

*<Alla Maestà  
Clementina  
Regina  
Della Gran  
Bretagna>:*

*The Political Significance of  
Dedications on the Example of  
Selected Operas Staged in the Teatro  
d'Alibert in Rome (1720-1730)*

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The close links between music and politics, in particular: between politics and the opera in the early modern age are a commonly recognised phenomenon, whose significance has been confirmed by recent research and the expanding body of literature on this subject<sup>1</sup>. The opera, which originated around 1600 at Italian courts, aimed to glorify the power of the rulers and their states. Also Louis XIV of France was a master of operatic self-advertisement par excellence. The public opera, inaugurated in Venice in 1637, established a new medium of communication with the public. As it reached out to different social groups, it became an ideal medium for the transmission of the central ideas of the time<sup>2</sup>. The importance of the opera houses as points of communication with the public could hardly be overestimated, as the genre was tremendously popular and its attraction continued to grow ever since its appearance. In Italy alone more than 40 cities had their public opera houses by 1700, and this number grew to nearly a hundred by the mid-1780s<sup>3</sup>.

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**1** At this point I will list only a few major contributions: Thomas McGeary, *The Politics of Opera in Handel's Britain*, Cambridge 2013; Ellen T. Harris, 'With Eyes on the East and Ears In the West: Handel's Orientalist Operas', in: "Journal of Interdisciplinary History" 2006 no. 3, pp. 419-443; Robert Hume, 'The Politics of Opera In Late Seventeenth-Century London', in: "Cambridge Opera Journal" 1998 no. 1, pp. 15-43; Melania Bucciarelli, 'Taming the Exotic: Vivaldi's *Armida* al campo d'Egitto', in: Vivaldi, 'Motezuma' and the *Opera Seria: Essays on a Newly Discovered Work and Its Background*, Brepols 2008, pp. 81-102; M. Bucciarelli, 'Venice and the East: Operatic Readings of Tasso's *Armida* in Early Eighteenth-Century Venice', in: *Music as Social and Cultural Practice: Essays in Honour of Reinhard Strohm*, eds. M. Bucciarelli, B. Jocus, Woodbridge 2007, pp. 232-249; Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty. Transforming Myths in Eighteenth-Century Italy*, Chicago and London 2007; Paul Monod, 'The Politics of Handel's Early London Operas, 1711-1718', in: "Journal of Interdisciplinary History" 2006 No. 3, pp. 445-472; John Bokina, *Opera and Politics. From Monteverdi to Henze*, New Haven and London 1997; Aneta Markuszewska, *Festa i muzyka na dworze Marii Kazimierzy Sobieskiej w Rzymie (1699-1714) [Feasts and Music at the Court of Marie Casimire d'Arquien - Sobieska in Rome (1699-1714)]*, Warsaw 2012; Maria Goloubeva, *The Glorification of Emperor Leopold I in Image, Spectacle and Text*, Mainz 2000; Candace Marles, *Opera as Instrumentum regni. Agostino Steffani's Enrico Leone*, in: "Opera Quarterly" 1994-1995, pp. 44-78.

**2** One should naturally be aware of the fact that both the beauty of the music and, quite frequently, also the noise in the house blurred the sense of the sung words. Still, the educated, literate part of the audience had access to printed libretti, which they eagerly read at home and in the city salons.

**3** M. Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty...*, p. 35.

The growth of the opera is inextricably linked with the history of the libretti and the phenomenon of an opera dedication, usually addressed to an aristocrat or the royalty. In some cases, as confirmed by libretti from Rome and London from the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the works were dedicated to selected audience members, such as noble ladies or the local aristocrats<sup>4</sup>. Already the title page of the libretto booklet bore the name, surname and titles of the patron in special or at least augmented fonts. As Xavier Cervantes aptly observed: "an artist could boast the protection of a particular noble, who himself was flattered to see his name adorn the title-page of an opera libretto"<sup>5</sup>.

The special address to the patron, of varying length, praised his or her virtues, qualities of the spirit, merits and position, and requested the patron's protection for the new work, which was a constant element of such dedications. Favour and protection were to be offered to the librettist if (most typically) he was the author of the dedication, - as well as the theatre manager and the composer. In this context let me quote another passage from Cervantes: "The role of the dedication as a public testimony of the protection granted by an aristocratic patron to a librettist is of paramount importance in the perspective of the interrelationship of *mecenas* and artist."<sup>6</sup> What can a musicologist learn today from an analysis of those, as it seems, highly conventional addresses? This article aims, on the one hand, to present specific examples of the role of an operatic dedication in defining the relations between the patron and the theatre manager, and on the other - to explain in what way the libretto dedication suggested or revealed the political functions and meanings of the opera. Excellent material for such an analysis can be found in operatic works dedicated to Maria Clementina Stuart née Sobieska, wife of James III Stuart, claimant to the British throne and protector of the Teatro d'Aliberti (from 1726 - Teatro delle Dame) in Rome in 1720-1730. The fact that those operas were staged in a public rather than a private theatre additionally enhanced their political message. First, however, we ought to become more closely acquainted with the figure of the dedicatee herself.

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**4** Cf. the *dramma per musica* entitled *La fede tradita, e vendicata* (1712) staged in Rome's Teatro Capranica and dedicated to the Roman aristocracy (alla nobiltà romana), or *Ataulfo re de'Goti ovvero La forza della virtù* from the same year, dedicated to the Ladies (alle Dame).

**5** Xavier Cervantes, 'History and Sociology of the Italian Opera In London (1705-45): the Evidence of the Dedications of the Printed Librettos', in: "Studi musicali" 1998 no. 2, p. 339.

**6** X. Cervantes, *History and Sociology...*, p. 339.

MARIA CLEMENTINA STUART NÉE SOBIESKA

Maria Clementina Sobieska (1701-1735) was a daughter of James Louis Sobieski - the eldest son of King John III of Poland and Marie Casimire Louise de La Grange d'Arquien ("Marysienka") – from his marriage to Countess Palatine Hedwig Elisabeth of Neuburg<sup>7</sup>. On her mother's side she was related to many European courts, and her godfather was Pope Clement XI himself. In 1718 the youthful Clementina attracted the attention of Charles Wogan, a loyal courtier of James III Stuart, claimant to the throne of England, Scotland and Ireland, who visited the courts of Europe on a mission to find a suitable candidate for his king's wife. During the carnival of 1718, Wogan came to the Silesian town of Ohlau (now Olawa), where the Sobieski family then resided. Of all the princesses he met during his travels, Clementina delighted him most – with her beauty, demeanour, education, connections and potential dowry. After prolonged and complicated negotiations, in which a number of spies were employed, the marriage contract between Clementina and James III was eventually signed, and in the autumn of 1718 the young princess, accompanied by her mother and a small retinue, set out for Italy, where her future husband had taken residence. Unfortunately, James's marriage ran counter to the political plans of the British king George I, of the Hanover dynasty, who persuaded Emperor Charles VI to imprison Clementina in Innsbruck. This act was met with shock and indignation throughout Europe, and still the Emperor remained deaf to all the entreaties he received for the princess's liberation. It was then that Wogan used his cunning and courage to free Clementina, and, thanks to an ingenious plan and the effective help of several loyal supporters – he succeeded. Clementina's daring escape was on everybody's lips in Europe: panegyrics praised the princess's bravery and fortitude and compared her to her famous grandfather John III; descriptions of her escape appeared in print, and numerous medals with her image were struck<sup>8</sup>. Soon after

Clementina's arrival in Bologna, on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1719 a proxy marriage took place<sup>9</sup>, followed by the ceremony proper on 2<sup>nd</sup> September in Montefiascone, a small town near Rome<sup>10</sup>. The newlyweds moved into Palazzo del Re in Rome, a residence offered to them by Pope Clement XI<sup>11</sup>. Unfortunately, after a brief period of mutual fascination, the Stuart marriage proved a failure, as the husband and wife differed in too many respects. What survived much longer than their love was their shared passion for music, and for the opera in particular.

OPERAS DEDICATED TO MARIA CLEMENTINA

Maria Clementina loved music and passed this passion onto her sons – the elder Charles and the younger Henry. In her royal residence in Rome, she eagerly held concerts, to which she invited Rome's best performers. She herself sang and played instruments. An English gentleman visiting Rome on a Grand Tour recalled his invitation to the Queen's private concerts: "The Princess, who stood by, addressing to the Doctor, in the prettiest English I think I ever heard, said, *Pray! Doctor, if these Gentlemen be lovers of Music, invite them to my Consort to-night; I charge you with it: Which she accompanied with a Salute and a Smile, in the most gracious Manner.*"<sup>12</sup> The gentlemen duly arrived at James and Clementina's palace, where, as they reported, "[we] saw a bright Assembly of the prime Roman Nobility, the Consort compos'd of the

<sup>7</sup> About Clementina's life, cf. Peggy Miller, *A Wife for the Pretender*, New York 1965; Wanda Roszkowska, 'Królowa Wielkiej Brytanii' ['Queen of Great Britain'], in: *Olawa królewiczów Sobieskich [The Ohlau of the Sobieski Princes]*, Wrocław 1984, pp.106-119. There is also a fictionalised story in Polish by Witold Nowak-Soliński (*Klementyna Sobieska "Królowa Anglii"* ["Queen of England"]) Warsaw 1984 (which, however, needs to be approached with much distance as a source of information)..

<sup>8</sup> „Alcune lettere particolari dicono, che sono uscite in questa Città molte medaglie d'oro, e d'argento, sulle quali si vede da una parte il ritratto della Principessa Sobieski Moglie del Ré d'Inghilterra con queste parole. *Clementina Maria Britannia,*

*Francia, Hibernia, & Scotia Regina, e nel rovescio vi si vede pure questa Principessa, che fugge verso Roma, dopo essersi liberata da Inspruck, nel medesimo tempo, che il Ré suo Marito faceva vela dalla Spagna verso Roma con questa divisa. Fortunam, causamque sequor, e al di sotto Deceptis Custodibus Anno 1719. Dicesi, che queste Medaglie sieno state e sieno attualmente molto ricercate, e ciascuno ne parla secondo la sua fantasia.*" In: "Mercurio storico e politico" (Roma X. 1720). Cf. Neil Guthrie, 'The Memorial of the Chevalier de St. George (1726): Ambiguity and Intrigue in the Jacobite Propaganda War', in: "The Review of English Studies" 2004 no. 201, pp. 545-546, especially footnote 9; *Idem*, "A Polish Lady". The Art of the Jacobite Print', in: *1650-1750: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 2007, pp. 287-312.

<sup>9</sup> Peggy Miller, *A Wife...*, p. 138.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Corp, 'The Location of the Stuart Court in Rome: The Palazzo Del Re', in: *Loyalty and Identity. Jacobites at Home and Abroad*, eds. P. Monod, M. Pittock, D. Szechi, Hampshire 2010, pp. 180-205; *Idem*, *The Stuarts in Italy 1719-1766. A Royal Court in Permanent Exile*, Cambridge 2011.

<sup>12</sup> *A Letter from an English Traveler at Rome, to his Father, Of the 6th of May, 1721 O.S., Printed in the Year 1721*, pp.8-9.

best Musicians of Rome, a plentiful and orderly Collation served.”<sup>13</sup> When the marriage crisis made Clementina leave her husband and move to the Convent of St Cecilia, Baron Philipp von Stosch, the British king’s long-time spy, reported: “On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> Princess Piombino dined with Princess Sobiesky in the Convent, after which she [Princess Piombino] went to the Pretender’s palace to negotiate a reconciliation. It seems at present that the desire to see Aliberti’s opera had a greater impact on the Princess’s soul than all the strong arguments of Cardinal Alberoni, who seeks in vain to plant heroism in the soul of a woman utterly dedicated to entertainment and the opera.”<sup>14</sup> No wonder then that, soon after her arrival in Rome, Clementina began to frequent Rome’s opera houses, becoming their patroness and much awaited guest<sup>15</sup>.

As early as in 1720, the Teatro d’Alibert dedicated to Clementina a *dramma per musica* entitled *Faramondo*, with a libretto by Apostolo Zeno and music by Francesco Gasparini. As the Queen was then in the last weeks of a pregnancy, the theatre’s impresario, Antonio d’Alibert staged a rehearsal-performance in Palazzo del Re. The *Diario di Chracas* reported:

“In the evening of St Stephen’s Day Her Majesty the Queen of England, Clementina Sobieska, felt the first, light pains of labour at two hours and three quarters according to the Italian time, when she was being entertained – in the presence of numerous princesses and members of the aristocracy, in total: a hundred persons or more - with a rehearsal of an opera to be staged in the theatre of Count d’Alibert. On the following day, the Queen’s palace was attended by the Cardinals, the Prelates, Rome’s magistrates and all the other persons selected to assist in Her Majesty’s childbirth, but the pains did not progress any further until the evening of 30<sup>th</sup> [December],

when late at night the selected persons were notified that they ought to proceed to her palace.”<sup>16</sup>

In the following years, the same theatre dedicated to Clementina the following operas:

1. *Eumene*, lib. A. Zeno, music by N. Porpora, 1721;
2. *Flavio Anicio Olibrio*, lib. A. Zeno, P. Pariati, music by N. Porpora, 1722;
3. *Adelaide*, lib. A. Salvi, music by N. Porpora, 1723;
4. *Scipione*, lib. A. Zeno, music by L. A. Predieri, 1724<sup>17</sup>;
5. *Il Valdemaro*, lib. A. Zeno, music by D. Sarro, 1726,
6. *Siroe Re di Persia*, lib. Metastasio, music by Porpora, 1727;
7. *Artaserse*, lib. Metastasio, music by L. Vinci, 1730 (Teatro delle Dame).

Most of these were composed by major representatives of the Neapolitan school, whose popularity in Italy and all over Europe was then growing - Nicola Porpora and Leonardo Vinci. The singers included Carlo Broschi – the famous Farinelli, one of Porpora’s most outstanding pupils, making his triumphant debut in Rome. Clementina could rightly feel proud and satisfied as the patroness of such eminent artists.

#### SELECTED DEDICATIONS – ADELAIDE (1723)

Already the dedication printed in the above mentioned libretto of *Faramondo* contains interesting hints. Firstly, the impresario addresses Clementina as *Sagra, e Real Maestà*, emphasising that he treats her as a real queen rather than a pretender to the throne. Secondly, as we read further, it had been her husband James who extended his patronage over the season’s first opera, and so, “the ancient Glory gained by my family on many occasions while serving

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 9

<sup>14</sup> “Mecredy le 21me la Princesse de Piombino fu diner chez la princesse Sobiesky au Couvent apres quoy elle alla trouver le Pretendent a son Palais pour negotier l’accommodement. Il paroit presentement que le desir de voir l’Opera de Aliberti fait plus d’effet sur l’esprit de la Princesse, que tous les raisonnements fortes du Cardinal Alberoni, qui pretend en vain de semer un heroisme dans l’esprit d’une femme infiniment adonne’ aux divertissements et spectacle”. London, National Archives, further referred to as NA, SP 85/116, (21 I 1726).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. “On avoit Dimanche passé seminé par tout Rome le bruit, que ce soir la Princesse Sobiesky viendroit au Theatre de Aliberti dans la loge de son Epoux lequel la conduiroit au logis après. Tout les Dames Romaines etoit en attente de voir ce spectacle, quand on vit contre l’attente de tout le monde comparoitre Madame Hayes vetue d’une richesse extraordinaire avec le Pretendent, ce que causa un murmure universel.” NA, SP 85/116 (16<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1726).

<sup>16</sup> “Comminciate la sera di S. Stefano le prime doglie leggere alla Maestà della Regina d’Inghilterra Clementina Subieski, verso le ore due e tre quarti dell’orologia italiano, mentre si procurava vestirla in presenza di molte signore Principesse e Nobiltà numerosa di 100 e più persone, colla prova dell’opera che deve farsi al Teatro del Sig. Conte d’Alibert, furono avvertiti il dì seguente li Sign. Cardinali, le Sign. Principesse, li Signori Prelati, il Magistrato di Roma e tutti gli altri Personaggi scelti per l’assistenza del parto di Sua Maestà la Regina, la quale non senti molto accresciute le doglie, se non la sera del 30, quando furono di nuovo avvertiti gli Assistenti sul tardi per rendersi alla di lei Abitazione. *Diario di Chracas* (4<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1721), quoted after: Alberto de Angelis, *Nella Roma Papale. Il teatro Alibert o delle Dame* (1717-1863), Tivoli 1951, p. 137.

<sup>17</sup> In the same year, also the Teatro Della Pace dedicated an opera to Maria Clementina. It was *Partenope* to a libretto by S. Stampigli and with music by D. Sarro.

at the court of Her Majesty Maria Casimira, the great Queen of Poland and Your Majesty's grandmother, lets me rest assured that also Thou, in whose perfect countenance the virtue of your husband and your grandmother's nobility shine so brightly, deignest to accept, with no less favour than his [James's] and no less benevolence than hers [Maria Casimira's] – this second drama, entitled *il FARAMONDO*, likewise presented in my theatre.”<sup>18</sup> There followed words of praise for Clementina, and a request for her to become the patroness of the work. In order to establish his relations with Clementina, Rome's new resident and potentially a key protector, patroness of the theatre, its manager Antonio d'Alibert deliberately referred to the quite recent relations between his own family and Clementina's grandmother, Maria Casimira<sup>19</sup>. In this way, he created an image of an intimate bond and trust between himself and the young Stuart queen, which is of utmost importance in any patron-client relations.

In 1722, Antonio d'Alibert's theatre company was heavily indebted and was taken over by a group of external managers described in the libretto as *gl'interessati del teatro*. While looking for patrons for the theatre, they also addressed the Stuarts to support its new productions, and dedicated the first opera of the carnival to James III Stuart (*Sofonisba*, lib. F. Silvani, music by L. A. Predieri), while the second, *Flavio Anicio Olibrio* (libretto by Zeno and Pariati) – was dedicated to Maria Clementina. The latter opera bore the following dedication:

“Madam,

Here comes on the stage, devoted to Your Majesty's generous look and kindest heart, Flavio Anicio Olibrio. And since in his time Rome enjoyed freedom, regained due to his virtues, he will now be glorified thanks to Your

Majesty's precious patronage, by which we hope to bring great joy to all the known world when this music sounds, all thanks to Your royal presence, which we hereby confirm, bowing humbly to Your Majesty.”<sup>20</sup>

This and the successive opera dedications appear rather conventional, as they mainly praise Maria Clementina's virtues and express gratitude for her generous protection. The dedication to the *dramma per musica Adelaide* of 1723 stands out in this context. Here is its complete text:

„Madam,

Here Adelaide seeks sanctuary under the wings of Your Majesty's most glorious protection. And we also gladly see her finding refuge there, confident that in Your Majesty's noble soul she will discover that kindness and compassion which she has already found in the heart of that great king who defended and enthroned her. Presenting it to Your Majesty with all respect, we entreat Thee continually to grace our theatre with Thy presence and we wish Thee the same fate as befell Adelaide after all her misfortunes, which all the world longs to see. Bowing humbly to Thee.”<sup>21</sup>

In order to understand the full meaning of this dedication and the comparison of Adelaide's fate to that of Maria Clementina Stuart, we need to become acquainted with the plot of the opera:

Berengario, Duke of Spoleto, treacherously murders Lotario, King of Padua, usurping his kingdom. He also wishes to marry Lotario's widow, Adelaide, to his son Idelberto, and thus secure his rule in Padua. Adelaide, however, resolutely rejects this dishonourable proposal.

**18** “e l'antica Gloria acquistata da miei Maggiori nel servire in molte occasioni la Maestà di Maria Casimira gran Regina di Polonia, ed Ava della M.V., mi hanno assicurato, che Ella, in cui, come in perfetto Parelio, tutta risplende la virtù dello Sposo, e la Magnanimità dell'Ava, con non minor Clemenza di questi, e con bontà non inferior dell'Altra, sia per gradire il **tribute** di questo second Drama intitolato *il FARAMONDO*, che pur debbe rappresentarsi nel mio Teatro *Faramondo*, Rome 1720, p. 4.

**19** Antonio's father, Count Giacomo d'Alibert first made a name for himself as organiser of theatrical life at the court of Christina, Queen of Sweden, and was later active at the court of Maria Casimira. His son Antonio had the opportunity to meet Clementina's grandmother and even dedicated to her one of his serenades, performed on 27<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1702 in front of the queen's palace. “Verso la mezzanotte il figliolo del conte d'Alibert fece una serenata alla regina di Polonia nel casino della Trinità di Monti con quantità d'istromenti e vi cantò la celebre cantarina Faustina Perugini.” Francesco Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, eds. G. Scano and G. Graglia, vol.2, Milan 1977-79, p. 264.

**20** „Madama, Dal magnanimo sguardo, e dal clementissimo Core della M.V. affidato, comparirà sù le Scene il Flavio Anicio Olibrio; E siccome Roma godè in quei tempi riacquistare dal di lui valore la perdita libertà, così mercè l'alto Patrocinio della M.V., di cui presentemente v'adorano, speriamo unitamente far palese all'Universo l'immenso giubilo, che ci ridonda dalla sua Reale assistenza nel confermarci con profondissimo inchino Di V. Maestà, Gl'Interessati del Teatro”. *Flavio Anicio Olibrio*, Rome 1722, pp. 3-4.

**21** „Madama, Ricorre al validissimo patroncinio di V. M. Adelaide; e noi ben volentieri ve la scorgiamo con sicurezza che Ella saprà ritrovare nell'animo generoso della M.V. quella benignità, e compatimento, che già ritrovò nel core di quel gran Ré, che la difese, e che la ripose nel Soglio. Nel presentarla però, che noi facciamo, à V. M. con tutto l'ossequio la supplichiamo à continuar à questo Teatro l'onore d'esser M.V. alla quale, augurando l'istessa sorte, che ebbe, doppio tante sciagure, Adelaide, e che il Mondo tutto sospira, facciamo un profondissimo inchino”. *Adelaide*, Rome 1723, pp. 3-4.

Ottone, King of Germany, who had fallen in love with Adelaide when she was still a young girl, comes to her rescue. His strength and personal charm attract Adelaide, who promises to become his wife, on condition, however, that he saves her and her kingdom. Ottone reluctantly leaves his beloved to summon all his armies and plan the attack. In the meantime, the city is taken by Berengario, who celebrates yet another military victory. His wife Mathilde gladly turns Adelaide into her slave, keeping her prisoner in a tower of the royal residence. Mathilde sends a messenger to Adelaide's cell, with two jugs – one containing a dagger and a vial of poison, the other – a crown and sceptre. Adelaide chooses death. Mathilde orders her to drink the poison, but when Idelberto declares that he will die with his love, his mother postpones the execution. In the meantime, Ottone duels with Berengario and emerges triumphant. Fearing for Adelaide's life, he does not attack Mathilde, but offers a peace treaty to Berengario. If the latter persuades his wife to surrender the city and free Adelaide, he will keep all the lands and property gained before his attack on Padua. If he refuses, Idelberto will die. Mathilde resorts to deception and tries to force Adelaide to write a letter to Ottone, demanding that he recognise Berengario's rights to the conquered territory and make peace with him. Adelaide refuses, however, claiming that her present state does not allow her to make any demands and establish laws. Ottone prepares to rescue Adelaide, but Idelberto asks him to refrain from the attack lest he might put Adelaide's life at risk. So it is Idelberto, alone and unarmed, who takes the message to Mathilde to stop the fury of Ottone's soldiers and save Adelaide. Eventually, though, it is the people of Padua who, out of compassion for their former queen and hatred for Mathilde, and led by Duke Osmondo, free Adelaide and name Ottone as their victor. Hearing the news of Padua's fall, Mathilde wishes to kill Adelaide and die herself. For the sake of Idelberto and grateful for his conduct in this affair, Ottone and Adelaide spare Berengario and Mathilde's lives. The opera ends with the appearance of a personified Italia, who, like the ancient *deus ex machina*, glorifies Ottone as an invincible commander and praises his excellent wife as well as their future offspring. The final chorus expresses the joy accompanying the royal marriage and wishes the noble victor a long life.

Several aspects of this libretto call for a commentary. First of all, the point of departure (and the driving force behind the action of the opera) is the dethronement of the rightful sovereign, whose widow is now being forced into an unwanted marriage. The theme of usurpation was a common one in Italian libretti from that period, which depicted the legitimate ruler's struggle to regain his throne

and kingdom. By constructing the libretto in this way, the author presumably aimed to advertise the qualities of a good ruler as opposed to those of a ruthless usurper. Such a libretto had an important moral dimension, as it praised the proper behaviour and condemned the wrongdoings. All the same, considering the fact that both James III and Maria Clementina, as the theatre's patrons, could influence the choice of contents and composers for the presented operas, it seems significant that most of the libretti dedicated to them concern the topic of dethroned monarchs<sup>22</sup>. In my view, this is the first and foremost political aspect of the operas staged in the Teatro d'Alibert. For no other European ruler of that time was the loss of the throne so acutely relevant as for James III Stuart.

In his article 'Il principe Livio Odescalchi e l'oratorio <politico>', Saverio Franchi claims that there were three political issues preoccupying the minds of Popes in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, which also found their reflection in Roman music: the Stuart exile, the Turkish threat and the War of the Spanish Succession<sup>23</sup>. Leaving aside those last two problems, we should note that the Restoration of the Stuart Monarchy in 1660 was enthusiastically received by the Roman Curia and brought a renewed hope for the return of the British Isles to Roman Catholicism. Despite the later events (the Stuarts' escape to France and then to Italy, the rule of William of Orange and the House of Hanover in Britain), Rome still cherished such hopes with respect to the Stuarts. No wonder, then, that Clementina's husband could count on the Pope's assistance, both in financial and political terms. James III's position in Rome was thus summed up by Edward Corp, a researcher engaged for many years in the study of the Stuart exile: "From 1719 until 1766 the papacy provided the exiled Stuart king with a regular quarterly pension and a residence for his court near the Quirinale in the centre of Rome. For nearly all this period it also provided James with a secondary residence at Albano. The king was afforded social precedence, outranking all the princes of the Church and the foreign ambassadors. He was also given the special political privilege of nominating cardinals. He was allowed to have Protestant services performed

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Jane Clark, 'The Stuart Presence at the Opera in Rome', in: *The Stuart Court in Rome. The Legacy of Exile*, ed. E. Corp, Aldershot, p. 86.

<sup>23</sup> Saverio Franchi, 'Il principe Livio Odescalchi e l'oratorio <politico>', in: *L'Oratorio musicale italiano e i suoi contesti: secc. 17.-18. : atti del Convegno internazionale, Perugia, Sagra musicale umbra, 18-20 settembre 1997*, Florence 2002, p. 156.

within his court, and was given a plot of land within the city where his Protestant subjects could be given public burial.<sup>24</sup> It is in the context of this powerful support granted by the Popes to the Stuart case that we should analyse the dedication of the opera *Adelaide*. By openly comparing the fate of the heroine to that of Clementina, the libretto was blatantly politicised. Adelaide, the heroine of this opera, demonstrated a truly indomitable character despite tragic events and in times of terror. The reward for her perseverance and courage was a triumphant return to the throne of Padua, with the assistance of the loving Ottone. In the dedication, the theatre's impresario expresses his wish that Clementina become the British Queen, adding that "all the world" longs to see that event – by which he means the Catholic world, with Rome as its centre. Apparently, at that time it was not mere courtesy. Maria Clementina's contemporaries saw her as a deserving candidate for the queen of a great country, which is confirmed, among others, by a description in the memoirs of Charles-Lewis Baron de Pollnitz:

„The Queen his [James III's] Wife is a Princess, who deserves in reality to be a Queen; and tho'not a sparkling Beauty, it may be said that her Person is infinitely charming; she has indeed the Character of a most accomplish'd Lady, and never was there a better natur'd Person with more Humility; she is friendly, compassionate, charitable; her Piety is exemplary, and in Truth, she leads the Life of a Saint, without affecting the Shew of ceremonial Devotion; for she has nothing more at heart than to do good, and her Love of one sublime Virtue is incredible; for tho'she is heartily attach'd to her own Religion, she has no Rancour against those who differ from her Opinion, but would fain reclaim them by her good Example and good Nature. Were she Mistress of a Kingdom, she would certainly make it her Rule to discharge the Duties of her Rank as became it; and indeed, Nature has given her great Advantages to acquit herself worthily in such a Sphere; for she has a wonderful quick Comprehension, an admirable Memory, and she speaks *Polish, High-Dutch, French, Italian* and *English* so well, that 'tis not easy to distinguish which of those Languages is most familiar to her. I own to you, that of all the Princesses whom ever I had the Honour to approach, I don't know one more deserving of the Veneration of the Public. I should be glad to see her happy; and if that Respect and Duty, from which I shall

never depart, did not bind me so strongly to the King and Queen of *Great Britain*, I could wish to see her wear the Crown of the three Kingdoms.<sup>25</sup>

There are other similar commentaries about Clementina and – even though this operatic heroine had been a much earlier creation – Sobieska not only clearly matched Adelaide in courage and fortitude (which she proved, among others, by her daring escape from Innsbruck), but, unlike the latter, she was a person of flesh and blood, and her demenour would undoubtedly turn the public's opinion in her favour.

An interesting conclusion for the dedication in question, and for the whole opera, is provided in the finale by the appearance of Italia (*L'Italia in Machina*) on the stage – a device more popular in earlier, 17<sup>th</sup>-century operas, but still quite frequently applied on the stage at the Teatro d'Aliberti. Italia utters the following words:

*Invincible king, summoned  
from Istro's shore  
by the fervid desire of splendid glory:  
All your victories and triumphs  
I now applaud, happy in my grandeur.  
Hark, o hark  
how the waves of my obedient rivers  
extol Thy bright name.  
Now rejoice with them, and united  
with Thy excellent spouse  
spend many happy years:  
now granted to Thee,  
and later to those born after Thee  
filling the world with famous heroes:*

Her words are taken up by the chorus, which closes the opera:

*The royal bed is sprinkled  
with pretty flowers by the God of Love  
and on every shore we hear resounding:  
Long live, long live  
the noble victor.*

**25** The Memoirs of Charles-Lewis, Baron de POLLNITZ. Being The OBSERVATIONS He made in his late TRAVELS from Prussia thro' GERMANY, FLANDERS, ITALY, HOLLAND, FRANCE, ENGLAND, &c. In Letters to his FRIEND. Discovering not only the PRESENT STATE of the Chief CITIES and TOWNS; BUT The CHARACTERS of the PRINCIPAL PERSONS at the several COURTS. In TWO VOLUMES, vol. II, London 1739, pp. 56-57.

**24** E. Corp, 'The Stuarts and the Papacy: I', in: *The Stuarts in Italy, 1719-1766. A Royal Court in Permanent Exile*, Cambridge 2011, pp. 17-18.

The dedication analysed in this article allows us to see Adelaide as Clementina's *alter ego*, and to hypothesise that in the figure of Ottone (extolled by *Italia*), the noble victor who restores Adelaide to her lost throne and restores order in their now jointly ruled kingdom – the singers of the Teatro d'Aliberti praised James III himself. This opera can thus be seen not only as a homage to his wife but as a tribute to the exiled Stuart king, who, as it happened, would never see either himself, or his wife and sons on the throne of England, Scotland and Ireland – however long such hopes may have been cherished in Rome, as evidenced by the words of *Italia* in the finale and by the activity of the *Curia Romana* in this field.