

What happened in 1678?

Reassessing »Orontea« and the Beginnings of Opera in Hanover*

Vassilis Vavoulis

The 1678 first opera season in the town of Hanover had important repercussions for the history of baroque opera in the whole of northern Europe. Events and processes set into motion that year initiated an important trail of dissemination of opera that we are only gradually beginning to understand.

Johann Friedrich and music in Hanover

The Hanoverians and their court have long attracted the interest of opera historians due to their long association with Venice and its theatrical world. It is in the context of those political, social, and cultural contacts with the Serenissima that the first Hanover opera, Antonio Cesti's *Orontea* (1678), can be better understood.

The Guelphs (Welfen) of the area of Brunswick (Braunschweig) were a monarchical house with one of the most interesting relationships to Italy. They could trace their lineage back to the Italian Guelfi and the legendary Henry the Lion who established the Guelph dynasty in the area of Saxony in the 12th century. Brunswick remained in their possession for over 600 years and until Hanover was annexed into Prussia in 1868. It was therefore a monarchical house with a particular sense of its heritage and links to Italy. For the young Brunswick princes, this background took on a very realistic form on their regular trips to Italy including long sojourns in Venice and Rome. Theirs was much more than the standard Grand Tour enjoyed by most aristocratic offspring.

For one of them, Johann Friedrich of Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1625–1679), the trips to Italy took a more serious turn in 1651–1652 when he converted to Catholicism at Assisi (following doctrinal discussions at the Vatican). In his case, an almost routine conversion of a young prince by the well oiled Vatican propaganda machine turned out to be an event with important repercussions for German-Italian relations for the whole of the 17th century.

Johann Friedrich was the third born son of duke Georg of Calenberg-Göttingen (1583–1641). It was Georg who moved the seat of the duchy from Calenberg to Hanover in 1635, thus establishing the Hanoverian court. With few prospects of ever ascending to the duchy, Johann Friedrich mainly indulged his many cultural and intellectual pursuits enjoying trips to Venice and Rome. In these, he was often accompanied by his cadet brother, Ernst August (1629–1698).

After his Catholic conversion Johann Friedrich became a valuable prospect for the Vatican and was allotted a young priest, Valerio Maccioni, as an accomplice in furthering the Catholic cause in the wider Hanover area (predominantly protestant). The situation took a more serious turn in 1665 when Christian

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Ludwig, the reigning duke of Hanover, died suddenly leaving the duchy in contention amongst the surviving brothers. Backed by the Vatican, France, and the Holy Roman Emperor, Johann Friedrich managed a usurping move putting himself in contention against his brothers, Georg Wilhelm (1624–1705) and Ernst August. In the end, the three of them came to an agreement upon which Johann Friedrich would hold the duchy of Calenberg with its seat at Hanover, Georg Wilhelm the second most important court at Celle, and the cadet, Ernst August, would reside at (Bad) Iburg as bishop of Osnabrück¹.

Following these events Johann Friedrich's ties to Italy understandably became closer. He was committed to furthering the cause of Catholicism in the area and in return the Vatican offered guidance and protection in a largely protestant, hostile environment. Similar ties existed with Venice as gradually Johann Friedrich became its most important foreign ally lending troops to all major Venetian conflicts in the Levant.

If Johann Friedrich needed the Vatican and the Vatican needed him, his relationship with Venice was of a much more personal nature. The city was the place of his carefree life as a prince and the cradle of his social and cultural interests. Music and opera played a large part in those interests and, like many monarchs, Johann Friedrich understood well the political value of music. One of his first moves upon coming to Hanover was to establish a top class Catholic Cappella hiring the Venetian opera composer Antonio Sartorio as his Kapellmeister and a number of international singers from Italy. The political aims of these actions are clearly spelled out by Valerio Maccioni in documents sent to Rome in November 1671 in which he stresses the role of the singers in luring Lutherans to the catholic chapel².

The question of ›Why 1678?‹

Every October or November, Sartorio and the Italian singers would undertake the journey south to take part in the Venetian opera season. The group would remain until Lent travelling back to Hanover sometime in March. Their movements and participation in operas is well documented in letters of the time³. The Hanover singers were a valuable commodity at carnival time and Venetian theatre owners frequently canvassed Johann Friedrich for securing their services. His grip on the theatrical world of Venice was extraordinary as he knew all the theatre owners, leased boxes in all the city venues (both opera and spoken theatre), included two patricians and librettists among his local agents (Pietro Dolfin and Nicolò Beregan), and was the personal recipient of numerous libretto dedications. No other European monarch had such a strong involvement in Venetian opera. This immersion can be somehow summed up by the following anecdote: the patrician Pietro Dolfin, his agent, was given the task of securing a copy of each libretto on the night of the premiere and forwarding it to Hanover. This often led to comical descriptions in his letters of how he stood outside the printers' shop at night waiting for the first copies⁴.

1 For an early 18th-century account of these manoeuvres see D.J. [David Jones], *The history of the most serene House of Brunswick-Lunenburgh, in all the branches thereof, from its origin, to the death of queen Anne*, London 2/1716 [a re-issue of 1/1715], p. 181 ff.

2 Adolph Köcher, *Geschichte von Hannover und Braunschweig: 1648 bis 1714*, vol. 2: 1668–1674, Leipzig 1895 (= Publicationen aus den Königlichen Preußischen Staatsarchiven 63), p. 415–423, especially p. 418.

3 Vassilis Vavoulis, ›*Nel teatro di tutta l'Europa: Venetian-Hanoverian patronage in 17th-century Europe*, Lucca 2010, p. xli–xlii.

4 See Vavoulis (footnote 3), document no. 165. – These librettos form today the basis of the collection at the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Landesbibliothek in Hanover. The circulation of librettos in the region deserves a separate study as there must have been at least three courts with Venetian connections collecting them: Hanover, Wolfenbüttel, and Celle.

As with his music chapel, Johann Friedrich's involvement in opera was as much a political decision as a personal choice. The numerous boxes that he owned became the scene of much coming and going among local and foreign nobility. Even when he was not in Venice he exercised a great deal of political influence simply by handing over the keys to his opera boxes to important contacts: a valuable ›instrumentum regni‹ through the world of music.

It is in the context of such an immersion and understanding of the Venetian tradition that *Oron tea* as the Hanoverians' first opera choice requires some degree of exegesis. Before asking ›Why *Oron tea*?‹ though, the equally important question of ›Why 1678?‹ needs to be addressed first.

With the Hanoverians' Venetian contacts and resources it is surprising that they waited until 1678 to bring opera to their city. The ingredients were certainly there from as early as the mid-1660s onwards with the services of Antonio Sartorio, the quality of the court singers, the many libretto dedications, and the links to librettists and theatre owners. Furthermore, the presence today in Hanover of three 17th-century opera scores with no evidence of performance further complicates the picture. Previous scholars (including myself) have rationalized the situation by positing that some sort of opera performance must have taken place and somehow no evidence survived. After reconsidering the whole situation, however, my present understanding is that, for reasons explained below, the Hanoverians did not stage an opera prior to 1678. One could of course surmise that one of these scores may have been performed in a concert version but that would be an anachronistic assumption on more than one accounts. First of all, the notion of a concert performance was totally extraneous to the aesthetic of the time as that would not have been an ›opera‹ as they understood it (in contrast to today's aesthetic of focusing mainly on the music). Furthermore, the notion of doing an opera ›quietly‹ with no big fanfare, no libretto printing, no invitations, no trail of ephemeral documentation, would have been just as much a ›non sequitur‹ for the people of the time. The real answer lies in the annals of history.

Europe in turmoil: The Dutch War, 1672–1678

For the better part of the 1670s Europe was engulfed in the so called Franco-Dutch War or simply Dutch War. ›Sandwiched‹ historiographically between the Thirty Years' War of 1618–1648 and the big Ottoman conflicts of the 1680s, the Dutch War has not received as much attention by music historians. Its importance has not been explored and yet it had important repercussions for the history of opera in the northern part of Europe.

The Dutch War was in essence another Franco-Habsburg conflict echoing in many ways the issues of the Thirty Years' War. Animosities began in March 1672 when France invaded the southern United Provinces (Netherlands) and it soon escalated into a pan-European conflict – France's imperialism was a threat to all. France sided with Sweden and England while the Netherlands allied with the Holy Roman Empire (Vienna) and the allied German princes. The conflict was resolved in 1678–1679 with the treaty of Nijmegen.

Because of the topography of the war – in parallel again to the Thirty Years' War – much of the conflict was fought over German territories making the involvement of all German princes inevitable and undoubtedly causing a lot of hardship for the local populaces. The Guelphs' involvement was immediate due to the large numbers of mercenary troops they kept active, something that was also their main claim to political power on the European map. Ernst August and Georg Wilhelm immediately sided with the allied German princes. Given his Catholicism, French-born wife, and various French connec-

tions, Johann Friedrich first signed lucrative neutrality contracts with France preventing him from siding with the other princes. Pressure, though, from his brothers and the alliance eventually forced him to end his association with France and sign a new neutrality treaty in 1675⁵. His ability, however, to be courted by both sides allowed him to amass considerable sums of money through lucrative contracts and treaties.

Johann Friedrich's long absences during the conflict along with those of his brothers are well documented in letters of the time. The two most voluminous correspondences that survive are those of his Venetian »segretario e agente«, Francesco Maria Massi⁶, and his sister-in-law, Sophie (wife of Ernst August)⁷. Required to send weekly reports to Hanover, Massi's letters make frequent mention of the Dutch War while at the same time showing considerable gaps in the correspondence pointing to those periods when Johann Friedrich was at a military camp and away from home. These parts of the correspondence were presumably forwarded to various locations and subsequently lost or misfiled. Most of these gaps occur during the spring and the summer, the warmer months of the year when traditionally warfare took place. The involvement of career soldiers and mercenary troops meant that winter was largely reserved for regrouping, training, and visiting families.

Johann Friedrich's winter camp was at Hildesheim which Sophie calls his »quartiers d'hiver«⁸. She frequently mentions the absences of both her husband and Johann Friedrich and the correspondence is very helpful in showing these patterns around 1675–1677, the height of the conflict. Sophie also chronicles Johann Friedrich's dealings with the French and the allied princes, as does Massi in his letters around August–September 1675⁹.

For Hanover the end of the Dutch War had important repercussions well beyond the immediately political and military ones. Events and projects set into motion after the war have marked the city to this day. The crucial outcome of the war was that Johann Friedrich's coffers grew richer by a considerable two million Thaler¹⁰. The lucrative contracts of his alliances became now the basis of an extensive plan of cultural expansion bringing into fruition Johann Friedrich's monarchical ambitions. These included the expansion of the Herrenhausen summer palace and gardens (at the outskirts of the city and modelled on Versailles), the building of a new theatre and library, and other constructions around the city. His biggest coup was luring to Hanover the great philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) to act as court librarian and archivist. His work placed the city on the intellectual map of Europe and he single-handedly established entities such as the ducal library and archives that have since become the important institutions they are today.

The new funds and respite from the war also meant that Johann Friedrich was able to realize his long-standing plans of bringing opera to the city. The brand new theatre was constructed on the plans of the ar-

5 Jones (footnote 1), p. 186–188.

6 Edited in Vavoulis (footnote 3).

7 Eduard Bodemann (ed.), *Briefwechsel der Herzogin Sophie von Hannover mit ihrem Bruder, dem Kurfürsten Karl Ludwig von der Pfalz, und des letzteren mit seiner Schwägerin, der Pfalzgräfin Anna*, Leipzig 1885 (= Publicationen aus den Königlichen Preußischen Staatsarchiven 26); Sophie de Hanovre, *Mémoires et lettres de voyage*, ed. Dirk Van der Cruysse, Paris 1990.

8 Bodemann, p. 252, 274, 277.

9 Ibid., letters of 1675–1676; Vavoulis (footnote 3), document nos. 244 and 253.

10 Rosenmarie Elisabeth Wallbrecht, *Das Theater des Barockzeitalters an den welfischen Höfen Hannover und Celle*, Hildesheim 1974 (= Quellen und Darstellungen zur Geschichte Niedersachsens 83), p. 13.

chitect Girolamo (Hieronymo) Sartorio. Nothing could mark better the Guelphs' triumphant emersion from the war than a new opera house, the first of its kind in the whole of northern Germany.

The Hanover theatre

Girolamo (Hieronymo) Sartorio (?–1707) arrived in Hanover in 1667, two years after his brother Antonio. Contrary to Antonio, Girolamo established himself permanently in the city and rose to become the court's chief architect serving under both Johann Friedrich and Ernst August. The city owes many of its civic structures to his designs, chief among them the Herrenhausen complex, expansions to the Leineschloss, the St. Johannes church, the opera theatre, and the new Leibniz library. With time, Girolamo's fame rose and he branched out with architectural commissions from various cities, including invitations to build some of the first opera theatres in northern Europe. He is the unsung hero of opera design in early modern Europe and his work needs to be examined in more detail.

Court accounts reveal that the main building phase of the Hanover theatre took place in late 1676 and the whole of 1677, with finishing touches being made as late as January 1678¹¹. The building included not only the structure itself but also the machines for the various flying cupids, chariots, sea waves, etc. In court documents of the time the theatre is usually referred to as »Schloßtheater« or »Comedienhaus« whilst after 1688 and the erection of the new, bigger theatre by Ernst August it is referred to as the »kleines Schloßtheater«.

Prior to 1678 the stage situation in Hanover had been a slow work-in-progress addressing needs as they arose. The first purpose-built stage was the Ballhof, a baroque dancing hall erected in 1649 by Johann Friedrich's brother Georg Wilhelm. Not a theatre per se, it was nevertheless used as such on special occasions such as the 1667–1668 wedding festivities for Johann Friedrich and Benedikta Henriette¹². As far as stage performances previous to 1678 were concerned, small-scale theatre works took place in a hall adjacent to the chapel. These have been documented (circumstantially) from as early as 1659–1661 in the letters of the young Elisabeth Charlotte von Orleans (known as Liselotte von der Pfalz), who stayed in Hanover as a young princess¹³. Furthermore, when Johann Friedrich came to power a French theatrical troupe was hired jointly by the three brothers taking turns in hosting them at their respective courts at Hanover, Celle, and Iburg/Osnabrück. The troupe's presence is documented from at least 1668 but may well have started earlier¹⁴.

When not used for operas the theatre was obviously used for the spoken plays produced by the French troupe and the court bills reflect this as they often refer to it as the »Comedienhaus«. Information about the structure is provided by documents relating to its extension many years later. After the Großes Schloßtheater was completed in 1688 it was decided, in 1691–1692, to renovate the smaller theatre and from that we learn that the original structure had only two rows of boxes to which a third was added around 1686–1687 (presumably to accommodate the need for more capacity before the completion of the new theatre), and a fourth still later¹⁵.

11 Ibid., p. 33.

12 Ibid., p. 29.

13 Ibid., p. 32.

14 Samuel Chappuzeau, *L'Allemagne protestante, ou, Relation nouvelle d'un voyage fait aux cours des electeurs, et des princes protestans de l'empire*, Geneva 1671, p. 348.

15 Wallbrecht (footnote 10), p. 32 ff.

›Why *Oron tea*?‹: Leading up to February 1678

Having addressed the question of the Hanoverians' tardy involvement in opera, their choice of Cesti's *Oron tea* also warrants some careful consideration.

As discussed above, Hanover was the single European court with the most intimate understanding of Venetian opera and its tradition (with the exception of Vienna). As such, their resources and contacts would have made possible any choice of repertory or indeed the commission of a brand new work. The choice therefore of an old »cavallo di battaglia« like *Oron tea* that had been revived many times in the past must have been one of necessity or a particular vision in itself.

Another puzzling piece of evidence is the presence in Hanover of a very special opera score, *Antonino e Pompeiano*, one of the two Antonio Sartorio operas given in Venice in the 1677 carnival. That year Sartorio composed two works for the S. Luca theatre (the other being *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*), and the whole amounted to one of the most successful seasons for both Sartorio and the theatre. The Hanover court singers took part in both operas and *Antonino* in particular was dedicated to Johann Friedrich and Benedikta Henriette. It would have made perfect sense to stage one of these successful, recent works, especially since the court singers had just taken part in them. Furthermore, the special nature of this score reinforces this sense of having found its way to Hanover specifically for performance purposes. *Antonino* is not the usual clean opera copy made by a copyist but rather a working manuscript with Sartorio's autograph corrections and additions, pages torn and added, and a plethora of performance markings. It is very clearly the score used in rehearsals and subsequently played from by either Sartorio or the second harpsichordist¹⁶.

The presence of such a score in Hanover with no subsequent evidence of performance is quite puzzling. The route to Hanover must have been that with the court singers upon their return after the Venetian season around March 1677. Given the briefness between the end of the season and their departure at the beginning of Lent, one may conjecture that there was no time to make a clean copy by a copyist (the usual way of circulating operas). As at the time of their return the new theatre was well under way, it is not easy not to make a connection between the arrival of this performance score of the latest Sartorio opera and the preparations of the theatre.

Backtracking a little in time, an event related to the Hanover season may have been that of the presence of Antonio Sartorio in Hanover in October 1676. Edward Tarr has found evidence (presumably in parish registers) that on 16 October 1676 Antonio and Gasparo Sartorio were godfathers at the christening of their brother Girolamo Sartorio's son Casparus Antonius (named after his two uncles)¹⁷. During the visit Antonio Sartorio was obviously made privy to Johann Friedrich's plans for the new theatre and was probably involved in discussions of what to stage. Given that at the time he had already started work on *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* and *Antonino e Pompeiano*, it is not surprising that one of these two operas may have been seriously envisioned as a candidate for the Hanover season.

On the Venetian side, the next reference to the Hanover operas is from 5 March 1677 close to the end of the Venetian season. Dolfin writes about Sartorio's and the singers' triumph and adds an interesting aside:

¹⁶ See the full discussion in Vassilis Vavoulis, *Antonio Sartorio (c. 1630–1680): Documents and sources of a career in seventeenth-century Venetian opera*, in: Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle 37 (2004), p. 1–70, especially p. 46–48.

¹⁷ Edward Tarr, art. *Sartorio, Gasparo*, in New GroveD2 22, p. 307.

Prego il Signor Dio adunque con l'intimo del cor mio, che agiustati gl'impedimenti, che la trattengono l'inspiri a tale cotanto bramato viaggio, altrimenti, o col pretesto d'opere, che costà, per quanto presento si van preparando, o ad un stimolo portatomi da suprema bontà col facilitarmi con gl'impulsi, il per me tra le trascorse disgratie mie assai difficile viaggio, io cercherò [sic!] ad osequiarla personalmente [?] in Hannover, quando non possa avere, come dissi, l'unica consolatione di riverir l'Altezza Vostra Serenissima in Venetia.¹⁸

The »impedimenti« holding Johann Friedrich back relate to the final phase of the Dutch War. Dolfin's offer to travel to Hanover with the excuse of operas being prepared there is another nod to the preparations of the Hanover season. The fact that he is using the word »opera« in plural does not probably refer to a double bill of operas but rather to plans that the opera may have been accompanied by a »Wirtschaft« (a type of German masque) as Hanover had done previously.

Another of Sophie's letters also indicates that there may have been an intention to do an opera a year earlier in 1677, when the Hanover theatre was still under construction. Sophie relays an invitation she received to attend »un opera en musique avec des changements de theatre sans machines«¹⁹, which in the end was substituted by a »Wirtschaft«.

The »sans machines« clarification is a crucial piece of the puzzle. In regard to the 1677 carnival it indicates that this opera would have been performed either in the partially completed theatre (and therefore without machines) or in the usual palace hall where theatre performances traditionally took place. It does indicate, however, how central the whole issue of spectacle and stage machines was to opera of the time if the promoters felt the need to qualify and indeed warn their audience. This issue also highlights an important reason why *Antonino* may have been abandoned in the end. By the late 1670s Venetian opera had become a highly complex and technologically advanced spectacle. After a tradition of 40 years the great expertise available locally in Venice had pushed the boundaries of the spectacle to unprecedented levels not easily emulated elsewhere. Market forces and the international exposure of the Venetian season had brought spectacles at the cutting edge of what was then possible. It is no coincidence that many of the stage designers in Venice were also trained naval engineers working at the Venetian Arsenal, a celebrated case being Giacomo Torelli.

A description of the central scene in *Antonino e Pompeiano* can suffice as an example of the effects called for by operas of the time. In a double execution-suicide scene we see the hero being precipitated from the top of the Capitol Hill in Rome into the waters of the river Tiber below while from across the city his consort witnesses the scene and in desperation throws herself equally into the river (needless to say they both survive). Both *Antonino* and *Giulio Cesare* include a cornucopia of rapid scene changes, elephant triumph processions, moonlight boat scenes, rapid collapses of statues and structures, animal menageries, etc.

The rising standards of spectacles were clearly felt in Venice as theatres needed to adapt in order to compete. A well-known case is that of the S. Luca theatre which a few years earlier had closed for a few

18 »I therefore pray to the Lord from the bottom of my heart that, settled the impediments that are holding you back, He inspires you into such a much desired trip, otherwise, or with the excuse of operas that, as far as I know, are being prepared there [Hanover], or with some incentive brought to me by your supreme kindness by facilitating with some stimulus the very difficult, because of my past misfortunes, trip, I will do my best to offer my obsequies in person in Hanover when I cannot have, as I said, the unique consolation of revering your Most Serene Highness in Venice.« Vavoulis (footnote 3), document no. 305.

19 Bodemann (footnote 7), p. 284–285, 289.

months in order for its proscenium and stage to be enlarged to accommodate the requirements of modern operas²⁰. And right around 1677–1678 the ante was raised further by the Grimani family (competitors of the S. Luca) when they launched a brand new theatre, S. Giovanni Grisostomo, that was the most technologically advanced in the whole of Europe.

By comparison, *Oronthea* was indeed a tame work: a manageable cast of nine, relatively few scene changes, and machines that went no further than a cloud carrying Love and deities across the top of the stage and some water and river effects.

Title page and preface

L'ORONTEA. / OPERA IN MUSICA / DÀ / RAPPRESENTARSI DI / NUOVO NEL THEATRO D'HANNOVER / L'ANNO 1678. // Per ordine / DELL' ALTEZZA Serenissima / Di / MADAMA / BENEDETTA / HENRICHETTA, / DUCHESSA DI BRUNSVICH, / IE LUNEBURG, NATA PRINCIPESSA / PALATINA DEL RHENO. // In HANNOVER per VOLF-GANGO SCHWENDIMAN / Stampator Ducale.

The above is a transcription of the title page of the libretto. The printer was Wolfgang Schwendimann (1632–1685), active as ducal printer in 1669–1685²¹. Starting with *Oronthea*, Schwendimann printed the texts for all operas, masques, and ballets given in Hanover: *L'Oronthea* (1678), *L'Alceste* (1679, 1681), *L'Helena rapita da Paride* (1681), *Le charme de l'amour* (1681), *La chase de Diane* (1681).

The words »da rappresentarsi« are common in librettos of the time indicating that the libretto was printed and circulated a little earlier than the actual performances. The title page marks straight away that this is a revival (»di nuovo«), and qualifies the dedication to Benedikta Henriette with the words »per ordine«. The fact of the revival is further clarified in the preface (complete transcription in appendix 1):

[...] si rinova nel Theatro d'Hannover la recita dell'Oronthea qui scielta fra gli altri drammi per l'esquisitezza della composition musicale, che nell'appagar colla soavità della vista. Lessere stata altrove rappresentata più volte le accresce pregio di fama, e non impedisce, che non possa comparir su queste scene colle gratie della novità, mentre rinasce adorna di nuovi fregi [...].²²

The preface is generally a well crafted document indicating the work of a professional writer, probably one of the Italian secretaries in court at Hanover. The two known ones at the time were Ortensio Mauro (1634–1725) and Nicolò Montalban. They were both employed as courtiers and secretaries and had opera-related interests. Mauro was first active in Celle as Georg Wilhelm's Italian secretary (1663–1674/75) but then moved to Hanover upon the assumption of power by Johann Friedrich. He went on to become court-poet under Ernst August and wrote librettos for Agostino Steffani²³.

²⁰ Vavoulis (footnote 3), document no. 209; Beth L. Glixon and Jonathan E. Glixon, *Inventing the business of opera: The impresario and his world in seventeenth-century Venice*, New York 2006, p. 23–24.

²¹ Christoph Reske, *Die Buchdrucker des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts im deutschen Sprachgebiet – Auf der Grundlage des gleichnamigen Werkes von Josef Benzling*, Wiesbaden 2007 (= Beiträge zum Buch- und Bibliothekswesen 51), p. 353–354.

²² »[...] is revived at the Theatre of Hanover the performance of *Oronthea* chosen here among other works for the exquisite of the musical composition and the gratification of the gentleness of the spectacle. The fact of it having been represented more than once elsewhere, increases the value of its fame and does not prevent it from appearing again on this stage with the quality of originality, as it is being adorned with new ornaments [...].«

Mauro's presence in Hanover around 1674–1675 can also be documented in Massi's letters where he is mentioned as responsible for writing Johann Friedrich's Italian correspondence and forwarding German avvisi to Italy. It is also evident that Mauro was already active as a poet forwarding to Massi verse compositions in a variety of styles²⁴.

Nicolò Montalban (Montalbano, Montalbani) is a lesser known figure who was nevertheless involved in a number of opera projects in the Brunswick area. Originally from a patrician family of counts in the Veneto (the Collaltos of Treviso), he is known to have served at least Johann Friedrich and Ernst August in Hanover²⁵. His title is confirmed in the 1681 libretto for the ballet *La chasse de Diane* where he is mentioned as »Comte Montalban« and as one of the many courtiers who took part in the ballet. He is presumably the same Nicolò Montalbano who in 1694 assassinated the extramarital lover of Sophie Dorothea, Georg Ludwig's daughter unhappily married to her cousin, Ernst August's firstborn son, also Georg Ludwig²⁶.

No matter who the author of the preface is, the text is carefully crafted and the work of a professional writer. In many ways it answers all of our questions about *Oronthea* something that suggests that the same questions were also expected by the audiences of the time. In the first quote above (»si rinnova« etc.) the author alludes to the whole sub-context of this being a conscious but perhaps not obvious choice for Hanover, while in the second passage he seems to pre-empt any reservations about the age of the work. Further quotations show how explicit they wish to make the fact that Benedikta Henriette is the guiding force behind the project:

[...] mentre rinasce adorna di nuovi fregi, & in molte parti abbellita dalle vaghe Idee, che per varie mutationi, & aggiunte s'è degnata di suggerire una Serenissima Intelligenza prima, e sola promotrice dell'Opera.²⁷

And finally, as with every good blockbuster, they also promise a sequel:

[...] fa sperare che dalla felicità di questa prima prova possa nell' avvenire nascer soggetto di pensar in tempi più sereni per la Germania, a nuovi, e più curiosi Spettacoli.²⁸

It is being acknowledged that this is a »prima prova« in the context of a land emerging from war while wishing for calmer times that will allow more extravagant spectacles (obliquely making a reference to *Oronthea*'s »tame« nature). It is also obvious that *Oronthea* and the new theatre were a stepping stone towards a more long-term cultural plan for Hanover.

One thing that comes across very clearly in both *Oronthea* and *Alceste* (the opera given the following year), is that behind these productions there were people who knew very well the Venetian tradition. The

23 Colin Timms, *Polymath of the Baroque: Agostino Steffani and his music*, New York 2003, p. 48–49; Angela Romagnoli, art.: *Mauro, Bartolomeo Ortensio*, in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 72, Rome 2008 (http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bartolomeo-ortensio-mauro_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/).

24 Cf. Vavoulis (footnote 3), document nos. 248–249, 259.

25 See also Wallbrecht (footnote 10), p. 178.

26 Ragnhild Marie Hatton, *George I – Elector and King*, London 1978, p. 59.

27 »[...] as it is being adorned by new ornaments and in many places embellished by the excellent ideas that, per various changes and additions, a Supreme Intelligenza deigned to recommend as the one and only patroness of the opera.«

28 »[...] one hopes that due to the felicity of this first attempt one may in the future have cause to think, in times more peaceful for Germany, about new and more adventurous spectacles.«

libretto of *Alceste* (1679) emphasizes this clearly by recounting the exact time intervals of its previous revivals in Venice:

Sotto Nome d'Alceste si rinova nel Teatro dell' AA. SS. d'Hannover l'Antigona, due volte rappresentata in Venetia; la Fenice à parere de scrittori ogni seicent' anni una volta si lascia vedere nel mondo, e questo Drama ogni nove anni si rinova ancor egli come Fenice; poiche doppo esser stato rappresentato la prima volta nel Teatro Grimano nell' anno 1661. La seconda volta riabellito dall' Autore nel Teatro Vendramino l'anno 1670.²⁹

»Per ordine«: Opera and Benedikta Henriette (1652–1730)

The words »per ordine« on the title page of *Oronthea* accompanying the dedication to Benedikta Henriette are intriguing. Obviously, the guiding force behind the new theatre and season must have been Johann Friedrich himself given his life-long infatuation with Venetian opera. And yet, in all the prefatory matter of the libretto he is not even mentioned once. The emphasis seems to be on giving all the »credit« to Benedikta.

The words »per ordine« are quite exceptional for libretto dedications both in Italy and abroad. The designation does not appear in any Venetian libretto of the 17th century and is used only sparingly on title pages of other books, usually to indicate a particular initiative, e. g. Roberto Bellarmino's book *Copiosa dichiarazione della dottrina christiana. Composta per ordine di N. Sigr papa Clemente VIII* (Venice 1670). Its use in books printed in 17th-century Germany is equally limited to four occasions all in relation to court spectacles: *Oronthea* and *Alceste* in Hanover, a Munich ballet *La casa d'Acquario* (1669), and a Vienna *Pastorale* (1636).

Furthermore, *Oronthea* was not an one-off as the same attribution was repeated in *Alceste* of the following year which raises the question of the extent of Benedikta's involvement and input in these works. The fact that both subjects deal with female heroines, and furthermore queens, seems to be part of the equation. Lacking any further documentary evidence, though, it is difficult to assess the real extent of »per ordine«. Generally speaking, Hanoverian operas tended to be dedicated to women. Apart from *Oronthea* and *Alceste* dedicated to Benedikta, *Helena rapita da Paride* of 1681 and a further revival of *Alceste* in the same year were both dedicated to Sophia Amalia, queen of Denmark and sister of Johann Friedrich and Ernst August; a further revival of *Oronthea* in Wolfenbüttel in 1686 is mentioned as »rappresentata dalle Dame di Corte«. There seems to be some sort of tradition placing opera spectacles under female patronage.

In the case of Benedikta Henriette it is difficult to find any further evidence as, historically, she is little more than a cardboard figure to us: almost nothing of her thoughts and opinions survive. She was quite young, a family person absorbed by the unsuccessful quest for a male heir, and not a prolific letter writer like her aunt and sister-in-law, Sophie. Perhaps, the *Oronthea* project was partially an attempt for her to gain some prominence and standing. One of Sophie's letters at the time of the performances certainly points to such an appropriation (»son opera«):

29 »Under the name of *Alceste* is revived at the theatre of Their Royal Highnesses of Hanover, *Antigona*, performed twice in Venice; the Phoenix, according to the authorities, every 600 years lets itself be shown once to the world, and this drama every nine years is revived again like the Phoenix; therefore, after being performed for the first time at the Grimani Theatre in 1661, the second time [was] re-embellished by the author for the Vendramin Theatre in 1670.« »Preface, *Alceste*, Hanover 1679.

Mais les chemins sont si espouvantables, que je n'ay pas peu me rendre à Hanover, où ma niessie veut que je viene pour voir son opera.³⁰

And another one from a year later at the time of *Alceste* points to Benedikta's strong involvement: »Elle [Benedikta] est fort occupée presentement à faire représenter un opera qui sera preste pour le carnaval.«³¹

The patronage pedigree of *Orontea*

Orontea was one of the most performed operas in the second half of the 17th century becoming part of a small »canon« of works that were frequently revived (others being Cesti's *La Dori* and Cavalli's *Il Giasone*). The popularity of these works has often been identified with their artistic merits such as text and/or music, but an area that has not yet been examined is the patronage attributes that they acquired through their long associations with various monarchical families. These associations imparted a patronage pedigree that was no less important for their frequent adoption for revival.

This is particularly true for *Orontea* whose early history is closely linked to various monarchical environments and their patronage. It was first performed in 1656 at the court of Innsbruck for duke Ferdinando Carlo and then, through Cesti's links to the Medici, chosen again in 1661 for the wedding of Cosimo III and Marguerite Louise d'Orléans. Earlier that year it had also been performed in Rome as part of the wedding festivities for Maria Mancini and Contestabile Onofrio Colonna (March 1661). With the latter performance started a life-long association between Cesti and the Colonna household.

The next major revival was in Venice in 1666 and was particularly important as it (re)placed the work within the Venetian tradition giving it new international exposure. That revival was also due to the Colonnas and, in particular, Maria Mancini (1639–1715) who was an ardent supporter of Cesti's and recommended the work to the theatre owners. It is also possible that Mancini felt some personal affinity with the young, valiant queen having almost become a queen herself through her well known youthful liaison with Louis XIV. This personal affinity and identification with *Orontea* may have also been part of how Benedikta Henriette viewed the character as well.

These links and associations acquire more substance when they are considered within the larger canvass of the relationship between the two houses. The Brunswicks (Johann Friedrich, Ernst August, and Georg Wilhelm) knew the Colonnas well through their travels in Venice and Rome since the 1660s. In those years Mancini held the premier social salon in Rome and was frequented by all three brothers. When she and Colonna started to attend the Venetian carnival in the mid 1660s³², they also socialized with the Brunswicks in Venice, inside and outside the opera boxes. There are numerous accounts of their evenings playing cards together in both Venice and Rome, and Mancini also had a brief affair with Ernst August in 1665 (to the full knowledge of his wife)³³.

The above had a particular reflection on the subject of opera patronage. The two families were the most prestigious foreign houses to be regular patrons of Venetian opera at the time (although the Brunswicks operated for longer and on a much bigger scale). The various Brunswick and Colonna family mem-

30 Letter from 3 February 1678; see Bodemann (footnote 7), p. 314.

31 Letter from 1 December 1678; see *ibid.*, p. 338.

32 Valeria De Lucca, »Dalle sponde del Tevere alle rive dell'Adria«: *Maria Mancini and Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna's patronage of music and theater between Rome and Venice (1659–1675)*, Ph. D. Diss., Princeton University 2009, p. 112 f.

33 Sophie de Hanovre (footnote 7), p. 11, 99–100, 102.

bers held the most libretto dedications in the course of the 1660s and 1670s³⁴. They both actively sponsored librettists, lent their singers to theatre owners, and hosted dignitaries and nobility in their boxes. Given the social interaction between the two families one has the sense that they somehow learned the ropes together, so to speak, in terms of opera patronage (or maybe just that the Colonnas learned from the Brunswicks). The political underpinning of this predilection for patronage was that they both had a very active sense of upward mobility (Johann Friedrich with his grandiose plans for Hanover, Mancini with the missed opportunity to be queen of France, and Colonna with his aspirations of being admitted to the Venetian nobility)³⁵.

When the Colonnas decided to sponsor their own operas in Rome in the 1670s by starting the Tor di Nona theatre enterprise, the collaboration between the two houses involved the ›sharing‹ of certain works. Two of Sartorio's operas that had the Brunswick stamp on them were revived in Rome in those years: *La prosperità di Elio Seiano* and *Massenzio*. *Seiano* was given in Rome in the carnival of 1672 and *Massenzio* two years later in 1674. In the meantime, Mancini's life had taken a more serious turn in the spring of 1672 (after the carnival), when she fled her unhappy and abusive marriage leaving her children behind. The scandal became a European cause célèbre and it is not clear how the Brunswicks reacted to it, although it seems that relations continued with both parties. We know that the 1676 Leyden edition of Mancini's memoirs was dedicated to and sponsored by Georg Wilhelm, Johann Friedrich's brother residing at Celle. And as mentioned above, Johann Friedrich continued to support Colonna's operatic enterprises by ›giving‹ him *Massenzio* for the 1674 Tor di Nona season. In 1676(?) there was a further revival of *Seiano* in the grand hall of the Colonna palazzo³⁶. And earlier in 1673, Antonia Coresi, Mancini's lady in waiting and house singer, was allowed to take part in the Teatro S. Luca season in Venice singing the part of Euridice in Sartorio's latest opera, *Orfeo*³⁷.

The above shows not only how close the two houses continued to be but also how they operated in often parallel ways as opera patrons. And when one delves a little deeper, the plot thickens. Apart from the two Rome revivals of *Elio Seiano* and *Massenzio* mentioned above, both works had a kind of pre-run in Naples. *Seiano* was given in 1671 at the S. Bartolomeo theatre a year before its Rome staging, and in 1674 the same happened with *Massenzio*. Colonna's involvement with the Naples theatre cannot be established with precision chronologically³⁸, but his title of Contestabile (just under that of Viceroy), plus his Roman activity as opera promoter, would have given him full access and influence in the local theatre community.

The subject of cultural and patronage collaboration between the two houses certainly warrants a more thorough investigation.

34 Glixon and Glixon (footnote 20), p. 131–132; Vassilis Vavoulis, *Nicola Gratianini and Francesco Bembo: A Venetian impresario's quest for a bass in the Hanover court*, in: Norbert Dubowy etc. (ed.), *Italian opera in central Europe, 1614–1780*, 3: *Opera subjects and European relationships*, Berlin 2007, p. 219–232, especially p. 220.

35 De Lucca (footnote 32), p. 118.

36 Elena Tamburini, *Due teatri per il principe – Studi sulla committenza teatrale di Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna (1659–1689)*, Rome 1997, p. 130. The Tor di Nona had closed in 1675.

37 Vavoulis (footnote 16), p. 14 ff.

38 Tamburini (footnote 36), p. 214.

»La palma spiccata da sassi«: The frontispiece

The frontispiece of *Oron tea* (Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Landesbibliothek, Libretti collection, Op. 3,1) provides further commentary to the Hanoverian season. The engraver is identified on the lower left-hand side as »Natalis Serault Sculp.«, a French sculptor active in Hanover and responsible for various engravings in the late 1670s. The image on the frontispiece is clearly divided into two juxtaposed parts with parallel attributions on top, »Hic Arma« and »Hic Artes«. Their meaning is approximately »Here the Arms«, »Here the Arts«, and they accompany depictions of a female warrior and a female figure with a cithara (lyre) and a laurel wreath (presumably a muse). The female warrior carries royal insignia and is also holding a shield with the coat of arms of Hanover (possibly a representation of Benedikta as the patroness of the work). The division into two is further highlighted by the verticality of two trees placed exactly above the two figures: a palm tree possibly signifying an »exotic« land such as the Egypt of *Oron tea* and a »normal« tree, like a laurel, probably symbolizing the muses. The overall symbolism is that of the new era descending upon Hanover after the triumph and end of the Dutch War and the new peaceful reign of Johann Friedrich's. This ties in with two more inscriptions that are found on the picture, »Terret et Oreat« on the periphery of the shield, and »Bello et Musis« under a Pegasus horse near the cithara-holding muse.

Allegories such as these are never linear in their logic and multiple meanings can be read into the representations. Although the palm tree ties in well with the subject of *Oron tea* it probably also has other connotations too. An almost identical palm tree can be found on the Thaler coins from Johann Friedrich's mint (see illustration 1).



Illustration 1: Johann Friedrich's mint (http://www.coinfactswiki.com/wiki/Brunswick-Luneberg-Calenberg_1679-HB_thaler_Dav-6575)

In fact many of the Thaler denominations minted by Johann Friedrich after he came to power had a depiction of a palm tree growing out of rocks, i. e. the biblical symbol of »La palma spiccata da sassi«. The palm, an antiquity symbol of glory and triumph, was taken over by Christianity to represent triumph in adversity and martyrdom, and ultimately triumph over sin.

The symbolism was undoubtedly adopted by Johann Friedrich in collaboration with his Catholic advisors. For him, the struggle was that of being a single Catholic amongst protestants, a message that he drove home by accompanying it with the motto »Ex duris Gloria«. A collection of sermons, delivered in the Hanover chapel in those years and published posthumously after Johann Friedrich's death in 1679, spell out very clearly the connotations of the imagery (see engraving in appendix 2). The sermons were delivered on seminal feasts like Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday towards the end of the Dutch War and were subsequently published by the preacher, Giuseppe Bono da Diso³⁹. The palm growing out of the rocks relates to how Johann Friedrich from a »vita cadetta e private« with no real monarchical prospects

rose to become one of Germany's major princes⁴⁰. The importance of this concept is explicitly repeated in many orations: »vostra fortuna cadetta, e privata, e finalmente gloriosa«⁴¹; »dalle durezza della vostra vita cadetta e privata sete arrivato à quella Gloria, che sì pacificamente frà tante turbolenze di guerra godete«.

Apart from its multiple appearances on coins, the »Palma spiccata« appeared at least three times in print: *Orontea* of 1678, the 1680 predication by Bono da Diso (engravings again by Serault), and in a 1685 posthumous volume in Johann Friedrich's memory in which the representation is appropriately adapted to include Death the Reaper (see appendix 2).

The *Orontea* sources and the Hanover version

The story of *Orontea* recounts the era of a young Egyptian queen who falls in love with Alidoro, a commoner that she cannot marry. Orontea is thus split between feelings of love and duty while her court try to dissuade her from marrying beneath her status. After many twists and turns a golden medallion is found on Alidoro that turns out to be the one given by king Tolomeo to the infant prince of Phoenicia, i. e. Alidoro is a prince. His new pedigree allows him to marry Orontea and, typically for the period, the main couple of royal lovers is joined by a couple of aristocratic descent, Silandra and Corindo. The opera ends with the customary union of four lovers, i. e. the four leading singers. In between the various love interests and misunderstandings the librettist Andrea Cicognini weaves in a military attack that Orontea fends off valiantly as a female warrior, plus extended comic interludes with the drunk servant Gelone (comic parts were usually played by singers trained in *Commedia dell'arte*).

The Hanover version adds a new prologue played by Marte, Diana, and Amore. The local echo of *Orontea* as the love-struck female warrior in relation to the historical situation of Hanover's triumph in the Dutch War is emphasized in the opening »didascalia«:

Al suono di varii stromenti guerrieri si fa l'apertura del Theatro, in mezzo del quale comparisce Marte in una nuvola rosseggiante con Trofei d'Armi all'intorno, e nella scena boscareccia Amor in atto di dormire giace à piè d'un'Albero.⁴²

In the main text of the prologue the homage and propaganda for the Hanoverians is not too explicit with only some mild nods at how in these »contrade« (courts) peace will put an end to war and how all Europe will love the »canore scene« of these August princes. The rest of the libretto follows closely the Venice 1666 version (a copy of which survives today at Hanover), minus the usual number of aria additions and substitutions common in most opera revivals of the time (scene numbers refer to the Hanover version):

- aria addition for Orontea: »Non amar un volto vago È impossibile mio Cor« (I / v)
- aria substitution for Alidoro: »Vorrei dar termine Al mio penar« (I / x)
- recitative additions (I / xiii)

39 Giuseppe Bono da Diso, *La palma spiccata da sassi, col moto Ex duris gloria [...] oratione funebre [...] con l'aggiunta di tre altri discorsi morali appropriati al medesimo simbolo [...] recitati nella chiesa ducale d'Hannover*, Hanover 1680.

40 Ibid., p. 33.

41 Ibid., p. 63; the following quote p. 87.

42 »To the sound of various warlike instruments the theatre stage is opened in the middle of which appears Mars on top of a rosy cloud with arm trophies all around him, and in a bucolic setting Eros in the act of sleeping lies next to a tree.« »Prologue«, *Alceste*, Hanover 1679.

- aria addition for Creonte: »La bellezza è una gran Maga, Ogni forza à lei si rende« (II / v)
- aria addition for Giacinta: »Ch'io più creda alla fortuna ò questo nò« (II / vii)
- recitative additions (II / ix)
- aria substitution for Corindo: »Mai più stelle spietate Io m'innamorerò« (II / x)
- omission of an Alidoro aria and addition of a Tibrino aria: »Sin, che potete, Amanti giovani« (II / xi)
- aria addition for Alidoro: »Destin placati un dì« (II / xiv)
- Alidoro aria substituted by Silandra aria: »Quando Amor mi darai pace« (III / ii)
- amplification of Aristeà's part with two scenes added at III / iii, including the aria »Donne belle, e amorose Quest'è il fin della beltà« (III / v)
- aria substitution for Alidoro: »Nò, nò, ch'à donna instabile, Io più non crederò« (III / ix–xi)
- substitution of Venice scenes III / x–xii with two new scenes for Corindo and Gelone (at III / xii)
- aria addition for Clorindo: »S'io spero, e, che sarà« (III / xviii)
- aria addition for Clorindo: »Vendetta d'honore Per scoppo hà la morte« (III / xx)
- variants in a scene on the background of Oron tea in Paphos (III / xxxii)

Due to its many revivals *Oron tea* has one of the most convoluted source stemmata in opera history. There are five different music settings – Venice 1649 (music by Francesco Lucio), Naples 1654 (Francesco Cirillo), Innsbruck 1656 (Antonio Cesti), Vienna 1660 (Filippo Vismarri), Chantilly 1687 (Paolo Lorenzani) – and about 26 different libretto printings. To complicate matters further, some of these librettos are not linked to a performance but were literary reprints aimed at general readership (given Andrea Cicognini's well known status as an author).

Most of the sources and the relevant complications concern Cesti's version of the opera which had the longest revival history. Williams Brown offers the most recent synthesis of the issues concerning the various stemmata of *Oron tea* and the relation between the four surviving Cesti scores and the different libretto printings. She has found that the librettos relating to Cesti's revivals can be grouped into two branches corresponding to the two equivalent branches of the four scores: the »Italian« branch (Vatican, S. Cecilia, and Parma scores) and the so called »Cambridge« branch and score. The smaller Cambridge group consists of the Venice 1666, Hanover 1678, Venice 1683, and Wolfenbüttel 1686 revivals⁴³. Williams Brown could not examine the Hanover version in person but the available evidence suggests that it belongs to the »Cambridge« score group. Although clearly a Venetian manuscript, the »Cambridge« score does not directly relate to Venice 1666 but it is more likely that the whole group of these revivals stems from a prototype further up the ladder⁴⁴. This could be a source linked to one of the 1661 Rome and Florence performances of *Oron tea* mentioned above with which the composer was personally involved (unfortunately though there are no librettos from 1661).

For the purposes of this study, and given its existence in Hanover, Venice 1666 has been taken as the main comparison text but even a cursory look at other versions available online makes it evident that the situation is more complex than this. Hanover 1678 is very close to Venice 1666 (differences given above), but it does contain 3 – 4 chunks of recitative that hark back to other sources (in I / xiii, II / ix–xi, III / ii). One of these is the very characteristic quatrina of I / xiii, a comic scene between servants Gelone and Tibrino, which cannot be found in Venice:

⁴³ Jennifer Williams Brown, »Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen« – Cesti, *Oron tea*, and the *Gelone* problem, in: Cambridge Opera Journal 12 (2000), p. 179–217, especially p. 201–202.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 203.

Gelone: La Regina di Marocco,
 Non vuol più pigliar tabacco,
 Aborri quel uso sciocco,
 E si diede in preda à Bacco.

Tibrino: Sei fuor di senno ò fingi
 Orontea ti richiama.

Also, later in the same scene, Hanover 1678 gives »La Regina è imbrociata« for Venice's »La Regina è impazzita«. Gelone's rhyming stanza on »Marocco / tabacco / sciocco / Bacco« and the »imbrociata / impazzita« variant could not have been added locally in Hanover as they are also found in the original Cicognini libretto of Venice 1649 and at least in Milan 1662 and 1667, Venice 1683, Rome 1677, and Wolfenbüttel 1686, and probably in other versions that I have not been able to consult. This means that Hanover consulted more than Venice 1666 for their production although it is also possible that these recitative variants were present in the score they used and were then copied into the libretto so that the text matched what was being sung on stage. Another indication they took different sources into account is the fact that the second stanza of Clorindo's aria addition »Vendetta d'honore« (III / xx) is a verbatim reproduction of the first stanza of Sesto's aria »Speranza mi dice« from Sartorio's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* of 1677 (I / xvi):

Vendetta d'honore	Speranza mi dice,
Per scoppo hà la morte,	Che questa mia mano
Di chi lò Macchiò.	Vendetta farà,
L'indegno Amatore	Il cor mi predice,
Cadrà, che tal sorte	Che Rege inhumano
Un' Empio incontrò.	Svenato cadrà
Vendetta, &c.	Speranza, &c.
Speranza mi dice,	Mi dice il Pensiero,
Che questa mia mano	Che l'empio Regnante
Vendetta farà,	Esangue sarà,
Il cor mi predice,	Che Rege severo
Che quest' Inhumano	Trafitto, e spirante
Svenato cadrà	Quest'alma vedrà.
Vendetta, &c.	Speranza, &c

This borrowing takes us back to the whole question of whether the two Sartorio operas of 1677, *Antonino Pompeiano* and *Giulio Cesare*, had been under consideration at Hanover as, obviously, their sources were available and seem to have been absorbed by the people behind *Orontea*. These preliminary findings suggest that there is much more to be discovered and confirms the fact that revivals were complex amalgamations at the best of times.

In conclusion one needs to say that there is much more to be discovered in the history of *Orontea* in Hanover. A single revival has revealed a whole nexus of historical circumstances, of actions, agendas, and of pragmatic decisions, and has brought up issues of opera patronage and appropriation that certainly warrant further investigation going well beyond the realms of this study.

Appendix

1. Preface of *Oronthea*

Con oggetto di dar à Musici un nobil' essercitio, à Precipi un'illustre divertimento, si rinova nel Theatro d'Hannover la recita dell'Oronthea qui scielta fra gli altri drammi per l'esquisitezza della composition musicale, che nell'appagar colla soavità della vista.

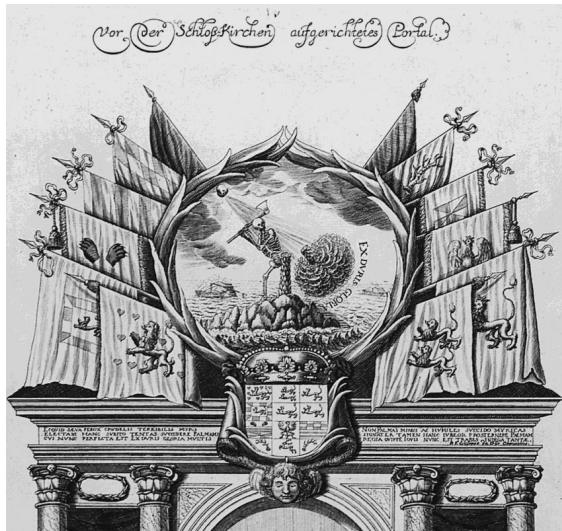
L'essere stata altrove rappresentata più volte le accresce pregio di fama, e non impedisce, che non possa comparir su queste scene colle grazie della novità, mentre rinasce adorna di nuovi fregi, & in molte parti abbellita dalle vaghe Idee, che per varie mutationi, & aggiunte s'è degnata di suggerire una Serenissima Intelligenza prima, e sola promotrice dell'Opera.

Come il merito di qualità più sublimi, che le dà luogo frà le più Auguste del secolo, la rende per tutto degna d'ammirazione, e di lode; così anco in quest' occasione le direzioni del suo delicatissimo Genio non puonno mancar di riuscita, e d'applauso; e l'ambitione c'hanno di ben corrispondere ad ordini si riveriti quelli a' quali è toccato l'honore d'esser' impiegati nell'essequirli, fa sperare che dalla felicità di questa prima prova possa nell' auvenir nascer soggetto di pensar in tempi più sereni per la Germania, a nuovi, e più curiosi Spettacoli.

2. Engravings of »La palma spiccata da sassi«



Giuseppe Bono da Diso, *La palma spiccata da sassi*, Hanover 1680



Johann Georg Lange, *Iusta funebria serenissimo principi Joanni Friderico*, Rinteln 1685