⁶

Similar accounts have been left by other grand tourists, such as Edward Wright (1720–1722) and Charles de Brosses (1739).³⁷ In view of the fact that all the oratorios listed in Table were performed at the four Venetian *ospedali* and “composed and directed by the best masters in Italy”, that their manuscripts display the material features of luxury copies and that attending performances at the four *ospedali* was considered something à la mode, it can be reasonably argued that at least some of the oratorio sources of the Dono Villa were intended for the luxury book market.

There are therefore two possible answers to the dilemma posed by the reference to the “Neapolitan” masters on the Milanese manuscript. Either Favi and his collaborators, having no clue about the authors of the inserted arias and/or about the fact that the 1772 *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* was by Bertoni, thoughtlessly identified the source as “Neapolitan”; or they deliberately and fraudulently Neapolitanized the source for marketing purposes. As regards the first possibility, it would be counterintuitive to maintain that Favi and his collaborators did not know that *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* was by Bertoni, because of the above-mentioned connections between Favi, the Forlivese/Bolognese *milieu* and the Venetian *ospedali*. Moreover, during those years Bertoni’s fame had reached its apex: he was appointed *primo maestro* at the ducal church of San Marco in 1785;³⁸ in addition to this, Alessandri and Scattaglia, the same booksellers who executed the decorative title pages on many of the manuscripts in the Dono Villa, printed Bertoni’s *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Venice, Teatro San Benedetto, 1776) in the year of its premiere.³⁹ Equally counterintuitive would be to maintain that they were unaware that at least one aria was by Pietro Terziani, a Roman (not Neapolitan) composer linked to the Accademia Filarmonica in Bologna, around which, as Vaccarini suggested, these scores revolved.

The second possibility is much more likely, since it can easily be explained by the Neapolitan “fever” that struck the musicians and music enthusiasts of those years. As shown at the start of this article, a Neapolitan provenance for music and musicians was widely perceived as a guarantee of excellence, often used to increase the marketability of specific manuscripts.

³⁶ Rousseau, *Confessions of J. J. Rousseau*, 257–258.

³⁷ See, respectively: Wright, *Some Observations*, 1:79; Brosses, *Lettres familières*, 143–144.

³⁸ Truett Hollis, “Bertoni, Ferdinando (Gasparo)”.

³⁹ One copy is preserved in I-Mc, Noseda C. 32. Bertoni came into contact with the emperor Joseph II in 1769 and in 1775, when the latter attended, unannounced, the performance of *Davidde penitente* at the Mendicanti. The emperor was so astonished by Bertoni’s oratorio that it was performed the following year in Vienna’s Kärntnertortheater at a concert given by the Tonkünstler-Societät. Truett Hollis, “Bertoni, Ferdinando (Gasparo)”.

Conclusion

This article has shed new light on the anonymous source of an oratorio preserved in the Dono Villa of the Library of the Conservatorio “Giuseppe Verdi” in Milan that bears the title *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* and the date 1784. The title on the first page of the source informs us that the oratorio is a patchwork of arias composed by some of the most celebrated Neapolitan *maestri*. Yet, upon closer examination, I have proposed that the 1784 source for *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* had connections to the Forlivese/Bolognese *milieu* and to the musical activities of Favi and his collaborators, additionally containing an aria by Terziani, a composer of Roman (not Neapolitan) provenance. The statement declaring the oratorio’s “Neapolitan-ness” is therefore misleading. I have tried to suggest that the reference to the Neapolitan *maestri* was added to enhance the manuscript’s marketability. Therefore, the case of the Milanese source of *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* could well represent an instance of forgery in eighteenth-century music: one belonging to the category of fake Neapolitan-ness.

The findings of this article open up further paths of research, each linked to every single oratorio belonging to the Dono Villa. As I have tried to suggest, complex networks between different centres of the Peninsula lay behind the 1784 source for *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum*. The question therefore arises whether further research on the other oratorios of the Dono Villa could make other, similar networks emerge. Vaccarini had already tracked the Forlivese connection down in the past, but had not identified Terziani’s aria in *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum* (this was not the purpose of her article, after all). In this specific case, the element of fake Neapolitan-ness led me to the above conclusions, but the careful examination of each oratorio in the Dono Villa has the potential to unearth previously unknown networks of musical influence. Networks that are, perhaps, concealed behind falsified authorships.

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PROFECTIO MOYSIS IN AEGYPTUM (1784):
PONAREJEN »NEAPELJSKI« ORATORIJ?

Povzetek

Ko je leta 1736 umrl šestindvajsetletni Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, so številni prepisovalci in založniki začeli njegovo ime brezvestno pisati na prepise skladb neznanih glasbenikov, da bi jih nato z dobičkom prodajali. Obravnavani Pergolesijev primer je značilen primer tega pojava, sicer ne neobičajnega za neapeljsko glasbo 18. stoletja. Če je bil skladatelj glasbenega dela označen kot »neapeljski«, je bil to zanesljiv znak njegove glasbene odličnosti. Znani so številni člani potujočih opernih skupin, delujočih po vsej Evropi, ki so bili v priložnostnih tiskih izrecno navedeni kot »Neapeljčani«, pa čeprav to niso bili.

Iz podobnih razlogov vzbujajo pomisleke tudi rokopis latinskega oratorija iz leta 1784 z naslovom *Profectio Moysis in Aegyptum*, shranjen v fondu donacije Villa v knjižnici Državnega glasbenega konservatorija Giuseppa Verdija v Milanu (Biblioteca del Conservatorio Statale di Musica Giuseppe Verdi). Prepisovalec je na naslovni strani zapisal, da je oratorij *pasticcio* »slavnih neapeljskih mojstrov«, vendar številne glasbene značilnosti kažejo na nepravilnost te opredelitve. V pričujoči razpravi so različne značilnosti tega doslej neopaženega »neapeljskega« vira (vodni znaki, vezava, platnice, povezave z drugimi partiturami, drugimi libreti itd.) kritično analizirane in avtor ocenjuje, da bi lahko šlo za primer glasbenega ponaredka. V popolnem nasprotju z domnevno »neapeljskostjo« oratorija se zdi, da številni dokazni elementi kažejo bolj na povezavo z Benetkami, Forlijem in Bologno poznega 18. stoletja ter Ferdinandom Bertonijem (1725–1813), skladateljem, rojenim v kraju Salò blizu Brescie na beneški *terrafermi*, Pietrom Terzianijem (1765–1831), maestrom rimskega rodu, in glasbenimi dejavnostmi Andrea Favija (1743–1822) ter njegovih sodelavcev. Vsa ta dejstva podpirajo domnevo, da je bil rokopis povezan s »slavnimi neapeljskimi mojstri« iz razlogov, podobnih tistim, ki so tudi sicer v drugi polovici 18. stoletja spodbujali pripisovanje skladb neznanih glasbenikov slavnemu Neapeljčanu Pergolesiju.