

A STUDY OF MONTEVERDI'S THREE GENERA FROM THE PREFACE
TO BOOK VIII OF MADRIGALS IN RELATION TO OPERATIC CHARACTERS IN
IL RITORNO D'ULISSE IN PATRIA AND *L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA*

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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TO BOOK VIII IN RELATION TO OPERATIC CHARACTERS
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ABSTRACT

The construction of character on the early operatic stage by means of musical gestures is an indisputable achievement of Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643). Such an accomplishment was the result of a continuing development of musical ideas over many decades that encompassed additional modes of inquiry from philosophy to rhetoric. The merging of these fields is evidenced in the Preface to Book VIII, in which Monteverdi laid out a concatenation of threefold divisions: three *genera*—*concitato*, *temperato*, and *molle*—in association with a high, medium, and low voice and with three emotions / virtues: anger, temperance, and humility / supplication. A detailed inquiry into the Preface terminology reveals its roots in a series of theoretical, rhetorical, and philosophical sources. An in-depth musical analysis of Monteverdi's Venetian operas *Ulisse* and *Poppea* and their main roles—Penelope and Ulisse in the former, and Nerone, Poppea, Seneca, and the betrayed spouses in the latter—demonstrates that the application of the three *genera* went beyond Book VIII. The primary emphasis of this research is devoted to how Monteverdi extended this system, along with all his musico-rhetorical devices, to the construction of character and depiction of emotion in his operas. Such an analysis illustrates the development of the composer's musical aesthetic and his search for verisimilitude conveyed in his human operatic characters, a quest that he pursued for many years.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The construction of character on the early operatic stage by means of musical gestures and management of vocal types is an indisputable achievement of Italian master Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643). Such an accomplishment was not realized in a single dramatic work but was the result of continuing development and rethinking of musical ideas. This process began with the composition of his first opera, *La favola d'Orfeo* (1607), and extended until the completion of his penultimate dramatic work, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (1639/40), and his final masterpiece, *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1642).¹ Monteverdi's conceptions continued to evolve over the years, often reaching beyond music and encompassing several additional modes of inquiry—appropriate to subjects ranging from philosophy to rhetoric—as strongly evidenced in the one-page Preface to *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi* (1638), his eighth book of madrigals.

The correlation of strategically selected musical devices with emotion—notably *stile concitato*, *stile recitativo*, and word painting within the established *seconda prattica*²—has been the object of much scholarly investigation into Monteverdi's eighth book

¹ Hereafter abbreviated and referred to as *Orfeo*, *Ulisse*, and *Poppea*.

² The word “prattica” is the archaic Italian form, used by Monteverdi and his contemporaries. It has remained in this form for most English-speaking scholars. Due to language evolution, however, the current spelling in modern Italian, *pratica* with one “t” is adopted here except when present in the title of works.

of madrigals (hereafter referred to as Book VIII) and his final published operas.³ Nevertheless, these works have most often been approached in individual and separate efforts and, with the exception of analyzing the application of *stile concitato*, have not been examined as connected by common elements.⁴ The three *genera*⁵ Monteverdi featured in his Preface to Book VIII—*concitato*, *temperato*, and *molle* in association with a high, medium, or low voice as well as the three affections / emotions of anger, temperance / moderation, and humility / supplication—have been studied mainly in terms of their

³ Several scholars have published important studies in this regard, mainly in terms of the opera *La favola d'Orfeo*. Noteworthy is Jeffrey Kurtzman's "Intimations of Chaos," *Approaches to Monteverdi: Aesthetic, Psychological, Analytical, and Historical Studies* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 1-25. There the author described in detail the emotions of the main character Orfeo and his related music under the terms of psychological disintegration. With regard to *pathos*, there is a stronger emphasis in Monteverdi's first opera than in *Poppea*, where the points of view of scholars range from the philosophical (see Ellen Rosand, "Seneca and the Interpretation of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXXVIII/1 [Spring 1985], 34-71) to the strictly historical (Wendy Heller, "Tacitus *Incognito*: Opera as History in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* LII/1 [Spring 1999], 39-96). In studies of Monteverdi's final opera, attention has often been placed on political and social aspects and their accuracy, on variances between librettist and composer, and on contrasting interpretations of Seneca. For these emphases, see Ellen Rosand, *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). Some scholars, however, have approached the theme of emotion underlining the victory of love (in terms of passion) in this work, notably Rachel Lewis, "Love as Persuasion in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*: New Thoughts on the Authorship Question," *Music and Letters* I/86 (February 2005), 16-41. This variety of perspectives mirrors the problems of ambiguity in Monteverdi's last opera.

⁴ The use of *stile concitato* in the confrontation scene between Seneca and Nerone in *Poppea* (Act I, Scene 9) has been the focus of extensive study by several musicologists, among which Ellen Rosand's *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007) and "Seneca and the Interpretation of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*," 34-71 are exceptional.

⁵ Monteverdi adopted the terms *genere* and *generi*, which distinguish singular and plural forms of the word in Italian. In this thesis I use the Latin forms, *genus* and *genera*, which are also the terms used in English. As Barbara Russano Hanning has indicated in "Monteverdi's *Three Genera*: A Study in Terminology," *Musical Humanism and Its Legacy: Essays in Honor of Claude V. Palisca*, ed. Claude V. Palisca, Nancy Kovaleff Baker, Barbara Russano Hanning (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992), 146, "the word *stile* was often employed by seventeenth-century writers after Monteverdi as a synonym for *genere* and has virtually supplanted it in modern literature." See also John Whenham, "The Later Madrigals and Madrigal-Books," *The New Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 216-47, in particular page 244.

treatment in the madrigals in that collection and, in particular, to the dramatic work *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda* (1624).⁶

The main purpose of this thesis is to explain the musical construction of character in Monteverdi's *Ulisse* and *Poppea* by analyzing and comparing the major roles in each opera and relating them to the composer's terminology as it appears in Book VIII. The few years between the publication of Book VIII and the composition of these dramatic works⁷—along with the composer's recognition of the three main passions of the soul (anger, temperance / moderation, and humility or supplication) and of the connection between *stile concitato* (agitated), *temperato* (moderate / temperate), and *molle* (soft) and vocal ranges (high, medium, and low), according to the terminology utilized in the Preface⁸—make it unlikely that Monteverdi approached voice characterization and character construction in his late operas as independent from the concepts introduced in the earlier

⁶ The terms *stile concitato*, *temperato*, and *molle* have been thoroughly examined in Barbara Russano Haning, "Monteverdi's *Three Genera*, 145-70.

⁷ In fact, there was only a span of three years between the publication of Book VIII and the opera *Ulisse*.

⁸ Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII – Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero; reprint, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum (Wien: Universal-Edition, 1967; reprinted New York: Dover Publications, 1991), xiv-xv. All citations refer to the Dover edition. The following quotation is reprinted in the original language in Appendix A. "Having considered that our mind have three principal passions or affectations—anger, temperance, and humility or supplication—as the best philosophers affirm, and, indeed, considering that the very nature of our voice falls into a high, low, and medium range, and musical theory describes this clearly with three terms of agitated (*concitato*), languid (*molle*), and temperate (*temperato*); and never having been able to find in all compositions of past composers an example of the agitated style [*genus*] as described by Plato in his Third Book of *Rhetoric*, ... I therefore ... set myself the task of discovering it." The vocal type distinctions of high, medium, and low voice are made not by Plato, as Monteverdi has incorrectly stated, but by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*, Book III, and adapted as referring to vocal ranges rather than delivery in terms of volume (loud, medium, or soft) as intended by the latter philosopher.

All future comparable original texts reproduced in Appendix A will be identified in the corresponding footnote with the shorter instruction: "See Appendix A for original."

collection.⁹ The correspondence of anger with *stile concitato*—according to Monteverdi’s words in the Preface as “imitating wrath [*ira*]” and to Barbara Russano Hanning¹⁰—has been repeatedly acknowledged; the connections between the remaining styles and of specific vocal ranges with the affections of temperance and supplication have also been strongly made.¹¹ Nevertheless, Monteverdi’s means of communicating these passions / affections as associated with and characterized by different voice types has not received the same critical examination.

In order to address this lacuna, the objective of this thesis is to explore the relationship between Monteverdi’s three *genera* and their rhetorical roles, taking the composer’s quotation from the book titled *Rhetoric* by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) as a reference point and his portrayal of character via vocal type, range, tessitura, and musical gestures as evidence of implementation. Emphasis is devoted primarily to an examination of Monteverdi’s musical depiction of main characters—Penelope and the title role in *Ulisse*, and Poppea, Seneca, and Nerone in *Poppea*—without excluding others of a serious nature. Regarding the latter, particular emphasis is given to the betrayed spouses Ottone and Ottavia in *Poppea*, whose suffering is, in part, related to Penelope’s stoicism as she waits for her husband to return.

⁹ The *stile concitato* and high voice associated with Nero and the low voice of Seneca are approached in great detail by Rosand, namely in her article “Seneca and *the Interpretation of L’incoronazione di Poppea*,” 34-71.

¹⁰ Barbara Russano Hanning, “Monteverdi’s Three *Genera*,” *Musical Humanism and Its Legacy*, 145-70.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Such an analysis has allowed an assessment of the extent to which Monteverdi re-aligned and refocused the use of *stile concitato*, *temperato*, and *molle* with vocal types / ranges and contrasting passions in his last operas, particularly *Poppea*, often by juxtaposing reason and emotion through opposing characters. As Monteverdi declared in the Book VIII Preface through the words of Boethius [Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius] (477-524), “it is contraries that deeply affect our mind (*animo*).”¹²

Literature Survey

The works examined in preparation for this study are all of a scholarly nature. They encompass primary and secondary sources on Monteverdi’s music and on his philosophical / theoretical concepts. To the first category belong the composer’s operas *Ulisse* and *Poppea*;¹³ correspondence with patrons and librettists;¹⁴ and his Preface to Book VIII, where important aesthetic choices and musical devices are unveiled.¹⁵

¹² Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII*, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum, xiv, xv. See Appendix A for original.

¹³ The excerpts from the operas *Ulisse* and *Poppea* in Chapters Five and Six are taken, respectively, from Claudio Monteverdi, *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria: dramma in musica*, in *Tutte le opere*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero, Vol. 12 (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1926), and Claudio Monteverdi, *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, ed. Hendrik Schulze (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2017).

¹⁴ The editions used in this thesis for Monteverdi’s letters in the original language are: Claudio Monteverdi, *Claudio Monteverdi: lettere, dediche e prefazioni*, ed. Domenico De’ Paoli (Rome: Edizioni De Santis, 1973), and Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1994). The adopted translated version is Claudio Monteverdi, *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi*, trans. and ed. by Denis Stevens (London: Faber and Faber, 1980).

¹⁵ The version of the Preface of Book VIII utilized in this study is Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII—Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum, xv-xvi.

With regard to secondary sources, the works of Tim Carter, Ellen Rosand, and Eric Chafe concerning Monteverdi's last Venetian operas as well as the city's milieu to which the composer was subject have been of great value. Among these studies are Carter's *Understanding Italian Opera* (2015) and *Monteverdi's Musical Theatre* (2012); Rosand's "Seneca and the Interpretation of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*" (1985) and *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy* (2007); and Eric Chafe's *Monteverdi's Tonal Language* (1992).¹⁶ These sources represent highly relevant and fastidious studies concerning the composer's poetic choices and his interpretation of *Ulisse* and especially *Poppea*, with the character of Seneca as a pivotal role in the latter opera.¹⁷

In the above-mentioned secondary sources from well-regarded Monteverdi scholars, the operas are approached both individually and together¹⁸ but often without connecting them, with the exception of their utilization of the *stile concitato*, to the concepts mentioned in Monteverdi's Preface to the 1638 score. To bridge this gap, a highly relevant source for this thesis is "Monteverdi's *Three Genera: A Study in Terminology*"

¹⁶ Tim Carter, "Giovanni Francesco Busenello and Claudio Monteverdi, *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Venice, 1643)," *Understanding Italian Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 26-67, and *Monteverdi's Musical Theatre* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002); Ellen Rosand, "Seneca and the Interpretation of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*," 34-71, and *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*; and Eric Thomas Chafe, *Monteverdi's Tonal Language* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 261-360, the latter concerned specifically with the musical analysis of the operas *Ulisse* and *Poppea*.

¹⁷ See Ellen Rosand, "Seneca and the Interpretation of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*," 34-71; and Tim Carter "Re-reading *Poppea*: Some Thoughts on Music and Meaning in Monteverdi's Last Opera," *Monteverdi and His Contemporaries* (Suffolk: St. Edmundsbury Press, 2000), 173-204.

¹⁸ This occurs in Rosand's *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, where the scholar analyzed Monteverdi's last operas written in Venice (*Le nozze d'Enea* [1641], *Ulisse*, and *Poppea*).

(1992) by Barbara Russano Hanning,¹⁹ who presented a thorough analysis of the composer's Preface to Book VIII and examined the correlation between *stile concitato*, *temperato*, and *molle* and the emotions of anger, temperance, and supplication as well as the high, medium, and low voice. Also useful is Sabine Ehrmann-Herfort's *Claudio Monteverdi: Die Grundbegriffe seines musiktheoretischen Denkens* (1987) and "The Arianna Model: On Claudio Monteverdi's Musical Conceptions" (2016) for her discussion of Monteverdi's aesthetics.²⁰

Methodology

The connection between terminology and stylistic distinctions related to voice type—as Monteverdi noted in the Preface of Book VIII and on the basis of which he constructed operatic characters in *Ulisse* and *Poppea*—has been found to be supported by the conceptions defended by the composer in the Preface as well as by the music itself. Regarding the latter, specific relationships between these concepts and the vocal features of characters in *Ulisse* and *Poppea* are addressed namely in terms of range and tessitura, in order to reveal a correlation among the high, medium, and low voices, the *genera concitato*, *temperato*, and *molle*, and the passions anger, temperance / moderation, and humility / supplication. Other expressive means will also be taken into consideration—notably the rhythmic aspect, the use of recitative and aria / arioso, and the association of

¹⁹ Barbara Russano Hanning, "Monteverdi's *Three Genera*, 145-70.

²⁰ See Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi: Die Grundbegriffe seines musiktheoretischen Denkens* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus Verlagsgesellschaft, 1987) and "The Arianna Model: On Claudio Monteverdi's Musical Conceptions," *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* XVIII/1 (2016) [online].

certain modes with particular characters—because they are informative in the assessment of character construction and depiction of emotion.

Additional sources consulted for this thesis are studies examining the cultural / artistic, philosophical, and political environment of the city of Venice, where Monteverdi was employed at the time he composed these operas. Other secondary sources relevant to this research are background studies addressing intellectual, philosophical, and rhetorical ideas incorporated in Monteverdi's musical style as well as those directed to the genesis and analysis of his characters. In order to understand the composer's broader approach to creating dramatic works, I have examined monographs and articles in which his compositional process, approach to opera, contributions to the evolution of genres, and the two staged works under consideration are the topics of inquiry. Other sources for this study have taken the form of interdisciplinary essays concerning the political, philosophical, psychological, and literary approaches identified in these same works.

Close examination of the scores as well as other relevant materials mentioned above yield multiple connections to the Preface to Book VIII, which has been the object of so much interest from Monteverdi scholars (mainly with regard to *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda* but less so for his operatic works). As a result of this inquiry, it can be observed, for instance, that in the opera *Ulisse* the middle / low voice of the female character Penelope represents the stoic person who accepts her condition, her behavior ranging only between the virtues (Monteverdi called them passions) of temperance and humility / supplication as she waits faithfully for years for her husband to return. On the other hand, Ulisse sings in a middle / high voice (associated with heroic deeds and anger) when confronted with warlike scenarios and in a middle voice when addressing his son

Telemaco and his wife Penelope. In the opera *Poppea*, Monteverdi communicated strong contrast between the higher-voiced characters of Nerone and Poppea—often set in *stile concitato* and with assigned arias—and the low-voiced Seneca. The implication of ascribing specific vocal styles and ranges to certain characters extends to the representation of dominant personality traits—the irrationality of the stubborn emperor juxtaposed against the rationality of the historically recognized embodiment of stoicism who symbolizes temperance, wisdom, courage, and justice.²¹ As for the abandoned spouses, Ottone, with his narrow, contralto range (high for a man and low for a woman, but considerably lower than Nerone), conveys his emotionally weak and unmanly yet complex character throughout the opera. Ottavia expresses her human frailty and difficulty in dealing with her betrayal through a middle-high voice and both *stile concitato* and *molle*, with a lament initially similar to that of Penelope. She fails, nonetheless, as does Ottone, to accept her suffering and to overcome her pain through reason. Musical analysis concerning these characters illuminates how their emotions and personalities are expressed—with their differing vocal types and ranges and varying means of communicating emotions or virtues—through appropriate musical devices conveying more or less faithfully Monteverdi’s three *genera*.

²¹ Such an image differs from librettist Busenello’s perspective on Seneca as hypocritical, as analyzed in Rosand’s “Seneca and the Interpretation of *L’incoronazione di Poppea*,” 34-71. A significant study in this regard, however, is that of Iain Fenlon and Peter Miller in *The Song of the Soul: Understanding Poppea* (London: Royal Music Association, 1992), in which the authors discussed the Senecan Neo-stoicism and the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, as well as explored the differences between the motivations of Busenello and Monteverdi. This approach is similar to that taken by Ellen Rosand in “Seneca and the Interpretation of *L’incoronazione di Poppea*,” 34-71, and in *Monteverdi’s Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, valuable contributions to studying the theme of emotion / reason in *Poppea*, with a major focus on the ambiguity in scholarly interpretations of Seneca and his construction as a character.

When reporting my findings and supporting my conclusions require quotations drawn from primary documents, I have adopted the following practice: when translations from foreign languages (Italian, German, Latin, or French) are quoted in the text or in footnotes, the original version, when available, is reprinted in Appendix A. An exception will be made for quotations that are originally in Ancient Greek—also reproduced in Appendix A—for which a translation in either Latin, English, or Italian will be provided instead, as appropriate.

Chapter Summaries

The present study is divided into three main parts—historical / cultural, philosophical / theoretical, and analytical—and seven chapters. This introduction to my research methods is followed by a broader contextual inquiry before turning to an analysis of the works themselves. In Chapter Two I draw attention to the city of Venice during Monteverdi's time. In the following chapter, I attempt to provide an explanation—from the perspectives of philosophy and music theory—of the terminology utilized by Monteverdi in the Preface to Book VIII. Chapter Four represents an extension of the previous one with an analysis of voice types and the vocabulary used to describe them. I devote Chapters Five and Six to the musical analysis and character study of the primary roles in the operas *Ulisse* and *Poppea*. Such an approach to research for this project and the consequent organization of findings lead logically to deductions of how and why Monteverdi constructed the principal characters in his final (surviving) operas in a particular manner.

Each chapter presents its own level of complexity and relevance to the main objective of this project: to assess to what extent Monteverdi applied the concepts as explained in the first part of his Preface to Book VIII to the surviving Venetian operatic works via their most important characters. To this end, the historical context for this study is provided in Chapter Two, in which I examine the intellectual, cultural, and artistic environment of Venice, *La Serenissima Repubblica*, which hosted Claudio Monteverdi until the final days of his life. This chapter is divided into five parts, proceeding from a global analysis to a more specific focus directly related to Monteverdi's operatic works. In the first, "Venice and the City-States," I analyze the historical context of a city-state that for several reasons, namely political and geographical, had the opportunity to triumph in many realms, not least of which were the arts and music. The subchapter that follows, "The Myth of Venice," is directly related to the previous one. I explain how Venice prospered during the Renaissance through a self-image of great wealth and affluence, enhanced through the power of art and music. Such prosperity and the desire to perpetuate that status was cause and consequence of musical growth in Venice, whether sacred or secular, a topic explored in the subchapter "Music in Venice at the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century." In the next division, "Why Venice? The Early Years," I assess the reasons related to financial and political standing as well as the possibility for a more reliable patron that help to explain why Monteverdi resettled and remained in Venice, after years of being underpaid and underappreciated at the court of Mantua. In the last section of this chapter, named after Edward Muir's article "Why Venice?,"²² the birth of

²² Edward Muir, "Why Venice? Venetian Society and the Success of Early Opera," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XXXVI/3 (Winter 2006), 331-53.

opera in Venice is contextualized not only from a musical perspective but also from an intellectual one through a discussion of the cultural academy, the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, to which the librettists of both *Ulisse* and *Poppea* (Giacomo Badoaro, 1602-1654, and Giovanni Francesco Busenello, 1598-1659) belonged.

In the third chapter, which is considerably longer than the previous one, I first contextualize Monteverdi's position within the broader concept of the *seconda pratica* before investigating how these aesthetic changes are reflected in his music, namely in *Il lamento d'Arianna*, and expressed in his letters, dedications, and other sources written between 1605 and 1638. From this preparation, I then analyze in detail the terminology used in the Preface to Book VIII. With the greater emphasis on its first part, where the system of three *genera*, three types of voice, and three affections are addressed, I examine first the contemporary sources that influenced—or might have influenced—Monteverdi's terminology, such as the theories of some of the members of the *Camerata Fiorentina* (Girolamo Mei, Vincenzo Galilei, and Giovanni de' Bardi) and music theorist Giambattista Doni [Giovanni Battista Doni] (1593-1647). I then proceed to study the ancient sources that Monteverdi did not refer to specifically in the Preface but that can be correlated strongly with his own ideas, namely those of Cleonides, *Quintilianus*, and Cicero.²³ Subsequently, I provide an analysis of the sources that Monteverdi referenced explicitly in his system—Plato (428 / 427 B.C.-348 / 347 B.C.); Boethius, and Aristotle—as well as their influence and meaning.²⁴

²³ Cleonides [ancient Greek thinker] (dates of birth / death unknown); Aristides *Quintilianus* [Greek music theorist] (late 3rd-early 4th century); and Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.).

²⁴ Barbara Russano Hanning's article, "The Three *Genera*" was of inestimable importance for the analysis of the Preface terminology and the ancient and contemporary sources.

Chapter Four (“Voice Types: Definitions and Distinctions”) is a study of the different voice types that appear in the operas *Ulisse* and *Poppea*. Here I explain the singing aesthetic and sound of the seventeenth century in Italy before proceeding with an introduction to vocal registers in terms of range, tessitura, historical context, and character association as illustrated in seventeenth-century Venetian opera: soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, countertenor, tenor, baritone, bass, as well as the voice of the castrato. I also dedicate a portion of this chapter to the association that Giambattista Doni made between voice types and characters in his *Trattato della musica scenica* (1635)²⁵ before proceeding to the results of my analysis of the operas *Ulisse* and *Poppea*.

In the subsequent two chapters (Five and Six) the terms Monteverdi specified in the Preface of Book VIII are applied to his music and interpretation of characters in his last surviving operas. The chapter on *Ulisse* is divided between analyses of the characters Penelope and Ulisse, with some brief references to their son Telemaco. This analysis is first approached from a literary point of view (encompassing both period writing and modern sources) and then in terms of Monteverdi’s music, which I explore according to how characters convey emotion through voice type, rhythm and style (*e.g.*, *concitato*), recitative and arioso, and finally through the use of tonalities associated with various characters.²⁶

²⁵ Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” *Lyra Barberina: amphichordos: Accedunt ejusdem opera, pleraque nondum edita, ad veterem musicam illustradam pertinentia ex autographis collegit, et in lucem proferri curavit Antonius Franciscus Gorius ... distributa in tomos II. Absoluta vero studio et opera Io. Baptistae Passeri ... cum praefationibus ejusdem*, Vol. 2 (Florence: Typis Caesareis, 1763; reprinted Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1974), 84-87. For an English translation, see *Readings in the History of Music in Performance*, ed. and trans. Carol MacClintock (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 202.

²⁶ As explained in more detail in “Characters and Voice Types” in Chapter Four, the term tonality will be utilized to refer to a scale potentially encompassing both the major and minor tendencies (thirds and sixths)

In the penultimate chapter, dedicated to the opera *Poppea*, I have devoted sections to five pivotal roles: Poppea, Nerone, Seneca, Ottone, and Ottavia. I analyze their characters and their expression of feelings (or its absence) through vocal range and tessitura, rhythm, style, and a balance of spoken and sung text (recitativo or aria) as applied to convey deceit, pain, anger, triumph, humility, and other affections and virtues. Although the tonality relationship with character is less pronounced in *Poppea* than in *Ulisse*, it will, nevertheless, be addressed. Finally, in the conclusion of this segment, I examine to what extent Monteverdi's three-fold system announced in the Preface can be applied to complex operatic characters.

Conclusion

However crucial the musical analysis of Monteverdi's last (surviving) operas to determining the manner by which the Preface terminology can be applied to *Ulisse* and *Poppea*, it is important to develop first an understanding of the cultural and historical context of the city in which the composer chose to live for more than three decades until his death. This city was Venice, *La Serenissima*, where Monteverdi enjoyed a greater sense of freedom, having separated himself from the highly demanding patronage system in Mantua from which his earned salary was often withheld. Although he maintained certain bonds with the Mantuan court, it was in Venice where he experienced a deeper

of a scale. Range and tessitura in the vocal part is a major factor not only in determining the tonality but in providing tonal contrasts between various characters and emotions, which will be addressed in Chapters Five and Six.

appreciation for his work, which he reported in several letters, and where he contributed to the renown of the city with his late operas for the public stage.

CHAPTER TWO

WHY VENICE?

CULTURAL, POLITICAL, AND ARTISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

*Vivendo io così in illustre & chiara città come è questa,
la qual senza alcun dubbio si può chiamar
il Theatro del Mondo et l'occhio d'Italia.*¹

Francesco Sansovino (1521-1586)

Monteverdi's works—as those of any artist—are indebted to many factors, whether in terms of initial stimulation, actual cause, or subsequent enrichment. The composer's theoretical / aesthetical approach in Book VIII of his madrigals and in his last operas is no exception. Therefore, to consider the contexts in which these works were created—namely the varying political, cultural, artistic, and religious tendencies in the cities where Monteverdi resided (in this case, Venice) and those who determined in large part the aesthetics of the region—can only enrich the understanding of his artistry. The repercussions on his creative choices that were due, at least in part, to those with whom he

¹ Francesco Sansovino, *Delle cose notabili della città di Veneti libri II : ne' quali amplamente, e con ogni verità si contengono vsanze antiche, habiti & vestiti, officii e magistrati, vittorie illustri, principi & vita loro, tutti patriarchi, senatori famosi, huomini letterati, chiese e monasterij, corpi santi e reliquie, fabbriche e palazzi, pittori e pitture, scultori e sculture, auuocati famosi, medici eccellenti, musici di più sorte : con la tauola copiosa*, Book 2 (Venice: 1562), dedication. My translation: “Thus living in such an illustrious and illuminated city [Venice] that can be called without a doubt the theater of the world and the eye of Italy.” According to Bronwen Wilson, *The World of Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 4, “The city as theater was an early modern topos, but one that resonated with widespread perceptions of Venice as a stage teeming with foreigners.” See also the reprint of Sansovino's work *Venetia citta' nobilissima et singolare, et singolare, descritta in 14. libri da m. Francesco Sansouino, nella quale si contengono tutte le guerre passate. ... Con aggiunta di tutte le cose notabili della stessa città, fatte, & occorse dall'anno 1580 sino al presente 1663. Da d. Giustiniano Martinioni ... Doue vi sono poste quelle del Stringa; seruato però l'ordine del med. Sansouino* [written in 1581] (Venice: Filippi Editore, 1998).

worked and an explanation of why public opera enjoyed such success in Venice from its earliest introduction are also important topics to consider but not the only ones. The pervasive impact of the Myth of Venice, which had effectively built and strengthened the city-state over the centuries, fed music production to an extent experienced by few other cities in what is today the country of Italy.

Embracing the dichotomy between a dependence on religion and myth and the level of political freedom it enjoyed from the dictates of Rome, Venice appeared to be the ideal place where Monteverdi could thrive, whether as a composer of sacred music or of opera—with a strong hedonistic component characterizing his last operatic work. The striking contrast between such freedoms and the composer's treatment at Mantua only reinforced his preference for *La Serenissima*, the city to which, after at least twenty-one years of service to the Gonzaga family, he devoted himself for the remainder of his life.²

To understand better the impact of Monteverdi's environment on his creative output during these years, this chapter is organized chronologically as well as from the broader perspective of how the Myth of Venice reinforced the past glory of the city. With the arts, notably music, as a powerful propaganda vehicle, the city provided Monteverdi the opportunity to work under near-perfect conditions, providing him a level of recognition and respect he was unable to acquire under Mantuan patronage. To conclude the present chapter, an examination and analysis of these factors taken together will aid in

² Monteverdi was inconsistent in declaring how long he had worked in Mantua. Paolo Fabbri suggested that his employment there was initiated either at the beginning of 1590 or sometime in 1591. See Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, trans. Tim Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 22.

providing an answer to the question “why opera?”³ as an avenue for Monteverdi’s creativity during his final years in parallel with his intense compositional activity in sacred music.⁴

Venice and the City-States

During the Renaissance the city-states of Venice, Siena, Lucca, and Florence were considered the four major republics in what was a fragmented Italy. The socio-political conditions on the peninsula played a crucial role in creating an environment where theory and practice could flourish. In fact, the decline of feudalism and the rise of urban society took place sooner there than in other parts of Europe. That what is now the country of Italy was then divided into smaller city-states encouraged competition as well as political rivalry as all strove to maintain independence.⁵ From the kingdom of Naples, the Papal States, and the duchies of Milan, Ferrara, Mantua, Urbino, Parma, and Savoy to the republics of Siena, Lucca, and Venice, competition unfolded not only on the political field

³ See Edward Muir, “Why Venice? Venetian Society and the Success of Early Opera,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XXXVI/3 (Winter 2006), 331-53.

⁴ Working at the Cappella di San Marco since 1613 and taking orders as a Catholic priest in 1632, he was responsible for a prolific repertoire in the area of sacred music, much greater than what survives. To prove this is the evidence of innumerable reported sacred works starting in 1583 when the composer was still in Cremona (for which scores are missing), as well as several letters and documents, as early as 1611, that refer to sacred music compositions that are now lost, such as a *Dixit Dominus*, which is very likely not among the ones published thirty years later in *Selva morale e spirituale* and the posthumous *Messa a quattro voci et salmi* of 1650. See Jeffrey Kurtzman, “Monteverdi’s Missing Sacred Music: Evidence and Conjectures,” *The Musicologist and Source Documentary Evidence: A Book of Essays in Honour of Professor Piotr Pozniak on His 70th Birthday*, ed. Zofia Fabianska, Jakub Kubieniec, Andrzej Sitarz, and Piotr Wilk (Karków: Musica Iagellonica, 2009), 187-208.

⁵ See Tim Carter, “The City-States of Italy,” *Music in Late Renaissance & Early Baroque Italy* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1992), 24. The importance of the ruling families of Florence, Mantua, Ferrara, Urbino, and Milan as art patrons—*i.e.*, the Medici, Gonzaga, Este, Montefeltro, and Sforza families respectively—cannot be denied, in particular during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Accept period after e as indicated.

but was reflected in the artistic arena as well—it was, in the words of Lauro Martines, “art as propaganda.”⁶ Oftentimes, arts and politics were intimately connected as noted by musicologist Tim Carter:

Movements of artists, poets, and musicians often followed lines of political affiliation and trade, creating complex cultural networks that operated both within the peninsula and between it and the rest of Europe ... given that support for the arts was in general directly linked to the artistic tastes and political motives of particular Renaissance patrons.⁷

Despite the political strength and power exhibited in providing patronage to the arts, notably by the Este, Gonzaga, Medici, and Sforza families,⁸ by the sixteenth century Rome (the Papal States) and Venice were considered as “the two largest political (and therefore artistic) power-bases in the peninsula.”⁹ On one hand, Rome controlled a large part of what is today the Italian country and hosted the head of the Catholic Church. By the time of the Counter-Reformation, the arts and music, in particular, were strong vehicles to articulate images of the Church’s power. On the other hand, Venice was proudly independent from Rome and defied its orders, leading to excommunication from the Catholic

⁶ See Lauro Martines, “Art: An Alliance with Power,” *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 241-76. The expression “art as propaganda” arises frequently in this book as a key idea.

⁷ Tim Carter, “The City-States of Italy,” 24-25.

⁸ See Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination*, especially his chapter on “The Princely Courts,” 218-40. Power and elite culture have walked hand-in-hand throughout history, and the Renaissance was no exception. Centered in the princely courts, this dialectic relationship focused on creating images that kept the union alive in ways that caused such “overly idealized” representations to become almost truth. Ostentation was reinforced through art, music, and literature, which served as powerful tools for the princes. Commonly represented in paintings is the image of the ruler next to important Christian figures, along with numerous other references that reflected secular power given divine sanction within Italian Renaissance society.

⁹ Tim Carter, “The City-States of Italy,” 27.

Church on several occasions: in 1284, 1309, 1483, 1506, and lastly, during the Interdict of 1606-1607, the latter damaging the pope more than Venice itself.¹⁰ The bitter conflict between the newly elected doge of Venice, Leonardo Donà [or Donato] (1536-1612), and Pope Paul V (1550-1621), one of the most forceful pontiffs of the Roman church during the late Renaissance, culminated with the Republic's refusal to yield legal jurisdiction to Rome in 1606 in two legal cases involving Catholic priests who were charged as common criminals in secular courts.¹¹ Venice's excommunication followed, which the leaders of the Republic chose to ignore.¹² Fra Paolo Sarpi (1552-1623) was appointed theological consultant to the Republic in 1606,¹³ and it was reportedly under his advice that Donà acted during the crisis of the Interdict.¹⁴ According to Lauritzen, "the Republic did not

¹⁰ See John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), in particular §12 "The Wages of Arrogance (1286-1299)," §13 "The Oligarchs Triumphant (1297-1310)," §27 "The Ferrara War and the Queen of Cyprus (1481-1488)," and §30 "The League of Cambrai (1503-1510)." The 1606-1607 interdict is studied in detail in William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 339-555.

¹¹ One of the priests was charged with murder. The decision to imprison two well-connected priests as any other criminal violated the *privilegium fori*, i.e., the right of ecclesiastics to be judged in criminal cases not by civil courts but by the church.

¹² See Peter Lauritzen, "The Baroque Façade: 1600-1699," *Venice: A Thousand Years of Culture and Civilization* (New York: Atheneum, 1978), 164-65. The Republic ignored the ban by ignoring the papal order and by arresting priests in the territory that denied the sacraments to Venetian subjects.

¹³ See Paolo Sarpi, *Istoria del concilio tridentino*, ed. Ugo Dotti (Torino: N. Aragno, 2016). Published in 1615, Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent* is still considered by scholars to be an indispensable, although controversial, source on the subject. For further reading, see Luigi Salvatorelli, "Venezia, Paolo V, e Fra Paolo Sarpi," *Storia della civiltà veneziana: dall'età barocca all'Italia contemporanea*, ed. Vittore Branca (Florence: Sansoni editore, 1979), 67-95. According to William J. Bouwsma in *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 624, Fra Paolo Sarpi's career "in its moments of greatest influence and the decline of his practical authority after the interdict, had long reflected the transformations in the political vigor of his beloved Venice; and so also did the immediate sequel to his death. The government was sufficiently moved to announce the event promptly to its representatives abroad, a gesture normally reserved for the passing of a doge; within a few days reports of miracles performed by the dead monk were circulating among the populace."

¹⁴ Peter Lauritzen, "The Baroque Façade," 165. According to Lauritzen, Sarpi "was attacked by a band of assassins obviously in the pay of Rome, stabbed and left for dead. Fortunately, he recovered and Venice's

concern itself with the dangers of defying the powerful papacy of the Counter-Reformation; the government immediately expelled the Jesuits, who represented the most militant supporters of the papacy."¹⁵ The Jesuits' expulsion during the Interdict also meant a freer atmosphere in Venetian intellectual circles and at the University of Padua.¹⁶ As a maritime power in contact with other cultures through her vibrant commercial exchanges, in particular with the Greek Orthodox world where papal dignity had no power or relevance, Venice had for a long time cultivated a rebellious and independent way of dealing with the papacy.¹⁷

The power of Venice, nevertheless, was based more on its commercial activities.¹⁸ In fact, Venice had many reasons to prosper. "Of all Italian states, the Venetian republic was able to muster the most effective force both at home and abroad. Furthermore, the

resolve was stiffened. Her ambassadors' position abroad was considerably strengthened by this underhanded attack that shocked all Christian Europe, and the Vatican was humiliated by the discovery of its complicity in the attempt on Sarpi's life."

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ See Galileo Galilei, *Siderius nuncius* (Padua, 1610; reprinted Pisa: Domus Galileana, 1964). The University of Padua was funded considerably by the Venetian government. Any citizen who wanted to pursue university studies had to enroll at Padua or pay a heavy fine. Around that time (1608), Galileo Galilei, who was professor at the Università di Padua, made important discoveries by turning his telescope to the sky, after which he wrote *Siderius nuncius*.

¹⁷ For further readings regarding the history of Venice, especially between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Vittore Branca, *Storia della Civiltà Veneziana*, Vol. 3, *Dall'età barocca all'Italia contemporanea*, in particular the essay by Enrico Sestan, "La politica veneziana nel seicento," 7-22. See also Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice & Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory, and Myth in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Peter Lauritzen, *Venice*; and Maurice Rowdon, *The Silver Age of Venice* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970).

¹⁸ Tim Carter, "The City-States of Italy," 28.

republic had a formidable fleet, a defensive body of water, protective sandbars, and a colonial empire which did much to satisfy the ambitions of the patriciate.”¹⁹ With its power consolidated by land and by sea, the position of Venice as a center of trade encouraged the interaction with many different cultural, artistic, and political views. Identities in Renaissance and early modern Venice were marked and shaped through exchanges with other cultures, which were multiplied through the printing industry.²⁰

Politically, the situation also seemed ideal in that it embodied the perfect mixture of aristocracy, monarchy, and democracy. Adding to this, a generational change of ideology and values echoing the humanist ideas of *vita activa*, rather than *vita contemplativa*, arose in republican Venice. A group of young patricians—the *giovani* [the young people]—were able to gain control of the Great Council in the 1580s.²¹ In opposition to the conservative approach of the elders, who supported intellectual isolationism and political passivity as well as the principle of universal authority, the *giovani* sought independence of moral and political action from religion. Such a position soon generated conflict

¹⁹ Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination*, 291. See also Hilliard Goldfarb, “Life in Venice as Context for Its Art and Music: 1500-1797,” *Art and Music in Venice*, ed. Hilliard F. Goldfarb (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 24. In the words of Goldfarb, “Venice in the sixteenth century presents a remarkable synthesis, for its time, of pietism and relative social and political tolerance, motivated to no small degree by the practical considerations of the presence of various important minorities, especially the Orthodox Greeks, in its domains (accelerated by the decline and fall of Constantinople), and by the economic demands of international commerce. It also maintained a tradition of limited autonomy from papal control.”

²⁰ Bronwen Wilson, *The World of Venice: Print*, 4. For more information regarding the importance of printing in Venice, see Wilson’s book, the focus of which is “how an expanding image of the world came to be projected in prints, and these profoundly new visual experiences transformed the ways in which identities accrued to individuals.”

²¹ The Great Council of Venice or Major Council [*Maggior Consiglio*] (1172-1797) was a political organ of the Republic of Venice. Participation in the Great Council was granted by hereditary right, which meant that patrician men were automatically members. Their principal role was electing the doge, appointing other officials to various offices and committees, and voting on especially important matters of state, such as declarations of war, international treaties, and other matters considered of great consequence.

within the Counter-Reformation church, culminating with the interdict of 1606-1607.²²

Bouwsma, in his highly relevant work on the city's political system, affirmed that:

The Venetian constitution became a model for Enlightenment in the seventeenth century as it had been for Florentines in the sixteenth, and the quality of life it appeared to guarantee both fascinated and encouraged the reformers of the Enlightenment. The Venetians themselves also continued, from time to time, to celebrate the perfections of their republic.²³

The instinct for democracy among the nobles was a remarkable trait of the city, a preference that did not exist, at least not to the same extent, in other city-states on the peninsula.²⁴ Intellectually and academically, there were schools and academies for those with an enquiring mind in addition to the University of Padua, which served students from Venice and all across Europe. Prominent academies included the *Accademia dei Filosofi* [Academy of the Philosophers], the *Accademia dei Nobili* [Academy of the Nobleman],

²² See Gary Tomlinson, "Monteverdi and Italian Culture," *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 254, and William J. Bouwsma, "The Awakening of Venice," and "Venice under the 'Giovani,'" *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 162-92. Such a change in ideology allowed further artistic developments as in the case of Venetian opera outlined later in this chapter.

²³ William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 162.

²⁴ Elizabeth Horodowitch, *Language and Statecraft in Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3. "One of the reasons why the nobles lasted as long as they did was their instinct for democracy among themselves."

and the *Accademia degli Incogniti* [Academy of the Unknowns].²⁵ In resonance with humanist thought, a school of rhetoric was founded in 1460 with the intent of improving public speaking in the city.²⁶

Despite such progress toward excellence, was Venice actually the true embodiment of perfection by the early seventeenth century? Or were the images of glory perpetuated through the years to feed an idealized and constructed concept of success?

The Myth of Venice

Venice during the Renaissance was a major cultural, political, and economic power. The idea that by the mid-seventeenth century it had degraded to the position of the pleasure-garden of Europe, having sunk into economic decline, has been dispelled by several scholars, notably Richard Tilden Rapp, calling such an idea a “myth” in itself:

The economic fortunes of early modern Venice did not swing wildly with exogenous events such as invasions or political upheaval. The Serene Republic, to be sure, had its episodes of piracy, plague, war, but as serious as they were, they did not alter the course of the secular trend.... Economic observers were aware that the effects of piracy problems early in the century, the plague of 1630-1631, and even the long War of Candia (1645-

²⁵ The latter academy was of utmost importance for Monteverdi’s Venetian operas. The librettists of *Il ritorno d’Ulisse* (Giacomo Badoaro) and *L’incoronazione di Poppea* (Francesco Busenello) were part of the *Accademia degli Incogniti*. For more information regarding academies in Venice, see Michele Maylender, *Storia delle accademie d’Italia* (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 2002) and Francesco Sisinni, “Le accademie nel seicento,” *Il seicento nell’arte e nella cultura—con riferimenti a Mantova* (Mantua: Silvana editoriale, Accademia nazionale Virgiliana, 1995), 17-20. There were many other academies that flourished in Venice, such as the Cacciatori, the Filoponi, the Immaturi, the Laboriosi, the Peripatetici, the Proveduti, the Sollevati (dedicated to literary subjects), the Discordanti (eloquence and philosophy), the Fileleuteri, the Informi (politics), and the Marittimi (nautical sciences).

²⁶ See Peter Akroyd, “Learning and Language” *Venice: Pure City* (New York: Nam A. Talese / Doubleday, 2009).

1669) were transitory. They saw as we see now that production, consumption, and the level of international trade are the factors that count.²⁷

Venice did continue to persevere beyond its past, able to develop in spite of the temporary problems that occurred and to flourish, particularly in the field of music.²⁸ The Myth of Venice²⁹ fed and reinforced the positive image of the city despite its above-mentioned vicissitudes. By insisting on projecting an image of a recent past, the will and strength to continue such an ideal were intensely felt by the citizens, especially among the aristocracy. Such rhetoric of “image” was not new. It already existed in Ancient Greece and was being repeated in the Italian Renaissance, during which humanists from different cities praised their native environs or those in which they lived as foreigners.³⁰ The humanists’ attitude toward history “was emphatically selective, elitist, self-congratulatory, and

²⁷ Richard Tilden Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), i-ii.

²⁸ For further readings regarding the decline of Venice, see Peter Ackroyd, “Decline and Fall?” *Venice: Pure City* (New York: Nan A. Talese / Doubleday, 2009), 311-27; and Gary Tomlinson, “Monteverdi and Italian Culture,” 243-60.

²⁹ The literature on the Myth of Venice as a subject of research has been growing gradually over the years. From the increasing list of scholarship are the following: Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory, and Myth in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Franco Gaeta, “Alcune considerazioni sul mito di Venezia,” *Bibliothèque d’humanisme et Renaissance*, XXXIII/1 (1961), 58-75; Gina Fasoli, “Nascita di un mito,” *Studi storici in onore di Giocchino Volpe* (Florence: Sansoni, 1958), 475-83; Myron Gilmore, “Myth and Reality in Venetian Political Theory,” *Renaissance Venice*, ed. J. R. Hale (London: Faber, 1973), 431-44; William J. Bouwsma, “Venice and the Political Education of Europe,” *Renaissance Venice*, ed. John Rigby Hale (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 445-66; Peter Ackroyd, “City of Myths,” *Venice: Pure City*, 345-76; Ellen Rosand, “Music in the Myth of Venice,” *Renaissance Quarterly* XXX/4 (Winter 1997), 511-37; and David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

³⁰ Sansovino was such an example—a citizen of Rome who lived in and praised the city of Venice.

fixed to a criterion of worldly success.”³¹ Several humanist historians of republican cities—notably Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374),³² Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444), Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), and Bernardo Giustiniani (1408-1489)—praised the cities in which they lived in a panegyric way

as ideological, even if in a different manner, as anything issued from a princely court.... [They] developed techniques for getting at a relative objectivity, but they did so by working through the blur of their own self-images, unknowingly projected by them back into antiquity.³³

³¹ Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination*, 198.

³² Francesco Petrarca, *In epistolas Francisci Petrarcae de rebus familiaribus et variis*, ed. Camilli Antona-Traversi and Philippi Raffaelli (Fermo: G. Bacher, 1890), 442. Petrarch’s known panegyric of the city in his *Epistolae*, written in 1304, affirms that Venice was “a city rich in gold but richer in renown, mighty in works but mightier in virtue, founded on solid marble but established on the more solid foundations of civic concord, surrounded by the salty waves but secure through her saltier councils.” See Appendix A for original. See also Felix Guilbert, “The Venetian Constitution in Florentine Political Thought,” *Florentine Studies, Politics, and Society in Renaissance Florence*, ed. Nicolai Rubenstein (London: Faber & Faber, 1968), 463-500.

³³ Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination*, 197-209. For other humanists and the general mentality of hyperbolic praise of the cities, see, for instance, Leonardo Bruni, “Panegyric to the City of Florence,” written in 1403-1404 (original title: *Laudatio florentinae Urbis*), *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society*, trans. Benjamin G. Kohl, ed. Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 121-75. In this work Florence is depicted as flawless on several levels. The fact that Bruni belonged to the elite of the Florentine patriciate is informative to a writing that leaned towards a “rhetoric of greatness and ideology of magnificence,” i.e., guiding the reader to be convinced of the patriciates’ and of the city’s importance and greatness. In an attempt to depict Florence under a perfect light, Bruni glorified several aspects of the city—from architecture and arts to other fields, such as politics. In the former, a certain “imposition of beauty” is related to the intent to prove persuasively that Florence was above the other Italian cities, a comparison that extended to the artistic field. On a social and political level, by attempting to show that everyone is treated equally, such views are subtly embedded with ideals of oligarchic power, in which the government is ruled by the few, not necessarily representing the majority. Certainly, the government did not focus on the “poor people,” who were excluded from the notion of *popolo*. The mentality of the humanists themselves, to whom Bruni belonged, was strongly connected to the idea of privilege. From the beginning, it was based on a course of study designed only for a certain kind of citizen, and the requirements to be considered a humanist and having full representation in the government were extremely strict. Praise of the city one lived in represented a way to persuade, in an ideological manner, those who were in a superior position—wealthy but without local noble lineage, as Bruni described—and could also be a way to solidify the sense of identity in the elected city.

Venice was not an exception in this propagation of “self-image,” but it was applied more extensively and forcefully there, perhaps, than in any other city to foster a sense of collectivity and maintain the idea of its greatness.

The Myth of Venice ideally combined “freedom and order and was therefore durable beyond any polity previously known to man ... [and] stimulated the European imagination for almost three centuries.”³⁴ There is no doubt that the Venetians “were enthusiastic producers of civic imagery in what became a project of self-promotion and re-definition,”³⁵ increasing self-glorification after suffering one reversal after another to the Turks in the Mediterranean in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Although there were many facets to the myth, there was a common focus on the perfection of the Venetian Republic, on the virtue and unique qualities of *La Serenissima*. Central to the mystification of the city was the personification of Venice herself.³⁶ At least since the fourteenth century, the city had been represented as Justice, holding sword and scales and seated upon a Solomonic throne of lions. According to the legend, Venice was founded on 25 March 412, the feast of the Annunciation to Mary. Therefore, Venice embodied the virtues of the Virgin Mary as well—with her inviolate purity and her association with immortality.³⁷

³⁴ William Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 162.

³⁵ Bronwen Wilson, *The World of Venice: Print*, 4.

³⁶ James Moore, “*Venezia favorita da Maria: Music for the Madonna Nicopeia and Santa Maria della Salute*,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXXVII/2 (Summer 1984), 299. The allegorical representation of the Virgin Mary was a central concept in the mythology of Venice, the *Serenissima Repubblica*: “Venice was seen as a pure, uncorrupted virgin state, inviolable by other political powers, and also as the daughter of Mary, a special protectorate founded symbolically on the feast of the Annunciation.”

³⁷ Ellen Rosand, “Music in the Myth of Venice,” 528.

In addition to the political aspect of the Myth of Venice,³⁸ religion played a crucial role: *La Serenissima* flourished under the special protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and also of the city's patron, San Marco. Indeed, "the result was a potent mix of the secular and the sacred—and of politics and religion."³⁹ In fact, the connection between politics and religion supplied the critical union necessary for much of the city's spectacle. As Rosand noted, "the traditional identification of religious occasions with significant events in Venetian political history ... provided the basis for grand ceremonies involving the entire city."⁴⁰

Devotional life in Venice was particularly intense compared to that practiced in other cities.⁴¹ According to Fenlon, "in part this was due to the extraordinary degree to which forms of social organization were connected to religious practice."⁴² Important to all these occasions was the musical establishment of the Basilica of San Marco [St. Mark's], the chapel of the Doge. As repository of the relics of Saint Mark [San Marco],

³⁸ Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City*, 331. For Fenlon, the Venetian elite carefully adjusted the rhetoric of the Myth of Venice so that it remained effective as both an expression of Venetian self-confidence and a means of social control, while still taking account of the lessons of recent history.

³⁹ Tim Carter, "Myths of Venice," 141.

⁴⁰ Ellen Rosand, "Music in the Myth of Venice," 526. The connection of Venice with religion and ceremonial activities became stronger when in 828 the relics of San Marco were carried from Alexandria to the city.

⁴¹ Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City*, 319. "As the visitors walked from church to church in search of relics, Venice itself became the last and most imposing stop in a sequence of cult centres marking the route to the Holy Places, an introduction to redemption itself."

⁴² *Ibid.*, 331. For a discussion of the myth specifically, see the chapter on "History, Memory, and Myth," 233-324.

which were themselves celebrated often in paintings and with music, the Basilica naturally assumed a central position in the ceremonial life of Venice.⁴³

Music in Venice at the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century

By the sixteenth century and extending into the seventeenth, the importance of music in Venice, stimulated by a “healthy rivalry between neighborhoods and patrician families,”⁴⁴ was undeniable.⁴⁵ According to Fortini Brown, its centrality is also strongly indicated in that it constituted the major form of entertainment in the Venetian home: fewer than a third of wealthy citizen families owned books, but all had at least two musical instruments.⁴⁶ As previously indicated, however, a principal purpose of music by the beginning of the seventeenth century was ceremonial: citizens of Venice intentionally

⁴³ Gabriele D’Annuncio (1900), quoted in Goldfarb’s *Art and Music in Venice*, 16. “When one is in Venice, one cannot feel except through music or think except through images. They come from everywhere in such profusion, endlessly, they are more real and alive than the people who jostle us in a narrow street.” For a connection between painting and music, see Francesca del Torre Scheuch, “Melodies in Images: Depictions of Musicians in Venice from the Cinquecento to the Seicento,” *Art and Music in Venice*, 103-13. For a detailed essay on religious music dedicated to the Virgin Mary in Venice, see James Moore, “Venezia favorite da Maria,” 299-355, although the conclusion that Monteverdi’s *Selva morale et spirituale* stemmed from ceremonies around the plague of 1630-1631 cannot be sustained.

⁴⁴ Nathalie Bondil, “Venice, the Ideal Musical City: A Perfect Balance between Nature’s Melody and Reason’s Harmony,” *Art and Music in Venice*, 16.

⁴⁵ See Iain Fenlon’s “Music in Monteverdi’s Venice,” *The Cambridge Companion to Monteverdi*, ed. John Whenham and Richard Wistreich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 163-78. Fenlon addressed the environment in Venice and music at the beginning of Monteverdi’s time there. For further readings on music and Venice in the seventeenth century, see Luigi Ronga, “La musica,” *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, 123-144; Tim Carter’s “The Venetian Secular Music,” *The Cambridge Companion to Monteverdi*, 179-94; and Ellen Rosand “Venice 1580-1680,” *The Early Baroque Era—From the Late 16th Century to the 1660s*, ed. Curtis Price (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 75-102.

⁴⁶ Fortini Brown, *Venice & Antiquity*, 123.

perpetuated the myth of the city by cultivating a public image that enhanced the spectacle. Music was a vehicle to convey such a message. It was “more than symbolic. Music functioned as an important part of the political as well as cultural reality of the city.”⁴⁷

With the Renaissance humanist emphasis on *vita activa* rather than *vita contemplativa*, one reason music was able to thrive to such a degree was due to its perceived usefulness. “We despise knowledge of things of which we have no need,” wrote one sixteenth-century Venetian.⁴⁸ It is plausible that literature, unlike music and painting, failed to enjoy such cultivation for reasons social, political, and practical as well: literature asks questions, presents problems. Music and art, instead, celebrate and affirm, reinforce ideas and strengthen the existing power (*i.e.*, music as propaganda): “writing may encourage disruption and even revolution, whereas art and music aspire towards harmony and balance.”⁴⁹

During the years that Monteverdi lived in Venice, the musical climate of the city was well represented in two primary arenas: the first resided in religious practices and was led by the music at the Basilica di San Marco, with many other manifestations throughout the city; the second was secular in nature.⁵⁰ Regarding the first and as already stated, the strong association between music and Marian devotion in early seventeenth-century Venice cannot be ignored: Mary as protectress of the city was established in the

⁴⁷ Ellen Rosand, “Venice 1580-1680,” 514.

⁴⁸ Peter Ackroyd, *Venice: Pure City*, 221.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* For the artistic environment in general, see Nicola Ivanoff: “Arte e Critica d’arte nella Venezia del seicento,” *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, 81-95.

⁵⁰ See Ellen Rosand’s “Venice 1580-1680,” 75-102. This scholar made such a distinction clear and analyzed both musical realms.

“collective Venetian psyche.”⁵¹ Religious ceremonies during 1630 and 1631 were particularly intense in response to the plague that devastated the city; a third of its population fell victim to the epidemic.⁵²

With a growing number of musicians employed at San Marco beginning in the fifteenth century, requests for musical works also increased. In fact, Monteverdi’s prolific compositional career in terms of sacred music started in Venice with his *Vespro della beata Vergine* even before he moved there.⁵³ At a time when his discomfort at the Mantuan princely court—his patron for at least twenty-one years—was exacerbated, Venice offered for all the reasons mentioned above an ideal environment where the composer could thrive on many levels. Conditions there were conducive to success for a composer of sacred music, while a growing interest in dramatic works led to his creation of operas for the public theater.

⁵¹ Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City*, 303.

⁵² James Moore, “*Venezia Favorita da Maria*,” 313. “These were the years of the most intense veneration of the Virgin in Venetian history. The city was infested with the plague and turned to Mary for aid by commissioning Baldassare Longhena’s Church of Santa Maria della Salute.” The Venetian Senate commissioned *Santa Maria della Salute*, which was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, with the hope that she would intercede with Christ to end the plague, just as had been done in 1575-1576 by commissioning Andrea Palladio’s church of the *Rendentore* to end the plague during those years. According to Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City*, 225, “contrary to some medical thinking, which was doubtful about allowing free public association, believed only to encourage the spread of the disease, public expiation through prayer and procession was one of the church’s main strategies to combat the epidemic.”

⁵³ See Jeffrey Kurtzman’s thorough studies on this work: *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610: Music, Context, and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and *Essays on the Monteverdi Mass and Vespers of 1610* (Houston: Rice University Studies, 1978).

Why Venice? The Early Years

Living in Venice in the midst of an environment conducive to artistic experimentation most certainly contributed to Monteverdi's musical and theoretical development. His receptiveness to this milieu was in no small measure determined by his previous musical training, his own intellectual curiosity, and his former employment and its attendant challenges at the Mantuan court. To summarize, his musical education began in Cremona, the town of his birth, where he studied as a singer and a string player before turning to composition under the guidance of Marc' Antonio Ingegneri (c. 1535/36-1592).⁵⁴ By the end of the 1580s Monteverdi had sought employment without success in both Verona and Milan, but it was with the Mantuan court that he would remain until 1613 and the death of Duke Vincenzo di Gonzaga. His long tenure at the court was despite the difficulties he experi-

⁵⁴ Monteverdi had the opportunity to study with *maestro di cappella* Marc' Antonio Ingegneri, a well-known musician who wrote church music and madrigals in the predominant style of the 1570s. For more information on Monteverdi's early training, see Denis Arnold, "Monteverdi and His Teachers," *The New Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 91-106. A precocious student, whose writing was influenced considerably by the style of his first master, Monteverdi was able to have several books of his sacred and secular music published beginning in 1582 at the age of fifteen with his *Sacrae cantiunculae tribus vocibus*. This was followed soon after by the *Madrigali spirituali a quattro voci* (1583) and the *Canzonette a tre voci* (1584). See Claudio Monteverdi, *Sacrae cantiunculae: tribus vocibus ... liber primus nuper editus* (Venice: Angelum Gardanum, 1582); *Madrigali spirituali à quattro voci* (Brescia: Sabbio, 1583); and *Canzonette a tre voci libro primo* (Venice: Giacomo Vincenzi & Ricciardo Amadino, 1584). See also Paolo Fabbri, "The *Sacrae cantiunculae tribus vocibus* (1582)," "The *Madrigali spirituali a quattro voci* (1583)," "The *Canzonette a tre voci* (1584)," *Monteverdi*, trans. Tim Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 10-15. The culmination of this early period in Cremona witnessed the publication of the first two books of madrigals which were released by the renowned Venetian publishing houses of Raverii and Gardano—*Il primo libro de madrigali a cinque voci, 1587* (1587; reprinted Venice: Alessandro Raverii, 1607); and *Il Secondo Libro de Madrigali a Cinque Voci, etc.: Quinto* (Venice: Angelo Gardano, 1590). See also Paolo Fabbri, "The *Madrigali a cinque voci ... Libro primo* (1587)," and "*Il secondo libro de madrigali a cinque voci* (1590)," *Monteverdi*, trans. Tim Carter, 15-21. These works, although strongly influenced by Ingegneri, are somewhat more modern in approach, perhaps due to Monteverdi's study of the madrigals of Luca Marenzio—considered one of the greatest Italian madrigalists of the time—and Giaches de Wert, the most famous Mantuan court composer, whose adoption of what would be referred to as the *seconda pratica* illustrated its earlier emergence.

enced there, namely a perceived lack of appreciation as a composer and irregular payments from the Gonzaga family, which resulted in financial instability and likely contributed to his ill health.

In the summer following the death of Vincenzo Gonzaga (1562-1612), Claudio and Giulio Cesare Monteverdi were dismissed from the court, after many requests from the composer.⁵⁵ Poorly paid (when paid at all), the latter felt a lack of appreciation from the Gonzaga family, despite the intense amount of work he had to complete. The strain caused by his professional demands as a court employee was exacerbated by personal tragedy, namely the death of his wife in September 1607. Denied time to grieve over his loss, he was instead continually pressured to produce a large number of compositions in a short amount of time. Simultaneously, he resented the poor treatment by the Gonzaga family, *i.e.*, the failure to receive payment for his work while forced to maintain the image of subservient behavior as a court musician. The effects of these tensions are evident in the following letters to Cardinal Ferdinando Gonzaga (1587-1626):

My most illustrious and Most Reverend Lord, and Most Respected Master, no less ready than desirous to serve Your Eminence, I began—as soon as the footman arrived—to carry out your commission for the piece of music I am sending to you. And although I can truthfully say that because of my indisposition (from which I have not yet recovered) due to the heavy tasks undertaken yonder [*i.e.*, in Mantua] in recent days, Your Eminence will not be served in precisely the way I would wish, may my goodwill be accepted all the same through your clemency.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ See Susan Parisi, “‘Licenza alla mantovana’: Frescobaldi and the Recruitment of Musicians for Mantua, 1612-15,” *Frescobaldi Studies*, ed. Alexander Silbiger (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 55-92.

⁵⁶ Claudio Monteverdi, letter (26 November 1608) to Cardinal Ferdinando Gonzaga, in *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi*, trans. and ed. Denis Stevens (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), 47. Original Italian text in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax (Florence: Leo D. Olschki, 1994), 20; see Appendix A for original.

and to court official and Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga's counselor Annibale Chieppio (1563-1623):

If he [Monteverdi's patron Duke Gonzaga] orders me to come and wear myself out again, I assure you that unless I take a rest from toiling away at music for the theatre, my life will indeed be a short one, for as a result of my labors (so recent and of such magnitude) I have a frightful pain in my head and so terrible and violent an itching around my waist, that neither by cauteries, which I have had applied to myself, nor by purges taken orally, nor by blood-letting and other potent remedies has it thus far been possible to get better—only partly so. My father attributes the cause of the headache to mental strain, and the itching to Mantua's air (which does not agree with me), and he fears that the air alone could be the death of me before long.... I tell Your Lordship that the fortune I have known in Mantua for nineteen consecutive years has given me occasion to call it inimical to me, and not friendly; because if it has done me the favor of receiving from His Highness the Duke the honor of being able to serve him in Hungary, it has also done me the disfavor of saddling me with an extra burden of expense from that journey, which our poor household feels almost to this very day.⁵⁷

In the same letter (to Chieppio), Monteverdi asked for help in changing his circumstances while remaining in the employ of the Duke and even sought "an honorable dismissal" should his request be denied:

Dear Sir, help me to obtain an honorable dismissal, for it seems to me that this is the best possible thing, because I shall have a change of air, work, and fortune; and who knows, if the worst comes to the worst, what else can I do but remain poor as I am?⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Claudio Monteverdi, letter (2 December 1608) to Annibale Chieppio, in *Letters*, ed. and trans. Denis Stevens, 51. Original Italian text in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax, 20-21; see Appendix A.

⁵⁸ Claudio Monteverdi, letter (2 December 1608) to Annibale Chieppio, in *Letters*, trans. and ed. Denis Stevens, 54. Original Italian text in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax, 23; see Appendix A.

His discontentment was reported in many additional letters, among them the one dated 6 November 1615 to his librettist Alessandro Striggio (1573-1630): “I left that Most Serene Court in a sorry plight—by God—as to take away no more than twenty-five scudi after being there for twenty-one years.”⁵⁹ Despite the fact that the Duke had increased Monteverdi's salary, significant delays in payment remained a pressing problem; he was even promised an annual pension which, like portions of his regular salary, was never paid. After publishing his *Vespers* in 1610 and visiting Rome to present the work to Pope Paul V, to whom it was dedicated, he was ordered to return to Mantua to continue his work at court.

His displeasure and mistreatment notwithstanding, Monteverdi benefitted greatly from the cultural environment in Mantua: he breathed the air of change, surrounded by intellectuals and musicians who were well aware of the foundations of early opera created in Florence through the efforts of the *Camerata Fiorentina* and of the newly emerging singing style.⁶⁰ It was, consequently, for the city of Mantua—through a request from the *Accademia degli Invaghiti* of which Francesco Gonzaga (1546-1620) was the leader—that the opera *Orfeo* was created, composed by Monteverdi. The opera *L'Arianna* [performed 28 May; with libretto by Ottavio Rinuccini (1562-1621)], the prologue to the comedy of Battista Guarini (1538-1612) *L'idropica* (2 June), and the dramatic work *Il ballo delle ingrate* (4 June; libretto by Rinuccini)—all of which were completed for festivities to celebrate the marriage of Prince Francesco Gonzaga to Margherita of Savoy

⁵⁹ Claudio Monteverdi letter (6 November 1615) to Alessandro Striggio, in *Letters*, trans. and ed. Denis Stevens, 95. Original Italian text in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax, 42; see Appendix A.

⁶⁰ The elaborated singing style Monteverdi adopted is explained in detail in Chapter Four.

(1589-1655) in 1608—along with the sacred work *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (1610) and the aforementioned opera *Orfeo*, contributed significantly to the Cremonese composer's reputation in the early seventeenth century and to establishing his pivotal importance to the history of Western music.

Despite his prolific activity in Mantua, it was in Venice that Monteverdi felt his work truly recognized. With his sudden dismissal from the Court of Mantua in 1613 and the death of Giulio Cesare Martinengo (1564-1613) the following year, *maestro di cappella* of San Marco in Venice, Monteverdi auditioned for the latter's position at the basilica, a post previously held by such luminaries as Adriano Willaert (1490-1562), Cipriano de Rore (1515/1516-1565), and Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-1590). He was awarded the post in August 1613.⁶¹ The appreciation Monteverdi felt as *maestro di cappella* (and no longer a mere servant), along with his improved salary and associated privileges (notably an apartment in the presbytery of San Marco), no doubt pleased him greatly. Furthermore, the fact that he was then dependent on a state institution, with a fixed annual liturgy not subject to the exuberant desires of an absolutist prince, made Venice significantly more appealing than Mantua. *La Serenissima* offered Monteverdi the opportunities (and the end of frequent uncertainty) he longed for, and the regularity of the liturgical

⁶¹ His functions were to train and maintain the efficiency of the *cappella* as well as to recruit new members, as illustrated in this report: "The Most Illustrious and Most Excellent Lord Procurators, named above having received a report from the said Claudio Monteverde, *maestro di cappella*, have balloted to take in as singer in the Church of San Marco Don Antonio Vincentini, Mantuan, with the salary of fifty ducats per year." Original located in Venice, Archivio di Stato, Procuratia *de supra*, No. 141 (*Decreti e terminazioni 1614-1620*), fols. 121V (30 December 1619), cit. in Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, trans. Tim Carter (Torino: Edizioni di Torino, 1895), 130.

calendar provided a stability that the capricious Mantuan environment under a despotic ruler had failed to provide.

The Myth of Venice,⁶² conveyed and reinforced through arts and especially music, produced additional circumstances under which the composer could thrive. An attendant level of enthusiasm for his new position was reported in his letters to Striggio, as in the following, written in 1620:

The Most Serene Republic has never before given to any of my predecessors—whether it was Adriano or Cipriano, or Zarlino, or anyone else—but 200 ducats in salary, whereas to me they give 400; a favour that ought not to be slightly set aside by me without some consideration, since (Most Illustrious Lord) this Most Serene Signory does not make an innovation without very careful thought. Wherefore—I repeat—this particular favour ought to command my utmost respect. More having done this to me, and honour[ing] me continually in such manner, that no singer is accepted into the choir until they ask the opinion of the Director of Music [Maestro di Cappella]; nor do they want any report about the affairs of the singers other than that of the Director of Music; nor do they take on organists or assistant director unless they have the opinion and the report of that same Director of Music; nor is there any gentleman who does not esteem and honour me, and when I am about to perform either chamber or church music, I swear to Your Lordship that the entire city comes running... Now let Your Lordship weigh in the balance of your very refined judgment that amount which you have offered me in His Highness's name, and see whether—on good and solid grounds—I could make a change or not.⁶³

⁶² See Iain Fenlon's chapter on the Myth of Venice: "History, Memory, and Myth," *The Ceremonial City*, 233-324.

⁶³ Claudio Monteverdi, letter (13 March 1620) to Alessandro Striggio, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Letters*, trans. Denis Stevens, 190-91. Original Italian text in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax, 92-93; see Appendix A.

According to Stevens, this letter

grips the reader not only by its also symphonic length but also by its sheer intensity and unassailable logic. It shows us Monteverdi at the crossroads. He has been tempted to return to the scene of his early triumphs by persuasive letters from an old friend, and he gives the matter due consideration couched in the form of rhetoric.... The answer was no.⁶⁴

In letters that followed, such as that dated 10 September 1627, also to Striggio, Monteverdi continued to emphasize the stability of his financial situation and confessed that he was glad not to have to undertake any teaching to support himself.⁶⁵ He was equally enthusiastic to provide his own music as *maestro di cappella* for major feasts in Venice, which enhanced his reputation as a composer. It is clear from Monteverdi's letters that, in addition to the economic advantages his job provided him, the attendant recognition, consideration, and respect also contributed to his positive reaction to his position in Venice. The appreciation that the city and their procurators demonstrated toward the composer and *maestro di cappella* is further evident in the following account dated 20 April 1615:

Their Most Illustrious and Most Excellent Lordships being fully satisfied with the good and diligent service proffered by messer Claudio Monte Verde [*sic*], *maestro di cappella* of their Church of St. Mark, who in past musical performances has given proof of this worth in composition and in the *concerti* done with great satisfaction both to the public and to individuals, and wishing in some part to recognize so good and affectionate a servant, and to give him the spirit to go from good to better, and to place all his efforts in the service and honour that he should offer to our Lord God,

⁶⁴ Claudio Monteverdi, in *Letters*, ed. and trans. Denis Stevens, 188-89.

⁶⁵ Claudio Monteverdi, letter (10 September 1627) to Alessandro Striggio, in *Letters*, ed. and trans. Denis Stevens, 361-364, and Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax, 172-74.

with the satisfaction of the most Serene Signory ... have decided that to the person of the aforesaid *maestro* should be given 50 ducats as a gift.... Their Most Illustrious Lordships, recognizing the worth and competence of the said Claudio Monteverde ... so that he might have the opportunity to resolve to live and die in this service, have determined by ballots that he be retained for ten years, with a salary of 400 ducats per year with the usual and accustomed prerequisites, etc.⁶⁶

Adding to this good fortune in Venice, Monteverdi was able to continue a busy professional career through associations with foreign courts (mainly that of the Gonzaga family, despite all the problems he had encountered in Mantua) and with institutions and private citizens of the city of Venice. Although his career as sacred music composer was greatly amplified during his years in Venice, the patrons of the public theater—the Venetian patricians—made the financial success of his operas presented there possible. Their growing interest in this genre, representative of secular artistic success in Venice, found a true partisan in Monteverdi.

Why Opera?

Patricians owned or built a number of private theaters in the city, notably the Teatro di San Lucca in 1622. Interest in theater ranged from performances of classical

⁶⁶ Quoted in Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, trans. Tim Carter, 137-38. According to Fabbri, the original is located in Venice: Archivio di Stato, Procuratia *de supra*, fol. 17r (20 April 1615).

tragedy and *commedia dell'arte* to opera (beginning in 1637) and other dramatic representations.⁶⁷ By the late 1630s public opera in Venice was flourishing,⁶⁸ “owing to the efforts of a travelling company of musicians led by Benedetto Ferrari and of the patrician patrons who initially made the theater [Teatro S. Cassiano] available for this company, the Tron brothers Francesco and Ettore.”⁶⁹ The four Venetian theaters in which public opera was performed—Novissimo, S. Moisè, S. Cassiano, and SS. Giovanni e Paolo⁷⁰

⁶⁷ See Elena Povoledo “Una rappresentazione accademica a Venezia nel 1634,” *Studi sul teatro veneto fra rinascimento ed età barocca*, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro (Venice: Leo S. Olschki, 1971), 119-70, on the “rappresentazione accademica del *Solimano*,” held in a temporary theatre next to SS. Giovanni e Paolo, by Prospero Bonarelli, who was a member of the *Accademia degli Immobili*. Monteverdi’s *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* was first performed in 1624 in the palace of the Mocenigo.

⁶⁸ For a thorough study on the business of opera, see Beth Glixon and Jonathan E. Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Their text is divided into four chapters: The Business of Opera (opera companies, the figure of the impresario, case studies of Venetian theaters); The Musical Production (the libretto, singers, dancers, and orchestra); the Physical Production (scenery, machines, costumes); and Consumers and Patrons. See also Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Simon Towneley Worsthorne, *Venetian Opera in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954; reprinted New York: Da Capo Press, 1984); and Emily Wilbourne, *Seventeenth-Century Opera and the Sound of the Commedia dell’Arte* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017). For a study on the city’s opera house during this century, see Eugene J. Johnson’s article, “Inventing the Opera House in Seventeenth-Century Venice,” *Venice Art and Music*, 189-96.

⁶⁹ Ellen Rosand, “Monteverdi’s Last Operas,” *The Cambridge Companion to Monteverdi*, ed. John Whenham and Richard Wistreich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 228.

⁷⁰ According to Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 2, the chronology of public performances in their first five years is as follows:

1637: *Andromeda* (S. Cassiano), Francesco Mannelli;
 1638: *La maga fulminata* (S. Cassiano), Francesco Mannelli;
 1639: *Le nozze di Teti e di Peleo* (S. Cassiano), Francesco Cavalli; *Delia, ossi la sera sposa del sole* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo), Francesco Mannelli; *Armida* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo), Benedetto Ferrari;
 1640: *Gli amori d’Apollo e di Dafne* (S. Cassiano), Francesco Cavalli; *L’Adone* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo), Francesco Mannelli; *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo), Claudio Monteverdi; *Arianna* (S. Moisè), Claudio Monteverdi; *Il pastor regio* (S. Moisè), Francesco Mannelli;
 1641: *Didone* (S. Cassiano), Francesco Cavalli; *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* (S. Cassiano or SS. Giovanni e Paolo), Claudio Monteverdi; *Le nozze d’Enea e Lavinia* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo), Claudio Monteverdi; *La ninfa avara* (S. Moisè), Benedetto Ferrari; *La finta pazzo* (Novissimo), Francesco Saccati;
 1642: *La virtù de’ strali d’Amore* (S. Cassiano), Francesco Cavalli; *Narciso ed Ecco immortalati* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo), Francesco Cavalli (?); *Gli amori di Giasone e d’Isifile* (SS. Giovanni e Paolo), Marco Marazzoli; *Sidonio e Dorisbe* (S. Moisè), Nicolò Fontei; *Amore innamorato* (S. Moisè), Francesco Cavalli; *L’Alcate* (Novissimo), Francesco Mannelli; *Bellerofonte* (Novissimo), Francesco Saccati. *L’incoronazione*

registered considerable activity in the refashioned genre during this time. As an elaborate carnival entertainment (from the *compagnie delle Calze* [The Hose Companies]), opera helped to perpetuate the mythical image of *La Serenissima*. Monteverdi's great interest in stage music—with its inspiration and aesthetic center in the ability of human speech [*oratione*] to move the affections—was only stimulated further by this environment.

The first Venetian operatic work, performed during the Carnival of 1637 at the Tron's Teatro S. Cassiano (*Andromeda* by librettist Benedetto Ferrari and composer Francesco Mannelli), enjoyed such a level of success that Ferrari's company returned in 1638 with a second work titled *La maga fulminata*. According to Rosand, in 1637 “opera, as we know, assumed its definitive identity—as a mixed theatrical spectacle available to a socially diverse, and paying, audience, a public art.”⁷¹ In 1639 the company moved to another theater in Venice, the SS Giovanni e Paolo, where Monteverdi later saw his own operas performed. During the first three years of Venetian public opera Monteverdi's absence from the repertoire was notable.⁷² Although his entry into the operatic market in Venice was delayed, it proved vital to the genre's history.⁷³

di Poppea was premiered in 1643 but during the 1642 Carnival season. For this reason, it often appears with both dates.

⁷¹ Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 1.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 16-17, n. 19. This absence was recorded by an anonymous observer.

⁷³ On the importance of Monteverdi's Venetian Operas, see Jane Glover, “The Venetian Operas,” *The New Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 288-318. See also Tim Carter, “Mask and Illusion: Italian Opera after 1637,” *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Tim Carter and John Butt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 241-82.

Before analyzing the relevance of Monteverdi's published operas⁷⁴—which will be discussed in the chapters dedicated to *Ulisse* and *Poppea*—it is important to clarify the most plausible reasons why opera flourished in Venice initially. According to Edward Muir, it was not so much because of the aesthetic appeal of operatic music but due to the function of attending opera as the means to fulfill one's social duty. The correlation between social festivities and the intellectual / political environment in Venice fed a sense of freedom—particularly during the Carnival season, when opera was generally performed. The unique relationships that emerged in response to public and private domains, politics and economics, the political structure of the city-state, and the sharing of political power among a large number of patricians represented the ideal environment in which Venetian opera could flourish.

The new art form provided an ideal arena in which patrician families, competing for political and economic standing, could exploit the presence in Venice of a large, diverse audience, drawn to the city by the fame of its carnival celebrations and its reputation of freedom and excitement. This combination not only assured the success of the genre but deeply affected the very nature of the works themselves.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Monteverdi's contribution to opera during this period is remarkable and went beyond the two published Venetian operas: not only did he revise his earlier opera *L'Arianna* in 1640, but he also wrote a third for the Venetian stage: *Le nozze d'Enea e Lavinia* [*The Marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia*] (1641), the music of which is now lost. Ellen Rosand in *Monteverdi's Last Opera: A Venetian Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 8, affirmed that although contemporary manuscript copies of the libretto to *Ulisse* indicate Giacomo Badoaro as the author, the text of the prefatory letter to the opera itself excludes such a possibility. This position is also supported by Anna Szweykowska, "Le due poetiche venete e le ultime opere di Claudio Monteverdi," *Quadrivium VIII* (1977), 149-57; and Thomas Walker, "Gli errori di Minerva al tavolino: Osservazioni sulla cronologia delle prime opere veneziane," *Venezia e il melodramma nel seicento*, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro (Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 1976), 7-20.

⁷⁵ Ellen Rosand, "Venice 1580-1680," 91.

All of these factors allowed those with different political and religious views to gather in the city, if only for a certain period of the year. Muir concluded that “Wandering aristocrats, displaced priests, and speculative thinkers found aid and comfort in the intellectual politics of the Venetian academies, the members of which wrote the librettos and financed the theaters for the early Venetian operas.”⁷⁶

After the plague of 1630 a sense of relief permeated Venice and, perhaps, explains the rise in popularity of theater when viewed as a means of release from the fear of death. Born as a Carnival entertainment, opera emerged, according to Muir, from the *compagnie delle Calze*, known for their hedonism and for pushing the limits of their Venetian elders.⁷⁷ As Rosand has determined, they played an important role in perpetuating the image of *La Serenissima*:

Earlier in the sixteenth century, seasonal performances of another kind at carnival had been prepared by special groups of young noblemen who operated under the direct supervision of the Council of Ten.⁷⁸ These *compagnie delle calze*, so called because they wore identifying hose, took complete charge of the entertainments, writing, producing, and performing in them. Among the more than forty such groups active between 1487 and 1565, most were dissolved after the single season for which they were constituted. In keeping with the raucous nature of the carnival celebrations, their productions were generally quite popular in appeal.... Although more varied in theme, geared to a broader audience, and less

⁷⁶ Edward Muir, “Why Venice?,” 332.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 334-35. The creation of boxes allowed, paradoxically, for privacy within the public theater, permitting the free “expression of instincts,” *i.e.*, hedonism. They “created a novel social space, simultaneously private and public—or, one might say, private in places of public access.... The Venetian box became a stage for the imagination and a metaphor for the libertine life.”

⁷⁸ The Council of Ten [*Consiglio dei Dieci*] existed from 1310 to 1797 and was one of the major governing bodies of the Republic of Venice, with actions often conducted in secret. It was initially intended as a temporary response to the revolt led by Bajamonte Tiepolo against the Doge. The authority of the Ten was continuously renewed (the ten members were elected for a one-year term by the Great Council), until it became a permanent body in 1334.

overtly iconographic than the state-sponsored *rappresentazioni*, the productions of the *compagnie* nevertheless had a political purpose: a splendid, opulent carnival, attracting crowds of foreign visitors, was as important to the image of the Serenissima as the pomp and ceremony of the celebrations in St. Mark's.⁷⁹

Venetian opera can, indeed, be interpreted as a display of political self-imaging, similar in that regard to court opera, with two main differences: the identity of the patron and the fact that the image was not individual, but communal. In the words of Beth and John Glixon, “the city of Venice itself perhaps best qualifies as patron: a successful opera season reinforced the status of the city (and not just its patrician rulers) as the entertainment capital of Europe.”⁸⁰

In summary, opera in Venice capitalized on three conditions that fostered its success: regular demand, dependable financial support, and a broad audience.⁸¹ After all, without the wealthy patrons, several of whom were libertines, such a success would not have been possible. The most important academy supporting early opera, both intellectually and financially, was the *Accademia degli Incogniti*.⁸² Muir described it as “not so

⁷⁹ Ellen Rosand, “Venice 1580-1680,” 86.

⁸⁰ Beth Glixon and John Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera*, 5.

⁸¹ Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 1.

⁸² Edward Muir, “Why Venice,” 341. The *Accademia degli Incogniti* had its Paduan roots in Cesare Cremonini (1550-1631), a professor of Aristotelian philosophy who sustained the doctrine of the mortality of the soul that connects “bodily sensations with the operations of the soul, which meant that sexual and other physical drives should not be suppressed but expressed. Skeptical of the Christian doctrines of salvation, Cremonini preached the value of physical pleasure over conventional Christian morality, a message that certainly struck a chord with his young students who would eventually found the libertine *Accademia degli Incogniti*.” For further reading on the libertines and the *Incogniti* in Venice, see Edward Muir, *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance—Skeptics, Libertines, and Opera* (London: Harvard University Press, 2007). For more detail regarding the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, see Giorgio Spini, *Ricerca dei libertini: La teoria dell'impostura delle religioni nel seicento italiano* (Roma: Universale di Roma, 1950), in particular the third part, “Gli incogniti a Venezia,” 145-200.

much an exclusively Venetian institution as a cosmopolitan Italian network that took advantage of the relatively free political and intellectual environment of the Venetian Republic.”⁸³ The reasons for choosing this name for the group were both philosophical and practical. First, the secrecy of their proceedings and membership was justified by the Platonic idea that the truth must remain hidden from the eyes of the vulgar—even if secrecy became for them “both a game and a pose.”⁸⁴ A much more pragmatic and worldly reason is due to the disguises worn during the Carnival season, when “audiences were masked [and] unknown patrons staged for unknown audiences operas that took full advantage of the collective anonymity.”⁸⁵ With the privacy provided by theater boxes within a space where activities were otherwise in view of the public, it is no surprise that the Venetian theater was rife with scandal.⁸⁶

It is important to mention that among the *Incogniti*—founded by Giovanni Francesco Loredano (1607-1661)⁸⁷ and active from 1630 until 1660—were the librettists Giulio Strozzi, Gian Francesco Busenello, and Giacomo Badoaro, all of whom collaborated

⁸³ Edward Muir, “Why Venice,” 340.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 339.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 333.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 338. With the expulsion of the Jesuits (the most vocal lobby against such a free environment) after the Interdict of 1607, conditions were in place for the success of opera. Even before the first operatic performance thirty years later, Venetians already had a “well-established tradition that associated carnival, comedy, courtesans, and scandal.” For questions regarding music space and sensuality in Venice, see Patricia Fortini Brown, “Seduction and Spirituality: The Ambiguous Roles of Music in Venetian Art,” *The Music Room in Early Modern France and Italy: Sound, Space and Object*, ed. Deborah Howard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 19-36.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 344. The academy enjoyed the “protective umbrella” of the Venetian republic. In fact, Loredano depicted the academies as a “microcosm” of the republic itself. See Giovanni Francesco Loredano, *Opere*

with Monteverdi. The importance of this academy in the development of opera, discussed at length in Muir's book *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance*, is due to two factors portrayed in the libretti of these members: their patriotism (reflected in the origins of Venice and its connection with mythology and Ancient Rome) and sexual libertinage (connected to their ambiguous interest in women and thoroughly analyzed by Wendy Heller).⁸⁸

Of all the opera composers active during these years, only Monteverdi had experience in the genre.⁸⁹ In the words of Ellen Rosand, it is without doubt that "Monteverdi helped to ensure its success. In his two surviving Venetian operas he realized the full potential of his *seconda pratica*, bringing all his experience to bear in the musical imitation of words and in the portrayal of human characters in dramatic interaction with one another."⁹⁰ *Ulisse* and *Poppea*, which mark the culmination of his career, were written only a few years after the Preface to his Eighth Book of Madrigals. The principles extolled in this preface, *i.e.*, the three *genera* (three passions or affections, three vocal registers, three styles), can be applied to the operatic characters in these final two works, as will be explained in the next chapters.

Di Gio: Francesco Loredano Nobile Veneto. Diuise in Otto Volumi [Secondo Volume] Bizzarie Accademie di Gio: Francesco Loredano Nobile Veneto Parte Prima. Con altre compositioni del medesimo, Parte I (Venice, 1670).

⁸⁸ See Wendy Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence: Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

⁸⁹ Ellen Rosand, "Venice 1580-1680," 93.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER THREE

PREFACE TO BOOK VIII OF MADRIGALS: MONTEVERDI AS A “PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHER” AND THE THREE *GENERA*

The aesthetic considerations in Monteverdi's letters and in his prefaces to a small number of compositions written before he completed his last operas in Venice reveal important information regarding his work and his thought process. In particular, the stance taken in the Preface to Book VIII of Madrigals, usually studied in relation to the works contained in that book, connects plausibly to the composer's operatic approach, which is not surprising considering the proximity in time between the Preface and his composition of *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* and *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Naturally, the terminology that appears in the Preface was not created suddenly *ex nihil*. It is the result not only of influences from both ancient and modern sources (with some of the former referenced in the Preface itself) but also of years of reflecting on aesthetic considerations with contemporary poets, librettists, patrons, and music theorists as the composer's own style changed over time.

It is undeniable that Claudio Monteverdi stands astride a stylistic change from the “old” to the “new,” from the “first” to the “second practice.”¹ The terms “*prima pratica*”

¹ As Sabine Ehrmann pointed out in *Claudio Monteverdi: Die Grundbegriffe seines musiktheoretischen Denkens* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1987), 1, announcing the “new style” and the birth of a new terminology is present in the concepts of *seconda pratica*, the *moderna musica*, and even in titles of works such as *Le nuove musiche* of Giulio Caccini (1551-1618). Marco Scacchi was one of the initial writers to associate the first practice with the old style and the second with the new, modern one. See Claude V. Palisca, “Marco Scacchi's Defense of Modern Music (1649),” *Words and Music: The Scholar's View*, ed. Laurence Berman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 189-235.

and “*seconda pratica*” have been subjects of a great deal of interest by numerous scholars through the years, whether concerning the well-known Monteverdi-Artusi polemic² or approaching terminology, characteristics, and history in relation to other composers associated with both practices.³ In this chapter the objective is not to focus on the extensively

² In 1600 Giovanni Maria Artusi (1540-1613), a Bolognese music theorist, published an attack on Monteverdi’s style, focusing on the yet unpublished fourth and fifth books of madrigals. The most famous response to this attack was written by Giulio Cesare Monteverdi, Claudio’s brother (1573-1630/1631) in the 1607 *Dichiarazione della lettera stampata nel Quinto libri de’ suoi madregali*, where he defended his brother’s views that had been stated in the 1605 Preface to the *Quinto Libro de’ Madrigali*, reprinted in Claudio Monteverdi, *Claudio Monteverdi: lettere, dediche e prefazioni*, ed. Domenico De’ Paoli (Rome: Edizioni De Santis, 1973), 394-404 and 391-92, respectively. Artusi was opposed to certain contrapuntal and modal liberties that Monteverdi took in relation to the counterpoint of earlier composers, notably unprepared and unresolved dissonances and absence of modal unity. Monteverdi’s innovations were, instead, justified for the purpose of expressing the emotional content and meaning of the text. He selected the term *prima pratica* to refer to the older tradition, whereas *seconda* implied the new style that had already been utilized by Cipriano de Rore, Luca Marenzio, and other composers before him. In the *seconda pratica*, as defined in 1607, music was the servant [*serva*] of the text [*oratione*], hence guided by the poetry [here *padrona*]. For an analysis of the terms *padrona* and *serva* and their social and gender implications, see Suzanne G. Cusick, “Gendering Modern Music: Thoughts on the Monteverdi-Artusi Controversy,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XLVI (1993), 1-25 [online]. Artusi’s attack and Giulio Cesare’s reply are translated by Oliver Strunk in *Source Readings in Music History: From Classical Antiquity through the Romantic Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), 393-412. See also Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle: Monteverdi’s Seconda Pratica* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), in particular the chapter “The Public Debate, I: *Prima* and *Seconda Pratica*,” 27-57, and Claude V. Palisca, “The Artusi-Monteverdi Controversy,” *The New Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 127-58. For the new practice, see Gabriele Bonomo, “*Melodia, ovvero seconda pratica musicale: Monteverdi e la prospettiva di una nuova Instituzione*,” *Musicam in subtilitate scrutando: Contributi alla storia della teoria musicale*, ed. Danile Sabaino, Maria Teresa Rosa Barezzani, and Rodobaldo Tibaldi (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, Università degli Studi di Pavia and Centro di Musicologia “Walter Stauffer,” 1994), 243-310.

³ See Jerome Roche “Monteverdi and *la Prima Pratica*,” *The New Monteverdi Companion*, 159-82. Artusi identified some of the composers who represented the ideal practice, the *prima pratica*: Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594), Costanzo Porta (1528/1529-1601), Claudio da Correggio Merulo (1533-1604), Andrea Gabrieli (1532/1533-1585), Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi (1554-1609), Giovanni Maria Nanino (1543/1544-1607), Orazio Vecchi (1550-1605), Josquin Desprez (1455-1521), and Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-1590), who was Artusi’s teacher. See Giovanni Maria Artusi, *Seconda parte dell’Artusi ovvero delle imperfezioni della moderna musica, Nella quale si tratta de’ molti abusi introdotti da i moderni Scrittori, & Compositori* (Venice: 1603), 5, 27 (reissued tmiweb.science.uu.nl/text/transcription/artsec.html). Giulio Cesare Monteverdi added to this list: Johannes Ockeghem (1410/1425-1497) and Clemens non Papa (1510/1515-1555/1556). See Oliver Strunk, ed. and trans., *Source Readings in Music History: The Baroque Era*, Vol. 4 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965), 48. Composers representing the *seconda pratica*, according to Giulio Cesare were, for example, Cipriano de Rore (1515/1516-1565), Luca Marenzio (1553-1599), Marc’Antonio Ingegneri (1535/1536-1592), Giaches de Wert (1535-1596), Luzzasco Luzzaschi (1545-1607), Carlo Gesualdo (1566-1613), as well as members of the *Camerata Fiorentina*, namely Giulio Caccini and Jacopo Peri (1561-1633).

studied discourse with Artusi and the genesis of the *seconda pratica*⁴—although it is evident that several elements of this new practice are necessary to understanding Monteverdi’s “aesthetic credo” (as designated by Ehrmann)⁵—but instead on the thoughts formulated by Monteverdi in the Preface of Book VIII in relation to vocal delivery, specifically the three *genera* with their philosophical, aesthetic, and musical implications.

In order to establish a connection between the three *genera* and the main characters’ voices in Monteverdi’s last operas, it is necessary to take a step back and to understand the origins of the terminology the composer adopted in the aforementioned Preface. Such an understanding should be contextualized within what will be called Monteverdi’s

⁴ See Giulio Cesare Monteverdi, “Dichiarazione,” in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Domenico De’ Paoli, 394-404, where he glossed his brother Claudio’s views presented in his *Quinto libro de’ madrigali a cinque voci* (Venice, 1605) and responded to criticisms of Monteverdi’s style by Giovanni Maria Artusi. According to Giulio Cesare, the first practice “turns on the perfection of the harmony, that is, the one that considers the harmony not commanded, but commanding, not the servant, but the mistress of the words.... By Second Practice, which was first renewed in our notation by Cipriano de Rore ... was followed and amplified ... by Ingegneri, Marenzio, Giaches de Wert, Luzzasco, likewise by Jacopo Peri, Giulio Caccini, and finally by loftier spirits with a better understanding of true art, he understands the one that turns on the perfection of the melody, that is, the one that considers harmony not commanding, but commanded, and makes the words the mistress of the harmony.” Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 408-10, [translation by Strunk]. Original Italian text in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Domenico De’ Paoli, 399; see Appendix A. The Monteverdi brothers were not alone in their formulations on the primacy of the text over the music. Adriano Banchieri wrote in “Discorso sopra la moderna pratica musicale,” *Cartella musicale nel canto figurato fermo, & contrapunto* (Venice: 1614), 165-66, quoted in Clifford Cranna, *Adriano Banchieri’s Cartella Musicale (1614): Translation and Commentary* (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1981), 349: “Nowadays the modern composer, taking better care to give delight for the most part (since it is his proper aim), seeks to imitate a perfect orator who wishes to set forth a learned and well-considered oration. As Celio Rodigino wrote in Book 23, chapter 3, the first saying of Cicero, speaking of a perfect orator, [is]: ‘The supreme orator is a harmonious sounding man who, in speaking, delights the minds of his listeners and moves them.’ Thus, it is required of a modern composer of music in the setting of a madrigal, motet, or any other words, that he must attempt to imitate with the harmony the affects of the text, so that in the singing, not only the composer himself can take delight, but equally the singers and the listeners. Deny it who will, music (with respect to the harmony) should be subject to the text, for it is the words which express the meaning. Therefore, if the words express (as we have said) grief, passion, sighs, questioning, error, or some similar happening, these words should be clothed with equivalent harmony.” Translation by Clifford Cranna; see Appendix A for original.

⁵ See Sabine Ehrmann, “The *Arianna* Model: On Claudio Monteverdi’s Musical Conceptions,” *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* XVIII/1 (2016), paragraph 8 [online].

“changing aesthetics / aesthetic credo,”⁶ which deals with the beginning of the *seconda pratica* polemic in both the 1605 *Scherzi musicali* and the 1607 *Dichiarazione*⁷ and continues with the “Arianna Model” after 1616. Following such explanations, an examination of the correspondence Monteverdi exchanged with Giambattista Doni in 1633 and 1634 will contribute to a further understanding of the 1638 Preface—its genesis and concepts and their philosophical implications—and will identify contemporary and ancient sources, namely those of Plato and Aristotle, that influenced Monteverdi’s aesthetic.

Changing Aesthetics / Aesthetic Credo⁸

There are not many sources in which Monteverdi stated his aesthetic concepts. Those still extant are particularly relevant and substantial in their content and, as such, have been studied by numerous scholars. While Monteverdi’s prefaces to his fourth and fifth books of madrigals (published in 1605 and 1607 respectively) had their genesis in the criticisms from Artusi, the 1638 Preface to Book VIII was written without the need to

⁶ This designation follows that adopted in Jeffrey Kurtzman, “Monteverdi’s Changing Aesthetics: A Semiotic Perspective,” *Festa Musicologica: Essays in Honor of George Buelow*, ed. Thomas J. Mathiesen and Benito V. Rivera (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1995), 233-54, and Sabine Ehrmann, “The Arianna Model.”

⁷ Leopold Silke, “A Change in Style,” *Monteverdi: Music in Transition*, trans. Anne Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 42. In the subchapter “Seconda pratica or the Predominance of Text over Music,” 42, the author pointed out that “Contrapuntal writing was regarded increasingly as the enemy of the words; the imitative style obstructed the comprehension of the text, the expressive means allowed in strict counterpoint no longer seemed sufficient for the interpretation of the textual content, and the nature of the polyphonic *soggetti* appeared to take too little account of the text form.”

⁸ Monteverdi’s aesthetic in relation to his music is thoroughly discussed by Ehrmann in *Claudio Monteverdi*. There she interpreted the composer’s aesthetic theories as a consistent system, de-emphasizing the evolution of his aesthetic thinking that went along with the changes in his compositional style. Unlike Ossi, Ehrmann did not distinguish the *seconda pratica* of 1605-1607 from the one expressed to Doni in 1630. See Massimo Ossi, “The Public Debate II: The Philosopher’s ‘Seconda Pratica,’” *Divining the Oracle*, 189-210.

respond to a direct and public attack.⁹ In addition, some of Monteverdi's letters expose problems and offer solutions to compositional issues.¹⁰ Apart from these writings, there are few theoretical essays of comparable importance. In contrast to the prefaces, which were addressed to the public, the letters usually were responses to questions or problems raised in specific compositions on which Monteverdi was working and, naturally, were addressed to librettists and patrons. A total of 127 letters from the composer are preserved, ranging in dates from 1601, when he became *maestro di capella* in Mantua, to 1643, shortly before he died in Venice. From this correspondence, more than thirty letters are relevant to understanding his aesthetics.¹¹

The issues in composition and the thought process detailed in letters and prefaces reveal an emphasis on practicality—as noted, Monteverdi wrote his theoretical reflections primarily to address concrete situations.¹² It is not unusual that in the initial polemic with

⁹ Other than the Preface, there are a few additional indications in Book VIII that are relevant and that provide brief instructions to the performer, namely with regard to “Non havea Febo ancora (Lamento della ninfa)” and *Il ballo delle Ingrate*. For “Non havea Febo ancora” for instance, Monteverdi wrote: “The Lament ... must be sung in time with the emotions of the mind and not in time with the hand.” See Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII—Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero; reprinted, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1967; reprinted New York: Dover Publications, 1991), xv-xvi, 304; see Appendix A for original.

¹⁰ See Annibale Gianuario, *L'estetica di Claudio Monteverdi attraverso quattro sue lettere* (Sezze Romano: Fondazione Centro Studi Rinascimento Musicale, 1993) for an analysis of Monteverdi's aesthetics through four of his letters: two regarding *Il lamento d'Arianna* and *Le nozze di Tetide* written to Alessandro Striggio (c.1573-1630) on 9 December 1616 and 6 January 1617 and the other two written to theorist Giambattista Doni (1593-1647) dated 22 October 1633 and 2 February 1634.

¹¹ These letters were addressed mostly to Mantuan court secretary and librettist Alessandro Striggio, the Mantuan dukes Vincenzo (1562-1612) and Ferdinando Gonzaga (1587-1626), Mantuan ambassador Annibale Iberti (unknown dates), Marquis Enzo Bentivoglio (1575-1639), and Giambattista Doni. See Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi*, 3. The letters with dates and recipients are listed on pages 57-59 and are assigned the following numbers: 3, 12, 18, 21-24, 29, 30, 38, 41-43, 51, 53, 69, 92-96, 98, 100, 101, 105, 106, 109, 111, 113, 114, 118, 123, and 124.

¹² Adriano Banchieri, “Discorso sopra la moderna pratica musicale,” 165, also prompted by practicality, advocated for “the emulation of an accomplished orator and an aesthetic maxim for modern composition,”

Artusi, Giulio Cesare Monteverdi (echoing his brother) wrote “second practice” and not “second theory”; Claudio Monteverdi intended to address specific compositional aspects in a practical manner [*nell’atto pratico*] in his music.¹³ The latter wanted music theory, which systematically taught the laws and rules of composition [in Giulio Cesare’s words, *insegnare le leggi e le regole*],¹⁴ to be left to the theoreticians.

Several general reflections, nonetheless, are found in writings of Claudio Monteverdi himself. On one hand, as Sabine Ehrmann observed, practical compositional work is the immediate cause for aesthetic considerations; on the other, this aesthetic takes effect in practice because interest is directed first to the impact of the music on the audience.¹⁵ It is apparent, therefore, that the Cremonese composer often used key aesthetic and musical concepts that helped both to legitimize his compositional process and to serve as a guideline for his compositions.¹⁶

quoted and translated in Sabine Ehrmann, “The *Arianna* Model,” paragraph 7. See Appendix A for original under footnote 4, first sentence.

¹³ Leopold Silke, “A Change in Style,” *Monteverdi*, 43. The polemics on both sides of the first and second practice conflict represented, in the words of Leopold Silke, “not just the fight between traditionalists and modernists, which may be found in any time period; it is also the dispute between theorists and practical musicians and literary men, between the demands of scholarship and of entertainment.” Such dichotomies between theory and practice represented the conflict between advocates of the *vita contemplativa* versus those of the *vita activa* that strengthened during the Renaissance.

¹⁴ See Giulio Cesare Monteverdi, “Dichiarazione,” *Lettere*, ed. Domenico De’ Paoli, 391-92.

¹⁵ Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi*, 29. See Appendix A for original source.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3. See Appendix A for original source in German.

Naturally, Monteverdi's ideas were influenced by many factors, notably contemporary thought, Plato's philosophy of music, interpretations of Plato by Marsilio Ficino,¹⁷ classical rhetoric and contemporary rhetorical education, and the growing role of the affects in the arts, resulting in part from the expanding emphasis on oratory.¹⁸ In the words of Leopold Silke,

up until then [*i.e.*, Monteverdi's time], scholars were in agreement that the intellect [*intelletto*] and not the feelings [*senso*] were the last resort when judging a work of art. Monteverdi, however, perceived the goal of music as being an appeal to the emotions of the audience.¹⁹

¹⁷ Vincenzo Galilei (1520-1591), a member of the *Camerata Fiorentina*, quoted Plato in Italian translations, whereas Monteverdi adopted the Latin translations, which is an indication that he did not borrow from Galilei, at least not directly.

¹⁸ Relative to Platonism, see Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi*, for a discussion of the tradition of the educated humanist during Monteverdi's time. The interpretations of Plato's philosophy were influenced by the translations of Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) and subsequently by the creation of a Platonism academy in Florence, named the *Accademia neoplatonica fiorentina*, established in 1462. The genesis of this first modern platonic academy in Florence was closely linked with the discovery of Greek literature by the humanists. See Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi*, 45-47. See also Arthur Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy of Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) and Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere La Colombaria, *Dall'accademia neoplatonica fiorentina alla riforma: celebrazioni del V centenario della morte di Lorenzo il Magnifico: convegno di studio* (Florence: Olschki, 1992) [no author indicated].

¹⁹ Leopold Silke, *Monteverdi*, 48.

Artusi applied a highly rational evaluation to all music, whereas the *seconda pratica* was considered as reflecting both reason and the senses.²⁰ Theorists lacked a system for discussing human emotions;²¹ it was precisely such a systematic approach that Monteverdi promised in his never-completed treatise on the second practice and that he attempted to outline in his Preface to Book VIII.²²

If the 1605 and 1607 dates were essential to delineate the traits of the *seconda pratica*, it was with *Arianna* that Monteverdi started to identify, in the words of Massimo Ossi, “the specific problems confronting him as he sought to give musical expression to

²⁰ On the question of sense and reason with regard to Artusi and Monteverdi, see Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 44-51. Also, see Tim Carter, “Artusi, Monteverdi, and the Poetics of Modern Music,” *Musical Humanism and Its Legacy: Essays in Honor of Claude V. Palisca*, ed. Nancy Kovaleff Baker and Barbara Russano Hanning (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992), 189: “not only was sense satisfied by the new style’s ability to move emotions, but also one could find rational foundations for the *seconda pratica*.... Such a reasoned account of the modern style could potentially produce a theoretical articulation of the *seconda pratica*—an *Istitutioni melodiche*—to match Zarlino’s rationalization of the *prima pratica* in his *Le Istitutioni harmoniche*.” (Hanning also preferred the old spelling [*prattica*] instead of the modern one).

²¹ In the early days of the seventeenth century, stereotypical formulas of “muovere gli affetti, esprimere gli affetti,” were presented in music theory sources with no further explanation. According to Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi*, 9, only with Gioseffo Zarlino, in his *Le Istitutioni Harmoniche del Rev. Messere Gioseffo Zarlino da Chiogga nelle quali oltre le materie appartenenti alla musica, si trovano dichiarati molti luoghi vedere*, Book II, chapter 8 (Venice: 1558), 87-89, came a more explanatory model.

²² Giulio Cesare explained the terms *muovere* and *affetto* in Claudio Monteverdi, “Dichiarazione,” *Lettere*, ed. Domenico De’ Paoli, 392; see Appendix A for original. The relevant passage has been translated by Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 410: “There is still another way of considering them, different from the established way, which with satisfaction to the reason and to the senses, defends the modern method of composing.” Giulio Cesare clarified that it is “‘with satisfaction to the reason’ because he will take his stand upon the consonances and dissonances approved by mathematicians (for he has said ‘with regard to the manner of employing them’.... ‘With satisfaction to the senses’ because the combination of words commanding with rhythm and harmony [is] obedient to them.” *Ragione* refers to the mathematical foundations of intervals and their proportions. The *senso*, which is connected to the interpretation of Giulio Cesare Monteverdi of *animi affectionem* [disposition of the soul], means not only the sense of hearing, but also the movement of the soul. For confirmation that Monteverdi still intended to write his treatise, see his letters to Giambattista Doni dated 22 October 1633 and 2 February 1634. Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Domenico De’ Paoli, 320-22; 325-28; see Appendix A for original. For English translations, see Claudio Monteverdi, *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi*, trans. and ed. by Denis Stevens (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), 409-11; 414-16.

the emotions of his characters and to do so in a language as close to ‘natural’ as possible.”²³ Working to construct this language became a constant goal throughout his career, with particular attention paid in *Arianna*, *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda*, and the *madrigali guerrieri* (the last two included in his Book VIII of Madrigals). Returning to the words of Ossi:

With these pivotal works he measured the progress of the “via naturale all’ immitatione”: a way for expressing changing emotions; the means for evoking truly violent affects and actions; and the means to define and deploy a musical language that, together with the words, could effectively represent not merely the letter of the individual words of the text, but their psychological meaning as well.²⁴

The passionate gestures of *Orfeo*’s main character and of *Arianna*—also conveyed via contrasting effects—and the concern for the expressivity of their emotions are reflected not only in the music but in Monteverdi’s correspondence as well, as illustrated below.

For Ehrmann, it is with *Arianna* that three main parameters emerged in Monteverdi’s aesthetic conceptions: *oratione*, *melodia*, and *affetto*.²⁵ Monteverdi had a great deal of interest in stage music: its aesthetic center and inspiration were found in human speech [*oratione*], which together with imitation to replicate the emotions served the goal of moving the affections. The central importance of speech in conveying the passions is inherent in the fact that it is an ability characteristic of humans. In the above-mentioned

²³ Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 11.

²⁴ *Ibid.* See also Gary Tomlinson, “Madrigal, Monody, and Monteverdi’s ‘Via Naturale Alla Immitatione,’” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXXIV/1 (Spring 1981), 60-108.

²⁵ See Sabine Ehrmann, “The *Arianna* Model,” paragraphs 4-5.

letter to Striggio on 9 December 1616 regarding the libretto for *Le nozze di Tetide*, Monteverdi wrote about this specific concern:²⁶

I have noticed that the interlocutors are winds, Cupids, little Zephyrs, and Sirens: consequently, many sopranos will be needed, and it can also be stated that the winds have to sing—that is, the Zephyrs and the Boreals. How, dear Sir, can I imitate the speech of the winds, if they do not speak? And how can I, by such means, move the passions? Ariadne moved us because she was a woman, and similarly Orpheus because he was a man, not a wind. Music can suggest, without any words, the noise of winds and the bleating of sheep, the neighing of horses, and so on and so forth; but it cannot imitate the speech of winds because no such thing exists.²⁷

For Monteverdi, *speech-oration* was appropriate mainly for people (for gods as well, although emotions are related more to human beings than to deities), not for allegorical abstractions. Such parameters reveal how much he believed that human dramas should be as psychologically and emotionally realistic as possible.²⁸ For Monteverdi, the act of singing was speech through the vehicle of music. As Ehrmann reasoned, “just like the

²⁶ *Le nozze di Tetide* [The Marriage of Thetis] was a *favola maritima* with a libretto by Scipione Agnelli (1586-1653). Monteverdi received the libretto in 1616, and *Le nozze* was premiered in 1617 in Mantua for the festivities celebrating the wedding between Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga and Caterina de' Medici (1593-1629), who were married in Florence on 7 February 1617. For more readings regarding this lost work, see Tim Carter, “Approaching the Lost Works,” *Monteverdi's Musical Theater* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 197-236.

²⁷ Claudio Monteverdi, letter (9 December 1616) to Alessandro Striggio, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Letters*, trans. and ed. by Denis Stevens, 110. Original Italian version in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1994), 9; see Appendix A. For further reading on the context of the *favola*, see Tim Carter, “Winds, Cupids, Little Zephyrs and Sirens: Monteverdi and *Le nozze di Tetide* (1616-1617),” *Early Music* XXXIX/4 (November 2011), 489-502.

²⁸ As will be explained in the next chapter, in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* the gods often sing virtuosic and aria-like passages in comparison to the human characters, whose use of recitative is more frequent, particularly in the case of Penelope.

underlying speech, the music changes its ways of speaking, signaling a direct link between spoken language and music.”²⁹ When Monteverdi wrote about music and its means of speaking [*modo di parlare*], as illustrated in several of his prefaces and letters, he saw the "*oratione* as the spoken language that conveys the movements of the soul.”³⁰ For this reason, speaking predominates over singing. Imitation and speech are intrinsically connected, for it is in the realistic imitation that music takes on the expression of human speech. Works that fit this Monteverdian conception are those that depict “real people who speak a living language, as opposed to allegories, which cannot speak at all.”³¹

As for *melodia*, it seems to be identified in general terms with vocal music, while becoming, as Ehrmann described, “a fashionable phrase or a catchphrase for Monteverdi over the course of his life and his creative works.”³² The composer took the term *melodia* to mean the entirety of a composition and, as with Plato’s definition of *melos* [song]³³—according to the interpretation and translation of the Greek philosopher’s description by Marsilio Ficino—as consisting “of three elements: text, harmony, and rhythm.”³⁴

²⁹ Sabine Ehrmann, “The *Arianna* Model,” paragraph 5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, referring to Monteverdi’s letter (9 December 1616) to Alessandro Striggio.

³² *Ibid.*, paragraph 6.

³³ *Melodia* and *musica* have similar meanings according to the translation by Ficino of the word *melos*, associated by the Greeks simply with singing, as indicated by Claude V. Palisca in “The Artusi-Monteverdi Controversy,” 154-55.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 152, as noted and translated by Claude V. Palisca. See translated text from Greek to Latin in Plato, “De re publica,” *Platonis Opera omnia latine*, trans. Marsilio Ficino (Florence: Laurentiū de Alopa Venetū, 1485), 398d; reproduced in Appendix A.

Affetto and *oratione* are naturally connected: “The *oratione* is the linguistic expression of the affect that stamps and shapes it.”³⁵ Monteverdi defined affection as *passione* or *affettione dell’animo*, meaning—in accordance with the theory of the time—both the affect the musician expresses in music and the effect of this musical expression on the listener. In the words of Ehrmann, “every affect has an external cause, which moves the human soul, which, through its musical representation, is capable of producing the corresponding affect.”³⁶

In the aesthetics of early seventeenth-century Italy, sentiment played an essential role. For instance, Alessandro Guidotti, the editor of *Rappresentatione di anima, et di corpo* (1600) of Emilio Cavaleri (c. 1550-1602), emphasized the impact of the affects on this composer’s music as well as on the members of the *Camerata Fiorentina* and their search for the “mirabili effetti”³⁷ of ancient music that influenced early modern vocal music.

No work was cited more frequently in Monteverdi’s letters than *Arianna*, which he referenced at least five times as a model or prototype.³⁸ It was in this composition that the emotions of the listeners were moved by the act of speech. According to Ehrmann,

³⁵ Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi*, 5. See Appendix A for original.

³⁶ *Ibid.* See Appendix A for original.

³⁷ *Mirabili effetti* became a common expression during Monteverdi’s time. Its meaning must have been fully understood, as further explanation rarely appears in contemporary documents.

³⁸ Of the surviving correspondence, four of Monteverdi’s letters referring to *Arianna* were sent to librettist Alessandro Striggio and one to Giambattista Doni. See Claudio Monteverdi, “Letters to Striggio,” *Letters*, ed. and trans. Denis Stevens: letter 19 (Mantua, 9 December 1616), 110; letter 31 (Venice, 9 January 1620), 160; letter 50 (Venice, 17 March 1620), 197; and letter 55 (Venice, 18 April 1620), 210. Letter to Doni: letter 124 (Venice, 23 October 1633), 421.

“expressions of passion by the protagonist were ‘duplicated’ within the listener.”³⁹ Even as late as 1633, as evident in the exchange of letters with Doni, Monteverdi still considered *Il pianto d’Arianna* from 1608 exemplary of his notions of imitation and its melody representative of the *lamento* genre archetype.

It was also in this exchange of letters that Monteverdi, after his promise in the 1607 *Dichiarazione*, mentioned again a book on the second practice called initially *Seconda pratica ovvero Perfettione della moderna musica*.⁴⁰ On this occasion, however, the book was given a different title: *Melodia ovvero seconda prattica musicale*, indicating a re-thinking over the years regarding the concept of *melos*. Monteverdi described his plans for the book, dividing *melodia* into *oratione*, *armonica*, and *rhythmica*, following Plato’s conception of music expressed in his *Republic* as text, harmony, and rhythm.⁴¹ It is also in this correspondence that Monteverdi explained his position toward the ancients: his interest in ancient views was not in their music itself but in their study of the effects of music.

The book title Monteverdi reported to Doni, a project that apparently never came to light, suggests the composer’s further reflection on the limits imposed in the 1607 *Dichiarazione*. In the words of Massimo Ossi, *melodia* “no longer equates the *seconda pra-*

³⁹ Sabine Ehrmann, “The *Arianna* Model,” paragraph 8.

⁴⁰ Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Domenico De’ Paoli, 391-92. The letters are dated 22 October 1633 and 2 February 1634 and are reproduced on pages 320-22 and 325-28 respectively. For the English translation, see Claudio Monteverdi, *Letters*, ed. and trans. Denis Stevens, 409-11 and 414-16.

⁴¹ According to Barbara Russano Hanning, “Monteverdi’s Three *Genera*: A Study in Terminology,” *Musical Humanism and Its Legacy: Essays in Honor of Claude Palisca*, ed. Nancy K. Baker and Barbara Russano Hanning (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon, 1992), 145-70, *melodia* is related to *melopoeia*, that is, to musical composition.

tica with a new *armonia* but expands its purview to encompass all *aspects* of composition.”⁴² It is for these reasons that 1633 represented a pivotal year in the debate over the *seconda pratica*. In fact, Monteverdi revisited the polemic with Artusi via correspondence with Doni and defined many of the problems central to his new aesthetic. It is worth noting that, at the time of Artusi’s original attacks, Monteverdi was not yet fully aware of the theoretical implications of his ideas.⁴³

On his interest in the aesthetics but not the practice of ancient music (in terms of its music theory), Monteverdi was particularly clear when he wrote to Doni in a letter of 2 February 1634, in which he acknowledged Vincenzo Galilei’s *Dialogo della musica antica, et della moderna* (1581):

I have, however, seen the Galilei⁴⁴—not just now, but rather twenty years ago—the part where he mentions that scant practice of ancient times. It was valuable to me at the time to have seen it and to have observed in this piece how the ancient [musicians] used their musical symbols differently from how we employ ours, but I did not try to go any further in understanding them, for I am sure they would have remained very obscure ciphers, or even worse, for this ancient practice has disappeared totally. I, therefore, turned to other paths in my studies, which I based on the knowledge of the best philosophers, who investigated nature, and because, on the one hand according to what I read there, I see that the affects agree with their reason and with the needs of nature, when I write practical music based on these observations; and because I, on the other hand, truly notice that the present rules have nothing to do with conforming to nature, I have therefore chosen the name of *seconda pratica* for my book, and I hope to make it so clear that one will not censure it, but consider it worthy of consideration. In my essay I will avoid the method used by the Greeks

⁴² Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 41.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 28-29. For the surviving correspondence with Doni, see Claudio Monteverdi, *Letters*, ed. and trans. Denis Stevens, 416-28.

⁴⁴ Monteverdi was referring to Vincenzo Galilei, *Dialogo della musica antica, et della moderna* (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1581).

with their words and signs and will adopt the words and characters we use today, because it is my intention to show with the means of our present practice, what I was able to draw from the reflections of these philosophers to put to the service of good art, and not for the principle of the *prima pratica*, which only takes the *armonia* into account.⁴⁵

Despite such statements, Monteverdi did not reject nor was he indifferent to what was known regarding ancient music or the sources that were available.⁴⁶ Unlike the composers of the *Camerata Fiorentina*, however, he did not wish to revive ancient music. Such practice and music theory were obsolete for modern times; furthermore, it was not possible to faithfully reproduce them in the same terms. For this reason, it would be pointless to dwell specifically on such aspects. Instead, Monteverdi preferred to look forward to the modern era, to the *moderna musica*.

What the composer never attempted to hide, however, was a deep interest in the study of the affections that were recounted in reputable ancient sources. His letters and the Preface to Book VIII make it clear that his concern for classical thought in terms of the affections / passions and states of mind had significant importance to his own thought and “system of affections.” The innovation of *stile concitato* was conceived, in fact, to restore to modern music the expressive range that Plato ascribed to it. It is in the aspect of human emotions that the study of the “best philosophers” [*grandi filosofi*], namely Plato and Boethius, was of certain relevance, in particular to the 1638 Preface. This

⁴⁵ Monteverdi, letter 123 (2 February 1634) to Doni, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Letters*, trans. and ed. by Denis Stevens, 409. Original Italian text in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Domenico De’ Paoli, 326; see Appendix A.

⁴⁶ For a detailed discussion of the importance of these letters, see Massimo Ossi, “Public Debate II,” *Divining the Oracle*, 189-210.

shows that the ancient sources were fundamental for the composer and were seen not only in terms of the theoretical approach to music they described but as an attitude with a pragmatic application.

It is without a doubt that by 1638 many aspects of Monteverdi's aesthetics had changed since 1607. As Jeffrey Kurtzman observed, the question of *oratione* and the relationship of text with music differ from that expressed by the composer in his first statement on *seconda pratica*,⁴⁷ mainly in terms of the notion of metaphor in music, present in the Preface of the *Scherzi* in 1607, and the coupling of text and music: "once the music is disjointed from the text, as in instrumental performance of a madrigal, the metaphor no longer works."⁴⁸ As Kurtzman illustrated, for instance, "the music may still ascend, but that ascent is no longer connected to a text concept."⁴⁹ The concern with musical metaphors reflects the sixteenth-century "obsession" with the notion of similitude, where the emphasis was placed on individual words or passions, unlike what Monteverdi outlined in the 1638 Preface to Book VIII and what can be observed in the collection of madrigals that follow.⁵⁰

In the 1638 text the focus indeed shifted from resemblance and metaphor to identity and difference.⁵¹ In the Preface to Book VIII, Monteverdi's concerns were, to adopt

⁴⁷ See Jeffrey Kurtzman, "Monteverdi's Changing Aesthetics," 233.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ See, for instance, *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda* in Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII*, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum, 143-67.

⁵¹ See Jeffrey Kurtzman, "Monteverdi's Changing Aesthetics," 247. There the author quoted Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970; reprinted London: Routledge, 1981), 50.

Kurtzman's terminology, "establishing taxonomies of the passions, of the voice, and of music."⁵² Instead of being directed to the ephemeral relationship between a word and a localized musical setting, the composer's emphasis shifted to the relationship between a generalized passion (for instance, agitation) and a generalized way of setting it (in this case, the characterization of the warlike passion). The "words expressing anger and disdain" have their correspondence in music with the reduction of one spondaic beat to "sixteen semiquavers [sixteenth notes] struck one after the other."⁵³

The difference between individual words and generalized affects is explained by Kurtzman in terms of the distinction between metaphorical (the resemblance in the eighth book is no longer that) and iconic or emblematic,⁵⁴

where the composer's musical metaphors as described in the *Dichiarazione* of 1607 are peculiar to the individual words of the text where they occur, his musical icons, as described in [the] 1638 preface, are symbols not for a specific text but for the generalized *significance* of the text, and that significance is expressed by Monteverdi in general categories, such as *concitato*, *molle*, or *temperato* rather than in terms of individual words from the text ... *concitato* genus can be used not only for a wide variety of texts signifying emotional agitation, it can also be recognized as symbolizing agitation even in instrumental music.⁵⁵

⁵² Jeffrey Kurtzman, "Monteverdi's Changing Aesthetics," 249.

⁵³ See *ibid.*, 250-51. Here the author addressed Monteverdi's *stile concitato*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 251-52.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 253.

In order to understand these different terms, it is important to inquire further into their genesis and into the Preface itself.⁵⁶

Preface Terminology

Monteverdi laid out, in a seven-hundred-word introduction (one page only), a systematic framework for musical composition and performance practice while also emphasizing his own contributions to modern music, namely his *stile concitato* and the refinement of his *concertato* style.⁵⁷ He also outlined a series of threefold divisions for each of the following: *modi*, *affetti*, *genera*, and function. Similarly, this text can be divided into three sections. The composer began by describing the origins of the new style, which he claimed to have invented, in terms of the *concitato* style and the three *genera* of voices. He amplified this commentary with remarks concerning performance practice and its history and the larger threefold division of music itself: for theater, chamber, and dance.⁵⁸ The content of the Preface is reproduced below:⁵⁹

⁵⁶ A facsimile of Monteverdi's foreword to the original edition [Venice, 1638] can be found in Claudio Monteverdi, "A chi legge," *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi con alcuni opuscoli in genere rappresentativo che saranno per brevi episodii fra i canti senza gesto. Libro ottavo* (Venice: Alessandro Vincenti, 1638). This introduction is reproduced in Appendix B.

⁵⁷ See Massimo Ossi, *Claudio Monteverdi's Concertato Technique and Its Role in the Development of His Musical Thought* (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1989).

⁵⁸ The ecclesiastic division is considered a separate style and, therefore, is not addressed in his essay.

⁵⁹ For a detailed analysis of the preface see Barbara Russano Hanning, "Monteverdi's Three *Genera*," 145-70, and Vicente Casanova de Almeida, "Análise do prefácio de Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) ao Oitavo Livro de Madrigais de 1638 conforme diretrizes retóricas do gênero demonstrativo ou epidíctico," *Revista Musica XIV* (2014), 238-57 [online].

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI TO THE READER⁶⁰
Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi

[Venice, 1638]

I have reflected that the principal passions or affections of our mind are three, namely anger, moderation,⁶¹ and humility or supplication; so the best philosophers declare, and the very nature of our voice indicates this in having high, low, and middle registers.⁶² The art of music also points clearly to these three in its terms “agitated,” “soft,”⁶³ and “moderate”⁶⁴ (*concitato, molle, and temperato*).⁶⁵ In all the works of former composers I have found examples of the “soft” and the “moderate,” but never of the “agitated,” a genus nevertheless described by Plato in the third book of his *Rhetoric* in these words: “Take that harmony that would fittingly imitate

⁶⁰ The translation used here can be found in Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 413-15. Other translations commonly cited are those of Stanley Appelbaum in Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII*, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum, xiv, whose choices are more literal (*temperato* as temperate instead of moderate, for instance). A reproduction of the original text can be found in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Domenico De’ Paoli, 416-18.

⁶¹ Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII*, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum, xiv. Appelbaum translated *temperato* as “temperate.”

⁶² *Ibid.*, Appelbaum chose “range” instead of “register.” Neither of these terms are explicitly referenced in the Italian original; Monteverdi simply described the nature of the voice as high, medium, or low. Therefore, the words “range” and “register,” terms that have unique meanings when describing vocal technique, are additions by the translators and are not to be taken here as applying exclusively to tessitura, voice type, or vocal range, but perhaps to a mixture of all three.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Appelbaum translated *molle* as “languid.” In comparison with “soft,” the latter seems to be more accurate. As will be addressed later in this chapter, there are strong indications that the term *molle* is connected with regard to historical notation, *i.e.*, *mollis*, related to *rotundum, b molle*, “soft b” (today, a lowered [“flat”] note), indicating a semitone below, and *durum*, related to “hard b” (today, a raised [“sharp”] note), indicating a semitone above.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Appelbaum’s translation: “temperate.”

⁶⁵ Oliver Strunk indicated that the division of melodies as formulated by Aristotle in *Politics* should be clear at this point—“and since we accept the classification of melodies made by some philosophers, as ethical melodies, melodies of action, and passionate melodies.” Compare Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. and notes by C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 1341b with Strunk’s translation in *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 22, of this passage. I disagree with Strunk’s remark and will approach this point later in the chapter when dealing specifically with Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. Regarding Aristotle’s writings, I adopt throughout this thesis the Bekker numbering / pagination—named for Augustus Immanuel Bekker, which is the standard form of citation for the Aristotelian works. This system consists of a number, the letter a or b, and often another number, referring respectively to the page number of Bekker’s edition of the Greek Aristotelian texts, the page column, and the line number.

the utterances and the accents of a brave man who is engaged in warfare.”⁶⁶ And since I was aware that it is contraries which greatly move⁶⁷ our mind,⁶⁸ and that this is the purpose which all good music should have—as Boethius asserts, saying, “Music is related to us, and either ennobles or corrupts the character”⁶⁹—for this reason I have applied myself with no small diligence and toil to rediscover this genus.

After reflecting that according to all the best philosophers the fast pyrrhic measure was used for lively and warlike dances, and the slow spondaic measure for their opposites,⁷⁰ I consider the semibreve, and proposed that a single semibreve should correspond to one spondaic beat; when this was reduced to sixteen semiquavers [sixteenth notes], struck one after the other, and combined with words expressing anger and disdain, I recognized in this brief sample a resemblance to the passion which I sought, although the words did not follow metrically the rapidity of the instrument.

⁶⁶ Monteverdi erroneously credited Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* to Plato; instead, he was referring to Plato’s *Republic*, 399a. See Plato, *Plato’s Republic for Readers: A Constitution*, trans. George A. Blair (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998). See also Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 200, where the author pointed out this mistake, as well as Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 5. Regarding Plato’s sources I adopt the system referred to as Stephanus numbers for quotation purposes. This reference system is organized according to page and column numbers (a-e) based on the Renaissance edition of the complete works of Plato by printer Henri Estienne, aka Henricus Stephanus (1528-1598).

⁶⁷ Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII*, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum, xiv. Appelbaum translated *muovono* [they move] in terms of “affect.” Both terms are acceptable, due to the commonly used phrase *muovere gli affetti* among Monteverdi’s contemporaries.

⁶⁸ The word *animo* refers to “the rational mind.” According to the *Vocabolario della Accademia della Crusca*, 2nd ed. (Venice: Jacopo Sarzina, 1623), 56, *animo* is “the intellectual part of the rational soul itself,” which is different from *anima*, which is “the intrinsic form of the living, the principle of life. The soul is a spiritual substance with no physical dimension, separated from the body by the spirit.” See Appendix A for original in Italian. With the term *animo*, however, Monteverdi also implied the passions and affections, since they are perceived in the physical body. His interpretation likewise privileges “sense” more than “reason” in the manner the former was reflected in the *seconda pratica*. Regarding the music effects on the soul, instead see Plato and his theories on the soul and their motion / movements, e.g., in Plato’s *Phaedrus* (246a-249d), and Plato and Aristotle’s theories on the effects of music on the soul. For the latter, see Mary B. Schoen-Nazzaro, “Plato and Aristotle on the Ends of Music,” *Laval théologique et philosophique* XXXIV/3 (1978), 261-73. See Plato, *Gorgias and Phaedrus*, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998)

⁶⁹ Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica libri duo, De institutione musica libri cinque*, Book I, chapter 1 (Lipsiae: Godofredus Friedlein, 1867), 178. For translations to English, see Boethius, Book I, chapter 1, *Fundamentals of Music*, trans. Calvin M. Bower, ed. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 1, and Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 79.

⁷⁰ As Strunk noted, this passage is taken from Plato’s *Laws*, 816c. See Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 413. See also Plato, *The Laws*, ed. and trans. A. E. Taylor (London: Dent, 1960).

To obtain a better proof, I took the divine Tasso,⁷¹ as a poet who expresses with the greatest property and naturalness the qualities which he wishes to describe, and selected his description of the combat of Tancred and Clorinda,⁷² as an opportunity of describing in music contrary passions, namely warfare and entreaty and death. In the year 1624 I caused this composition to be performed in the noble house of my especial patron and indulgent protector the Most Illustrious and Excellent Signor Girolamo Mocenigo,⁷³ an eminent dignitary in the service of the Most Serene Republic, and it was received by the best citizens of the noble city of Venice with much applause and praise.

After the apparent success of my first attempt to depict anger, I proceeded with greater zeal to make a fuller investigation, and composed other works of that kind, both ecclesiastical and for chamber performance. Further, this genus found such favor with the composers of music that they not only praised it by word of mouth but, to my great pleasure and honor, they showed this by written work in imitation of mine. For this reason, I have thought it best to make known that the investigation and the first essay of this genus, so necessary to the art of music, came from me. It may be said with reason that until the present, music has been imperfect, having had only the two general—“soft” and “moderate.”

It seemed at first to the musicians, especially to those who were called on to play the *basso continuo*, more ridiculous than praiseworthy to strum on a single string sixteen times in one measure, and for that reason they reduced this multiplicity to one stroke to the measure, sounding the spondee instead of the pyrrhic foot, and destroying the resemblance to agitated speech. Take notice, therefore, that in this kind the *basso continuo* must be played, along with its accompanying parts, in the form and manner as written. Similarly, in the other compositions, of a different kind, all the

⁷¹ The Italian literary figure Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) was best known for the epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), partially set to music by Monteverdi in *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda* (1624), integrated in *Book VIII of Madrigals* several years later, in 1638. For the poem, see Torquato Tasso, Orazio Ariosto, Antonio Canacci, and Erasmo Viotti, *Gerusalemme liberata del sig. Torquato Tasso. Al sereniss. sig. don Alfonso II duca di Ferrara. &c. Tratta da fedeliss. copia, et vltimamente emendata di mano dell'istesso autore. Oue non pur si veggono i sei canti, che mancano al Goffredo stampato in Vinetia; ma con notabile differenza d'argomento in molti luoghi, e di stile; si leggono anco quei quattordici senza comparatione piu corretti. Aggiunti à ciascun canto gli argomenti del sig. Oratio Ariosti* (Casalmaggiore: Appresso Antonio Canacci & Erasmo Viotti, 1581).

⁷² The story of Tancredi and Clorinda is contained in Tasso's *La Gerusalemme liberata*, xii, 52-68, as excerpted in Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 413.

⁷³ Girolamo Mocenigo (1581-1658)—o Mozenigo, as Monteverdi originally wrote—was a ducal councilor and patron of the arts.

other directions necessary for performance are set forth. For the manners of performance must take account of three things: text, harmony, and rhythm.⁷⁴

My rediscovery of this warlike genus has given me occasion to write certain madrigals which I have called *Guerrieri*. And since the music played before great princes at their courts to please their delicate taste is of three kinds, according to the method of performance—theater music, chamber music, and dance music—I have indicated these in my present work with the titles *Guerriera*, *Amorosa*, and *Rappresentativa*.⁷⁵ I know that this work will be imperfect, for I have but little skill, particularly in the warlike genus, because it is new and *omne principium est debile*.⁷⁶ I, therefore, pray the benevolent reader to accept my good will, which will await from his learned pen a greater perfection in the said style, because *inventis facile est addere*.⁷⁷ Farewell.⁷⁸

As the title *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi* indicates, Book VIII is divided according to madrigals of war and those of love. Each part concludes with a ballet: the first part ends with *Volgendo il ciel*, written for Ferdinando III to whom the book is dedicated, and the second with *Il ballo delle ingrato* (text by Ottavio Rinuccini [1562-1621] and first

⁷⁴ See Plato's *Republic*, 348d; trans. Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 4.

⁷⁵ Unlike Oliver Strunk, Appelbaum translated these titles as "Warlike, amorous, and dramatic," the latter being rather problematic. See Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII*, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum, xvi. While Strunk avoided the troublesome translation, Hanning, in her article on the three *genera*, used the literal translation, "representational." See Barbara Russano Hanning, "Monteverdi's Three *Genera*," 148. As for this threefold division, Strunk indicated that: "this seems to say, but cannot mean, that there is a correspondence between Monteverdi's three methods of performance and his three varieties of madrigal. Among the *madrigali guerrieri*, for example, some are *teatrali*, some *da camera*, some *da ballo*. To put it differently, *guerriero* and *amoroso* correspond to kinds of music—*concitato* and *molle*—while *rappresentativo* corresponds to *teatrale*, a method of performance." Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 667. As for the difference between *rappresentativo* and *recitativo*, see Doni's position interpreted in Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 332.

⁷⁶ "All beginnings are weak" [my translation from Latin].

⁷⁷ "It is easy to add to things already invented" [my translation].

⁷⁸ Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII*, ed and trans. Stanley Appelbaum, xv-xvi. See Appendix A for original.

performed in Mantua in 1608). The *madrigali amorosi* are generally more intimate with a variety of types of pieces, from the aria-like *Ninfa che scalza il piede* for tenor; duets as exemplified in *Mentre vaga angioletta* for two tenors in virtuoso style; and trios, which include *Lamento della Ninfa—non havea Febo ancora* for two tenors and one bass plus a soprano solo, the last described as *genere rappresentativo*.⁷⁹

From the beginning, Monteverdi established a series of threefold classifications in addition to the functions of music described above: affects of the soul (*ira, temperanza, et umiltà o supplicatione*), the nature of the human voice (*alta, bassa, et mezzana*), music genera [or *stili*, as Monteverdi referenced it] (*genus concitato, molle, et temperato*), and music functions (theater, chamber, and dance). To the latter category of function is connected those of style [called by Monteverdi *generi*]: *guerriera, amorosa, and rappresentativa*. Even if only in a vague manner, such an association between function and style resonated with Monteverdi's contemporaries and successors, namely with composer and music theorist Marco Scacchi (1600-1662), who divided the threefold system into

⁷⁹ See Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 244. According to Ossi, "it is by now a commonplace that, aside from *Combattimento*, the *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi* and *Hor ch'il ciel* are not particularly 'guerrieri,' and that this can also be said of most of the other pieces in which the *genus concitato* is employed, when they are measured against Monteverdi's original theoretical formulation. *Concitato*-derived passages rarely accompany texts expressing *ira et sdegno*; rather, they serve as aural cues when-ever any kind of martial imagery is involved, and the various components of the new *genus* are pressed into service, even when no warlike text is present, to convey a range of agitated emotions." See also Massimo Ossi, "Venus in the House of Mars: Martial Imagery in Monteverdi's *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi* (1638)," *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* XVIII/1 (2012) [online]; Nino Pirrotta, "Monteverdi's Poetic Choices," *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 309-11; and Robert Holzer, "Ma invan la tento et impossibili parmi, or How *guerrieri* Are Monteverdi's *Madrigali guerrieri*," *Sense of Marino: Literature, Fine Arts, and Music of the Italian Baroque*, ed. Francesco Guardiani (Ottawa: Legas, 1994), 429-50. In addition, see Vicente Casanova de Almeida's Monteverdi e o Stile Concitato: uma poética guerreira em 1638 (Porto Alegre: Simplíssimo Livros, 2016), and "Monteverdi, 1638: Éthos, páthos e o pírrico como tópos rítmico na criação do Stile Concitato," Simpósio de Estética e Filosofia da Música: Anais do SEFiM, Vol. 1 (Porto Alegre: Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul Press, 2013), 75-91.

ecclesiasticus, cubicularis, and scenicus seu theatralis.⁸⁰ Naturally, the aspects of affection, vocal delivery, and music are the main focus of this chapter, considering that my purpose is to demonstrate a connection between the three *genera* and the operatic language of the composer, discussed in the chapters pertaining to *Ulisse* and *Poppea*. The classification in terms of function and style of opera is already clear, *i.e.*, *teatrale* and *stile rappresentativo*, and, therefore, is not part of this study.

In this seven-hundred-word document, Monteverdi achieved a synthesis of theory and composition and revealed himself to be a musical and philosophical thinker despite obvious flaws in the essay's content due to several possible reasons, such as the composer's advanced age and his health condition. The weaknesses in the Preface are notably the following: the incorrect reference to Plato's *Rhetoric*, instead of his *Republic*; the transposed order of moderation and humility and the voice registers of low and middle, when, in fact, middle belongs to moderation and low to humility; the confusion between "passion / emotion" and "virtue"; and the lack of clarity regarding the connection among all the other threefold divisions. All these points will be treated later in this chapter.

Despite these issues, Monteverdi's Preface provides in itself the necessary evidence to contradict the stance assumed by Doni in his pejorative statements against the composer as a man of low intellect. In a rather derogatory but, nevertheless, important letter to Marin Mersenne on 7 July 1638 comparing Monteverdi's talents to those of Florentine librettist Rinuccini, Doni wrote the following:

⁸⁰ See Claude V. Palisca, "The Artusi-Monteverdi Controversy," 156-58. Unlike Monteverdi, Scacchi included the ecclesiastical style and excluded dance in his system. See also Vicente Casanova de Almeida, "A tradição platônica no Breve Discorso Sopra la Musica Moderna de Marco Scacchi (1649)," *Ars Historica: Historiografia e Estudo do Oitocentos* XI (December 2015), 37-54 [online].

Moving on to the fact that you (on p. 61 of the *Livre 7 Des Instruments de Percussion* [*De l'harmonie universelle*, II (Paris, Pierre Ballard, 1637)]) place Frescobaldi [Girolamo, 1583-1643] on the level of the most esteemed musicians of Italy, together with Lucas [*sic*] Marenzio and Monteverde, you should not be misled in this. For today in Rome, there are a dozen of musicians who are more esteemed than him.... As for Claudio Monteverde, he is not a man of letters—no more than other modern musicians—but he excels in writing emotional melodies, thanks to the long experience he had in Florence with those fine intellects of the academies, such as Signor Rinuccini, who was gentleman of the chamber to the deceased King Henri the Great [IV, King of France (1553-1610)] and an excellent poet, who (from what I know from a good source), although he understood nothing about music, contributed more than Monteverde to the beauty of this *Complainte d'Ariadne* written by him.... I am somehow upset that he has never written since I sent him my book, nor even acknowledged my letter, whereas before he wrote to me a few times.⁸¹

Despite the negative remarks on Monteverdi in this correspondence, this letter is rich with information: first, it reinforces Monteverdi's connection with the *Camerata Fiorentina*, an essential relationship to understanding the genesis of a good part of the composer's terminology in his introduction to Book VIII; second, it underlines the importance of the *Lamento di Arianna* (referred to in the letter in French); and last, it validates the notion that Doni sent Monteverdi one of his books: either the *Compendio del trattato de' generi e de' modi della musica* (1635) or the *Trattato della musica scenica* (written between 1633-35 and published posthumously in 1763), which, as will be

⁸¹ Giambattista Doni, letter (7 July 1638) to Marin Mersenne, quoted in Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, trans. Tim Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 232. The original text can be found in Marin Mersenne, *Correspondance du p. Marin Mersenne religieux minime*, ed. Paul Tannery and Cornelis de Waard (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1933), 17-18; see Appendix A for original. Marin Mersenne (1588-1648) was a French theologian, philosopher, and mathematician.

discussed shortly, were sources of inspiration for Monteverdi's reflections on the three *genera*.⁸²

Not everyone agreed with Doni's negative assessment. Monteverdi was regarded as more than a mere musician by others, namely Matteo Caberloti, who knew him well during the last decade of the composer's life. In his eulogistic book *Laconismo delle alte qualità de Claudio Monteverde* [1644], he described the composer as a man of philosophy, who, while preparing his treatise on *Melodia*, was also busy with his ecclesiastical duties and had taken his vows as a Catholic priest around the same time:

heaven granted two further "lustra" for Claudio, a priest, practicing all religious duties, but above all else to care for the future, having given himself to philosophy, was in the process of writing a volume in which, noting the most hidden secrets of his art, he sought to prevent that never more in centuries to come would be hidden from students the true paths to facilitate the gaining of perfection in the art of music.⁸³

⁸² Giambattista Doni, *Compendio del trattato de' generi e de' modi della musica* (Rome: Andrea Fei, 1635). Doni's *Trattato della musica scenica* was published posthumously in *Lyra barberina: De' trattati di musica di Gio. Battista Doni* (Venice: 1763). See Claude V. Palisca, "Giovanni Battista Doni," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), V, 552 and James H. Moore's review of *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi*, ed. and trans. Denis Stevens, in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXXV (1982), 563. For the *Trattato della musica scenica*, see Giambattista Doni, "Trattato della musica scenica," *Lyra Barberina: amphichordos: Accedunt ejusdem opera, pleraque nondum edita, ad veterem musicam illustradam pertinentia ex autographis collegit, et in lucem proferris curavit Antonius Franciscus Gorius ... distributa in tomos II. Absoluta vero studio et opera Io. Baptistae Passeri ... cum praefationibus ejusdem*, Vol. 2 (Florence: Typis Caesareis, 1763; reprinted Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1974), 1-144. See also Claude V. Palisca, *G. B. Doni's Lyra Barberina: Commentary and Iconographical Study; Facsimile Edition with Critical Notes* (Bologna: A.M.I.S., 1981) for a detailed study of Doni's treatises contained in *Lyra Barberina*.

⁸³ Matteo Caberloti, "Laconismo delle alte qualità de Claudio Monteverde," *Fiori poetici raccolti nel funerale del molto illustre e molto reverendo sig. Claudio Monteverde maestro di cappella della Ducale di San Marco*, ed. Giambattista Marinoni (Venice: Francesco Miloco, 1644), 10; translation in Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, trans. Tim Carter, 229; see Appendix A for original.

According to Massimo Ossi, “Monteverdi stands alone among Italian early baroque theorists in attempting to establish a causal relationship between musical devices and human passions by constructing a system founded on psychology,” even if those foundations could be rather rudimentary.⁸⁴ It was after Monteverdi, in the 1640s and 1650s, with Descartes’ *Les passions de l’âme* (1649), and Kirchner’s *Musurgia universalis* (1650), that a more thorough system of delineating affects was formulated.⁸⁵

As noted previously, Monteverdi’s system is not flawless: to start, “the threefold taxonomy of pseudo-emotions—*ira*, *temperanza*, *e humiltà*—is missing two emotions obviously critical to Monteverdi’s conception, namely pain and sorrow, which the protagonists in his dramatic scenes effectively articulate in the form of *lamento*.”⁸⁶ Secondly, Monteverdi’s three emotions are not all true emotions—only anger is; the remainder are virtues.

⁸⁴ Massimo Ossi, *Claudio Monteverdi’s Concertato Technique*, 303.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* Attempts to do so can be observed earlier than these dates, for instance, with Pietro Cerone, *El melopeo y maestro, tractado de música theorica y pratica; en que se pone por extenso; lo que uno para hazerse perfecto musico ha menester saber; y por mayor facilidad, comodidad, y claridad del Lector; esta repartido en XXII Libros* (Naples: Giovanni Battista Gargano & Lucracio Nucci, 1613) and in Wolfgang Schonsleder, *Architectonice Musices universalis ex qua melopoeam per universa et solida fundamenta musicorum, propria marte eondiscere possis* (Ingolstadt: Wilhem Eder, 1631). See the recently published English translation of Book XII, chapter 5, 665-72; and Part II, chapter 8, 117-211, respectively, in Pietro Cerone and Wolfgang Schonsleder, *Musical Interpretation of Text in Vocal Polyphony*, ed. Massimo Di Sandro, trans. Júlia Coelho (Avellino: Edizioni Pasitea, 2017), original texts on pages 109-14 and 115-19. See also the comparative table regarding emotions and the Jesuit rhetorical tradition in Carlo Reggio, *Orator christianus*, 1612; the list of *affectus* in Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia universalis*, 1650, Book VII, 598-620; and Schonsleder’s examples from 1631, namely on anger, in Cerone and Schonsleder, *Musical Interpretation*, 13. In summary, Cerone expanded Zarlino’s discussion of the affections, without repeating the distinctions in sadness, joyfulness, sweetness, and harshness and adding innovations in terms of imitation of action (ascending, descending), spatial categories (far, near), and temporal designations (lasting, fleeting).

⁸⁶ Sabine Ehrmann, “The Arianna Model,” paragraph 4.

Other issues related to this matter are, for instance, the distinction between *musica di teatro* and *musica da ballo*, exemplified specifically in the strong element of theater required in *Il ballo delle ingrato*. Furthermore, Monteverdi omitted sacred music from the category of function. Nor did he explain the interrelationship of the parts of the different threefold categories in the sense of how the *modi* of music—chamber, theater, and dance (as well as the ecclesiastical mode eliminated but nevertheless acknowledged)—are connected to the tripartite division of *guerriero*, *amoroso*, and *rappresentativo* or their relationship to the three *genera* and the three types of voices. The question remains: are they related at all?

As Hanning pointed out, the title of Book VIII can provide guidance on some of these issues: *Madrigali guerrieri, et amorosi, con alcuni opuscoli in genere rappresentativo, che faranno per brevi episodi frà i canti senza gesto* [“Madrigals of War and Love with some pieces in representational style, which will work as brief episodes among the songs without gesture.”⁸⁷ *Canti senza gesto* refers to madrigals (for two to eight voices) to be performed without the use of gestures; these were meant for the princely chamber. *Stile rappresentativo*, as with *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda*,⁸⁸ *Il ballo delle ingrato*, and *Lamento della ninfa*, belongs to theater and / or dance music because it implies gesture (dance included, in the case of *Ballo*) or there are specific roles assigned to some voices. Hanning is therefore correct in that the three *genera* are not exclusive to a

⁸⁷ Barbara Russano Hanning, “Monteverdi’s Three *Genera*,” 149.

⁸⁸ See Sabine Ehrmann, “The *Arianna* Model,” paragraph 4. Regarding *affetto*, the three states are paired with three styles in Book VIII, which represents a “triad of emotional situations that was designed to match the circumstances of *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda*.”

specific group, but “rather, each is a style of expression available and applicable as the local demands of the text may dictate.”⁸⁹

As for the question of the opposites introduced by Monteverdi with a quotation from Boethius, “music is related to us, and either ennobles or corrupts the character,”⁹⁰ the purpose of music in *Il combattimento* seems clear: moving the passions by juxtaposing two extreme affects while imitating the psychological states of both Tancredi and Clorinda. For this specific piece, the main emphasis is not the combat itself but the paths of the emotional struggle that emerge in Tasso’s poem. The Preface does not concern the isolation of the *genus concitato* but rather the emotional conflicts between characters on a larger scale: that is what gives the action verisimilitude. The contrast between death and prayer, anger / *concitato* and humility and supplication / *molle*, is what makes the action go forward “with a natural order to an end that moves.”⁹¹ Such interpretation is applicable not only to *Il combattimento* but, at the least, to those works cast in *stile rappresentativo*.

The three categories of *oratoria, rhythmica, et armonica* do not seem to correspond to this hierarchical system.⁹² For Monteverdi, emotions could be conveyed only when all

⁸⁹ Barbara Russano Hanning, “Monteverdi’s Three *Genera*,” 149.

⁹⁰ Claudio Monteverdi after Boethius, in Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 413.

⁹¹ Claudio Monteverdi, letter (9 December 1616) to Alessandro Striggio, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Letters*, ed. and trans. Denis Stevens, 117. Original in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Domenico De’ Paoli, 87; see Appendix A.

⁹² Hanning supported this statement in “Monteverdi’s Three *Genera*,” 149, a position with which I agree. Ossi approached these categories in terms of their connection to the other threefold divisions. See Massimo Ossi, *Claudio Monteverdi’s Concertato Technique*, 317.

the components of Plato's *melos* (speech, harmony, and rhythm) were present. Ossi considered that "delivery" is related also to *maniera di suonare* [way of playing] and hence applied to instruments as well. Nevertheless, "it is the performer's voice that delivers the voice of the composer's oration,"⁹³ and it is only for the voice that Monteverdi aimed to infuse the pitches with correlative emotion: high with *ira*, middle with *temperanza*, and low with *umiltà o supplicatione*, as Ossi affirmed. It is undeniable that the voice occupies a special and crucial position in this system: it is the closest to the orator who declaims (*i.e.*, who speaks) the text. The *genus concitato*, despite the need for instruments to achieve its effect, did not require instrumental music as an independent category in Monteverdi's system of *genera* and functions.⁹⁴

The *concitato* style, as with Monteverdi's most fundamental concepts of music theory, arose during his compositional work, a reflection of his process with a view to

⁹³ Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 206.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 212. For the *genus concitato*, Monteverdi added a cautionary note to performers, reminding them that the principles of good playing are three: *oratoria*, *armonica*, and *retmica* [*sic*], as well as the need for adjusting their performance according to the genre of music they are performing (*concitato*, *molle*, or *temperato*). See Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 248-49. On *concitato* style, Ossi, in *Claudio Monteverdi's Concertato Technique*, 178, affirmed not the primacy of the voice but its equality with the instruments, stating that: "The overall effect depends as much on the instruments (in the preface, continuo instruments) as it does on the voice—specifically the ability of the instruments to repeat the same note quickly. Although in the *Combattimento*, at crucial points in the battle, the voice is called upon to declaim a steady stream of *semicrome* [*i.e.*, sixteenth notes], it is the instrumental writing that relies steadily on this technique. The *genere* [Lat. *genus*] *concitato*, then, is conceived as a vocal and instrumental unit, in which the instruments are not limited to harmonic support. This emancipation of the *obbligato* treble instruments from the accompanying function to the indispensable role that they play in the *Combattimento*: they are truly *obbligato*. It represents a very important step forward for Monteverdi's *concertato* technique and one that will play a most important part in the large madrigals in the eighth book, although not only within the context of the *genere* [Lat. *genus*] *concitato*." Nonetheless, my focus in this thesis is not on the instruments but on vocal delivery in connection with *ethos*.

pragmatism.⁹⁵ As he himself defined it, the *conciato* style is a fixed rhythmic *semicroma* [sixteenth-note] motion on one note. It was originally thought to be only for the accompanying instrument,⁹⁶ but Monteverdi transferred it to the vocal parts, where the

⁹⁵ For *conciato* style, see Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 211-42. Some scholars disregard the relationship between the style and the *genus* associated with it. Denis Arnold suggested that Monteverdi's discovery of this new style is coincidental with the time the composer was visiting Hungary in 1595 as part of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga's court. For Arnold, the fanfare motives and rapid rhythmic patterns "are the stuff of military music, and perhaps to an older stager like Monteverdi, who had never forgotten his journeys to the war in Hungary in 1595, [the *conciato* style] had the fascination of reminiscence. But nothing is as tiresome as other men's campaigns; and perhaps the best that can be said is that these battle pieces are not quite as dull as Janequin's *La bataille de Marignan*." Denis Arnold, "The Monteverdian Madrigals," *B.B.C. Music Guides* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 56-57, quoted in Barbara Russano Hanning, "Monteverdi's Three *Genera*," 150. Gary Tomlinson also minimizes the effect of the *conciato* style in imitating *ira* and excited affections, calling it "bellicose bluster" with regard to the grand *concertato madrigali guerrieri*, affirming that "their martial images, mainly furious melismas and fanfare melodies over repetitive harmonies, are simple pictorial madrigalisms—and tedious ones at that." Gary Tomlinson, "Monteverdi and Italian Culture," *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 209.

⁹⁶ On instrumental practices associated with Monteverdi's *concertato* style, see Massimo Ossi, "Contemporary Concertato Practices," *Claudio Monteverdi's Concertato Technique*, 200-99. The *concertato* style, according to Ossi, *ibid.*, 3, had already been utilized, however, by Luzzaschi, Giovanni Rovetta (1595/97-1668), Biagio Marini (1594-1663), Martino Pesenti (1600-1648), Carlo Milanuzzi (1590-1647), Giovanni Valentini (1582-1649), and Tarquinio Merula (1595-1665). For studies on instrumental technique, choices, ensemble combinations, etc., see Massimo Ossi, "Technical Aspects of Monteverdi's Instrumental Scoring," *Claudio Monteverdi's Concertato Technique*, 8-79. See also Jack Westrup, "Monteverdi and the Orchestra," *Music and Letters* XXI (1940), 230-45; Paul Collaer, "L'orchestra di Claudio Monteverdi," *Musica II* (Florence: Sansoni, 1943), 86-104; and Peter Holman, "Col nobilissimo esercizio della vivuola: Monteverdi's String Writing," *Early Music* XXI (1993), 576-90.

As Ossi observed in *Claudio Monteverdi's Concertato Technique*, 38, "over half of all instrumental parts in Monteverdi's works are left without instrumental specification. With the exception of the *basso continuo*, for which instrumentation is commonly not specified, the bulk of under designed parts is found in the operas, both *Orfeo* and the two surviving [Venetian] works. This is in contrast with Monteverdi's habit of labelling instrumental parts in the madrigal books and sacred collections." He continues by deducing that "such a clear distinction in practice between operas and madrigals is partly explained by the nature of the operatic medium, in which much of the instrumental complement to the voices seems to have been left to the ad hoc arrangements or improvisation." See also Gloria Rose, "Agazzari and the Improvising Orchestra," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XVIII (1965), 382-93. Of Monteverdi's three surviving operas only *Orfeo* was published after the event—principally, it would seem, as a kind of record of the performance, since most of the indications for performance and scoring are in the past tense. The others survive only in manuscript and may represent incomplete performance materials intended for specific occasions: the instrumental sections of the Venetian source for *Poppea*, for example, at times gives only the *basso continuo* parts, leaving the upper staves blank. According to Massimo Ossi, *Claudio Monteverdi's Concertato Technique*, 183: "As early as 1616 Monteverdi already considered the instruments capable of imitating natural sounds (and doubtless manmade sounds as well), and this manner of imitation was to be employed in the service of dramatic goals. 'How am I to move the emotions?' is the composer's central concern when faced with an unusual libretto, his words echoing later the Preface of Book VIII: 'Good music has as its end to move (the emotions).'"

instrumental gesture was adapted accordingly. Combining the elements related to battle—the way of imitating the tumult of the *battaglia* with trumpet-like triads, fast and repeated notes, and rhythms reminiscent of drums, the *stile concitato* fit the new *genus guerriero* that Monteverdi introduced with his Book VIII⁹⁷ and associated with anger (*ira*).⁹⁸

This *genus* was not applied exclusively in Book VIII, however. The *genus concitato* can also be observed in Monteverdi's later works, showing that the composer continued, as Ossi noted, “to reserve its original form for situations where the music needs to reflect a character's most excited state.”⁹⁹ For instance, in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* it is with *stile concitato* that Monteverdi depicted Nerone's anger during his altercation with Seneca in the first act of the opera. Tremolo and triadic motion, associated in this instance with *concitato*, is applied to the parts of both Nerone and Seneca at other points in the confrontation (for instance, with Nerone's mention of war), but the sixteenth-note figurations occur only in conjunction with Nerone's words “mi sforzi allo sdegno” [you push me to scorn]. And “even then, the full *concitato* texture is not invoked until the second time the words are uttered and the emperor's temper has flared out of control.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Leopold Silke, *Music*, 69. See also Massimo Ossi, *Claudio Monteverdi's Concertato Technique*, who defends the conclusion that the innovation of this technique lies in the fact that this new style is equally important for voice and instrument. It is about pairing vocal and instrumental components, both contributing to the realization of this specific *genus*. According to him, the Preface to Book VIII is the first theoretical discussion in which vocal and instrumental elements are treated equally.

⁹⁸ Anger had been the subject of several earlier treatises: from Seneca's *De ira* (between 41 and 49 A.D.) to Thomas Aquinas on the *passiones irascibiles* in Thomas Aquinas, “De passionibus animae,” *I-II Summae theologiae divi Thomae exposition* (1485), ed. Jacobus M. Ramírez and Victorino Rodríguez (Madrid: Instituto de Filosofía “Luis Vives,” 1973), xxii-xlvi.

⁹⁹ Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 248-49.

Unfortunately, not much documentary evidence has survived regarding the remaining styles of *temperato* and *molle*. A further study on the contemporary and ancient sources can help to understand why these two styles required no further explanation. After all, some of the ideas that Monteverdi claimed had already been studied, and the results had been circulating among Italian theorists at least since the *Camerata Fiorentina*, even if they were not associated with a systemic method that solved the problems of the new expressive goal of music. For instance, the notion that music could move the soul had been a recurrent theme in writings in the sixteenth century but was most often associated with the effects of ancient music.

Contemporary Sources

Threefold classifications were not new to Monteverdi and his contemporaries nor were they ascribed only to Plato and Aristotle. Such divisions were fairly common in sixteenth-century aesthetics: music theorists Gioseffo Zarlino and Giambattista Doni, as well as *Camerata Fiorentina* members Girolamo Mei and Vincenzo Galilei, referred to a interconnected threefold characterization of the voice, rhythm, and emotions, a system that Monteverdi followed.¹⁰¹ Having read *Dialogo della musica antica, et della moderna*,¹⁰² as proven in the letter to Doni quoted above and to which Hanning referred, Mon-

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹⁰¹ Claude V. Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). On the importance of Girolamo Mei in the *Camerata*, see also Claude V. Palisca, "Girolamo Mei: Mentor to the Florentine Camerata," *The Musical Quarterly* XL/1 (1954), 1-20.

¹⁰² Vincenzo Galilei, *Dialogo della musica antica, et della moderna* (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1581), dedicated to Giovanni de' Bardi, reinforces the importance of the *Camerata Fiorentina* and its members' interest in ancient as well as modern music.

teverdi was acquainted with Mei's theories. Such threefold divisions are specified in a 1572 letter to Galilei from Mei, who referred to music and the qualities of the voice, as well as associating rhythmic motion with voice and affections / moods, *e.g.*, intermediate tempo with a poised spirit, rapid with excited, and slow with lazy:

With the voice, this can only be achieved through its qualities, be it low, high, or moderate, since it has been provided with them by nature to this end, so that it may generate a sound that is appropriate and natural to the emotion to which it wants to move others. Similarly, it is well known that moderate sounds, between the extremes of high and low, are appropriate for demonstrating a quiet and moderate affect, and those that are too high reflect a soul that is moved and *sollevato*, while those that are too low reflect subdued thoughts and habits. In the same way, a middle speed between fast and slow denotes a quiet soul, a fast one excitement (*concitato*), and a slow speed a lethargic and lazy soul. Taken together, it is evident that all the qualities of harmony and number have as their proper nature the ability to move those affections that are similar to themselves. Therefore, pitches that are too high or too low were rejected by the Platonists, the ones for being too lament-like, and the others too lugubrious; only pitches in the middle were accepted, as was also the case with numbers and rhythm.¹⁰³ Moreover, all contrasting qualities, be they natural or acquired, will be weakened when mixed or confused together, and in a certain sense they blunt each other's strength if they are equal, or reduce it proportionally according to the power and vigor each has. The result is that when mixed with different ones, each will operate either imperfectly, or very little.¹⁰⁴

Mei's conclusions are different from those of Monteverdi: ancient music, in order to achieve the desired effect, adopted only the characteristics that were able to arouse the passions intended, while "avoiding mixing them with elements that might defeat their

¹⁰³ Plato, *Republic*, Book III, 398c.

¹⁰⁴ Girolamo Mei, letter (8 May 1572) to Vincenzo Galilei, in Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 194-95 [translation by Ossi]. See original Italian text in *Girolamo Mei: Letters on Ancient and Modern Music to Vincenzo Galilei and Giovanni Bardi*, ed. Claude V. Palisca (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: American Institute of Musicology, 1960), 92-93. See Appendix A for original.

purpose. This led to homophony... [although] Monteverdi never renounced counterpoint. He sought out the mixture of contrasting elements as the best means for generating strong emotions—not confusion—in his listeners.”¹⁰⁵

Another member of the *Camerata Fiorentina* with whom Monteverdi was acquainted and whose ideas resonated with his own as expressed in the Preface was Count Giovanni de’ Bardi (1534-1612), whose reflections on Plato’s division of music in the Third Book of *The Republic* were expressed in his *Discorso mandato da me a Giulio Caccini detto Romano, sopra la musica anticha, e’ cantar bene* (1578).¹⁰⁶ Bardi also associated voice type with states of mind as seen in the following excerpt:

For those great philosophers, connoisseurs of nature, understand that in the low voice resides the slow and the drowsy; in the intermediate, calm, majesty, and magnificence; and in the high, rapid blows to the ear and lamenting. Now who does not know that the inebriated and drowsy speak mostly in a low and slow tone; that men of big business converse in a median,

¹⁰⁵ Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 195.

¹⁰⁶ Giovanni Bardi, “Discorso mandato da me a Giulio Caccini detto Romano, sopra la musica anticha, e’ cantar bene” (1578), *The Florentine Camerata*, ed. and trans. Claude V. Palisca, 90-131. See Appendix A for original with English translation. For more information on the sources quoted in this excerpt as provided in Appendix A, see Plato, *Plato’s Republic for Readers*, trans. George A. Blair, 398a-e; Plato, *Plato: Timaeus and Critias*, trans. A. E. Taylor (London: Routledge, 2014), 35b; Aristides Quintilianus, *De musica: Nunc primum separatim edidit, e codicibus MSS. recensuit, emendavit, annotavit et commentatus est Albertus Jahnus. Pars i. De musica libri III. Cum brevi annotatione de diagrammatis proprie sic dictis, figuris, scholiis cet. codicum MSS*, trans. to Latin and ed. Albert Jahn, Book I, section 13 (Berloini: B. Calvary, 1882), 24; see translation to English: Aristides Quintilianus, *Aristides Quintilianus, On Music in Three Books*, trans., introduction, and commentary Thomas J. Mathiesen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 94; Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, trans. W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 9.12.3: “The Thebans assert that on the part of their citadel, where today stands their market-place, was in ancient times the house of Cadmus. They point out the ruins of the bridal-chamber of Harmonia, and of one which they say was Semele’s [and] into the latter they allow no man to step even now. Those Greeks who allow that the Muses sang at the wedding of Harmonia, can point to the spot in the market-place where it is said that the goddesses sang.” In this monograph by Pausanias (?-180), the numbers refer to book / chapter / section (e.g., Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 9.12.3 references Book 9 (*Boeotia*), chapter 12 (*Thebes*), section 3.

magnificent, and calm voice; and that those who are burdened by anger or great grief speak in a high and excited voice?¹⁰⁷

On this subject, Aristotle affirmed at the end of *Politics* that in songs and rhythms there are images of anger, gentleness, strength, temperance, and every other moral quality, as well as all things that are contrary to these.¹⁰⁸ The philosopher explained that the melodies are the mutations of moral character [*costumi*] because one does not remain in the same mood [*modo*] as one listens to each of these.

The source that seems to be the most direct one, however, is that written by Giambattista Doni.¹⁰⁹ Several connections can be noted between Monteverdi's 1638 Preface and sections of Doni's treatises on dramatic music and the modes, *Trattato della musica scenica* and *Compendio del trattato de' generi e de' modi della musica*, written between 1630 and 1635.¹¹⁰ Both publications date from the time of their correspondence with each other, of which only two examples remain extant. The earliest indication that Monteverdi was aware of the tradition of the threefold division of *ethos* related to *melo-poeia*—a term analyzed later in this chapter (under the subheadings related to ancient sources)—is suggested by the evidence supplied by Doni in a letter to Marin Mersenne on 7 July

¹⁰⁷ Giovanni de' Bardi, "Discourse Addressed to Giulio Caccini, Called the Roman, on Ancient Music and Good Singing," *The Florentine Camerata*, ed. and trans. Claude V. Palisca, 93-95; see Appendix A for original.

¹⁰⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 8.1340a.

¹⁰⁹ On the history of Monteverdi's correspondence with Doni, see Stevens's introduction to these exchanges in Claudio Monteverdi, *Letters*, ed. and trans. Denis Stevens, 406-09 and 412-13.

¹¹⁰ For Doni's influence on Monteverdi's three *genera* by the latter's reading of the *Trattato della musica scenica* and of the *Compendio del trattato de' generi e de' modi*, see Eric Thomas Chafe, *Monteverdi's Tonal Language* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 237-38, and Barbara Russano Hanning, "Monteverdi's Three *Genera*," 157-62.

1638 (reproduced in footnote 81), where the theorist claimed that he had sent Monteverdi his book and complained that he had never written him back.¹¹¹

Even though Monteverdi would not ultimately be interested in rendering Greek theory applicable to modern practice, it is plausible that he read parts of Doni's monographs (the *Compendio del trattato de' generi e de' modi della musica* and / or *Trattato della musica scenica*) and gained inspiration there for the 1638 Preface. With regard to imitation, Doni stated in the *Trattato della musica scenica* that syllables should not be set to continuous *semicrome* [sixteenth notes] but should be set in that manner only sporadically as *crome* [eighth notes] when representing someone's anger or when the individual has "grown pale and violently insane."¹¹² Later in the same treatise, Doni alleged that, unlike counterpoint, *melopoeia* (the art of composing) and melody (the work itself) had been neglected in modern times. The composition could be improved, he claimed, by reactivating the use of the *generi* [Lat., *genera*] and the *modi* that had been abandoned centuries ago.¹¹³ The theorist defined *melopoeia* as "the art of making beautiful and pleasing sounds, and above all suitable to the subjects that are sung."¹¹⁴ Hanning indicated that in the same chapter of the treatise, and reinforced in the *Compendio del trattato*,¹¹⁵ Doni,

¹¹¹ Giambattista Doni, letter (7 July 1638) to Marin Mersenne, quoted in Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, trans. Tim Carter, 232. The original French text can be found in Marin Mersenne, *Correspondance*, ed. Paul Tannery and Cornelis de Waard, 17-18; see Appendix A, footnote 81.

¹¹² Giambattista Doni, "Trattato della musica scenica," chapter 25, 76, as cited by and trans. in Barbara Russano Hanning, "Monteverdi's Three *Genera*," 159. See Appendix A for original.

¹¹³ Giambattista Doni, "Trattato della musica scenica," chapter 26, 77.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, quoted in Barbara Russano Hanning, "Monteverdi's Three *Genera*," 159; see Appendix A for original.

¹¹⁵ Giambattista Doni, *Compendio del trattato*, chapter 10, 51-60.

with Zarlino and Galilei, dealt with intervals and their effects, namely major and minor thirds, while associating them with two different kinds of melody: *diastaltica*, called by Doni “agitated, merry, and virile” and *systaltica*, “sad, languid, and effeminate”.¹¹⁶

Suffice it for now to note this maxim: that motion by step or small intervals makes the melody soft and sweet (*molle e grave*), expressing the submissive and feminine dispositions; but moving by leap or by remote intervals makes the song virile and sustained and demonstrates similar disposition (to these motions), as Cleonides indicates in his Introduction.¹¹⁷

In the *Compendio del trattato* Doni added to these two types of melody a third: the *hesychastic*. While the *diastaltic* is related to happiness and the *systaltic* to sadness, fear, and languor, the *hesychastic*, in the theorist’s words:

does not induce any disorderly affection or vehement perturbation but only delights the soul pleasantly, causing a moderate (degree) of cheerfulness, and clearing the mind with serene and tranquil thoughts. It is (derived) from the verb ... meaning *quietare* (to calm).¹¹⁸

Although he was the author of the most immediate source currently recognized, Doni, along with the members of the *Camerata Fiorentina*, was not the only one to influence Monteverdi’s aesthetic. At the time of the dispute with Artusi (and perhaps even before that), Monteverdi became acquainted with the writings of Gioseffo Zarlino, and only later

¹¹⁶ Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” chapter 26, 79 [my translation]. See Appendix A for original.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*; trans. in Barbara Russano Hanning, “Monteverdi’s Three *Genera*,” 160; see Appendix A for original.

¹¹⁸ Giambattista Doni, *Compendio del trattato*, chapter 10, 54; trans. in Barbara Russano Hanning, “Monteverdi’s Three *Genera*,” 160; see Appendix A for original.

with those of Doni. Whether he knew Zarlino's thoughts before or after the polemic of 1607, certainly the fact that he was familiar with them triggered the need to investigate musical practices further. Despite disagreeing on several aspects, Artusi and Monteverdi followed—as did all, or practically all, musicians at the time—the teachings of Plato regarding the threefold division of music and the association of each with a different *ethos*.¹¹⁹

Another source for which there is a strong case of influence on Monteverdi before he encountered Doni is Zarlino's *Sopplimenti musicali*,¹²⁰ already mentioned in Giulio Cesare's *Dichiarazione* of 1607, along with Zarlino's *Le istituzioni harmoniche*. The acquaintance of Claudio Monteverdi with these sources thus leads logically to the conclusion that his three *genera* were also influenced by Zarlino. For instance, in his *Sopplimenti musicali*, Zarlino approached the nature of “affections or habits of the soul” [*affettioni, o costume dell'animo*] and what characterizes each individually.¹²¹ Consistent with Monteverdi's later deductions, Zarlino also referred to three categories or *genera*:

¹¹⁹ Giovanni Maria Artusi, *Seconda parte dell'Artusi*. See Appendix A for original of the following: “Melodia is made up of Text [*oration*], Rhythm [*ritmo*], and of Harmony [*armonia*] together, as Plato so defines it in the *Republic*. And those qualities that are joined within it, as the highness, lowness, and equality of the voices, are to be considered as part of Harmony,” as translated by Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 195. Artusi's interpretation of Plato's passage in terms of voices is more likely related to implications of the *harmoniai*, or modes, since Plato does not directly mention voice types / delivery in all three registers as does Aristotle.

¹²⁰ Gioseffo Zarlino, *Sopplimenti musicali: Nei quali si dichiarano molte cose contenute nei due primi volumi, delle Istitutioni & Dimostrations; per essere state mal' intese da molti; & si risponde insieme alle loro calornie. Con due tauole, l'una che contiene i capi principali delle materie, & l'altra le cose più notabili, che si trouano nell' opera. Terzo volume. In Venetia, Appresso Francesco de' Franceschi, Sanese, 1588* (Venice: Francesco dei Franceschi Senese, 1588; reprinted Ridgewood, NJ: Gregg Press, 1966).

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, Book VII, chapter 2, 270, quoted in Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 53 [translation by Ossi].

We must, therefore, realize, that the Affections or Customs were called by the Ancients *ethoi*, because through them one could direct and know human Qualities or Constitutions, which we might call, without being in error, the Passions of the Soul. These were of three kinds. The first was that called *sustaltikon*, that is to say, *intervallare*, in which by the means of speech was acted and shown an action carried out with strong and manly soul, such as the actions of Heroes.... The second was called *hessuchastikon*, that is, restrained or constricted, in which by narrating some matter, either contemporary or past, the soul was represented as shrunken and withdrawn into humility. It was represented as a subject, in an effeminate way, to any passion or affections, and as not very manly, lacking in all resolve.... The third, called *hexukastikon*, or Quiet, was reserved for quiet and free actions, and peaceful dispositions of the soul, with a moderate mind.¹²²

The similarities between *Sopplimenti musicali* and Monteverdi's Preface are striking. Zarlino emphasized a threefold division of the melodic categories of the ancients, after Cleonides and Aristoxenus: diatonic (*farlo divenire forte*) [led the soul to strength], chromatic (*farlo divenir molle*) [led the soul to softness], and enharmonic.¹²³ As Hanning indicated, the association of *molle* and chromaticism naturally did not start with Zarlino.¹²⁴

¹²² Gioseffo Zarlino, *Sopplimenti*, Book VII, chapter 2, 270-71, quoted in Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 53 [translation by Ossi]. See Appendix A for original.

¹²³ Gioseffo Zarlino, *Le istituzioni harmoniche*, Book II, chapter 9, 89-91.

¹²⁴ The dichotomy of emotional extremes was, for centuries, associated with the quality of intervals ("incited and soft") [*incitato e molle*]. For further readings and bibliographical references on the intervals and music theory of the philosophers, theorists, and musicians in general that are discussed in this chapter, see C. Matthew Balensuela and David Russell Williams, *Music Theory from Boethius to Zarlino: A Bibliography and Guide* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2007), and David Russell Williams and David Damschroder, *Music Theory from Zarlino to Schenker: A Bibliography and Guide* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2009). A list of music theory sources by different authors can be found in Balensuela and Williams: Boethius (24-32) and Cleonides (34), and in the volume by Williams and Damschroder: Giovanni Artusi (11-12), Giambattista Doni (74-75), Vincenzo Galilei (97-100), Girolamo Mei (198-200), Claudio Monteverdi (208-10), and Gioseffo Zarlino (391-95), among others. (This does not represent an exhaustive list: there are other authors mentioned in this chapter that appear in the indexes of these two volumes, but coverage of them is sparse; they are often referenced indirectly through the writings of other theorists.)

How Monteverdi realized *molle* with the help of narrow or chromatically altered intervals, imitating the affect of humility or supplication, the amorous, or the erotic in his last operas,¹²⁵ will be analyzed in the subsequent chapters devoted to *Ulisse* and *Poppea*.

After reading and analyzing Monteverdi's Preface, the threefold divisions made by Zarlino sound familiar: the three types [*maniere*] referring to melody are *hypatoid*, or low [*più grave*], *mesoide* or intermediate [*chorde mezane*], and *netoide* or high [*acute*]. In connection with these types, Zarlino mentioned three *modi* with regard to *melopoeia*: the nomic, dithyrambic, and tragic;¹²⁶ and referred to *genera* in connection with affections / ethos: *diastaltic*, *systaltic*, and *hesychastic*.¹²⁷

The *maniere* (low, middle, and high divisions) of the *melopoeia* are only approached briefly, but in Book VIII of *Sopplimenti*, the author, as with Boethius, Plato, Aristotle, and other ancient philosophers, described the ability of the ancient modes to evoke different affections: Phrygian, to excite anger [*concitar l'ira*]; Mixolydian, related to a meditative state and sorrowfulness; and Dorian, stable and moderate, coinciding with *temperato* affections and *mezzana*, *i.e.*, between the two extremes.¹²⁸ With an awareness of such passages, Monteverdi's utilization of the words *molle*, *temperato*, *concitato*, and *mezzano* in his Preface to Book VIII is revealed as strikingly similar.

¹²⁵ Barbara Russano Hanning, "Monteverdi's Three *Genera*," 164.

¹²⁶ Gioseffo Zarlino, *Sopplimenti musicali*, Book VIII, 278; see Appendix A for original.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 278-79.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 87-88. For further reading on modal *ethos*, see Barbara Russano Hanning, "Monteverdi's Three *Genera*," 165, referring to Franchino Gaffurio ([1451-1522], 1518), Gioseffo Zarlino (1558), and Vincenzo Galilei (1581).

All of these terms, even though used extensively during the Renaissance and early Baroque periods by humanists, music theorists, and musicians, are not exclusive to this period nor are they attributed only to Plato, even if the latter was undoubtedly the main philosophical source for Monteverdi. A review of the general index to Monteverdi's letters translated by Denis Stevens shows that Plato was the only philosopher from antiquity quoted by the composer in his surviving correspondence—and only once, in the letter to Alessandro Striggio on 9 December 1616.¹²⁹ As observed in the Preface, Monteverdi referred to Boethius as well and adopted Aristotle's notion of vocal delivery and pitch modulation, mistakenly referring to Plato's Third Book of *Rhetoric* as his source. There were also other ancient philosophers who played an important role in the genesis of the threefold division of the *genera*, whether by their direct or indirect influence on musical thought during Monteverdi's lifetime, as will be observed in the next two subchapters.

Ancient Sources and Further Indirect Implications

As already established in the previous chapter, several sources from antiquity emphasizing rhetoric were discovered and translated during the Renaissance—with new writings of Aristotle and Cicero among them.¹³⁰ The threefold division of *affetti* /

¹²⁹ Claudio Monteverdi, letter (9 December 1616) to Alessandro Striggio, in *Letters*, ed. and trans. Denis Stevens, 108-11; original Italian version in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax, 9. The general index of Claudio Monteverdi, *Letters*, ed. and trans. Denis Stevens was compiled by Lilian Elizabeth Stevens.

¹³⁰ For further readings on the importance and impact of rhetoric during the Renaissance, as well as its relationship with philosophy, see Leonel Ribeiro dos Santos, "Viragem para a Retórica e conflito entre Filosofia e Retórica no pensamento renascentista," *Linguagem, retórica e filosofia no renascimento* (Lisbon: Colibri, 2003), 9-76. For issues on translations and interpretation of texts, see Leonel Ribeiro dos Santos, "Linguagem, tradução e interpretação no humanismo dos séculos XV e XVI," 117-202 in the same source. See also Peter Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric 1380-1620* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

passioni was not invented by Zarlino or the *Camerata Fiorentina*; the variety of ancient philosophical sources proves that. Although the terms changed slightly, the main ideas of humility or supplication, moderation, and anger or bravery were referenced in at least three sources in addition to those referenced by Monteverdi: Cleonides, Aristides Quintilianus, and Marcus Tullius Cicero.¹³¹ These men also constructed a division of different types of musical composition (explained by Cleonides and Quintilianus) and vocal delivery (in terms of speech, as addressed by Cicero) associated with *ethos*.

The threefold types of music indicated by Cleonides and Quintilianus are, not surprisingly, exactly the same as those discussed by Zarlino and later Doni in their treatises, *i.e.*, *diastaltic*, *systaltic*, and *hesychastic*. For Cleonides and Quintilianus, *systaltic* is associated with humility, sadness, lack of manliness, and is also related to pity (explored by Aristotle as an emotion in *Rhetoric*).¹³² *Hesychastic* is related to the quietude of the soul, and *diastaltic* is aligned with heroic deeds and manliness.¹³³

Quintilianus made other crucial divisions that were adopted *ipsis verbis* by Zarlino. These are associated among themselves and are, in order from high, middle, and low: the *genera* diatonic, enharmonic, chromatic; the scales netoid, mesoid, and hypatoid; the high, middle, and low ranges of the mode; and in terms of rhythm, active / fast tempo

¹³¹ Cleonides was translated from Greek to Latin by Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457) in *Harmonicum introductorium* (Venice, 1497); Quintilianus was translated by Giovanni Francesco Burana (1475-?), *De musica, libri tres* (1475/80-?), preserved in Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, MS CCXL (201)]; as for Cicero, see Cicero, *De oratore* (55 B.C.), reprinted under the title M. Tullii Ciceronis, *De oratore ad Quintum fratrem libri tres*, ed. Lucas Robia and Filippo Giunta I (Florence: Ex officina Philippi Giuntae, 1514).

¹³² On pity, see Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book II, Part 8, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (New York: The Modern Library, 1954), 115-16.

¹³³ See Cleonides, "Harmonic Introduction," ed. and trans. by Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 45.

with diastaltic, measured and symmetrical with hesychastic, and slow tempo with systaltic.¹³⁴

Parallels can also be drawn with the writings of Cicero, whose foundation of Roman rhetoric exerted a great influence on Italian humanists through his interpreter Quintilianus.¹³⁵ The former described the three genera in *De oratore*, as *subtile, modicum, [and] vehemens*.¹³⁶ In *De oratore*, Book II, 128, Cicero named the three *genera* of the rhetorical goals: *conciliare, docere, concitare* (to please, to enlighten, and to stir the audience). The *genus molle*, as referred to by Monteverdi and many music theorists, also has a connection with Cicero's less effective *molle quiddam*.¹³⁷ Monteverdi's *stile concitato* can be traced to Cicero's *genus vehemens* with the goal of *concitare*.¹³⁸ Likewise, the *temperato* can be associated with the *genus modicum ac temperatum* and the *genus molle* (Cicero's *genus molle* and Augustine's *genus humile*).¹³⁹ The correspondence with the terminology of Cicero appears fairly obvious, whether it is due to direct or indirect influence.

¹³⁴ Barbara Russano Hanning, "Monteverdi's Three *Genera*," 155.

¹³⁵ See Jakob Wisse's "Cicero's Sources I: Aristotle and 'De oratore,'" and "Pathos in 'De oratore,'" *Ethos and Pathos: From Aristotle to Cicero* (Amsterdam: Adolf M Hakkert, 1989), 105-63 and 250-300, respectively.

¹³⁶ Marcus Tullius Cicero, "De oratore," *Cicero Rhetorica*, Vol. I, Book XXI, ed. A. S. Wilkins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 69. For a translation to English, see Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator*, trans. James May and Jakob Wisse (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹³⁷ Marcus Tullius Cicero, "De oratore," Book XXIII, 77.

¹³⁸ For Cicero's parallels with Monteverdi's terminology, see Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi*, 6.

¹³⁹ Marcus Tullius Cicero, "De oratore," Book XXVII, 95. See Appendix A for original. See also Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi*, 6.

Monteverdi's concerns seem not to lie exclusively with the modes nor on all of the above-mentioned rhythmic characteristics because the major emphasis of his thought appears to have been on delivery, style, and *ethos*,¹⁴⁰ as well as on the new *concitato* style. Nevertheless, all of these factors are relevant to understanding the genesis and interconnectedness of Monteverdi's theory in the Preface and their application in his operatic works.

Ancient Sources and Further Direct Implications

Monteverdi quoted Boethius directly in his Preface with a passage taken from *De institutione musica* on the power of the opposites to move the mind.¹⁴¹ The borrowing refers to an excerpt in which Boethius related the “hard” to the “soft” modes, a passage that, in the words of Eric Thomas Chafe, clearly resonates

with the Greek *genera* and the qualities of hardness and softness traditionally associated with them since ancient times and retained in later music theory in connection with the terms *durus* and *mollis*. When Boethius speaks of three different categories of people to whom these contrary affections appeal, as “harsh,” “restrained” and “lascivious and effeminate,” he moves into the ethical sphere of Plato's *Republic*, to which Monteverdi also refers.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, Barbara Russano Hanning—in “Monteverdi's Three *Genera*,” 153-54—pointed out that Cleonides established that it is possible to modulate from one *ethos* to another, and, in fact, such transitions occur in Monteverdi's works. To what extent such a process is required in his operas will be addressed in the next chapter.

¹⁴¹ Monteverdi quoted Boethius almost *ipsis verbis*, removing the word *naturaliter* [naturally] from the phrase as it is unnecessary. See Appendix A for original. See also Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, *De institutione musica*, Book I, chapter 1, 178. Translation in Boethius, “Music Forms a Part of Us through Nature, and Can Ennoble or Debase Character,” *Fundamentals*, Book I, chapter 1, 1.

¹⁴² Eric Thomas Chafe, *Tonal Language*, 236-37.

The question of opposites and the affections is addressed later in the first chapter of Boethius's Book I: "For nothing is more characteristic of human nature than to be soothed by pleasant modes or disturbed by their opposites."¹⁴³ Immediately following this passage, Boethius called on Plato's authority regarding character and ethical modes evoked or disturbed by music. Once again, the passage on warlike aspects in connection to Plato is referenced:

Thus, Plato holds that the greatest care should be exercised lest something be altered in music of good character. He states that there is no greater ruin of morals in a republic than the gradual perversion of chaste and temperate music [and that] lascivious modes bring something immodest into the dispositions of the people or rougher ones implant something warlike and savage.¹⁴⁴

Later, Boethius quoted the same authoritative source: "Plato holds music of the highest moral character, modestly composed, to be a great guardian of the republic; thus, it should be temperate, simple, and masculine, rather than effeminate, violent, or fickle."¹⁴⁵ Boethius's perspective on these opposites reflects his views on the role of a moderate *ethos* according to his interpretation of Plato. Instead of having fury and sweetness as the antithesis of one another, the emphasis is placed instead on the former and the effect of temperance: fury and wrath can become peaceful with a "more temperate mode."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Boethius, *Fundamentals*, Book I, chapter 1, 2. Original Latin text in Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, *De institutione musica*, Book I, chapter 1, 178; see Appendix A.

¹⁴⁴ Boethius, *Fundamentals*, Book I, chapter 1, 2. Original Latin text in Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, *De institutione musica*, Book I, chapter 1, 178; see Appendix A. In these sections Boethius makes use of Plato's passages in *Republic*, 399a-e; 410-11a-e.

¹⁴⁵ Boethius, *Fundamentals*, Book I, chapter 1, 4. Original text in Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, *De institutione musica*, Book I, chapter 1, 181; see Appendix A.

¹⁴⁶ Boethius, *Fundamentals*, Book I, chapter 1, 8. Original text in Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, *De institutione musica*, Book I, chapter 1, 187; see Appendix A.

Boethius did not focus solely on dualities, however. He adopted as well a tripartite division of music: the well-known separation into cosmic, human, and instrumental, which he presented in the chapter immediately following.¹⁴⁷ In his discussion of “human music,” he referred specifically to voice (high and low with regards to pitch) and its function, while mentioning Aristotle to explain such a connection. In this case, the function is not to move the affections, but, along with “a certain harmony ... [to connect] incorporeal ... reason with the body,” thus generating sounds through material and immaterial means:

Whoever penetrates into his own self perceives human music. For what unites the incorporeal nature of reason with the body if not a certain harmony and, as it were, a careful tuning of low and high pitches as though producing one consonance? What other than this unites the parts of the soul, which, according to Aristotle, is composed of the rational and the irrational?¹⁴⁸

It is notable that Boethius referred to the ideal of the soul as found in *Nichomachean Ethics* and not as in *De anima*, where Aristotle affirmed that it is not enough to distinguish between the rational and the irrational.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, it is in the Aristotelian source, *Ethics*, that the Doctrine of the Mean is found, *i.e.*, achieving virtue by emphasizing the

¹⁴⁷ Boethius, *De institutione*, Book I, chapter 2, 187-89. Here the author described these three kinds of music. For translation to English, see Boethius, *Fundamentals*, Book I, chapter 2, 9-10.

¹⁴⁸ Boethius, *Fundamentals*, Book I, chapter 2, 10. Original Latin text in Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, *De institutione musica*, Book I, chapter 2, 189; see Appendix A. For information on the division of the soul into rational and irrational parts, see Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book I, chapter 13, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1102a-b, 22-24.

¹⁴⁹ Aristotle, *De anima*, ed. and trans. R. D. Hicks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), 432a-b, 147-48.

importance of moderation and finding a middle ground between two extremes.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, a pair of opposites define each virtue, as in the division of *affetti / passioni* into anger and humility / supplication as the extreme opposites and temperance / moderation as the virtue.

A problem with Monteverdi's system is that, of the three emotions / affections cited in the Preface, only one is attributable to the emotions, the one on which Monteverdi placed the greatest emphasis with the *stile concitato*, i.e., anger [*ira*]. Moderation [*temperanza*], and humility are, instead, more virtues than passions or affections.¹⁵¹ The *temperantia* is indeed referenced by Plato in Book IV of the *Republic* as one of the four cardinal virtues that masters the treatment of affects.¹⁵² Supplication, when connected to humility, however, can be associated with affects, but it is still related more with virtue than with emotion. Among the virtues established by Plato—and later adopted in Chris-

¹⁵⁰ See Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1109a, 39-40. Because it is difficult to aim at a middle course, Aristotle proposed three rules to help achieve the mean and be a virtuous person. The first is “to keep well away from that extreme which is the more opposite to it.” For the two extremes, deficiency and excess, one is a worse mistake than the other. Aristotle suggested that since to hit the middle point is extremely difficult, “we must sail the second best way.” See also Bahadır Küçüküysal and Erhan Beyhan, “Virtue Ethics in Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics,” *International Journal of Human Sciences* VIII/8 (2011), 44-51 [online].

¹⁵¹ Monteverdi mixed passions and virtues. See Alexander Nehamas, “Pity and Fear in the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*,” *Aristotle’s Rhetoric: Philosophical Essays*, ed. David J. Furley and Alexander Nehamas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 257-82. Quoting Nehamas, “Aristotle believes that emotions and non-rational desires in general are ultimately subject to reason ... [which] persuade the irrational desires. Aristotle envisages that the emotions will form an integral part of the virtuous life,” as is evident in the definition of virtue in *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, chapter 5, 110b25-26.

¹⁵² See Plato, *Plato’s Republic for Readers*, trans. George A. Blair, 426-35a-e, and Plato, *The Symposium*, trans. Percy Bysshe Shelley (London: Cassell, 1887; reprinted Provincetown, MA: Pagan Press, 2001), 196c.

tian theology—are prudence / wisdom, courage / fortitude, temperance / restraint / moderation, and justice / fairness.¹⁵³ It is important to remember that Monteverdi had already taken orders as a Catholic priest and was familiar with these designations.

Monteverdi also adopted, as an axiom in defense of the *seconda pratica*, Plato's tripartite nature of *harmoniai*: "song is put together out of three things, words, *harmonia*, and rhythm ... and *harmonia* and rhythm must follow the words."¹⁵⁴ Plato's virtues comprise four modes and four different affects, but they seem to fit Monteverdi's system. Nevertheless, Monteverdi did not approach the question of the modes directly, probably because, as Chafe observed, new systems of thought, including tonality, were emerging in music:

In his various proclamations concerning old and new musical practices Monteverdi reveals a remarkable awareness of the momentous style change that ultimately ushered in a new era of music. And in his compositions Monteverdi laid the groundwork for tonal structures and figurative procedures with such purposiveness that we can speak of his role in the creation of the modern worldview as comparable to those of his contemporaries Galileo and Descartes in their respective fields.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ See Daniel Devereux, "The Unity of the Virtues," *A Companion to Plato*, ed. Hugh H. Benson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 325-40.

¹⁵⁴ Plato translated to English in Claude V. Palisca, "The Artusi-Monteverdi Controversy," 152. See translation from Greek to Latin in Plato, "De re publica," *Platonis Opera omnia latine*, trans. Marsilio Ficino (Florence: Laurentiū de Alopa Venetū, 1485), 398d, reproduced in both Latin and English in Claude V. Palisca, "The Artusi-Monteverdi Controversy," 152. See footnote 34 in Appendix A for the Latin version.

¹⁵⁵ Eric Thomas Chafe, *Tonal Language*, 1.

It was a sign of the new times. Monteverdi's sixty-year career in composition spanned the beginning of what is considered the modern age in philosophy, art, science, and music, and within it were planted the seeds of the Age of Reason. Attitudes were changing in terms of what music could express and by which means.

There is no doubt that the ethical aspect of music was important to Monteverdi. For Plato, devoting oneself exclusively to physical training without music would fill a man with "brutality and insensitivity," and if dedicated only to music, he would succumb to "flabbiness and sentimentality."¹⁵⁶ An aggressive aspect of human nature, Plato alleged, could develop into bravery if well trained or could degrade to that which is "savage and insensitive."¹⁵⁷ Emphasis is thereby placed on the contrast between "softness" and "aggressiveness," between *molle* and *concitato*, as well as the desirability of training in both.

As previously noted, Monteverdi erroneously referenced the Third Book of *Rhetoric*—instead of correctly citing *The Republic*—as Plato's work in the Preface to Book VIII. (The Third Book of *Rhetoric* was written by Aristotle). While Plato did, in fact, deal with rhetoric, he did not do so specifically in the third book of *The Republic*.¹⁵⁸ He

¹⁵⁶ Plato, *Republic*, 410c.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 410d.

¹⁵⁸ Massimo Ossi claimed in *Divining the Oracle*, 198, that "Plato dealt with rhetoric elsewhere" besides in the *Republic*. The philosopher did, in fact, address the topic of rhetoric in the *Republic* itself. Book I is devoted to issues regarding persuasion. Socrates discussed the matter with three main interlocutors: Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus, who represented the three primary behaviors Socrates usually encountered. They embodied (in order) conventional wisdom, youthful enthusiasm, and professional expertise, as well as the three types of what can be called mindsets: indifference, uncritical yielding, and outright belligerent opposition. For more on how Plato's *Republic* relates to rhetoric, see William W. Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle's Platonic Delivery," *Aristotle's Practical Side: On His Psychology, Ethics, Politics and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2006), 242-64. See also James L. Kastely, *The Rhetoric of Plato's Republic: Democracy and the Philosophical Problem of Persuasion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,

did discuss the implications of rhetoric in Book I, however, as well as in *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, when attempting to define the elements of this method of delivery. Plato's position is not a positive one; for him, rhetoric was more of a craft learned than a knowledge acquired because rhetoric goes beyond knowledge, seeking instead to persuade. The goal of rhetoric is not to teach then but rather to convince.¹⁵⁹

On the other hand, a comparison of Monteverdi's Preface with Aristotle's *Rhetoric* reveals that it was, in fact, the source to which the composer referred. As Ossi concluded after making such a comparison, the composer demonstrated a similar style and methodology and paraphrased Aristotle's main concepts regarding the aspect of delivery. Furthermore, Monteverdi's first sentence—"Havendo [*sic*] io considerato le nostre passioni od affettioni del animo, essere tre le principali" [Having considered that three of our emotions are preeminent]—echoes the beginning of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the sixteenth-century translation by Annibale Caro: "Essendo tre le cose de le quali s'ha da trattare intorno a l'arte del dire" [There are three things that require special attention in regard to speech], and "onde che tre sono le cose, che si considerano circa la recitatione" [since there are three things that must be considered regarding delivery].¹⁶⁰

1992), in particular chapter 2, "The Elenctic Victory and the Failure of Persuasion," 24–45. Not all of the threefold categories have to fit precisely within the system that helped Monteverdi shape his thoughts on emotion, style, and vocal delivery. Plato's position on rhetoric was not favorable, and for this reason it would be hard to find a correspondence between the types of interlocutors mentioned above and the categories of anger, temperance, and humility, since the former division (conventional wisdom, youthful enthusiasm, and professional expertise) does not map onto a moderate, wise, and temperate mind with no need to persuade.

¹⁵⁹ See Plato, *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, trans. James H. Nichols, 501e–503a.

¹⁶⁰ Aristotle, *Retorica d'Aristotele in lingua Toscana*, trans. Annibale Caro (Venice: Salamandra, 1570), 31.

As Fortenbaugh noted, Book III of *Rhetoric* was written during Aristotle's residency at the Academy and was, therefore, influenced by Plato.¹⁶¹ For example, Aristotle's threefold divisions of three larger concerns echo Platonic teachings: first, the sources of persuasion (logical, emotional, and ethical, 1356a1-4, Book I and 1403b9-13, Book II); second, a discussion of speech (it must cover three topics: proof, style, and arrangement, 1403b6-8); and third, delivery (high, low, and middle vocal delivery).¹⁶² Book III of *Rhetoric* is indeed concerned with style, *i.e.*, with how ideas are delivered and how the character of the elements of delivery affect the ideas.¹⁶³ It begins with the following words:

There are three things which require special attention in regard to speech: first, the sources of proofs; secondly, style; and thirdly, the arrangement of the parts of the speech. We have already spoken of proofs and stated that they are three in number, what is their nature, and why there are only three; for in all cases persuasion is the result either of the judges themselves being affected in a certain manner, or because they consider the speakers to be of a certain character, or because something has been demonstrated. We have also stated the sources from which enthymemes should be derived—some of them being special, the others general commonplaces. We have therefore next to speak of style; for it is not sufficient to know what one ought to say, but one must also know how to say it, and this largely contributes to making the speech appear of a certain character. In the first place, following the natural order, we investigated that which first presented itself—what gives things themselves their persuasiveness; in the second place, their arrangement by style; and in the

¹⁶¹ William W. Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle's Platonic Attitude toward Delivery," *Aristotle's Practical Side*, 358. The Plato Academy was founded in Athens by Plato *ca.* 387 B.C. Aristotle studied there for two decades, between 367 and 347 B.C., before founding the Lyceum.

¹⁶² See William W. Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle's Platonic Attitude toward Delivery," 353-65.

¹⁶³ Regarding voice and delivery within the context of rhetoric in antiquity, see Verena Schulz, *Die Stimme in der antiken Rhetorik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014). Of special interest in amplifying the present discussion are the chapters "Die Stimme in der antiken rhetorischen Theorie und Praxis: von Isokrates bis Alkuin," 84-177 and "Begriffe für Lautstärke und Tonhöhe (der Stimme)," 178-84.

third place, delivery, which is of the greatest importance but has not yet been treated of by anyone.¹⁶⁴

The concern for delivery in this book is seemingly clear and related to the art of persuasion.¹⁶⁵ The study of rhetoric is concerned likewise with expressive vocal utterance and inflection (in terms of speech). As Aristotle claimed:

Now delivery is a matter of voice, as to the mode¹⁶⁶ in which it should be used for each particular emotion, when it should be loud, when low, when intermediate; and how the tones, that is shrill, deep, and intermediate, should be used, and what rhythms are adapted to each subject. For these are three qualities that are considered—volume, harmony, rhythm.¹⁶⁷

As Fortenbaugh acknowledged, when someone speaks, he or she must use the voice and necessarily adopt some form of delivery.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, the voice is an important medium for conveying character. The relationship of voice to character is also recognized in *Ethics*, where Aristotle described the high-minded person as someone who speaks in a

¹⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1403b. Aristoxenus's theories resonate with Aristotle's ideas. On the question of rhythm, see Aristoxenus, *Elements of Rhythm*, Christopher C. Marchetti, *Aristoxenus' Elements of Rhythm: Text, Translation, and Commentary with a Translation and Commentary on POxy 2687* (Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2009).

¹⁶⁵ For a thorough analysis of each of the three books in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, see Alan G. Gross and Arthur E. Walzer, *Rereading Aristotle's Rhetoric* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000). See also Keith Erickson, *Aristotle: The Classical Heritage of Rhetoric* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1974); Jonathan Barnes, "Rhetoric and Poetics," *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), 259-86; and Christof Rapp, "The Nature and Goals of *Rhetoric*" and Stephen Leighton, "Passions and Persuasion," *A Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Georgios Anagnostopoulos (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 579-611.

¹⁶⁶ "Mode" here does not relate to music but should be understood as "management of the voice."

¹⁶⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1403b27-32, 165.

¹⁶⁸ See William Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle's Platonic Attitude," 355-56.

deep voice and deliberate manner.¹⁶⁹ This specific passage leads to a different reading of what “deep” and “low” voice conveys because it is the point at which Aristotle associated vocal pitch with a specific moral character. Such an association will be discussed further when relating vocal ranges to operatic characters in the next chapter.

Good delivery is a matter of managing one’s voice correctly in relation to different emotions: using a loud, soft, or in-between voice; a high, low, or intermediate pitch; and different rhythms.¹⁷⁰ The general idea suggested here is that “a particular style effectively delivered manifests character,” and variation in pitch is “natural and essential to the spoken language of human beings in much the same way that variation in voice,” *i.e.*, voice inflection or emphasis, is fundamental to human discourse.¹⁷¹

A central notion in Book III of *Rhetoric* is that a specific style of delivery should be suitable for each kind of rhetoric and that the right effect can be achieved by matching the delivery to the given text. Otherwise, the purpose of the orator is defeated. Whether directly or indirectly, Monteverdi borrowed Aristotle's approach to delivery and the connection between delivery and the rhetorical nature of the text in his own work. Likewise, the composer’s Preface establishes parallels with emotions, vocal range, and the three musical *genera*.

Like Monteverdi’s interpretation and implementation, Aristotle’s system is not without its flaws: for the Greek philosopher, delivery was dependent on subject matter

¹⁶⁹ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1125a13-14, 79.

¹⁷⁰ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1403b27-32, 165.

¹⁷¹ See William Fortenbaugh, “Aristotle’s Platonic Attitude,” 355-56.

and was considered the emotional character of the argument. Delivery referred to the voice, which should reflect the speech content and could be divided into three elements: volume, harmony or pitch, and rhythm. While Aristotle provided three categories for the first two (loud or high, low or deep, and intermediate), he offered no such divisions for rhythm (unlike Quintilianus and Cleonides in terms of fast / active, symmetrical / measured, and slow). Nonetheless, his ideas and organization of a threefold division regarding volume and pitch of the voice are strongly echoed in Monteverdi's Preface in terms of vocal qualities.

Aristotle mentioned similar ideas in his *Politics*, Book VIII, but with more precision in terms of passions, virtues, and character:

Rhythm and melody supply imitations of anger and gentleness, and also of courage and temperance, and of all the qualities contrary to these, and of the other qualities of the character, which hardly fall short of the actual affections, as we know from our own experience, for in listening to such strains our souls undergo a change.¹⁷²

In the same source Aristotle referred to difference in melody. As referenced above, Strunk indicated that the division of melodies / *genera* by Monteverdi (*concitato, temperato, et molle*) was as formulated by Aristotle in *Politics*: "And since we accept the classification of melodies made by some philosophers, as ethical melodies, melodies of action, and passionate melodies."¹⁷³ Of the different translations of the types of melodies

¹⁷² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1340a18-20.

¹⁷³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1341b, trans. Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings: Classical Antiquity through Romantic*, 22.

noted by Aristotle, C. D. C. Reeve identified them as of “character, action, and inspiration.”¹⁷⁴ Other possibilities are “ethical, practical, and enthusiastic” melodies, or melodies of “character, action, and passionate or inspiring.”¹⁷⁵ Yet how well do these interpretations relate to the other categories?

Attempting to apply such associations appears problematic. “Practical” and “enthusiastic” are rather close, but none of the three seems to be related to the idea of *molle*, and, therefore, fails to confirm the composer’s theory of affections, style, and *genera*. A comparison of the different associations explored in this chapter (supplied in Table 3.1) can provide a clearer idea of how some parts of the threefold categories do not have to fit unequivocally into this system for the overall relationships to be relevant.

In *Rhetoric* Aristotle dedicated his efforts not only to the art of persuasion in terms of vocal delivery (of oration), but he invested in the study of affections / passions: “appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hatred, longing, emulation, pity, and in general the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure or pain.”¹⁷⁶ Concerning anger specifically, the only true affection that Monteverdi cited in his threefold system, Aristotle

¹⁷⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1341b33, trans. C. D. C. Reeve, 270.

¹⁷⁵ See G. M. Sifakis, “Music as Imitation of Ethical Qualities” and “Homoeopathy and the Sacred Melodies,” *Aristotle on the Function of Tragic Poetry* (Herakleion: Crete University Press, 2001), 58-63 and 77-84.

¹⁷⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1105b21-24. Regarding Aristotle’s theory of passions, see Jamie Dow, *Passions and Persuasion in Aristotle’s Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), particularly the chapters on “The Passions in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*,” 131-44 and “Aristotle’s Theory of the Passions—Passions as Pleasures and Pains,” 145-81. See also John M. Cooper, “An Aristotelian Theory of the Emotions,” *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 406-26; William W. Fortenbaugh, “Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* on Emotions” and “Aristotle: Emotions and Moral Virtue,” *Aristotle’s Practical Side*, 9-38 and 107-30, respectively; and David Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006). For a study on emotions in the writings of both Plato and Aristotle, see A. W. Price, “Emotions in Plato and Aristotle,” *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 121-42.

referred to an “agitated spirit” as related to a warlike character, which suggests that this passion is not exclusive to Plato as the sole source of inspiration for the Cremonese composer. Aristotle defined anger as a passion “accompanied by distress, for conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight at the hands of men who have called to slight oneself or one’s friends.”¹⁷⁷

Of special significance is the fact that keywords such as “anger,” “revenge,” and “distress” are also connected to the *concitato* musical character, which Monteverdi continued to employ in his works completed after Book VIII of Madrigals. This extension can be found in particular in *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, where opportunities for the expression of anger and fury from several of the pivotal characters are many.

¹⁷⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1378a, 30-32.

Table 3.1. A Comparison of the Tripartite Affective, Musical, and Rhetorical Categories.

Aristotle	Volume	Loud	Intermediate	Deep
Aristotle, Cleonides, Quintilianus, Monteverdi	Voice Pitch / Range	High	Middle	Low
Quintilianus	<i>Genera</i>	Diatonic	Enharmonic	Chromatic
	Scale	Netoid	Mesoid	Hypatoid
	Rhythm	Active / Fast	Measured / Symmetrical	Slow
	Types of music	Diastaltic	Hesychastic	Systaltic
Cleonides	<i>Ethos</i>	Heroic Deeds Manliness	Quietude of the Soul	Humility / Sad- ness Unmanly
Cicero	Cicero's <i>genera</i> <i>De oratore</i>	<i>Vehemens</i>	<i>Modicum ac</i> <i>Temperatum</i>	<i>Molle /</i> <i>Subtile</i>
	Cicero's Rhetorical Goals	<i>Concitare</i>	<i>Conciliare</i>	<i>Docere</i>
Monteverdi	Passions (or Virtues)	Anger Warlike	Temperance Moderation	Humility Supplication
	<i>Genera</i> (styles)	<i>Concitato</i>	<i>Temperato</i>	<i>Molle</i>

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated in the preceding pages, there is a considerable number of philosophical and musico-theoretical sources that inspired Monteverdi's system of communicating character through voice, either directly or indirectly. Despite the fact that he connected the high, medium, and low voice with the *genera concitato, temperato, and molle* and only the *concitato* / high voice with the affection of anger, the study of the influences summarized in Table 3.1 and supported by historical evidence presented in this chapter illustrates how the different categories correlate to Monteverdi's system as revealed in the Preface.¹⁷⁸

Likewise, those divisions / categories omitted from this table were determined on the basis that they do not help to understand the relationship between the three *genera* and the operatic characters in the operas *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* and *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. For example, the divisions *da ballo, teatro, and camera*, and the function of music are not relevant for this purpose, as an opera is already established in terms of function, *i.e.*, theater [*teatro*], and as being "representational" [*rappresentativo*] (which does not exclude pieces in the *amoroso* and *concitato* styles). For these reasons, attempts to connect elements of the Preface to specific operatic characters in terms of vocal delivery and emotions portrayed will exclude some of the other categories that Monteverdi presented in his writing and that he devised for a specific context and genre. It is the first part of the composer's Preface to Book VIII that resonates best in terms of intersections

¹⁷⁸ Of crucial importance in understanding the influence of various philosophers and music theorists on Monteverdi is Barbara Russano Hanning's article on "Monteverdi's Three *Genera*," 151-70.

among passions (and virtues), *genera*, and vocal pitch or range, and it is the part that can best aid in determining the extent to which Monteverdi applied these categories beyond his eighth book of madrigal.

CHAPTER FOUR

VOICE TYPES: DEFINITIONS AND DISTINCTIONS

The preceding analysis in Chapter Three of Monteverdi's system of communicating character according to what he expressed in the Preface of Book VIII of Madrigals provides the foundation to assess the degree to which he applied this system of passions (and virtues), music *genera*, and vocal pitch / range in the operas *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* and *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, composed shortly after the Preface was completed. To address this issue most effectively, my focus for the current chapter is to examine Monteverdi's selection of voice types for these works. For this undertaking I have utilized, in part, Doni's findings in *Trattato della musica scenica* in order to explain Monteverdi's treatment of certain operatic characters. It is relevant to understand the singing aesthetics of the time, however, before discussing the different types of voices and their associations in the operatic realm.

Singing Aesthetics and Sound of the Period in Question

In the late sixteenth century the aesthetics of balancing ornamentation with elegance, of singing with grace, and of delivering the text in a noble, refined manner were announced and explored in several music treatises before the publication of Giulio Caccini's *Le nuove musiche* (1602).¹ Vocal treatises of the time, namely those of Giovanni

¹ Giulio Caccini, *Le nuove musiche* (Florence: Appresso i Marescotti, 1602).

Camillo Maffei (c. 1500-1562/73), Ludovico Zacconi (1555-1627), Giovanni Luca Conforto (1560-1608), and Giovanni Battista Bovicelli (1550-1594), indicate that the skill of the singer, evident in the selection and execution of ornamentation, should reflect a fine sense of balance and style.² Diminutions and embellishments became tiresome when excessive. If the music was expected to move the affections as nothing else could, ornamentation and improvisation acted as valuable tools with which the affections could be moved more intensely.³

Vincenzo Giustiniani (1564-1637) in his *Discorso sopra la musica* observed that a different style of singing started to emerge around 1575:

² See Giovanni Camillo Maffei, *Delle lettere del Signor Gio. Camillo Maffei da Solofra, Libri due. Dove tra gli altri bellissimi pensieri di Filosofia, e di Medicina, v'è un Discorso della Voce e del Modo d'apparare di cantare di Garganta, senza maestro, non più veduto, nè stampato* (Napoli: Raimondo Amato, 1562); Ludovico Zacconi, *Prattica di musica utile et necessaria si al compositore per comporre i canti suoi regolatamente, si anco al cantore per assicurarsi in tutte le cose cantabili: divisa in quattro libri. Ne i quali si tratta delle cantilene ordinarie, de tempi de prolotioni, de proportioni, de tuoni, et della convenienza de tutti gli istrumenti musicali. S'insegna a cantar tutte le composizioni antiche, si dichiara tutta la Messa del Palestina titolo Lomè Armè, con altre cose d'importanza & dilettevole. Ultimamente s'insegna il modo di fiorir una parte con vaghi & moderni accenti* (Venice: Bartolomeo Carampello, 1596); Giovanni Luca Conforto, *Breve et facile maniera d'essercitarsi ad ogni scolaro non solamente a far passaggi sopra tutte le note che si desidera per cantare, et far la disposizione leggiadra, et in diversi modi nel loro valore con le cadenza, ma ancora per potere da se senza maestro scrivere ogni opera, et aria passeggiata che vorrano, et come si notano: et questo ancora serve per que che sonano di viola, o d'altri istrumenti da fiato per scigliere la mano et la lingus et per diventar possessere delli soggetti et far altre invention de se fatte* (Rome, 1593); and Giovanni Battista Bovicelli, *Regole, passaggi di musica, madrigali e motetti passeggiati* (Venice: Vincenti, 1594).

³ See Howard Mayer Brown, *Embellishing Sixteenth-Century Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976) for examples of embellishments applied in sixteenth-century music. For later embellishments, see also Edward Dannreuther, "A. and G. Gabrieli. Merulo. Sweelinck," "Caccini. Monteverdi. Carissimi," and "Frescobaldi," *Musical Ornamentation*, Part I (London: Novello, Ewer, 1893; reprinted New York: Kalmus, 1961), 11-14, 33-37, 43-56; Bruce Dickey, "Ornamentation in Early Seventeenth-Century Italian Music," *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, 2nd ed., ed. Stewart Carter, rev. Jeffery Kite-Powell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 293-316. See also Roseen H. Giles, "Baroque Rhetoric and the Aesthetic of *meraviglia*," *The (Un)Natural Baroque: Giambattista Marino and Monteverdi's Late Madrigals* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 2016), 57-111.

In the Holy Year of 1575, or shortly thereafter, a style of singing appeared which was very different from that preceding. It continued for some years, chiefly in the manner of one voice singing with accompaniment, and was exemplified by Giovanni Andrea napoletano, Signor Giulio Cesare Brancaccio, and Alessandro Merlo romano [all of whom] sang ... with a range of 22 notes.⁴

Highly-ornamented solo singing in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries became progressively more intense, with a preference for high voices.

In order to understand the different voice types and ranges, it is important to clarify that all references to pitch in this thesis are communicated at notated pitch, not at the sounding pitch of the time. For this reason, when referring to a soprano range, for instance, it must be taken into consideration that it was likely not based on the modern sounding pitch ($a' = c. 440$ Hz). As Jeffrey Kurtzman argued, the relationship between notation and sounding pitch is a rather intricate problem:

for it involves such interrelated aspects of music as the modes or psalm and Magnificat tones in which the music is composed, the use of the *mol-lis* signature, the typical vocal ranges of contemporary voices, the pitch standards of accompanying organs and other instruments, notational conventions, and the divergent practices of individual composers.⁵

⁴ Vincenzo Giustiniani, "Discorso sopra la musica," *Readings in the History of Music in Performance*, ed. and trans. Carol MacClintock (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 28. Original Italian text in Vincenzo Giustiniani, "Discorso sopra la musica de' suoi tempi (1628)," *Le origini del melodramma*, ed. Angelo Solerti (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1903; reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969), 106-07; see Appendix A. For the full text of the *Discorso* in Italian, see *ibid.*; for the English version, see Vincenzo Giustiniani, *Discorso sopra la musica*, trans. Carol MacClintock (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1962). The singers cited here are Giovanni Andrea napoletano (unknown dates), Signor Giulio Cesare Brancaccio (1515-1586), and Alessandro Merlo romano (1543-1601).

⁵ Jeffrey Kurtzman, "Vocal Ranges, Cleffing and Transposition in the Sacred Music of Giulio Belli," *Barocco padano e musicisti francescani: L'apporto dei maestri conventuali: Proceedings of the XVI convegno internazionale sul barocco padano (secoli XVII-XVIII)* (Padova: Centro Studi Antoniani, 2014), 141.

The real sounding pitch in opera performed during the 1640s is not sufficiently clear to be assessed accurately although a' was probably lower than 440 Hz: in northern Italy the wind instruments usually determined the standardized pitch of the period, known as *mezzo punto* and centered around $a' = c.$ 466 Hz. When performing with instruments, choirs normally sang at *tuono corista*. This could mean $a' = c.$ 415 Hz (higher *tuono corista*) or $a' = c.$ 392 Hz (lower *tuono corista*), which allowed the instruments to transpose downward a full step. Sometimes choirs seemed to have sung at $a' = c.$ 440 Hz (*tutto punto*). Due to the primacy of the choir in assessing pitch level, the notated tessituras and ranges (in particular, the highest notes for sopranos and the lowest for basses) were important factors in determining the sounding pitch. Even though these pitches are directly connected to madrigals and motets rather than opera, the singers who performed in opera were the same as those who worked in St. Mark's Basilica and other churches. Employing virtuoso singing styles and ornamentation, they sang madrigals and motets in private surroundings as well.⁶

Musicologist Bruce Haynes quoted several contemporary sources that called attention to the issue of notated versus sounding pitch, which could also vary from city to city. For example, late sixteenth-century organ builder and player Giovan Battista Morsolino⁷ reported on the difficulties that the issue encompassed: “organists are always

⁶ See *ibid.*, 141-46, and Bruce Haynes, *A History of Performing Pitch: The Story of A* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 58-73. See also Bruce Haynes, *Pitch Standards in the Baroque and Classical Periods*, 2 vols. (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Montreal, 1995), and “Pitch in Northern Italy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Recercare* VI (1994), 41-60. Additional reading can be found in Herbert Myers, “Pitch and Transposition,” *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, 375-96.

⁷ Giovan Battista Morsolino was also known as Morsselino, Marsalino, or Mossolino (unknown birthdate-1591). According to Marina Toffetti, “Morsellino, Giovan Battista,” *Treccani: Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 77 (2012) [online], he was already renowned in 1546 in Cremona as an organ-

(or at least usually) compelled to play lower than the written key in order to accommodate the singers. This is what is done at St. Mark's in Venice.”⁸ In his *Prattica di musica utile et necessaria*, music theorist Ludovico Zacconi observed that

just as the human voice can sing a piece a tone higher or a tone lower, depending on how well it works and is satisfying; so the instruments can play a composition sometimes in one key, sometimes in another because they are all without exception high compared to the voices. Thus, when it happens that instruments wish to accompany singers, most of the time, to oblige them, they play a 2d, 3d, 4th, etc. [lower].⁹

For this reason, the sounding vocal range of a soprano or a tenor, *e.g.*, in Monteverdi's operas, would likely have been different from what is performed and heard today. Tessitura and range are still observed, however, in terms of comparison with the other voices: a soprano is high in comparison to a mezzo-soprano and even higher than a bass. The rigidity with which specific voice types are assigned to certain roles today was, instead, a more fluid decision in Monteverdi's time. For instance, *Poppea*'s Ottavia was first interpreted by a soprano, whereas today the convention is to assign the role to a mezzo-soprano.

ist and as a singer. Morsolino worked in Munich as organist from 1568 to 1590, until he transferred to Milan, where he also worked as an organist until his death.

⁸ G. B. Morsolino, trans. and quoted in Bruce Haynes, *A History of Performing Pitch*, 62. See Appendix A for original.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 65. Original Italian text in Ludovico Zacconi, “Universal dimostratione di quanto vadino alto & basso tutti gl'Istrumenti Musicali,” *Prattica di musica utile et necessaria*, 218; see Appendix A.

Voice Types and Characters

As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, the three *genera* can be understood not only in terms of their rhythmic aspects, notably in the utilization of *stile concitato*, but also in relation to the emotions as well as, in the words of Monteverdi, “the nature of the voice itself” [*la natura della voce stessa*], *i.e.*, whether the voice is high, medium, or low. It is important, therefore, to examine the different voice types selected for specific characters in his final operatic works in order to understand how the composer employed these various registers in his later career.

While there is no doubt that European art music prior to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries presented challenges for its performers, those challenges were not yet directed chiefly to the solo singer. With the emergence of early opera and oratorio, however, the solo voice progressively became the most important focus of the ensemble. By that time, as vocal pedagogue and tenor Richard Miller indicated, “range and tessitura already showed the modern singing instrument ... [with the] demanding roles of *L’incoronazione di Poppea*.”¹⁰

A voice type can be defined in terms of both tessitura (that part of the voice where the singer is most comfortable) and timbre. John Potter, a tenor and vocal pedagogue,

¹⁰ Richard Miller, “The Demise of the *Studio Baroque* Vocal Sound,” *On the Art of Singing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 130. See Richard Miller, “The Soprano Voice,” “The Mezzo and Contralto Voices,” “The Tenor Voice,” and “The Baritone and Bass Voices,” *English, French, German, and Italian Techniques of Singing* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977), 143-72, for further readings about voice types and the modern subdivisions of the voices. See also John Potter, “The Development of the Modern Voice,” *Vocal Authority: Singing Style and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 47-66.

concluded that “the physiognomy of the voice has almost certainly not changed significantly for many thousands of years, so the proportion of men [and women] potentially able to sing in the modern tenor range is likely to have been the same for as long as people have been able to sing.”¹¹ The same rationale can be applied to all voice types. Vocal technique has changed, but physiological aspects have not (to our knowledge) been altered substantially over time. On this matter, Potter affirmed that

it is technique that creates the sound world [that we have today], and we should bear this in mind when listening to a modern tenor singing Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*, for example. What we are accustomed to hearing is perhaps a reduced version [in terms of volume] of the modern voice rather than the evolving voice of the seventeenth century.¹²

Although not excluding the sound ideal (in terms of color / timbre), vocal range was more important for voice definition, all the while making the words as intelligible as possible. This is not surprising, considering the focus of contemporary sources on clarity of text rather than vocal color and timbre, which were rarely mentioned.¹³ As Potter claimed, the importance was less on [the timbre of the] sound in the Baroque period than on the delivery of the words.¹⁴ Monteverdi’s judgment of the bass voice of Giovanni Battista Bisucci

¹¹ John Potter, “The Prehistory of the Voice,” *Tenor: History of a Voice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 2-3. According to research conducted at the University of York, many singers who specialize in early music simply utilize a scaled-down version of modern technique.

¹³ Primary sources on the importance / supremacy of the text have been mentioned in the previous chapter. See also John Potter and Neil Sorrell, “The Merging Soloist and the Primacy of the Text,” *A History of Singing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 63-83, for a modern secondary source regarding this subject. Monteverdi’s letters about singers indicate such an emphasis but also a concern about the aesthetic quality of the voice. This can be observed in his descriptions of Caterina Martinelli, the *concerto delle donne*, the nuns of St. Vito in Ferrara, and other accounts, most often of female voices.

¹⁴ John Potter, “The Prehistory of the Voice,” 4.

(c. 1603-?) when he auditioned for employment at St. Mark's in Venice was that he possessed a "decent *trillo*. The voice is very pleasant but not too deep. He articulates the words very clearly, his voice goes up into the tenor range with ease very smoothly indeed, and as a singer he is very reliable."¹⁵ Such observations reveal the composer's priorities in terms of what he considered good singing.

Soprano

Despite its common association today with the female voice, the soprano, according to the definition presented in *Grove Music Online*, refers to

a term signifying in normal practice the highest musical range, used both in instrumental and vocal music.... In vocal music ... the word generally refers directly to the singer ... it is [not only for the female voice but is] also used for a boy's treble voice ("boy soprano"). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries [the term] was used for the adult male castrato with a high range. The word itself is built on the root "sopra" or *sovra* ("above," *ove*) and derives (through such forms as *supremus*, *supranus*, *sovranus*, and *sopranus*) from the Latin *superius*, the commonest term for the top voice in 15th-century polyphony.... Zarlino (*Le istituzioni harmoniche*, 1558, p. 281) remarked that the canto is "a voice called by some the soprano because of its supreme position...." Vicentino (*L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica*, 1555) used only the word "soprano" and almost exclusively the soprano clef, reflecting the interest of the Ferrarese court (where he worked) in music for female sopranos.¹⁶

¹⁵ Claudio Monteverdi, letter (13 June 1627) to Alessandro Striggio, in Claudio Monteverdi, *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi*, trans. and ed. Denis Stevens (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), 333. Original Italian text in Claudio Monteverdi, *Claudio Monteverdi: lettere, dediche e prefazioni*, ed. Domenico De' Paoli (Rome: Edizioni De Santis, 1973), 256; see Appendix A. For information on the ability to sing in more than one voice register or type, see Richard Wistreich, "Reconstructing Pre-Romantic Singing Technique," *The Cambridge Companion to Singing*, ed. John Potter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 178-91. See also Richard Wistreich "La voce è grata assai, ma...: Monteverdi on Singing," *Early Music*, XXII/1 (1 February 1994), 7-20.

¹⁶ Owen Jander, Elizabeth Forbes, Stanley Sadie, J. B. Steane, Ellen T. Harris, and Gerald Waldman, "Soprano," *Grove Music Online* (doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.26243).

Relative to the last point, the interest in music at the Ferrarese court was associated with the *concerto delle donne* (also known as the *Ladies of Ferrara*), a virtuoso ensemble of three female sopranos assembled in 1580.¹⁷ In 1585 Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga established a similar group in Mantua, thereby reinforcing the contemporary taste that favored the high and virtuosic voice.

Composers began to notate embellishments meticulously in the late sixteenth century and were influenced, at least in part, by the *concerto delle donne*. Its members were extremely competent in high tessitura virtuosic singing, as reported by Vincenzo Giustiniani in his *Discorso*:¹⁸

The Ladies of Mantua and Ferrara were highly competent and vied with each other not only in regard to the timbre and disposition of their voices but also in the ornamentation of exquisite *passaggi* delivered at opportune moments, but not in excess.... Furthermore, they moderated or increased their voices, loud or soft, heavy or light, according to the demands of the piece; now dragging, now breaking off with a gentle, interrupted sigh, now singing long *passaggi* legato or detached, now *gruppi*, now leaps, now with long *trilli*, now with short, and again with sweet *passaggi* sung softly, to which sometimes one heard an echo answer unexpectedly. They accompanied the music and the sentiment with appropriate facial expressions, glances, and gestures, with no awkward movements of the mouth or hands or body which might not express the feeling of the song. They

¹⁷ The three ladies were initially Laura Peverara (1546-1610), Anna Guarini (1563-1598), and Livia d'Arco (1565-1611).

¹⁸ Susan McClary, "Soprano as Fetish: Professional Singers in Early Modern Italy," *Desire and Pleasure in Seventeenth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 89. For instance, Luzzasco Luzzaschi's control over every detail of the music of the *concerto delle donne* is noticeable in such examples as the solo madrigal "O Primavera," and the trio "O dolcezze amarissime d'amore," in which he wrote out all embellishments. For additional information regarding virtuoso singing, see John Potter and Neil Sorrell, "The Age of the Virtuoso," *A History of Singing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 84-108.

made the words clear in such a way that one could hear even the last syllable of every word, which was never interrupted or suppressed by passages and other embellishments.¹⁹

By the time Monteverdi wrote his first opera, *La favola d'Orfeo* (1607) for the Mantuan court, the aesthetic preference for virtuosity was already well established with these ensembles (in both Ferrara and Mantua), as is suggested by the main character's difficult aria "Possente spirito" in the 1609 score. Musicologist Susan McClary affirmed that:

If the music of the *concerto delle donne* no longer takes its cues from the complexities of metaphysical poetry, it has a different agenda. It introduces to the public sphere radically new ways of experiencing the self, a self no longer tethered to the exigencies of discourse language but rather freed to simulate the throbbing of desire or the soaring sensation of ecstasy. The voice ceases to serve as a mere vehicle of speech; instead, it enacts metaphors of the body as it would feel if liberated from the constraints of gravity.²⁰

Such liberation from "the constraints of gravity" was key to the ensemble's success: the *concerto delle donne* instilled an insatiable appetite for high voices in the listeners of the time.²¹ Naturally, male virtuoso singers also existed during this period, of which Giulio Caccini and Jacopo Peri were examples. The preference for high voices inspired in the

¹⁹ Vincenzo Giustiniani, *Discorso sopra la musica*, trans. Carol MacClintock, 69-70. Original Italian text in Vincenzo Giustiniani, "Discorso sopra la musica de' suoi tempi (1628)," *Le origini del melodramma*, ed. Angelo Solerti, 107-08; see Appendix A.

²⁰ Susan McClary, "Soprano as Fetish," 89.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

latter part of the sixteenth century the emergence of the castrati, who eventually competed at the same level with women's voices.²²

Castrato

In the words of McClary, "for all the gender bending featured in seventeenth-century opera, the castrati played the role of heroes [or at least, of the main characters], as in *Poppea* with Nerone, while ... tenors and baritones [and basses], whose voices testified to their physical maturity, could only play the parts of fathers, kings or philosophers."²³ The castrato voices were well suited for early Italian opera: a castrato cast as the hero had a voice as powerful as a man's natural voice (due to his highly developed thoracic cavity and underdeveloped vocal cords),²⁴ and the sound was far more brilliant than that of a falsetto.²⁵ Furthermore, it was as high as a woman's register. In fact, his part was often written higher than that of the *prima donna* with whom he sang.²⁶ In a letter dated 16 August 1608 during his visit to Venice, Thomas Coryat described the castrato voices as "supernatural," accompanied by a sweetness of sound, characterized by ease and freedom

²² In this regard, see Susan McClary, "Soprano Masculinities," *Masculinity in Opera: Gender, History, and New Musicology*, ed. Philip Purvis (New York: Routledge, 2013), 33-50, as well as Angus Heriot's book *The Castrati in Opera* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1956; reprinted Boston: Da Capo Press, 1975).

²³ Susan McClary, "Soprano Masculinities," 41.

²⁴ See Rodolfo Celletti, "Aspetti particolari del melodramma barocco: I castrati e la vocalità del loro tempo," *Storia del belcanto* (Rastignano, Bologna: Editografica, 1983; reprinted Fiesole, Italy: Discanto Edizioni, 1983), 113-20.

²⁵ See W. J. Henderson, *Early History of Singing*, 136-37. The predecessor of the operatic male soprano was the falsetto who imitated the boy soprano by singing in the falsetto range.

²⁶ John Rosselli, "The Beginnings of Opera," *The Cambridge Companion to Singing*, ed. John Potter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 90. See also Simon Ravens, "Baroque Europe," *The Supernatural Voice: A History of High Male Singing* (Rochester: The Boydell Press, 2014), 96-122.

from tension, and a “miracle of nature.”²⁷ With such quality of sound, the castrato, who could sing as soprano or as contralto, became increasingly popular in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century opera.²⁸

Contralto and Countertenor

In a letter to Vincenzo Gonzaga in 1610 Monteverdi described a (male) contralto voice in a way that provides important insight into the qualities he sought in a singer:

I was entrusted by Messer Pandolfo [Pandolfo Grandi of Modena]²⁹ (on behalf of your highness) with hearing a certain contralto, come from Modena, desirous of serving Your Highness, so I took him straightaway into S. Pietro [the cathedral in Mantua] and had him sing a motet in the organ-loft. I heard a fine voice, powerful and sustained, and when he sings on the stage he will make himself heard in every corner very well and without a strain, a thing that Brandino [Antonio Brandi, male contralto]³⁰ could not do as well. He has a very good *trillo* and decent ornamentation, and he sings his part very surely in motets.... He has a few small defects, that is to say, he sometimes swallows his vowel a little, almost in the manner of

²⁷ Thomas Coryat, *Coryat's Crudities; Hastily Gobled Up in Five Moneths Travells in Freance, Savoy, Italy* (London, 1611; reprinted Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1905), 389. Thomas Coryat (ca. 1577-1617) was an English traveler and writer of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean age.

²⁸ André Maugars. *Response faite à un curieux* (Rome, 1639), 16. The difference is indicated by French viol player André Maugars, referring to the singing in Rome in the seventeenth century: “There are a greater number of castratos for the *Dessus* [soprano] and *Haute-Contre* [alto], very beautiful and natural tenors, and very few low basses.” See Appendix A for original.

²⁹ Pandolfo Grandi of Modena or Pandolfo del Grande (unknown birth / death dates) was one of the Mantuan court tenors. For further readings on this singer, see the introduction by Denis Stevens to the letter Monteverdi sent 9 June 1610 to Vincenzo Gonzaga in Claudio Monteverdi, *Letters*, trans. and ed. Denis Stevens, 72. According to Pietro Canal, “Della musica in Mantova: Notizie tratte principalmente dell’archivio Gonzagada ed esposte dal M. E. Ab. Pietro Canal,” *Memorie del Reale veneto istituto di scienze, lettere ed arti*, Vol. 21 (Venice: Antonelli, Reale Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 1879), 744, Pandolfo was employed by Vincenzo Gonzaga in 1591.

³⁰ Antonio Brandi, also known as Brandino (unknown birth / death dates), was a Mantuan male contralto who participated at the premiere of the eight-act opera *Arianna* by Monteverdi (1608). See Franklin Mesa, “Arianna,” *Opera: An Encyclopedia of World Premieres and Significant Performances, Singers, Composers, Librettists, Arias and Conductors, 1597-2000* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2013), 17. According to Tim Carter, “Lamenting Ariadne?,” *Early Music*, XXVII/3, *Laments* (Aug. 1999), 403, Brandino might have interpreted the role of Nunzio Secondo in the opera.

Messer Pandolfo, and sometimes sends through his nose, and then again, he lets it slip through his teeth, which makes the word in question unintelligible; and he does not really strike the ornamentation as would be needful, nor does he soften it at certain places. But I am of the sure opinion that he could rid himself of all these things as soon as they are pointed out.³¹

It is not clear from this passage if the male contralto voice was a castrato or a countertenor. As late as Charles Burney's time (1726-1814) and according to his account of his travels to France and Italy, the difference between a castrato contralto and a countertenor was still not precise. He described the contralto of the time as "a countertenor, or a voice of higher pitch than a tenor, but lower than the treble."³² Neither Burney nor his contemporaries made a distinction between a contralto and a countertenor. In Milan Burney heard a castrato contralto, and in Naples he referred to a "very fine contralto" alongside a "young man with a soprano voice, whose singing was full of feeling and expression."³³ Regarding his experience in Germany, he reported that Vittoria Tesi-Tramontini (1700-1775), also known as "La Fiorentina," whom Burney met in 1772, had a strong masculine contralto voice by nature and generally performed songs written for the bass voice (al-

³¹ Claudio Monteverdi, letter (9 June 1610) to Vincenzo Gonzaga, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Letters*, trans. and ed. Denis Stevens, 66-67. Original Italian text in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Domenico De' Paoli, 48; see Appendix A.

³² This definition is present in both Charles Burney and Thomas Becket, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy: or, The Journal of a Tour through Those Countries, Undertaken to Collect Materials for a General History of Music* (London: T. Becket, 1771), v, and in Charles Burney, *Music, Men, and Manners in France and Italy, 1770* (London, 1771; reprinted London: Eulenburg Books, 1980), 227.

³³ Charles Burney and Thomas Becket, *The Present State of Music*, 340.

though it is assumed she sang them an octave higher). For Burney, “contralto” could refer to a voice or a part for either gender, young or adult, natural or castrated. The term was synonymous with the countertenor, but it did not identify the falsettist voice.

The distinction is as follows: “contralto” today denotes the lowest female voice, its nomenclature derived from the fifteenth-century *contratenor altus* [high contratenor], abbreviated to *contr’alto* in the sixteenth century. “Alto” was the designation of choice in the sixteenth century, particularly for falsettists; “contralto” was applied to a low female or castrato voice. With the disappearance of the castrato, the term became exclusive to the female voice.³⁴ The countertenor is, instead, exclusively a male voice, high in register, originally and remaining most commonly applied to a contralto range.

Historically the countertenor emerged in England from the contratenor line in late medieval and Renaissance polyphony, via *contratenor altus* [high contratenor], which—used interchangeably—became “countertenor” and “altus,” then alto (as in Italian nomenclature) and, later still, tautologically, “male” alto [also, *haute-contre*].³⁵

“Countertenor” and “contralto” were interchangeable terms during Monteverdi’s era and as late as Burney’s time.

The role of *vecchia nutrice* [old nurse] in opera has been performed often by countertenors and contraltos. *Poppea* is no exception, with the characters Arnalta and

³⁴ For additional information on the countertenor voice, see Corinna Herr, Arnold Jacobshagen, and Kai Wessel, *Der Countertenor: Die männliche Falsettstimme vom Mittelalter zur Gegenwart* (Mainz: Schott, 2012). See also Peter Giles and J. B. Steane, “Countertenor,” *Grove Music Online* (doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.06694).

³⁵ Owen Jander, J. B. Steane, Elizabeth Forbes, Ellen T. Harris, and Gerald Waldman, “Contralto,” *Grove Music Online* (doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.06365). See also Peter Giles, *The History and Technique of the Counter-Tenor: A Study of the Male High Voice Family* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994).

Nutrice singing in a notated low and narrow range of g / a to a' / b'. Required to sing a notated range of g-a', Ceffea from *Scipione Africano* (1664) by Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676) is another example of a *vecchia nutrice* role assigned to a contralto or countertenor vocal range.³⁶ In terms of the female voice, Monteverdi's system seems clear: contralto is reserved for the lower female range and, as explained in the previous chapter, is associated with humility or supplication. Arnalta and Nutrice, secondary characters in *Poppea* and both contraltos, are employed by the principals Poppea and Ottavia, respectively. Although they each provide advice to their mistresses, they are still relegated to the humble position of servant and, as such, have no power to change the course of the action.

Tenor

As far as exclusively male voices are concerned, there were regular reminders in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century treatises to singers to remain in the chest register as much as possible. Not everyone admired the "artificial voice." Although the falsetto register was recognized early on as having special useful qualities, the chest voice (the register in which one speaks) was preferred by some: in 1562 Giovanni Camillo Maffei, referring to Aristotle's notion of the perfection of the voice, claimed that "since the low voice exceeds and surpasses and embraces all the others, it must be considered more perfect, more noble and more generous."³⁷ Giulio Caccini was also openly opposed to the *voce*

³⁶ Kordula Knaus, "Von Ammen, Müttern, Schwestern und Göttinnen: der Einsatz hoher Männerstimmen für weibliche Bühnencharaktere in der Oper," *Der Countertenor*, 201.

³⁷ Giovanni Camillo Maffei, *Delle lettere del Gio. Camillo Maffei da Solofra libri due*, 26-27, trans. Nanie Bridgman, "Giovanni Camillo Maffei et sa lettre sur le chant," *Revue de musicologie*, trans. Candace Smith and Bruce Dickey, XXXVIII/113 (July 1956), 17. See Appendix A for original.

finta [feigned voice], claiming that “from a feigned voice can come no noble manner of singing, which only proceeds from a natural voice,”³⁸ *i.e.*, without falsetto.

In the early Baroque period before the almost exclusive casting of the castrati, tenors took leading roles in many operas. The earliest works of Monteverdi require substantial roles for tenors, as in the opera *Orfeo* and the *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (1610).³⁹ There are not only several duets for tenors and continuo, *e.g.*, “Zeffiro torna,”⁴⁰ but in *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda* (1624), the roles of both Tancredi and the Testo are assigned to tenors.⁴¹ Monteverdi’s last opera, however, *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, calls for a castrato in the main male role of Nerone.⁴² Cavalli also created some roles for tenor. The high tenor, almost a “tenor-falsetto,” required for the travesty role of

³⁸ Giulio Caccini, “*Le nuove musiche*: Foreword,” *Readings*, trans. and ed. Carol MacClintock, 391-92. See also the translation in Giulio Caccini, “To the Readers,” *Le nuove musiche*, ed. and trans. H. Wiley Hitchcock, 2nd. ed. (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 1970), 9. Original Italian text in Giulio Caccini, “*Le nuove musiche*: Ai lettori,” *Le origini del melodramma*, ed. Angelo Solerti, 69, and facsimile in Giulio Caccini, “Ai lettori,” *Le nuove musiche*, 11; see Appendix A. For additional information regarding falsetto, see Richard Wistreich, “Reconstructing Pre-Romantic Singing Technique,” 177, 180. Wistreich found that “singers and composers understood, long before scientists confirmed the fact, that the voice has two registers: the modal or chest voice, and the falsetto. This is true for men and women and also for children (head voice for women and children). Although basses and tenors, as well as altos and sopranos, have different lower limits to the tones [notes] they can reach, the point at which the chest register gives out at the top and the falsetto takes over ... is roughly the same in all voices,” which is d’ to f’. Wistreich also claimed that “trained baritones and tenors can often carry the chest register relatively easily up to A4 or even B4 without forcing, if the tone is very lightly placed. This softer, sweeter sound, which almost all men can utilize to sing higher tones (often called ‘head voice’), is nevertheless part of the chest register.”

³⁹ John Potter, “The Prehistory of the Voice,” 18.

⁴⁰ “Zeffiro torna,” published in Claudio Monteverdi, *Scherzi musicali* (Venice: Bartolomeo Magni, 1632), SV 251, was originally written for two tenors and continuo.

⁴¹ See tenor duets in Claudio Monteverdi, *Tutte le opere di Claudio Monteverdi*, Vols. VII and VIII, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero (Wein: Universal Edition, 1926).

⁴² The role of “Musica” in *Orfeo* was assigned to a castrato as well [Giovanni Gualberto Magli (?-1625)], but the main and most vocally demanding role in this opera was that of Orfeo.

Ceffea in his *Scipione*, shows the progressive eclipse of the tenor during the second half of the seventeenth and extending into the eighteenth centuries.⁴³

Giambattista Doni supported the use of the tenor voice in certain cases. In his larger discussion of which voices were suitable for the generic roles of gods, angels, and demons, he suggested that the composer should give to the character of Jesus a tenor register because tenors have a more “well-adjusted [*ben temperato*] and perfectly organized body” than any other register.⁴⁴ Despite the lack of clarity in Doni on what constitutes a “perfectly organized body,” a possible reason for this voice to flourish in early operatic scenes was the fact that both Jacopo Peri and Giulio Caccini, in addition to their distinction as the first composers of opera, were also famous tenors, whose levels of virtuosity were well known.⁴⁵ Caccini’s pupil Francesco Rasi (1574-1621), a tenor as well, sang Aminta in Peri’s *Euridice* in Florence (1600), Giove or Febo in Caccini’s *Il rapimento di Cefalo*, (1600), Orfeo in Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo* in Mantua (1607) and Bacco and Apollo in *Arianna* (1608), as well as Apollo in Marco da Gagliano’s *Daphne*. Severo Bonini (1582-1663), also a student of Caccini, affirmed that he [Rasi]: “sang elegantly, and with the greatest passion and spirit. He was a handsome jovial man, with a most pleasing

⁴³ John Potter, “The Prehistory of the Voice,” 18.

⁴⁴ Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” *Readings*, ed. and trans. Carol MacClintock, 202. Original Italian text in Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” *Lyra Barberina: amphichordos: Accedunt ejusdem opera, pleraque nondum edita, ad veterem musicam illustradam pertinentia ex autographis collegit, et in lucem proferri curavit Antonius Franciscus Gorius ... distributa in tomos II. Absoluta vero studio et opera Io. Baptistae Passeri ... cum praefationibus ejusdem*, Vol. 2 (Florence: Typis Caesareis, 1763; reprinted Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1974), 86; see Appendix A.

⁴⁵ For further readings on Peri as a singer, see John Potter, “The Prehistory of the Voice,” 10-14. Peri sang in Caccini’s opera *Il rapimento di Cefalo* in 1600 as well as in the 1589 intermedio to celebrate the marriage of Cristina di Loreno and Ferdinando I de’ Medici, in which Caccini and Rinuccini also participated.

smooth voice; his divine, angelic singing was enhanced by his joyous countenance and majestic presence.”⁴⁶ Although the range of the tenor voice (written for operatic roles) was narrower than it is today, its ability to combine dramatic declamation with extreme virtuosity insured its popularity in early seventeenth-century Italian opera.⁴⁷

Baritone and Bass

The preference for high voices did not exclude roles for the lower registers of the human voice: the baritone and the bass. According to McClary, it became a convention in Venetian opera for these voice types to be assigned to characters who were not connected to romantic activity. In her words, these ranges were

unaltered voices for male characters, testifying by means of sound production that their genitals remain intact—[and that they] mostly never have anything to do with sexual or even romantic activity.... The gender economy of Venetian opera demands a ... severe renunciation: whether they serve as fathers, kings, philosophers, or the more prestigious gods, almost all characters who sing bass have traded erotic pleasure for social authority.... We have, in other words, a bizarre situation in which only castrati can play sexually active characters, while unaltered males sing the roles of those deemed by their culture as ineligible for sexual encounters.⁴⁸

Such distinctions can be observed in Monteverdi’s dramatic works, in which the roles of gods, notably Plutone in *La favola d’Orfeo* and *Il ballo delle ingrate* (1608), Nettuno in

⁴⁶ Severo Bonini, quoted in Carol MacClintock, “The Monodies of Francesco Rasi,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XIV/1 (Spring 1961), 34. See also Severo Bonini, “Estratto dalla ‘Prima parte de’ Discorsi e Regole sopra la musica,’” *Le origini del melodramma*, ed. Angelo Solerti, 129-42.

⁴⁷ John Potter, “The Prehistory of the Voice,” 17-18.

⁴⁸ Susan McClary, “Gender Ambiguities and Erotic Excess in the Operas of Cavalli,” *Desire and Pleasure*, 112.

Ulisse and the philosopher Seneca in *Poppea* were cast as basses and, despite their expected duty to intercede, were not involved directly in emotional affairs. The main roles, however, were assigned to the opposite end of the voice type spectrum: to sopranos, high castrati, and tenors.

Characters and Voice Types

In early opera gods and goddesses, allegories, semi-mythological shepherds, and similar characters were not expected to behave like normal human beings.⁴⁹ It was acceptable, therefore, for them to sing rather than to speak their lines (*i.e.*, more aria / arioso style and less in a recitative style).⁵⁰ In fact, in Monteverdi's last operas—as Potter has observed—the gods, goddesses, and allegories are usually assigned rather elaborate vocal lines, while those same devices are often associated with excess when applied to human characters.⁵¹

The association of voice types with certain characters, particularly supernatural ones, had already been clearly explained by Doni in his *Trattato della musica scenica*, written only two years before Monteverdi created his last operas. The theorist also related certain modes with specific gods, as can be seen in the passage below:

⁴⁹ In this regard, see Rodolfo Celletti, “La vocalità del melodramma barocco,” *Storia del belcanto*, 38-41.

⁵⁰ John Potter, “The Prehistory of the Voice,” 17-18.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

About Assigning the Correct Voice and Tone to the Right Personage

By “tone” should not be understood the term used alternatively for “mode,” called in Greek *armonia*, but that part of the vocal system low or high, about which it can only do good to make a few observations, though they are not necessary for expert composers....

They were also accustomed to assign to the heroes the Hypodorian or Hypophrygian mode, the first of which was lower than the tuning note by a fourth and the second by a semitone. Mars likewise can be given a bass voice, or a broad and robust tenor. Mercury, Apollo, Bacchus, and such characters, who usually appear as young men, should be tenors or contraltos unless you would rather assign a falsetto to Mercury, the better to convey his varied and fraudulent nature; in the same way Proteus (by the Latins called Vertumno) is portrayed; it would be a clever trick to have him use different voices, when that is possible. For the good goddesses one could made differences in the same way—for those who are imagined as more elderly or more virile, a lower tone; as for Cibeles, mother of the gods, or Bellona, goddess of War, a contralto; for Juno, Ceres, Minerva, and Venus, lower soprano; for Diana and Proserpine, higher sopranos.

Because the vain pagan gods were thought to have been born in different countries, where they were worshiped accordingly as the different countries had different systems of music, it would be suitable to assign the different systems to these different gods, for example, the Dorian mode or Hypodorian to Jove of Cretan birth, a province of the Doric nation.... To Minerva the Iastrian or Ionic is appropriate, because the Athenians were of this race, and she was believed to have been born among them. But much more attention should be paid to the quality and proper use of each mode, such as for Mars, god of war, the Hypophrygian; for Venus, the Lydian; ... for Neptune, [also] the Hypophrygian; and the same process for others, to be left to the judgment of the erudite poet, or the judicious musician. Especially is this true of the gods to whom no birthplace has been assigned, like Fortune, Nemesis, etc.⁵²

An analysis of Monteverdi’s treatment of supernatural characters in *Ulisse*—the gods

Nettuno (Act I, scenes 5 and 6; and Act II, scene 7) and Minerva (Act I, scenes 8 and 9;

⁵² Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” trans. Carol MacClintock, *Readings in Music History*, 202-03. Original Italian text in Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” 84-87; see Appendix A.

Act II, scenes 1, 9, and 12; and Act III, scenes 6 and 7)—reveals that the composer did not apply the principles espoused by Doni as far as mode and character association are concerned. He adopted the terminology “tone” as different from the modes in Greek *armonia*, and instead used it to refer to “that part of the vocal system low or high.”⁵³ Tessitura and range in the vocal part are major factors not only in determining the “tone” (the word used by Doni and other contemporary theorists) but also in establishing the tonal contrasts between various characters and emotions, which will be assessed in the following chapters on *Ulisse* and *Poppea*. Despite not utilizing Doni's term in the musical analysis in this thesis—due to its possible association today with psalm tones—and using tonality instead, the tessitura and range associated with an operatic role, as well as the thirds and sixths of the scales they sing, are still of the utmost importance to the musical analysis: the acknowledgment of these factors will help to assess the character construction and depiction of emotion and to associate with them the right genera and the “nature of the voice” as high, medium, and low, according to Monteverdi’s system.⁵⁴

⁵³ Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” trans. Carol MacClintock, *Readings in Music History*, 202. Original Italian text in Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” 84-87; see Appendix A.

⁵⁴ “Tonality” will not be applied simply as “major / minor” mode, for Monteverdi’s time was one of transition between modal and tonal. Occasionally “major / minor” will be used in the musical analysis, howbeit sparsely. When referring to D tonality, for instance, it can encompass both major or minor thirds / sixths. A character can sing either major or minor and still be associated with D tonality and a certain affect. Modal mixture and leaning toward tonality during Monteverdi’s time makes this a difficult topic in terms of choosing the right terminology. As for the tonality, Charon in 1890 attributes to Monteverdi its beginning: “The doctrine of the new modes soon displayed the errors of this harmony, which formed an infinity of bad combinations, such as the sixth with the third, or frequently on many other degrees of the scale: it was on the above principle, that Palestrina and all his school wrote. But the most important point had yet to be divulged. A schoolmaster in Lombardy, (Charles Monteverde) [*sic*], who flourished about 1590, invented the harmony of the dominant; he was also the first who dared to use the seventh and even the ninth of the dominant, openly and without preparation; he likewise employed the minor fifth as a consonance, which had always before been used as a dissonance. Thus the tonal harmony became known.” Alexandre Choron, *A Dictionary of Musicians: From the Earliest Ages to the Present Time. Comprising the Most Important Biographical Contents of the Works of Gerber, Choron, and Fayolle, Count Orloff, Dr.*

It is important to note that Monteverdi did not always express himself musically in terms of modes⁵⁵ as the concept of tonal structures was beginning to take shape (see

Burney, Sir John Hawkins, &C. &C. Together with Upwards of a Hundred Original Memoirs of the Most Eminent Living Musicians; and a Summary of the History of Music, trans. John S. Sainsbury (Rep Sainsbury and Company, 1827; reprinted Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xxviii.

⁵⁵ Whether using modal mixture or tonality, expressing *ethoi* in music was, naturally, one of Monteverdi's concerns. His perhaps greatest influence regarding *ethos* was most likely Zarlino (N.B. as indicated in Chapter Three, Monteverdi had a copy of Zarlino's *Le istitutioni harmoniche*). The *ethoi* Monteverdi applied have not always matched those related to the modal *ethoi* described by Zarlino—although with *Ulisse's* Penelope several instances of D and C tonality correspond to some of these descriptions—since the *ethos* will depend on the text as well as the voice type. See Gioseffo Zarlino, *On the Modes: Part Four of Le istitutioni harmoniche, 1558*, trans. Vered Cohen, ed. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 58-89. See Gioseffo Zarlino, *On the Modes*, 54-89. For Zarlino there are twelve different modes: D, E, F, G, A, C in the authentic and plagal versions, described individually in his *Le istitutioni harmoniche* as “First Mode,” “Second Mode,” and so forth. Zarlino referred to the D authentic as “between sad and cheerful,” “religious, devout, and somewhat sad; hence we can best use it with words that are full of gravity and that deal with lofty and edifying things.” D plagal is explained as having “a certain severe and unflattering gravity, and ... its nature is tearful and humble ... lamentful and deprecatory”; E authentic is “somewhat harsh, but [can move] one to weeping, hence [is suitable] to words which [*sic*] are tearful and full of laments”; E plagal instead is “marvelously suited to the lamentful words or subjects that contain sadness or supplicant lamentation, such as matters of love, and to words which express languor, quiet, tranquility, adulation, deception, and slander. Because of this effect, some called it a flattering mode. This mode is somewhat sadder than its principal [authentic], especially ... in slow tempo”; on F authentic, Zarlino found that “some claimed that, in singing, this mode brings to the spirit modesty, happiness, and relief from annoying cares. Yet the ancients used it with words or subjects that dealt with victory, and because of this some called it a joyous, modest, and pleasing mode.... This mode is not much in use ... for they [composers] consider it harsher and more unpleasant than any other mode”; F plagal is used, like the authentic, “very frequently by churchmen.... They called it a devout and tearful mode to distinguish from the second mode, which is more funeral [*sic*] and calamitous”; G authentic is described as “appropriate to ... lascivious ... cheerful [words] and spoken with modesty, and those that express threat, perturbation, and anger”; G plagal “contains a certain natural softness and an abundant sweetness which fills the spirits of the listeners with joy combined with great gaiety and sweetness ... it is completely removed from lasciviousness and every vice ... [and] contain[s] profound, speculative, and divine thoughts”; A authentic is “suitable for lyric poetry ... [for] words containing cheerful, sweet, soft, and sonorous subjects, because (as it is claimed) it possesses a pleasant severity, mixed with a certain cheerfulness and sweet softness”; A plagal is “not very different from ... the second and fourth modes”; C authentic is known by “its sweetness and beauty;” and finally, C plagal is “suitable for expressing thoughts of love which contain lamentful things, for ... it has something sad about it. Nevertheless, every composer who wishes to write a composition that is cheerful does not depart from this mode.” See also Claude Palisca, “Mode Ethos in the Renaissance,” *Essays in Musicology: A Tribute to Alvin Johnson*, ed. Lewis Lockwood and Edward Roesner (Philadelphia: American Musicological Society, 1900), 131-33. On this same topic as it applies during the sixteenth century, see Tim Carter, “Some Questions of Theory,” *Music in Late Renaissance & Early Baroque Italy* (London: B. T. Batsford Limited, 1992), 47-59.

Chapter Three) and can be observed in the use of mixed modes (see, for example, Penelope's Lament "Di misera regina," Act I, scene 1, in Chapter Five).⁵⁶

Due to the emergence of the system of tonality and the resultant changes being implemented in the modal system, Monteverdi did not follow the conventions of associating particular modes with character types that were described by Doni in his *Trattato della musica scenica*. He did adopt and implement instead most of the theorist's often rather vague suggestions aligning voice type with character traits. The passage below describes Doni's ideas regarding which character should be assigned to a certain type of voice in dramatic works:

About Assigning the Correct Voice and Tone to the Right Personage

When two or more actors appear together, all grown men and of equal condition (let us assume three shepherds), it would not be well to assign to each one the same pitch or tension of the voice. It would be better, since this is heard between men, who speak with great variety, to give one of them a higher voice level and to another a lower level. For example, to the first a level between F and e, to the second, F and f, to the third, G and g.... This has been judiciously observed by Peri, who distinguishes the higher voice of Arcetro from the lower one of Tirsi.... So where three young shepherds might be talking, one could be given the voice of a baritone, another a tenor, and the third a contralto, separating the systems by at least a third. In the same way, if there are two nymphs, assign to one the high soprano and to the other, the lower. One may have some doubts as to what to do when deities, celestial spirits, virtues, vices, etc., come into the picture. I will point out one thing, first in talking of real beings, then of pretended and fabulous ones.

When Jesus, our Lord, is introduced both before he died and after he was revived in glory, I would make no difference between them; it seems right

⁵⁶ See Eric Thomas Chafe, *Monteverdi's Tonal Language* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992). See also Tim Carter, "The Search for Musical Meaning: Modal Types and Tonal Categories," *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 169-78. See also McClary, Susan Kaye. *The Transition from Modal to Tonal Organization in the Works of Monteverdi: A Thesis*. Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1976.

to give him the same voice, that is, a fine tenor (which should be smooth and clear, as in the voice of Sig. Francesco Bianchi) because his voice is more suitable than any other to a well-adjusted and perfectly organized body. As for God the father, who is always presented in the shape of an old man, in my opinion a baritone suits him better than any other voice. To the Angels, who always appear in the shape of youths, according to the age they seem to be, I would give a soprano, more or less high, or even a contralto. As for the celestial and the infernal souls (who rightly have no voices), when they take on an astral or other body appearing as human beings, they should have the same qualities and actions. To the Prince of Demons, because ordinarily he appears in gross and bearded form, it is best to assign a basso profundo, which will suit him better when it is lower than the tuning note, when he sings to the accompaniment of some low instruments with an extravagant sound. To the other demons, according to the form, sex and age they represent, may be assigned different voices, but never sopranos, only some falsettos.

One should take care also when there are many voices that the clearest, most beautiful, and neatest be assigned to the good spirits and the Celestial Deities, and the gloomy, harsh, cracked, and rough ones to the evil spirits and the infernal gods. Saturn, Jove, Neptune, Vulcan, Janus, Hercules, and such fabulous gods should receive deep voices, that is, bass or baritone, with tones even below the tuning note when possible, as the Ancients did....

[As for the] Shades of Souls of the dead ... if they are presented in their usual human form they should be given the same voice as if they were alive. But if only their likenesses covered with a veil are introduced, there would be no difficulty in having them speak in a more subtle voice than their natural one, or by means of some trick their natural voice might be altered so as not to appear to be the voice of a living man; and with this difference, the Blessed Souls should have (for example) a contralto [voice] and the Damned Souls a forced tenor, or some other similar voice, even if the personage of antiquity is of heroic and great stature.... It would also be fitting for the Tritons, Nereids, and such gods and monsters of the sea to sing with strange and unusual voices; the Harpies also with shrill voices, and in like manner the other chimerical and fantastic figures of the Ancients. Also, for certain characters one should use a special kind of melody, for instance, one should have the Sirens sing with a special inflection of the voice: *stracini* (*portamenti*), trilli, tremolo, *passaggetti*, and other very artistic ornaments.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Giambattista Doni, "Trattato della musica scenica," trans. Carol MacClintock, *Readings*, 202-04. Original Italian text in Giambattista Doni, "Trattato della musica scenica," *Lyra Barberina*, 84-87; see Appendix A.

Monteverdi's alignment in terms of character traits and voice type with what Doni prescribed is evident when supported by examples. For instance, Doni referred to God as "presented in the shape of an old man" and best cast as a baritone. The two characters who represent "old" and "time" in Monteverdi's last operas are portrayed as basses: Tempo (Time, *Chronos*) in the opera *Ulisse* and Seneca in *Poppea*, the stoic old philosopher and Nerone's tutor (before the decay of the Roman Empire). Just as Doni categorized the angels "who always appear in the shape of youths, according to the age they seem to be," Monteverdi set Amore (Love), who is depicted as a slender-winged youth in classical mythology, for a soprano voice. Giove (Jove) in *Ulisse*, instead, does not have a particularly low voice—assigned only one g'' and a couple at f'', notes that are manageable for a baritone—and resides in a medium tessitura, indications that this is a role that could be sung by either a (low) tenor or a baritone.⁵⁸ As for the remaining gods whom Doni addressed in the excerpt above—"Juno, Ceres, Minerva, and Venus, [as a] lower soprano"—Monteverdi followed the theorist's advice in casting them as sopranos, often in a lower range. Giunone (Juno) in *Ulisse* is not a particularly high or low soprano. The same applies to Minerva in *Ulisse*. As for Pallade (Pallas) in *Poppea*, who is also identified as Minerva in Roman mythology, her short part extends only to f''; the remainder lies in the middle register, hence coinciding with the range of a low soprano. The same situation occurs with Venere (Venus) in *Poppea*: her highest pitch is an e'', and her tessitura aligns both with that of low soprano and a mezzo-soprano.

⁵⁸ Today the designation is *baritenor*, a type of voice that is a baritone [timbre] with virtually a tenor range.

Doni dealt mainly with non-human characters and corresponding voice types in the excerpt reproduced above, yet provided little justification for his choices (with the exception of the correlation of age and voice type, such as of God and the angels). Gods and goddesses, although able to feel emotion, are not affected in the same way as human characters. Their frequent virtuosic singing and their emphasis on singing rather than speaking (song rather than recitative) became accepted as their power overcame that of the human characters. In the search for verisimilitude, when human characters are assigned similar emotional expression communicated with highly virtuosic and melismatic singing as prescribed as a matter of course for the gods, it can become excessive and display a lack of “temperance,” to use Monteverdi’s expression in his three *genera* system.

To which extent, then, are the musical *genera*, voice types, and emotions (as set forth in the Preface of Book VIII) associated with the primary characters in *Ulisse* and *Poppea*? How are their *humana fragilità* [human frailty], or anger, or excitement, or controlled emotions expressed in music? These questions will be addressed in the next two chapters by examining the point of view of the composer, by conducting character studies of the main operatic participants, and by analyzing the music assigned to these roles in *Ulisse* and in *Poppea*.

CHAPTER FIVE

IL RITORNO D'ULISSE IN PATRIA (1639/40)

Introduction and Opera Overview

After an examination of the different voice types with their ranges and tessitura in terms of high, medium, and low in the previous chapter and the study of the Preface terminology in Chapter Three, it is now instructive to assess how many of these concepts apply to complex operatic characters and to which degree. The first step is to examine the two main roles in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*—Penelope and Ulisse—and observe how they convey affections through their voices and which musical *genera* are associated with them before analyzing Monteverdi's last opera, in which the number of complex characters is significantly higher.

Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria [The Return of Ulysses to His Homeland] consists of a prologue and three acts (initially five)¹ to a libretto by Venetian nobleman Giacomo Badoaro, a member of the *Accademia degli Incogniti*.² The first performance was at the

¹ Changes to the libretto are detailed in at least three sources by Ellen Rosand: *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 250-53; "The Bow of Ulysses," *The Journal of Musicology* XII/3 (Summer 1994), 383; and "Two Scores," and "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 69-88, 249-94.

² Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, trans. Tim Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 251. Giacomo Badoaro worked with Homer's epic and the events related to the Trojan Wars again for the libretti *Ulisse errante* (1644), with music by Francesco Saccati, and *Elena rapita da Teseo* (1653), with music by Jacopo Melani, wrongfully attributed to Francesco Cavalli, as observed by Fabbri. See Silke Knippschild, "Homer to the Defense: The *Accademia degli Incogniti* and the opera *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* in Early Modern Venice," *Classics@3: The Homerizon: Conceptual Interrogations in Homeric Studies*, ed. Richard Armstrong and Casey Dué III (2005), 1-19.

Teatro SS Giovanni e Paolo in Venice during the 1639-1640 carnival season at the same time as the revival of *L'Arianna* at the Teatro S. Moisè.³

Although the score and libretto of *Ulisse* were considered lost,⁴ the opera was still listed in catalogs of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries based on evidence contained in the *Memorie Teatrali di Venezia* (1681) of Cristoforo Ivanovich (1620-1689). There he reported that it was the penultimate Monteverdi opera performed at the Teatro San Cassiano in 1641.⁵ In 1880 August Wilhelm Ambros discovered a manuscript of the opera at the National Library in Vienna although it bore no signature and no title. Some years later another copy was discovered at the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, this time with the librettist's name indicated.⁶ The dedication introducing the libretto of *L'Ulisse errante* (Venice: Giovanni Pietro Pinelli, 1644) further proves the collaboration between

³ Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, 250. According to Fabbri, the public Teatro S. Moisè hosted spoken plays exclusively until 1640.

⁴ There are currently four editions of this opera: Claudio Monteverdi, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria – Die Heimkehr des Odysseus*, in *Denkmäler der tonkunst in Österreich*, ed. Robert Haas (Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1959); Claudio Monteverdi, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria: drama in musica*, in *Tutte le opere*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero, Vol. 12 (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1942); Claudio Monteverdi, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria – The Return of Ulysses*, ed. Alan Curtis (London: Novello, 2002); and Claudio Monteverdi, *Il ritorno di Ulisse in patria: tragedia di lieto fine in un prologo e tre atti = The Return of Ulysses = Die Rückkehr des Odysseus in die Heimat*, ed. Rinaldo Alessandrini (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2007).

⁵ Cristoforo Ivanovich, *Minerva al tavolino: lettere diuere di proposta, e risposta à varij personaggi, sparse d'alcuni componimenti in prosa, & in verso. Nel fine le memorie teatrali di Venezia* (Venice: Nicolò Pezzana, 1681).

⁶ See August Wilhelm Ambros, *Geschichte der Musik*, ed. Hugo Leichtentritt (Leipzig: Leuckart, 1881), 362, and Francesca Zardini and Grazia Lana, “Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria’ di Badoaro e Monteverdi,” *Gli Ulissi di Giacomo Badoaro. Albori dell’opera a Venezia* (Verona: Fiorini, 2007), 31. The authorship was not without polemic: see, for example, Emil Vogel, *Claudio Monteverdi: Leben, Wirken im Lichte der zeitgenössischen Kritik und Verzeichniss seiner im Druck erschienenen Werke* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1887), in which Vogel contested Monteverdi’s authorship of this opera.

Badoaro and Monteverdi: “*Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* was adorned with the music of Signor Claudio Monteverde, subject to all fame and of long-lasting name.”⁷

Badoaro and Busenello, the latter *Poppea*’s librettist, were both members of the *Accademia degli Incogniti* and part of a movement in Italian drama that gradually shifted emphasis from the purely mythological or pastoral to real, historical subjects.⁸ *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* does, in fact, represent the heroic passions in music drama through the story of human characters. Nonetheless, the opera in itself is half mythological, half human in its roster of participants. This “hybrid” drama can be categorized in two ways: as a moral allegorical opera and as a drama that leans toward verisimilitude with human characters defined as individuals.⁹ The plot for *Ulisse* is taken from Books XIII through XXIII of Homer’s *Odyssey*.¹⁰ With Penelope and Ulisse as its main characters, the opera is focused on how constancy and virtue are ultimately rewarded while treachery and deception are overcome.¹¹

⁷ Giacomo Badoaro, “Letter of *L’Assicurato* [The Assured One], Member of the *Accademia degli Incogniti* Written on his *Ulisse Errante* to Signor Michel’Angelo Torcigliani,” *Composing Opera: From Dafne to Ulisse Errante*, ed. Tim Carter and Zygmunt M. Szweykowski, trans. Tim Carter (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 1994), 1967. Original Italian in *ibid.*, 196 and Giacomo Badoaro, *L’Ulisse errante: opera musicale / dell’Assicurato academico incognito; al signor Michel’angelo Torcigliani* (Venice: Giovanni Pietro Pinelli, 1644), 16-17; see Appendix A. The manuscript score is housed in the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna (MS 18763). It contains only the continuo and vocal parts, with the exception of the sinfonie and ritornelli, which are written in five parts with instruments specified. The surviving manuscript is a working copy, *i.e.*, to be used for a performance, unlike *L’Orfeo*’s edition of 1609, which was associated with a courtly event and intended to be preserved.

⁸ Leo Schrade, *Monteverdi: Creator of Modern Music* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1950), 348.

⁹ This is also true of Claudio Monteverdi’s dramatic works *La favola d’Orfeo* and *L’Arianna*.

¹⁰ See Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Alexander Pope (London: Printed by W. Bowyer for B. Lintot, 1715; reprinted Cambridge: ProQuest, 1992). The excerpts from the *Odyssey* for this project will be taken from this source. For a prose version of the text, see Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. by S. H. Butcher and Andrew Lang, *The Complete Works of Homer: The Iliad and the Odyssey* (New York: The Modern Library, 1938).

¹¹ For this chapter I will adopt the names of characters as they appear in Monteverdi’s opera, even when I am referring to them in relation to Homer’s *Odyssey*.

Table 5.1. Characters (by Order of Appearance)¹²

L'Humana Fragilità [Human Frailty]	mezzo-soprano
Il Tempo [Time, god]	bass
La Fortuna [Fortune, goddess]	soprano
Amore [Cupid / Love, god]	(boy) soprano (Costantino Manelli)
Penelope [wife of Ulysses]	mezzo-soprano (Giulia Paoelli)
Euriclea [Eurycleia, Penelope's nurse]	mezzo-soprano
Melanto [Melantho, attendant to Penelope]	soprano
Eurimaco [Anfinomo's servant, Melanto's lover]	tenor
Nettuno [Neptune, sea-god]	bass (Francesco Manelli)
Giove [Jupiter, supreme god]	tenor (? Giovan Battista Marinoni)
Coro Faeci [Chorus of Phaeacians]	alto, tenor, bass
Ulisse [Ulysses or Odysseus, King of Ithaca]	tenor
Minerva [goddess]	soprano (Maddalena Manelli)
Eumete [Eumaeus, shepherd, Ulysses's old servant]	tenor
Iro [Irus, a parasite]	tenor
Telemaco [Telemachus, son of Ulysses & Penelope]	tenor
Antinoò [Antinous, a suitor to Penelope]	bass
Pisandro [Peisander, a suitor to Penelope]	tenor
Anfinomo [Amphonomus, a suitor to Penelope]	alto or countertenor
Giunone [Juno, goddess]	soprano
Coro in cielo [Heavenly chorus]	soprano, alto, tenor
Coro marittimo [Chorus of sirens]	soprano, tenor, bass

Prologue: The events of the opera are preceded by this moralizing introduction in which Humana Fragilità declares herself subject to the hazards, unpredictability, and often tyranny of Time (Tempo), Fortune (Fortuna), and Love (Amore).

Act I: Ulisse's palace on the island of Ithaca. Penelope has waited twenty years for Ulisse's return from the Trojan Wars and laments his absence to her nurse Euriclea

¹² The characters are listed by order of appearance in the opera. The names of the singers in parentheses are those who performed at the premiere. See Ellen Rosand and Sergio Vartolo, *Preface to Recording: Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria: Monteverdi's Five-Act Drama* [CD] (Leeuwarden, Netherlands: Brilliant Classics, 93104, 2005); Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre*, 18, n. 24; and Tim Carter, "The Art of the Theater," *Monteverdi's Musical Theatre* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 101.

("Di misera regina"). Shortly after, two lovers (Melanto and Eurimaco) appear on stage to celebrate the pleasures of passion. Ulisse returns to Ithaca with the Phaeacian sailors, whose ship turns to stone as soon as he disembarks; disoriented, he awakens on the shore and is angry with the Phaeacians for abandoning him. Soon he is greeted by the goddess Minerva, disguised as a shepherd, who tells him that not only has he arrived home, but his wife has been faithful during his long absence. Ulisse bathes in a sacred fountain to conceal his identity both from the wrath of Nettuno and from Penelope's suitors and emerges as an old beggar. The shepherd Eumete, Ulisse's faithful servant, greets his disguised master and, unaware of the beggar's true identity, learns from him of Ulisse's imminent return.

Act II: Ulisse's palace on the island of Ithaca. Eumete welcomes Ulisse's son Telemaco, who has arrived in Ithaca with the help of Minerva; she introduces him to the old beggar. A ray of light reveals the beggar's true identity, and father and son are joyously reunited. At the palace Penelope resists the advances of the suitors, who are disturbed to hear of Telemaco's return. Minerva offers Ulisse a plan for removing the suitors while Telemaco tells Penelope of his recent travels. Still disguised, Ulisse appears and is taunted by Iro, who challenges him to fight. Ulisse defeats Iro, and the scene shifts again to Penelope, who insists that Ulisse be welcomed. She proclaims that she will marry whoever is able to string her husband's great bow, still unaware that the beggar is indeed her beloved. The suitors fail, leaving Ulisse to prepare the weapon, which he uses to kill them.

Act III: Ulisse's palace on the island of Ithaca. Despite the massacre of the suitors, Penelope is not convinced that the old beggar is, in fact, Ulisse. Not even Telemaco

can persuade her of the truth. Minerva and Juno successfully plead with Jove on Ulisse's behalf. Only after Ulisse has provided factual proof, instead of trying to convince her through arguments, does Penelope finally recognize her husband after twenty years of sorrow, solitude, longing, waiting, and uncertainty of his return.

Prologue

Before analyzing the main characters (Penelope and Ulisse) and their music, the connections between them and the allegorical figures introduced in the Prologue are noteworthy for their commonalities regarding harmony, rhythm, and / or *ethos*.¹³ Monteverdi has replaced Badoaro's original three characters (Fate, Prudence, and Fortitude) with four of his own (Humana Fragilità, Tempo, Fortuna, and Amore). The reasons for such a change are associated, most likely, with how the composer perceived the human characters in *Ulisse* and can be observed in the tonality relation that those engaged in the Prologue have with the main roles. The allegorical figure (Humana Fragilità [Human Frailty]) and the gods (Tempo [Chronos, Time], Fortuna [Fortune], and Amore [Love / Cupid]) each has his or her own distinct melodic line, as will be assessed below.

Humana Fragilità (usually cast as a mezzo-soprano) sings arioso passages with proportionate lines in the D harmony—the one also utilized most often by Penelope—with a few rather short, straightforward, and simple diminutions (instead of fast runs) on the words *humana*, [human], *combate* [it combats], *fugace* [fleeting], *fortuna* [fortune],

¹³ See Robin A. Miller, *The Prologue in the Seventeenth-Century Venetian Operatic Libretto: Its Dramatic Purpose and the Function of Its Characters* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Texas, 1998), for additional readings on this topic.

and *gioco* [game]. Most of her singing is syllabic, and her verse is repeated several times after interjections from the gods who participate in the Prologue. Only in the last part of the opera’s introduction is she silent, excluded (in the libretto and in the music) from the trio formed by Fortuna, Amore, and Tempo. The notated range of Humana Fragilità¹⁴ is rather limited for an operatic character—less than an octave (from c’ to bb’), with a medium tessitura between d’-a’ as is apparent in Example 5.1:

Example 5.1. Humana Fragilità’s Fourth Stanza in the Prologue, mm. 1-8.¹⁵

L’HUMANA FRAGILITÀ

Mi - se - ra mi - se - ra son ben i - o fat - tu - ra hu - ma - na
(Lento)

cre - der a cie - chi cre - der a cie - chi e zop - pi è co - sa va - na.

*Misera son ben io, fattura humana;
creder a ciechi e zoppi è cosa vana.*

Truly wretched am I, a thing of man’s
making
to believe in the blind and the lame is a
vain thing.¹⁶

¹⁴ As indicated in Chapter Four, all further references to range will be in terms of the notated pitch, not any actual sounding pitch.

¹⁵ The musical examples presented in this chapter are transcribed, without the realized continuo part, from the score of Claudio Monteverdi, *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero. The measure numbers refer only to the example included in the thesis and not to the example’s position in the complete score. The titling of the captions is according to the manner in which the excerpts are typically referenced: e.g. “Penelope’s Lament” in *Ulisse*, “Seneca and Nerone’s Confrontation Scene,” and “Di misera regina” in *Poppea*, or simply “Poppea’s Scene with Arnalta” and “Ottone’s Second Verse in Act I, Scene I” when there is not a specific title associated with the excerpt in question.

¹⁶ This passage is as translated in Claudio Monteverdi, and Giacomo Badoaro, “*Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*,” *Boston Early Music Festival, June 7-14, 2015: Invention & Discovery*, trans. Ellen Hargis (Boston:

The simplicity of the vocal line of Humana Fragilità is apparent in this passage.

Tempo (*Chronos*, Time), bass, has a melodic motion characteristic of *stile concitato*, with a non-dancelike motive, fast and long runs, and dotted notes on the words *non* [no], *ali* [wings], and *mortali* [mortals]. He sings in G, the main tonality adopted by Ulisse for most of the opera. Tempo's music begins in a low range and shifts suddenly to a faster pace with quick runs, which is better suited to a more assertive line. This music stands in contrast to that of Humana Fragilità, who is subject to Time [Tempo]. The latter has an extensive range (from F to d') and a tessitura of one octave (from A to a).

Fortuna sings a sequential pattern largely following a circle of fifths (D / G / C / A) in a triple-meter dancelike arioso with melismatic text setting starting in D and ending in the G tonality. Such compositional choices are noteworthy: Penelope's main key is D; Ulisse's is usually G, but there are several instances in which he sings in C. Furthermore, Amore's tonality is A, which both Penelope and Ulisse utilize in the final recognition scene. Fortuna's motive is usually in stepwise motion with equal note values. The repetition of single words and entire verses is prominent, with a tempo faster than that of Humana Fragilità and Tempo. Her range is also wider than that of the former (from d' to g''), and her tessitura, higher (between g' and d'').

Finally, Amore (soprano) sings between the balanced arioso of Humana Fragilità and the dancelike song of Fortuna, in triple meter and in A. As with the other characters,

Boston Early Music Festival, 2015), 154. All translations from the libretto are taken from this source, unless specified otherwise.

word repetition is also present here, as well as melismas on the words *amore* [love], *saettator* [archer], *ignuto* [naked], and *difesa* [defense]. This character's range is from e' to g''; the tessitura is the highest of all the characters in the prologue—from g' to e''.

In the musical portrayal of Human Frailty, Monteverdi clearly distinguished her as a human character from the gods of Time, Fortune, and Love. At the end of the Prologue, the voices of Tempo, Fortuna, and Amore join in a trio that excludes Humana Fragilità. She is thus shown to be subject to the whims of time, fortune, and love, a situation that encapsulates the plot of the opera for both Penelope and the title character. The gods in the Prologue consistently sing more elaborated *passaggi*, as do the other gods later in the opera, than the human characters, whose degree of virtuosic singing is rather limited. The constraint and moderation of Humana Fragilità is also expressed in the long note values for the basso continuo (see Example 5.1).¹⁷ Vocally, her restrained line (much closer to a dramatic recitative) acts in contrast with those of the other characters in order to represent human emotions.

Recitative is a recurring manner of delivering text in *Ulisse*, in particular with regard to the character of Penelope, who, with the exception of her initial lament, maintains

¹⁷ For an analysis of the prologue, see Hendrik Schulze, *Odysseus in Venedig: Sujetwahl und Rollenkonzeption in der venezianischen Oper des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004), 103-04. An interesting relationship regarding hexachords is indicated by the same author, *ibid.*, 104: "With regard to the hexachords from which the respective chords originate, which underlie the various parts, there is again a striking difference between the fragilità allegory and the other allegories: it applies to the use of the chords of the *Hexachordum Molle* (Bb-F-C-g / G-d / D-a / A) with a Phrygian cadence after A, later bringing in chords on E / e and expanding the *Hexachordum naturale*. The other allegories [gods], however, use the chords of the *Hexachordum naturale*, partially extended to the *Hexachordum durum* (C-G-D-a / A-e / E-b) that appears exclusively in the trio, the point at which the three allegories definitively state their dominance over Humana Fragilità. Here the intent appears clear: to separate who suffered [*erleidende*] (*molle*) from the cause of the suffering [*bewirkende*] (*durum*). This parallelism can be observed again and again in the course of the opera." [My translation]. See Appendix A for the German original.

control over her emotions for much of the opera.¹⁸ A discussion of the distinctions between aria and recitative (*i.e.*, singing and speaking) is relevant at this point in order to understand better Penelope's manner of delivering her text, which is most often through speech-like recitative.

Recitative

According to musicologist Beth Glixon, while an aria moves in phrases more-or-less predictable and regular, recitative instead follows a freely metrical text, and its phrases are often unpredictable, irregular, and of indeterminate length.¹⁹ A recitative is usually melodic in nature, "with the exception of the most declamatory recitative, the repeated-note style" that is, in itself, "amelodic." When it is placed in contrast to an active vocal line, generally the tendency is to draw the attention to the more melodic expressive elements.²⁰

¹⁸ For an analysis of the function of recitative in seventeenth-century opera, see Beth Lise Glixon, *Recitative in Seventeenth-Century Venetian Opera: Its Dramatic Function and Musical Language* (Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1985). See also F. W. Sternfeld, "A Note on 'Stile Recitativo,'" *Proceedings of the Royal Music Association*, CX (1983-1984), 41-44. For the utilization of arias specifically, see Claude V. Palisca, "Aria Types in the Earliest Operas," *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* IX/1 (2003) [online]. For a clarification of the meaning of the term from the period as it was initially applied by Vincenzo Giustiniani in his *Discorso sopra la musica* (1628), see Tim Carter, "An Air New and Grateful to the Ear: The Concept of Aria in the Renaissance and Early Baroque Italy," *Music Analysis* XII/2 (1993), 127-45. See also F. W. Sternfeld, "Aspects of Aria," *Con che soavità: Studies in Italian Opera, Song, and Dance, 1580-1740*, ed. Iain Fenlon and Tim Carter (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 111-17.

¹⁹ See Chapter Four for further discussion regarding aria and recitative.

²⁰ Beth Glixon, *Recitative*, 67. According to Glixon, the term "recitative" encompasses various styles of music, mainly these three: simple and recitatorial; affective and emotional; and lyrical, moving toward arioso. Arioso lies between the unmeasured recitative, set to recitative verse, and the more formal features of the arias. The characteristics of arioso correspond to the types of arias, tendentially in three categories according to the text: the laments and the comic and serious arias. See Ellen Rosand, "The Laments," "The Comic Arias," "The Serious Arias," *Aria in the Early Operas of Francesco Cavalli* (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1971), 83-379.

Regarding Italian recitative, Mersenne affirmed in *Harmonie universelle* (1636)

that:

As to Italians, in their recitatives they observe many things of which ours (the French) are deprived, because they represent as much as they can the passions and affections of the soul and spirit as, for example, anger, furor, disdain, rage, the frailties of the heart, and many other passions, with a violence so strange that one would almost say that they are touched by the same emotions they are representing in the song.²¹

Recitative was, in fact, adopted extensively in the opera *Ulisse* to emphasize the contrast between human and godly emotions, the latter of which were expressed through a more elaborated singing style.²² While Monteverdi more closely approached a level of realism in *Poppea*, with many fewer appearances of the gods, the presence of human characters in *Ulisse* and their expression of emotion through recitative reflected his quest towards such verisimilitude.²³

Due to the complexity of operatic characters, the variety of conflicting emotional situations and of changes in mood / affect is essential to observe. These changes can be

²¹ Marin Mersenne, “*Harmonie Universelle: How to Train Voices and Make Them Capable of Singing All Kinds of Airs and Chansons, and Particularly How to Sing Embellishments*,” *Readings in the History of Music in Performance*, ed. and trans. Carol MacClintock (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), 173.

²² See Tim Carter, “‘In Love’s Harmonious Consort?’ Penelope and the Interpretation of *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* V/1 (1993), 4. In the words of Carter, “song was also appropriate for certain kinds of characters: gods and allegorical figures (song signifies superhuman powers), inhabitants of a pastoral world . . . , and characters of ‘low,’ often comic, status.” It was suited for lovers and their “flirtatious behavior” as well.

²³ Beth Glixon, *Recitative*, 62. “The amount of recitative per dialogue . . . varied considerably according to the dramatic situation. Lovers traditionally sang lyrical music to each other; but most interaction among other characters was advanced through recitative.”

conveyed through the manipulation of rhythm (slower / faster through different note values, syncopation, change of meter), harmony (harmonic shifts, pedal points, arpeggiations, cadential formulas), repetition (rhythmic, melodic, and textual), and tessitura, as will be observed with Penelope's music.

Penelope's Character

It can be assumed that the librettist depicted the characters in *Ulisse* according to his own interpretation of Homer's original.²⁴ It is necessary, nevertheless, to consider certain information contained in the original source as well, some of which occurs earlier than Book XIII, for it reinforces the depth of interpretation of the main characters, whether for Badoaro or for Monteverdi. In the case of Penelope, for instance, who represents the archetype of the *sposa abbandonata*, there are many valuable indications of her character before Book XIII. In Book II of Homer's *Odyssey*, for example, Antinoo attributes to her the "traditional feminine virtues": to knowing the working of fine fabrics, to possessing noble thoughts,²⁵ and to being "inventive" and "artful."²⁶ As for her gift for inventiveness, Joseph Russo observed that Penelope was "renowned throughout Greece for her loyalty and cleverness."²⁷ These last two features are essential for understanding scenes such as the ones with the suitors, as well as Penelope's distrust of her own senses

²⁴ For more on this inquiry, see Ellen Rosand, "Sources and Authenticity: Three Librettos," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 52-58.

²⁵ Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Alexander Pope, 63 [2.117].

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 62 [2.106]: "Thus spoke th'inventive Queen, with artful sighs."

²⁷ Joseph Russo, "Interview and Aftermath: Dream, Fantasy, and Intuition in 'Odyssey' 19 and 20," *American Journal of Philology* 103 (1982), 9. The numbers in the title refer to books in *The Odyssey*.

in recognizing Ulisse until he discloses details that only he could know, thereby proving his identity.

Later, in Book XVIII, Penelope repudiates the attribution of glory / renown [*kleos*]²⁸ by focusing on her pain and faithfulness instead.²⁹ She responds to the compliments of Eurimaco, who attributed to her the combination of qualities that traditionally distinguished female excellence in the heroic world, as follows:

Should Greece through all her hundred states survey
Thy finish'd charms, all Greece would own thy sway,
In rival crouds contest the glorious prize,
Dispeopling realms to gaze upon thy eyes:
O woman! loveliest of the lovely kind,
In body perfect, and compleat in mind!³⁰

According to Marilyn Katz, even when Penelope addresses her own glory: her “*kleos* comprises both constancy and cleverness. It includes both the beauty, probity, and skill that make her an exemplar of her sex.”³¹

²⁸ *Kleos* means glory, renown, or reputation. Marilyn Katz made extensive use of this term in her book *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminacy in the Odyssey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

²⁹ Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Alexander Pope, 174 [18.293-300]: “Ah me! returns the Queen, when from this shore / Ulysses sail'd, then beauty was no more! / The Gods decreed these eyes no more should keep / Their wonted grace, but only serve to weep. / Should he return, whate'er my beauties prove, / My virtues last; my brightest charm is love. / Now, Grief, thou all art mine! the Gods o'er cast / My soul with woes, that long, ah long must last!”

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 176 [8.289-92].

³¹ Marilyn Katz, *Penelope's Renown*, 4-5.

Penelope's constancy becomes a stable, unchanging reference point for the adventures of Ulisse. She calls the suitors to her, but then she rejects their attention and remains steadfastly loyal to Ulisse until Telemaco reaches maturity. The reason is evident for the first time in Book IV: the suitors plot against Telemaco as the potential king of Ithaca, a replacement for his father.

When he considered Telemaco simply a young boy, Antinoo proposed an ambush to teach him a lesson for his boldness. Later in Book XVI the latter's authority, once he has reached maturity, becomes a true threat to the suitors, whereupon they abandon plans to attack him.³² At this point, the main focus of the plot is shifted to Ulisse's return.

Before her husband's arrival, Penelope is distressed by the dangers threatening her son and realizes that she must gain time to devise a different way to cope with the threat of violence to Telemaco and to herself.³³ It is here that her cleverness comes to the forefront: she decides to fill the suitors with hope and, thereby, divert them from their planned brutality.³⁴ According to Katz, "Penelope does not approach [the suitors] seductively, but she inspires them with the expectation that she is planning to marry one of them in order to forestall their violence."³⁵

³² Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Alexander Pope, 91 [16.383-92].

³³ W. Büchner, "Die Penelopeszenen in der Odysee," *Hermes* 75 (1940), 139. See also Marilyn Katz, *Penelope's Renown*, 82.

³⁴ W. Büchner, "Die Penelopeszenen," 140.

³⁵ Marilyn Katz, *Penelope's Renown*, 90 [referring to 18.160]. In the edition used for this thesis (Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Alexander Pope, 168), the translator explained this verse as follows: "The Greek [language] is very concise, and the expression uncommon ... that is, Penelope thus acted that she might "dilate the heart of the Suitors;" meaning (as Eustathius observes) that she might give them false hopes by appearing in their company; for the heart shrinks and is contracted by sorrow and despair, and is again dilated by hope or joy. This is I believe literally true, the spirits flow briskly when we are in joy, and a new pulse is given to the blood, which necessarily must dilate the heart: on the contrary, when we are in sorrow the spirits are

On the surface, Penelope's behavior appears to be one of weeping, mourning, "and making occasional piteous complaints about her own situation, after which she inevitably retreats upstairs to cry, pray, and sleep."³⁶ Her personal situation had grown increasingly desperate: on the one hand, her husband has vanished without a trace, with no signs of coming back to her.³⁷ On the other, she is surrounded by suitors whom she is seemingly free to accept but not allowed to reject. The risk of holding them at bay is placing her son in mortal danger.³⁸ With no desirable choices available, Penelope has reason to despair.³⁹

Penelope is more than a passive victim, however: she manipulates her situation as part of self-defense and self-interest.⁴⁰ In fact, her acquiescence to the suitors' wooing is simply part of her plan to gain time; her suggestion that she will marry whoever can string her husband's bow is made with a lack of expectation that any of the suitors will succeed.⁴¹ Her situation is decidedly complex: she is not connected to Ulisse by blood, and she maintains her own autonomy, free from subjection to male authority until Tele-

languid, and the blood moves less actively; and therefore the heart shrinks and contracts, the blood wanting vigour to dilate and expand it."

³⁶ See Douglas Olson, *Blood and Iron: Stories and Storytelling in Homer's 'Odyssey'* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 149. Penelope's emotional states are referenced in Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Alexander Pope, 259-61 [14.409-33]; 61 [16.36-43], after which she inevitably retreats upstairs to cry, pray, and sleep (e.g., 262 [14.449-51]; 62 [17.58-60]).

³⁷ Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Alexander Pope, 28 [1.241-42].

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.126, 68; 16.409-23, 92-93.

³⁹ Douglas Olson, *Blood and Iron*, 149.

⁴⁰ See Patricia Marquardt, "Penelope *Polutropos*," *American Journal of Philology* CVI (1985), 32-48.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

maco reaches maturity, which will, at the same time, give her the freedom to remarry and disassociate herself from Ulisse.⁴²

Penelope's reluctance to accept the imminent return of Ulisse is regarded as human and realistic by several scholars, notably Agathe Thornton: "Penelope's unbelief ... is a consistent feature of her character."⁴³ It must be taken into consideration how many years she has waited in vain, how many times she has been disappointed, and how much she sees herself compelled to accept the necessity of remarrying.⁴⁴ Disbelief and longing stand side-by-side in Penelope's characterization, and the first is the basis of the second, for the more extended the longing, the further distant Ulisse seems.⁴⁵ Penelope's reticence in recognizing Ulisse is seen first by Telemaco and later by Ulisse, as cold-hearted: "The Gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone!"⁴⁶ Ulisse attempts to counter her steadfastness by transforming her "stubborn heart" into an attribute and designating her as a woman among women.

Only when Ulisse discloses information that he alone can know—the description of their bed—does Penelope finally recognize and accept her husband. The symbolism of this description is rather momentous, for, not only does it represent the institution of marriage, but, in the words of Katz, "the bed itself is a mist often interpreted as an emblem of

⁴² See Marilyn Katz, *Penelope's Renown*, 9-10.

⁴³ Agathe Thornton, *People and Themes on Homer's 'Odyssey'* (London: Methuen, 1970), 105.

⁴⁴ Herbert Eisenberger, "Studien zur Odyssee," *Palingenesia VII* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1973), 271.

⁴⁵ Siegfried Besslich, *Scheigen, Verschweigen, Übergehen: Die Darstellung des Unausgesprochenen in der Odyssee* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1966), 21.

⁴⁶ Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Alexander Pope, 149 [23.106].

permanence and stability—its immobility is a symbol of Penelope’s own resolute faithfulness.”⁴⁷

Penelope is depicted in the *Odyssey* with the characteristics of cleverness (even cunning) and stability and, at the same time, is grieving and drowning in her own pain. The complexity of Penelope’s character is also reflected in how Monteverdi represented her musically in *Ulisse*—from the depths of her despair in her own “human frailty” to her assertiveness and resolve to remain faithful to her husband and her son⁴⁸—and in how he reinforced her image through changes to Badoaro’s libretto.

The influence of Monteverdi on the libretto of *Ulisse* is indeed apparent in the restructuring and cutting of passages of text. As Rosand indicated, “several of the cuts intensify the remarkable build-up of momentum that characterizes the libretto as a whole, as Ulisse draws nearer to his goal.”⁴⁹ Penelope’s refusal to believe until the end of the opera that the old man who just arrived in Ithaca is her husband contrasts with the momentum of Ulisse’s attempts to sway her. Her persistent denial until the very last moment—with failed efforts from the shepherd Eumete, her son Telemaco, her nurse Eri-clea, and finally by Ulisse himself to convince her of the opposite—only makes her acceptance of her husband’s identity at the end of the opera more striking.

⁴⁷ Marilyn Katz, *Penelope’s Renown*, 178, 181. On the narrative of the bed and its construction and symbolism, see *ibid.*, 177-82.

⁴⁸ For the duplicity of Penelope’s character in Books 17-23, as she remains by Telemaco’s side and, at the same time, makes herself available for remarriage, see Marilyn Katz, “Duplicity, Indeterminacy, and the Ideology of Exclusivity,” *Penelope’s Renown*, 6.

⁴⁹ Ellen Rosand, “Constructions of Character,” *Monteverdi’s Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 251, subchapter “Shaping an Epic or Rewriting Penelope.”

The impact of Penelope's recognition scene is reinforced by the elimination of two earlier passages in the libretto. These cuts aid in depicting her stern resolve and stoic steadfastness (after the lament scene) by omitting parts of the text in which she is represented as hopeful or joyful. The first exclusion occurs in Act III, Scene 6 in the initial five-act libretto, when Eumete describes to Ulisse her reaction to the news that her husband is arriving soon:

<p><i>O come tosto cangia L'allegrezza d'un cor sembante al vero; Come un torbido volto Presto serena i conturbati rai, Mostran rose i piacer, viole i guai. A le grate novelle Io vidi, o Peregrino, Rischiara di Penelope il bel volto, E squarciando del duol la Nube oscura, Mostrarsi come suole, Fra torbidi d'April più chiaro il Sole.⁵⁰</i></p>	<p>Oh, how promptly changes to joy A heart at an intimation of truth; How quickly a tumultuous face Soothes its distraught looks: Purpled troubles seem roseate pleasures. At the welcome news I saw, oh Pilgrim, The fair face of Penelope brightened And, breaking the dark cloud of pain, She showed herself as often, Brighter than the Sun against the storms of April.⁵¹</p>
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To have this textual passage set to music in the opera, depicting a joyful Penelope, would undermine the idea that—apart from the very first scene—she is guided by temperance, determined not to believe in anyone, skeptical of the senses, and faithful to Ulisse until the end through her commitment to reason and honor.

The second substantial passage that illustrates a similar case occurs in Act IV, Scene 1 in the libretto, in which Penelope rejects Telemaco's words attesting to the immi-

⁵⁰ As transcribed by Ellen Rosand, *ibid.*, 251-52.

⁵¹ My translation.

ment return of his father. By cutting the last six lines of the scene, where Penelope instead confesses that her son's words brought her some hope, Monteverdi remained true to a specific image of her as a stoic character in control of her emotions.

<i>Voglia il Ciel, che mia vita anco sostenti</i>	Heavens will that my life shall also have
<i>Debole fil di speme,</i>	A weak thread of hope,
<i>E come picciol seme</i>	And as the small seed is taught by Nature
<i>Natura insegna ad ingrandirsi in pianta,</i>	To grow into a plant,
<i>Così dentro al mio petto</i>	Thus inside my chest
<i>Nasca da picciol seme alto diletto.⁵²</i>	Shall from a small seed be born a great delight. ⁵³

According to Rosand, by omitting the two examples “of Penelope’s softening—the only such allusions in the libretto— ... [Monteverdi] confirms her moral fixity [and] intensifies the climatic effect of her final acceptance of her returned husband,” thereby emphasizing her virtue.⁵⁴ The initial lament of Penelope is the main moment in the opera when she is shown as a human being enduring what seems to be a deep and unending sorrow: a clear image of her “human frailty.”

⁵² Ellen Rosand, “Constructions of Character,” 252.

⁵³ My translation.

⁵⁴ Ellen Rosand, “Constructions of Character,” 252.

Penelope's Music

The similarities between Penelope and Humana Fragilità are evident, not only for what the former character endures (as Tim Carter concluded, she “has been able to resist one of the Humana Fragilità’s oppressors in the prologue: Tempo”⁵⁵) but at a musical level as well: the D tonality is adopted by Penelope overall and is also assigned to Humana Fragilità. The range of the two characters is likewise comparable—Penelope’s (Bb-d’’) is only slightly wider than that of Humana Fragilità (c-bb)—and their tessituras are practically identical—Penelope (c-a) compared to the Prologue character (d-a). The parallelisms are striking for each conveys a similar *ethos* (simplicity, modesty, and vulnerability to the whims of time, fortune, and love) in several instances during the opera.⁵⁶ Furthermore, both sing long lines in a simple declamatory style and are often assigned recitative (Penelope) or a non-lively, simple arioso (Humana Fragilità) to express their thoughts. Rosand observed that Penelope’s “intransigence is matched and intensified by her austere and speech-like mode of expression, her reluctance, or inability, to release her voice in song.”⁵⁷ The state of mind of Humana Fragilità and its transference to musical expression are not of the same intensity because, perhaps, of her identity as allegory; hence she always expresses herself in arioso rather than in austere recitative. The choice

⁵⁵ Tim Carter, “Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria (1640),” *Monteverdi’s Musical Theater*, 256.

⁵⁶ See Gioseffo Zarlino, “The Natures or Properties of the Modes,” *On the Modes: Part Four of Le Istitutioni Harmoniche, 1558*, trans. Vered Cohen, ed. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 58-91.

⁵⁷ Ellen Rosand, “Monteverdi’s Last Operas,” *The Cambridge Companion to Monteverdi*, ed. John Whenham and Richard Wistreich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 234.

of song or even arioso for Penelope is, indeed, quite rare, as can be observed in the following musical analysis.

Act I, Scene 1

Penelope's first appearance is punctuated, on the one hand, by her expression of grief as she bemoans her loneliness and the many years spent waiting for Ulisse. On the other, her austere rigidity and intensity of self-control are embodied in the music through the extreme constriction of her melody, delivered, in fact, in recitative.⁵⁸ Her lament can be related to that of Arianna, who mourns her abandonment by Theseus, unaffected by the characters around her. Reminiscent of the course of action in *L'Arianna*, resignation, anger, and hope are also preeminent in Penelope's lament.⁵⁹ Despite being in the company of her old nurse Ericlea, the recitative of Ulisse's wife is, according to Rosand when describing that assigned to Arianna, "completely self-motivated, generated by the ebb and flow of her own internal passions."⁶⁰ Her assessment is equally true of both heroines.

⁵⁸ To see the cuts Monteverdi made to Penelope's lament, see Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 255-57.

⁵⁹ Ellen Rosand, "A Master of Three Servants," *ibid.*, 225. According to that author, "Arianna moves us by the intensity of her pain and by her efforts to deal with it, as she progresses from despair ("Lasciatemi morire," "O Teseo, o Teseo mio") to disbelief ("Dive, dove è la fede"), to fury ("O nemi, o turbi, o venti"), to shame ("Mirate, ove m'ha scorto empia fortuna"). Monteverdi casts the lament entirely in recitative style." On the lament in Monteverdi's dramatic works, see Rosand's subchapter "Fashioning the 'Just Lament': *Arianna's* Venetian Progeny," 224-42, in the same book.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 225.

Penelope's strophically set lament is divided into three sections and is interrupted twice by Ericlea's brief interjections that echo her queen's state of misery. Such a structure, typical of the *molle genus*, strengthens the depiction of Penelope's affect of sorrow. Every section of her monologue ends with the hope of Ulisse's return, representing an almost obsessive thought to which all others are ultimately driven.

The first part of Penelope's lament (see Example 5.2) emphasizes her fixation with the past. After relating that Ulisse, the Greek warrior, has not been allowed to return home, she reviews the reason for her solitude and grieves over the seemingly endless and unjust years of waiting:

*Di misera Regina
non terminati mai dolenti affanni!
L'aspettato non giunge
e pur fuggono gli anni;
la serie del penar è lunga, ah! troppo!*

A chi vive in angoscie il Tempo è zoppo.

*Fallacissima speme,
speranze, non più verdi ma canute,
all'invocato male
non promettete più pace o salute.*

*Scorsero quattro lustri
dal memorabil giorno
in cui con sue rapine
il superbo Troiano chiamò
l'alta sua Patria alle rovine.
A ragion arse Troia
poiché l'Amore impuro
ch'è un delitto di fuoco,
si purga con le fiamme.
Ma ben contro ragione, per l'altrui fallo
condannata innocente
dell'altrui colpa io sono
l'afflitta penitente.*

For a wretched Queen
painful sorrows never end!
The hoped-for never comes
and yet the years fly by;
the succession of sufferings is long,
oh, too much!
For one who lives in anguish, Time is a
cripple.
Most false hope,
hopes no longer fresh, but ancient,
to my old sorrows
you no longer promise peace nor
well-being.
Twenty years have passed
since that memorable day
when with his abduction
the proud Trojan
caused his great country to fall to ruin.
Troy burned for good reason,
for an unchaste love,
which is a crime of passion,
is purged by fire.
But quite against reason,
for I am an innocent condemned
for another's fault, for another's guilt
I am the afflicted penitent.

*Ulisse accorto e saggio,
 tu che punir gli adulteri ti vantì,
 aguzzi l'armi e susciti le fiamme
 per vendicar gli errori
 d'una profuga Greca; e intanto lasci
 la tua casta consorte
 fra i nemici rivali
 in dubbio dell'honore, in forse à morte!
 Ogni partenza attende desiato ritorno;
 Tu sol del tuo tornar perdesti il giorno.*

Ulisse, resourceful and wise,
 you who boast of punishing adulterers,
 you hone weapons and fan the flames to
 avenge the sins
 of a fugitive Greek woman,
 and meanwhile you leave
 your chaste spouse
 amongst enemy rivals,
 her honor in question, and perhaps
 even in danger of death!
 Every departure awaits a longed-
 for return;
 You alone have lost sight of your
 homecoming.

This section begins with Penelope's expression of sorrow for which Monteverdi utilized the *molle* interval of a minor third: between the bass (C) and the melody (eb'), without establishing any tonality. Weighed down by her own pain, Penelope initiates her doleful speech in the low register of her voice and remains there for the major portion of this scene. Her part is centered around eb' / d'; she reiterates the same pitch (eb') several times in a monotone and lamenting manner (see mm. 1-4). She states that her pain is endless, just like the years she has been waiting for Ulisse: "Di misera Regina / non terminati mai dolenti affanni!" [For a wretched Queen / painful sorrows never end!]. The emphasis on her seemingly interminable condition is illustrated musically by the repeated pitches (mm. 1-9). The pitch repetition is interrupted (mm. 7-9) with a descending line (f'-eb'-d'-db'-c'-bb) on the words *mai, dolente affani* [never, painful sorrows] with dissonances of a second particularly prominent against the bass and extending on two occasions to the bottom of her range. The opening repeated C minor harmony is ambiguous and therefore unstable, but eventually moves toward F with flat sixth, finally arriving at

the first cadence on B \flat as a minor mode (m. 9). The overall harmonic motion, from c to B \flat outlines the typical “sigh” motive, already heard several times in the voice. Monteverdi’s choice of recitative, with its continuously repeated pitches, for this section of text is perfectly appropriate to reinforce Penelope’s obsessive thoughts of the past and the anguish they have generated.

After the initial measures, the range of each melodic phrase increases slightly to achieve a higher pitch level: first f’ (m. 6), then a’ (m. 12), bb’ (m. 17), b’ (m. 23), c’’ (m. 32), and then d’’ (m. 52), the top of Penelope’s range, several times made more pungent by abrupt upward leaps and several *durus* harmonies rooted on D. Each attempt at raising the tessitura, however, culminates in a dissonance before returning to the low part of her voice to emphasize her depressive state from the long years without knowing if Ulisse will return. Notice, for example, the f’ on the word *mai* [never] against the g in the bass and the comparable e’ against f with the word’s repetition (m. 7); the a’ in the word *aspettato* [the awaited one] against G in the bass (m. 12); the a / bb’ against a bass G followed by a f’ in the melody against F \sharp in the bass on the words *Lunga, ah!* [long, alas] (m. 17); and the b’ on *speranze* [hopes] against a sustained harmony in A (m. 23). By themselves, the words “never,” “the awaited one,” “long, alas,” and “hopes” do not form a complete sentence, but they do represent the keywords to understanding Penelope’s *ethos*. Set higher in her voice but only temporarily so and, thereby, failing to establish a higher tessitura and a brighter mood, these dissonances bring into focus the silent despair of a faithful wife who, despite her wisdom, is also human.

Until the plea *pace o salute* [peace or health] (m. 28), every attempt to sing in a higher tessitura (above an f) is thwarted by Penelope's pain. Beginning with *l'aspettato non giunge* [the awaited one does not arrive] (m. 11) and extending to *la serie del penar è lunga* [the succession of sufferings is long], the expression of grief is also conveyed through dissonances and longer note values on specific words. A notable dissonance against the bass is formed on the word *lunga* [long] by the sustained G against the a' in the voice (mm. 16-17). Not surprisingly, the word is set to longer note values than previously utilized and, furthermore, with syncopation. The final syllable is carried by an f' in the voice against an F# in the bass. In a continuation of the emphasis on dissonance, the outline of the melody also forms a tritone—from bb' on a secondary strong beat to e', which is accented more heavily due to its position on beat one on the syllables *lun-(ga)* and *trop-(po)* [too much] (mm. 17-18). The bb' coincidentally forms a brief diminished fourth with the bass F#.

The upward motion and subsequent collapse that occur in the entire scene can be summarized, as Rosand indicated, in the last measures of this section where the upward chromatic melody accompanies one of the two refrains: *Tu sol del tuo tornar perdesti il giorno* [You alone have missed the day of your return], which will be called Refrain A (mm. 62-69).⁶¹ This passage ascends chromatically from an f# (m. 62) to a d'' (m. 67); is prolonged and intensified by three repetitions of *del tuo tornar* [of your return]; and reaches the highest point (d''), now consonant, before collapsing again to the lowest register and cadencing on a D tonality an octave below. As Eric Chafe indicated, this phrase

⁶¹ Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *ibid.*, 262.

has the rising chromaticism of two of the *Orfeo* passages: the title character's farewell to the world in "Tu se' morta" and again at the end of "Possente spirto," when in the underworld he calls on the gods to return Euridice to him (*Rendetemi il mio ben, Tartari Numi* [Give me back what is mine, Gods of Tartarus]). It also recalls the beginning of Arianna's lament with its upward chromatic motion that, once achieving the d'', also falls to cadence an octave below, depicting her pain and resignation.⁶²

Although harmonies in the flat region are frequent throughout Penelope's scene, sharp harmonies also intervene often to emphasize both emotional instability and pain coming from multiple directions. Ultimately, her expressions of pain are centered around D, which aligns with the helplessness of *Humana Fragilità* represented in the Prologue. To reinforce the idea of her human condition and what it implies, the repetition of words and pitches occurs extensively throughout the monologue, such as with the reiteration of f' (m. 6) on the words *non terminate, non terminati mai* [never cease], underlying Penelope's sorrow due to the long period without news from Ulisse, and d' with *l'aspettato, l'aspettato* [the hoped for / awaited one] (mm. 10-13). The flat region in the music of this scene is also employed extensively by Monteverdi to depict Penelope's human condition: with several occurrences of eb' and bb' for the voice and in the *basso continuo* and some appearances of db' for the voice. In this way the *cantus mollis* and the Monteverdian *molle genus* punctuate Penelope's speech and reflect her depressed state.

⁶² Eric Thomas Chafe, "Tonal Allegory in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*," *Monteverdi's Tonal Language* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 278.

The suffering is too long and too painful for this character, although for the remainder of the opera she maintains an attitude of stoicism towards her present situation. The vocal line of the lament advances by narrow intervals, often by step. The passage from measures 22-47 is headed toward A, in which F major figures momentarily as a chromatically contrasting harmonic area for the narration of the abduction of Helen. Starting with *Fallacissima speme, speranze* [Most-false hope, hopes (no longer fresh)] (m. 22), the change of harmonies is associated with feelings of anger at the injustice of her position. The delivery is still via recitative as Penelope continues to recall the reasons for Ulisse's absence and reflects on the war of Troy. The C tonality begins with an open fifth on the words *Scorsero quattro lustri / dal memorabil giorno* [Twenty years have passed / since that memorable day] (mm. 29-30). As she recalls why Ulisse is away, her mood intensifies toward anger, although it is radically different from the anger of Ulisse or even Nerone or Ottavia in *Poppea* in *concitato* style. Penelope's anger is never fully expressed for her temperance and patience are her major strength (mm. 31-42).

From mm. 53 to 63 the flat harmonies once more reflect Penelope's depression at her personal state. The mournful mood and *molle* intervals return with the recurrence of B \flat in the bass against an a' in the voice to support the word *casta* [chaste] (m. 55) and with a suspension on e \flat ' against F at the words *forse (a morte)* [perhaps (death)] (mm. 58-59). The statement of the last phrase *Tu sol del tuo tornar perdesti il giorno* [You alone have missed the day of your return] encapsulates the *ethos* of her lament: after an

ascending, mostly chromatic, sequence whose increasing tension and instability draw attention to her repeated words, Penelope's voice reaches its highest note (d'') and then falls an octave to d', again in the low part of her range.

Example 5.2. Penelope's Lament, First Section in Act I, Scene 1, mm. 1-67.

PENELOPE

Di mi - se - ra Re - gi - 'na non ter - mi - na - ti mai do - len - ti affan - ni

(Lento)

6 non termi - na - ti non termi - na - ti mai_ mai mai do - len - ti af - fan - ni l'aspetta - to

12 l'as - petta - to non giun - ge, e pur fug - gono gli an - ni La se - rie del pe - nar è lun - ga ahitrop - po

19 a chi vi - ve in an - go - scie il tem - po è zop - po Fal - la - cis - si - ma spe - me, spe - ra - ze non più verdi ma ca -

25 nu - te all'in - vecchia - to ma - le non promette - te più_ pa - ce o sa - lu - te._ Scor - se - ro quat - tro

30 lu - stri dal memo - ra - bil gior - no in cui_ con sue rapi - ne il su - per - bo Tro - ja - no chia - mò l'al - ta sua Pa - tria al - le ro - vi - ne a ra -

Example 5.2. (Continuation).

35

gion ar-se Tro-ja poi-chè l'amor— impu-ro ch'è un de-lit-to di fo-co, si pur-ga con le fiamme ma ben contro-ra-
40

gio-ne per l'altrui fal-lo con-danna-ta inno-cen-te dal-l'altrui col-pe io so no. L'afflit-ta l'afflit-ta
45

l'afflit-ta pe-ni-ten-te U-lisse U-lis-se accorto e sag-gio tu che pu-nir gli a-dul-te-ri ti van-ti a-guz-zi
50

l'ar-mi e susci-ti le fiam-me per vendi-car gli er-ro-ri d'una pro-fu-ga Gre-ca e'n tan-to la-sci la tua
55

ca-sta consor-te fra nemi-ci ri-va-li, in dubbio de l'ho-nor in for-se a mor-te—
60

o-gni partenza attende— de-si-a-to ri-tor-no Tu sol— del tuo tor-
64

nar del tuo tor-nar tu sol— del tuo tor-nar per-desti il gior-no.

After a brief comment by the nurse Ericlea resonating her mistress's pain (*Infelice Ericlea, / nutrice sconsolata, / compiangi il duol della Regina amata* [Unhappy Ericlea, / disheartened nurse, / join in the sorrow of your beloved Queen], Penelope, in the second part of the lament, focuses more on present events than on her state of hopelessness. In the middle of this section she implores, *Torna, deh torna, Ulisse!* [Return, oh, return, Ulisse!] (Refrain B), a text that is repeated at the end of the third section, as shown in the excerpt below and in Example 5.3.

*Non è dunque per me varia la sorte?
Cangiò forse Fortuna
la volubile ruota in stabil seggio?
E la sua pronta vela,
ch'ogni human caso porta
fra l'incostanze a volo
sol per me non raccoglie un fiato solo?*

Will fate never change for me?
Will Fortune perhaps change
the spinning wheel into a secure throne?
And her speedy sail,
which carries every human destiny flying
through life's vicissitudes,
can it not for me gather even a single
breath?

*Cangia per altri pur aspetto in Cielo
le Stelle erranti e fisse.
Torna, deh torna, Ulisse!
Penelope t'aspetta,
l'innocente sospira,
piange l'offesa, e contro
il tenace offensor nè pur s'adira.*

For others, the wandering stars change
their arrangements in the sky.
Return, oh, return, Ulisse!
Penelope awaits you,
the innocent one sighs,
the aggrieved one weeps, and against
the stubborn offender, still she holds
no grudge.

*All'anima affannata
porto le sue discolpe, acciò non resti
di crudeltà macchiato,
ma fabbro de miei danni incolpo il fato.
Così per tua difesa, col destino,
col Cielo, fomento guerre e stabilisco
risse.
Torna, deh torna, Ulisse!*

In my afflicted soul
I carry your acquittal, that you will not be
stained by cruelty,
but I declare Fate guilty of my injury.
Thus in your defense, with destiny,
with Heaven, I declare war and strife.

Return, oh, return, Ulisse!

Although for the second part of the lament Penelope remains depressed, her tessitura is comparatively higher than before, and the motion of her line more diatonic than chromatic (yet still in stepwise motion overall). Furthermore, the beginning of this section is not based on *cantus mollis*, despite Penelope's T of her sad fate. Her reflection is more abstract here because it is put in terms of the good fortune and her wheel. The dramatic intensity is built through the gradual pitch ascent from the opening e' to d'' (m. 9) instead of by flat harmonies and sigh figures. The frequent changes of chords reflect her wish for a changed fortune. Only the last sentence of this passage (before her plea for Ulisse to return) descends, back to the original e. In the process, the harmony turns to the flat side with B \flat only to conclude with a radical, pungent harmonic shift to A. This change in tonality sets up the sharp harmonies of her plea to Ulisse and their contrast with the *cantus mollis*, as she again sighs and weeps in the B refrain (mm. 15-18).

Torna, deh torna, Ulisse! [Return, oh, return, Ulisse!] (mm. 15-18 and 40-43) is punctuated, by larger leaps and dissonances, such as on the word *torna* [return] (m. 16) with a c'' in the voice against a d in the bass followed by the descending interval of a melodic tritone between c'' and f \sharp '. This particular segment is shaped more dramatically than the previous ones in this section and is emphasized by a strong, cadential bass motion whose rhythm underscores the stressed beats. This passage recapitulates Penelope's sorrow and the resistant upward motion of the first section to close where it began—on A (the tonality of Amore), not a surprising choice as the Queen persistently speaks about matters of the heart and the tumultuous state her soul has endured because of her love for Ulisse.

Only after the B refrain and with Penelope's continued request (perhaps to the gods) for her husband to come home does the *cantus mollis* return. The shift is a sign of her heart's supplication and begins at the close of measure 19 with *Penelope t'aspetta, / l'innocente sospira...* [Penelope awaits you, / the innocent one sighs ...]. Her plea is also punctuated at times by poignant dissonances on strong beats, denoting intense grief, as on the words *Deh torna* [Alas, return] (m. 19).

The emphasis on f# and bb (mm. 27-34) in both the voice and harmony with limited pitch motion represents an intense expression of her pain. With her "declaration of war" (mm. 36-38), the vocal line and harmony become diatonic, where the intensity is created by the repeated notes. The B refrain returns, bringing sharp harmonies with it to underscore her anguished plea (mm. 39-42).

Example 5.3. Penelope's Lament, Second Section in Act I, Scene 1, mm. 1-42.

PENELOPE

Non è dunque per me va-ria la sor - te cangiò for-se for-tu - na la volu- bi-le ruo - ta instabil_

5
seg - gio e la sua pronta ve - la Ch'ogn'human caso_ por - ta fra l'incostan - za a vo - lo sol per me non rac

9
coglie un fiato so - lo Cangia per al - tri pur a-spet-to in cie-lo le stel-le er-ran tie fis - se tor - na tor-na

16
tor - na deh torna tor-na Ulis - se_ Deh torna U-lis-se, Pe - ne-lo-pe t'aspet-ta la inno-cen-te so-

22
spi - ra pian - ge l'of-fe - sa e contro il tenace offen - sor nè pur s'a - di - ra al - l'a - ni-ma af-fanna-ta

28
por-to le sue di-scol-pe ac-ciò non re-sti di cru-del - tà macchia- to Ma fal-so de' miei dan-ni in colpo il fa - to co-

Example 5.3. (Continuation).

35
 si per tua di - fe - sa col des - ti - no, col Cie - lo fo - mento guer - re e sta - bi - li - sco

38
 ris - se Tor - na Tor - na Tor - na deh - tor - na tor - na Ulis - se.

After another brief interjection by Ericlea, Penelope continues with her inner dialogue in the third and last section of the lament. The former attempts to provide her mistress with a glimmer of hope: *Partir senza ritorno / non può Stella influir, / non è partir, non è* [To leave without returning / cannot be the will of the Stars, / that is no departure, no]. In contrast to the previous sections Penelope adopts a more positive and brighter mood to deliver the pastoral text (see below), set without *molle* intervals, and, instead of recitative, written in arioso style (see Example 5.4).

*Torna il tranquillo al mare,
 torna il Zeffiro al prato,
 l'Aurora, mentre al Sol fa dolce invito,
 è un ritorno del dì, che è pria partito.*

*Tornan le brine in terra,
 tornano al centro i sassi,
 e con lubrici passi
 torna al oceano il rivo.
 L'huomo qua giù ch'è vivo
 lunge da' suoi principi
 porta un'alma celeste e un corpo frale;
 tosto more il mortale,
 e torna l'alma in Cielo*

Tranquility returns to the sea,
 the spring breeze returns to the fields,
 the Dawn, meanwhile offers a sweet
 invitation to the Sun,
 and a return of the day, which departed
 before.

The frosts return to the earth,
 the stones return to the pull of gravity,
 and with quicksilver steps
 the ocean returns to the river.
 Man, who here on earth lives
 far from his home
 bears a heavenly soul and a frail body;
 soon the mortal dies,
 and the soul returns to Heaven,

*e torna il corpo in polve
dopo breve soggiorno;
tu sol del tuo tornar perdesti il giorno.*

*Torna, chè mentre porti empie dimore
al mio fiero dolore,
veggo del mio morir l'hore prefisse.
Torna, deh torna, Ulisse.*

and the body returns to dust
after its brief sojourn;
you alone have lost sight of your
homecoming.

Return, for as long as you bring
cruel delays to my bitter anguish,
I see the hour of my death before me.
Return, oh, return, Ulisse.

Her music is initially cast in C (C major instead of C minor) but eventually cadences in D (mm. 12-13), the tonality assigned to *Humana Fragilità*. As Chafe indicated, the beginning of this section represents Penelope's final introduction to the "natural" region,⁶³ which corresponds to the *temperato stile* in Monteverdi's three *genera* system.

The initial portion of this section introduces a side of Penelope whose concerns have been put aside momentarily, who sings to nature in a contemplative manner rather than remaining focused on her pain in what amounts, at times, to self-pity. Such a peaceful moment is short-lived, however, as shown when Penelope repeats the word *torna* [Return] (m. 21), a word that was set previously to an ascending, chromatic, dissonant, and emotionally poignant line, evoking Ulisse's return (see Refrain B of the previous section). The sequential passages and melodic turns against a stable bass (mm. 1-13), nevertheless, contain no dissonances or other elements to disturb as Penelope enjoys her contemplation of nature, almost as if to evade reality. Such evasion does not last long, and harsh reality soon returns. The initial "unmoving reciting tone," as designated by

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 282.

Rosand,⁶⁴ resurfaces at the reference to “human frailty,” preparing the melody for the initial *stile molle*, which begins with the text *L’uomo qua giù ch’è vivo / lunge da suoi principi / porta un’alma celeste e un corpo frale* [Man, who here on earth lives / far from his home / bears a heavenly soul and a frail body] (mm. 14-22). Yet, note the return of the contrast between sharp and flat harmonies (mm. 21-22), emphasizing the state of all mankind in returning to dust.

After the intense chromatic rise of the A refrain—*Tu sol del tuo tornar perdesti il giorno* [You alone have missed the day of your return]—that immediately follows, a brief section of relatively static recitative—*Torna, che mentre porti empie dimore / al mio fiero dolore, / veggio del mio morir l’hore prefisse* [Return, for as long as you bring / cruel delays to my bitter anguish, / I see the hour of my death before me]—with rhythmically accented dissonances on *fiero* [bitter] (m. 32) and *morir* [to die] (m. 33) precedes the final passage to conclude the lament with a return to the B refrain (*Torna, deh torna Ulisse*).⁶⁵ The point of this passage with its accompanying stasis is the mournful acceptance of what Penelope sees as an unalterable fate (note the pungent E chord on the word *prefisse* [m. 35]). Such dissonances draw attention to Penelope’s shift from contemplation to anguish, an emotion she seeks to control.

The pastoral text of the third section indeed depicts a different mood when the recitative style is halted temporarily to allow for an arioso with short instances of neumatic singing. Up to this point Penelope’s inability to sing has been a striking feature of the

⁶⁴ Ellen Rosand, “Constructions of Character,” *Monteverdi’s Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 268.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 261.

opera:⁶⁶ her brief shift to arioso style at the beginning of the third section of her scene in Act I is but a mere moment of nostalgia for a more joyful time when she did, in fact, know how to sing, *i.e.*, to experience happiness and express her emotions freely. When harsh reality resurfaces with the B refrain, Penelope returns as well to her earlier recitativo style and concludes with a final cadence calling for Ulisse's return. She communicates her imperative with pungent sharps on g' and f', the culmination of descending leaps that themselves form melodic tritones. Especially telling, however, is the conclusion in A, which unites her harmonically with Ulisse.

⁶⁶ See Tim Carter, "*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (1640)," *Monteverdi's Musical Theater*, 255-62, for an interpretation of Penelope in terms of "singing" and "speaking."

Example 5.4. Penelope's Lament, Third Section in Act I, Scene 1, mm. 1-40.

PENELOPE

Tor-na il tran-qui-lo al ma-re tor - na il Zef-fi-ro al pra-to l'au-ro-ra mentre al sol... fa dol-ce in-

(Andante)

6 vi-to e un ri-tor-no del di... che è pria... par-ti - to. tornan le brine in ter-ra tor-nano al centro i sas-si

11 e... con. lu - bri-ci pas-si tor-na al o-ce-a-no ri - vo. L'huomo qua giù ch'è vi - vo lunge da suoi principi

16 porta un'alma ce-le-ste, e un cor - po fra - le to-sto more il mor-ta - le, e tor-na l'alma in Cie - lo e

21 tor-na il corpo in polve do-po bre-ve soggiorno tu sol - del tuo tor-nar del tuo tor-nar tu sol... del tuo tor

Example 5.4. (Continuation).

27
nar perdesti il gior - no tor - na che men - tre por - ti em - pie di - mo - re al mio fie - ro do - lo - re

33
veg - gio del mio mo - rir l'ho - re pre - fis - se Tor - na tor - na tor - na deh torna tor - na U - lis - se.

Although punctuated with sorrow, Penelope’s overall ascetic rigidity and intensity of self-control in this scene are evident in her restrained and restricted vocal lines as well as in her reduced range. When considering the various styles of music enumerated by Beth Glixon that are encompassed in the term “recitative” (*i.e.*, simple and recitativo; affective and emotional; and lyrical, moving toward arioso),⁶⁷ it can be assessed from the previous analysis that these categories are all present in Penelope’s lament.

Act II, Scene 1

Penelope’s steadfast faithfulness is represented in Act II as well, where she refuses to renounce her faith, again expressing her stance in recitative style. The contrast with Melanto’s high-voiced lyricism serves only to emphasize further Penelope’s steadfast affect and vocal delivery. Melanto tries to persuade the Queen to love again, but Pe-

⁶⁷ Beth Glixon, *Recitative*, 67.

nelope is not persuaded to change her mind with what she considers vain advice. In response to Melanto's long discourse, Ulisse's wife replies with shorter, more assertive sentences. The latter's first reaction is dismissive and rational: *Amor è un idol vano, è un vagabondo nume / Un giorno solo cangia il piacer in duolo* [Cupid is a useless idol, a vagabond god / A single day can change pleasure into sorrow]. Monteverdi initiated Penelope's line with an ascending rhythmic motive on the word *amor* [love], which he elected to have her repeat six times;⁶⁸ through this repetition, her thought is redirected by the following text: *cangia il piacer, (il piacer, il piacer, il piacer, il piacer) in duolo*, [can change pleasure ... into sorrow]. This segment is set in triple meter to a rather circular melody due to the emphasis (repetition) of the word *piacer* [pleasure]. It depicts what Penelope has been avoiding for many years (*i.e.*, unchaste love and pleasure) because of her husband's unusually long absence.⁶⁹

At Melanto's further insistence, Penelope's response is even more concise, showing her moral decorum as well as assertiveness:

Melanto

*Perchè Aquilone infido
 turbi una volta il mar,
 distaccarsi dal lido
 animoso nocchier non dèe lasciar?
 Sempre non guarda in Ciel
 trova una Stella,
 ha calma ogni procella.
 Ama dunque, ché d'Amore
 dolce amica è la Beltà.
 Dal piacere il tuo dolore
 saettato caderà.*

Even though a treacherous North Wind
 may once stir up the sea,⁷⁰
 should a plucky sailor
 not try to cast off from the shore?
 One does not always see
 a gloomy Star in the Heavens,
 and every storm will abate.
 Love, then, for Beauty
 is the sweet friend of Love.
 Your sorrow will fall to the arrows
 Of your pleasure.

⁶⁸ See Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 269.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ To the original version translated by Ellen Hargis I added the word "may."

Penelope

*Non dèe di nuovo amar
chi misera penò,
torna stolta a penar
chi prima errò.*

He who suffered wretchedly
is not owed new love,
he who erred before
foolishly returns to suffering.

Penelope's response is accompanied by harmonic shifts (*molle / durus*) but ultimately concludes in D (see Example 5.5, mm. 23-31). Nevertheless, her affect is not one of supplication or open sorrow; she knows she must make vital decisions based on her reason, not her heart. In contrast to her lament, she ultimately regains her resolve after an episode punctuated by *stile molle* and a bit of self-pitying emotion.

Monteverdi's application of dissonance and the repetition of specific words are again significant in order to understand Penelope's intentions. Her decisiveness justifies the reiteration of the word *penar* [to suffer], which she declaims to sequential motion that completes an octave descent to d' (mm. 27-30) and draws attention to the consequences of loving again. Penelope's assertiveness and moderate range (from c' to d''), as well as the reduced use of chromatic harmonic shifts (in contrast with her first scene) and fewer dissonances—illustrated by the words (*di*) *nuovo* [again], with a' in the melody against Bb' in the bass, and *misera* [wretched / miserable], initiated by bb' against an A (m. 28)—are indicative of her moderation as a character and the style she now adopts: she refuses to give in to loving someone else and wants to endure patiently her waiting, explaining through logical reasoning why she is willing to do so.

Example 5.5. Drusilla and Penelope's Scene in Act II, Scene 1, mm. 1-31.

DRUSILLA

A - ma dunque... Che d'amo - re... dol - ceami -

7
ca è la bel - tà dal pia - cer il

13
tuo do - lo - re... sa - et - ta - to ca - de -

19
PENELOPE
rà. Non de - e di nuo - vo amar chi
(Lento)

26
mi - - se - ra pe - nò torna... stolta a pe - nar torna... stolta a pe -

29
nar... a penar... a pe - nar... a penar... chi prima errò.

Act II, Scene 12

Penelope's response to the suitors' insistence that she relent to love again and choose one of them to marry is similar. Against the long lines of Pisandro, Anfinomo, and Antinoo, Penelope's retorts are considerably shorter and, in comparison, more assertive, with stoic principles resisting against vanity and assigning virtue as the main criteria when selecting a husband:

*Son vani, oscuri pregi
i titoli de' regi,
senza valor, il sangue,
ornamento Regale,
illustri scettri a sostener non vale.
Chi simile ad Ulisse
virtute non possiede
de' tesori d'Ulisse è indegno herede.*

They are vain, vague prizes,
these titles of kings,
lacking noble blood,
Regal trappings,
or worthy scepters.
Whoever does not possess valor
equal to Ulisse's valor [virtue]
is not worthy of inheriting Ulisse's
treasures.

Penelope's musical line is restrained and narrow in range as in the previous scenes. Similar to her interaction with Melanto, Penelope's tessitura, with its center on the fifth above d' (a'), is higher here than in the lament. It now resides in the middle register of her voice in *stile temperato*. Her sober recitative has also abandoned the constant harmonic shifts that characterized the lament: it begins and ends in D, and her line is defined by syllabic text setting, diatonic motion, and simplicity (see Example 5.6).

Example 5.6. Penelope to the Suitors in Act II, Scene 12, mm. 1-16.

PENELOPE

Son va - ni o - scu - ri pre - gi i ti - to - li de' Re - gi sen - za va - lor il san -

(Lento)

7
gue or - na - men - to Re - ga - le il - lu - stri scet - tri a so - ste - ner non va - le. —

12
Chi si - mi - le ad U - lis - se vir - tu - te non pos - sic - de de' te - so - ri d'U - lis - se è in - de - gno e - re - de.

Later in the scene Penelope meets Ulysses, who remains disguised as a beggar. She sees him only as he is disguised, not as her husband. Nevertheless, she offers him an equal chance to participate in the contest to string Ulysses's bow along with the suitors who hope to win Penelope as wife:

*Concedasi al Mendico
la prova faticosa!
Contesa gloriosa
contro petti virili un fianco antico
ché tra rossori involti
darà il foco d'Amor vergogna ai volti.*

May the Beggar
be granted the arduous test!
A glorious contest—
an aged flank against manly chests
that will turn the fires of love
into blushes of shame.

While her vocal line still spans little more than an octave (see Example 5.7), it, nevertheless, exposes some liberty otherwise absent from her overall role. As she stands

before Ulisse, her line is energized with dotted notes in the melisma on the word *antico* [old], a reference to time—Tempo’s music and the anguish of time (mm. 10-11)—octave leaps (m. 7 and mm. 11-12), less stepwise motion, arpeggiation on the repeated word *contesa* [contest] (mm. 5-7), and an ending on A, the key of Amore.⁷¹ Note also the active continuo line in measures 6-7, 12-16, and 19-23. None of the leaps in her vocal line are extreme and there are no striking dissonances, yet her music in this excerpt exhibits the greatest degree of melodic freedom so far. Her musical line seems to be a reflection of an inner conflict between the emotions in her heart and her assertive words, perhaps indicating that she senses something at odds with what her reason tells her. Even though Penelope is drawn to Ulisse, through the tonality of Amore, she resists the—as yet—inexplicable feeling and returns to her stepwise motion delivery, although over an active bass and with increased intensity through the repetition of *darà il foco d’amor* [that will turn the fires of love] (mm. 20-23).

⁷¹ The temporal reference (“old”) is noteworthy, considering that Ulisse has been gone for twenty years. Consequently, the notions of “time” and “old” are particularly poignant for Penelope.

Example 5.7. Penelope to Ulisse in Act II, Scene 12, mm. 1-35.

PENELOPE

Con-ce-dasi al mendi - co la pro - va fa - ti - co - sa con - te - sa con - te - sa conte - sa glo - ri - o - sa contro

(Andante)

9

pet-ti vi-ri-li un fianco an - ti - co che tra rosso - ri che tra rosso - ri in vol - to

17

darà'l fo-co d'a-mor ver-gogna ai vol - ti da-rà il fo-co d'amor ver-go-gna ai vol - ti.

24 ULISSE

Questa mia destra humi - le s'arma s'arma s'arma a tuo conto o Cie - lo le vit -

(Non lento)

30

to - rie appre - sta - te o sommi De - i s'a voi son ca-ri i sacri-fi-zi mie - i.

Act III, Scene 10

Penelope does not yield either to the blasphemies of the suitors nor to the hope conveyed by Telemaco and Eumete; she persists until the end of the opera with her conviction not to let herself be fooled by appearances. In Act III, Scene 10 her resolve contrasts with the behavior of Ulisse, whose recitative, as described by Rosand, is infused “with increasing lyrical ardor.”⁷² His attempts to convince her yield nothing, for she maintains her role as the *sposa abbandonata*. While Ulisse despairs at failing to be recognized by his wife with melodic leaps and dissonant stepwise motion (see Example 5.8)—from tritones (*corro al riposo* [I hasten for repose] and *sprezzai* [I spurned], mm. 6 and 28) to minor 6^{ths} (*sospirati amplessi* [long sighed-for embraces], m. 17)—Penelope’s constancy is sustained through the simplicity of her melodic line and the decisiveness of her responses.

Ulisse

*O delle mie fatiche
mèta dolce e soave,
porto caro, amoroso,
dove corro al riposo.*

O sweet, gentle beacon,
dear, loving harbor,
where my labors
hasten for repose.

Penelope

*Fermati, cavaliere,
incantator’ o mago,
di tue finte mutanze
io non m’appago.*

Stop, knight,
enchanter or magician,
I am not persuaded
by your feigned appearance.

Ulisse

*Così del tuo Consorte,
così dunque t’appressi
ai lungamente sospirati amplessi?*

This is how you hasten
to the long sighed-for embraces
of your Consort?

⁷² Ellen Rosand, “Constructions of Character,” *Monteverdi’s Last Operas A Venetian Trilogy*, 273.

Penelope

*Consorte io sono, ma del perduto Ulisse,
nè incantesmi o magie
perturberan la fé, le voglie mie.*

I am the Consort, but of the lost Ulisse;
neither charms nor magic
will disturb my constancy or my will.

Ulisse

*In honor de' tuoi rai
l'eternità sprezzai,
volontario cangiando e stato e sorte.
Per serbarmi fedel son giunto a morte.*

I spurned immortality
in honor of your eyes,
willingly changing condition and fate.
In order to stay faithful I nearly perished.

Penelope

*Quel valor che ti rese
ad Ulisse simile
care mi fà le stragi
degli amanti malvagi.
Questo di tua bugia
il dolce frutto sia.*

That valor which renders you
similar to Ulisse
made the slaughter
of the wicked suitors dear to me.
This shall be the sweet fruit
of your lie.

Ulisse

*Quell'Ulisse son Io
ceneri avanzo,
residuo delle morti,
degli Adulteri e Ladri
fiero castigato, e non seguace.*

I am that Ulisse,
risen from the ashes,
left alive among the dead,
proud punisher of Adulterers and Thieves,
and not their follower.

Penelope

*Non sei tu 'l primo ingegno
che con nome mentito
tentasse di trovar comando o Regno.*

You are not the first mastermind
who with a false name
tried to find command and Kingdom.

Penelope's consonant and mostly stepwise-motion (mm. 7-11 and 18-25) contrasts with Ulisse's line marked by leaps and dissonances. Her attitude of command supported by the root position harmony on the word *fermati!* [stop!] (m. 7) is also on a strong beat, reinforcing the idea that, despite her human emotions, she can stand resolutely before this man who, seemingly intent on seduction, refuses to respect her wishes.

In response to Ulisse's agitation Penelope upholds her position of skepticism and determination and answers coldly, maintaining a medium tessitura from e'-bb' in comparison to the harmonic instability of Ulisse's higher tessitura (a-d') and dissonant vocal line. After all his attempts to convince her—recounting his rejection of immortality and his faithfulness to her even though he nearly perished, Penelope responds simply and without passion through a diatonic and stepwise line. With the words *Non sei tu 'l primo ingegno / che con nome mentito / tentasse di trovar comando o Regno* [You are not the first mastermind / who with a false name / tried to find command and Kingdom], she dismisses his pleas, and, with her refusal to accept him back, leaves Ulisse in a state of near despair.

Example 5.8. Penelope and Ulisse's Last Scene in Act III, Scene 10, mm. 1-59.

ULISSE

O del-le mie fa-ti - che me-ta dolce e so-a - ve por-to ca-ro amo-ro-so do-ve cor-ro do-ve cor - ro al ri-po - so.

(Lento)

7 PENELOPE

Fer - ma-ti ca-va-lie - ro in-can-ta-tor o ma - go di tue fin-te mu-tan - ze io non m'ap - pa - go.

12 ULISSE

Co-si del tuo con-sor - te co - si dunque t'ap-pressi a lungamen - te sospi - ra - ti amples - si.

18 PENELOPE

Con-sor-te io so-no con - sor - te io so - no ma del per - du - to U-lis - se ne incan-tesmi o ma - gi - e per - turberan. la

24 ULISSE

fe' le voglie - mi - e In ho - nor de tuoi ra - i l'e - terni -

28

-tà sprezza - i vo - lonta - rio can - giando, e sta - to, e sor - te

Example 5.8. (Continuation).

31 PENELOPE

per serbar-mi fe-del son giunto a mor-te. Quel va-lor che ti re-se ad U-lis-se si-mi-le ca-re mi fa le stragi degli a-

38

man-ti malva-gi que-sto que-sto que-sto di tua bu-gi-a il dol-ce frutto si-a...

45 ULISSE

Quell' U-lis-se Quell' U-lis-se son i-o delle ce-ne-ri a vanzo re-si-du-o delle mor-ti degli a-

51 PENELOPE

dul-teri e la-dri fic-ro casti-ga-tor e non se-gua-ce. Non sei tu'l primo in-

56

ge-gno che con no-me men-ti-to tentasse di tro-var comando o regno.

It is only when Ulisse discloses details of their bed that he alone could know does Penelope finally yield to the facts (see Example 5.9). On recognizing her husband, she not only sings in a joyous triple-time arioso but also adopts his G tonality (m. 20). As she sings of her transformation (*hor sì ti credo* [now I believe you]), she does so with her highest pitch (d²), in this case the dominant whose resolution to G makes her statement firm and convincing (after m. 25). When referring to *onestà* [honesty] (m. 34), *Amor* [Love] (m. 36), and *ragioni* [reasons] (mm. 37-38), she returns to her typical recitative style to conclude that brief moment in her D harmony while explaining the reason for her coldness toward him.

Ulisse

*Del tuo casto pensiero io so 'l costume,
so che 'l letto pudico
che tranne Ulisse solo, altro non vide,
ogni notte da te s'adorna e copre
con un serico drappo
di tua mano contesto, in cui si vede,
col Virginal suo Coro,
Diana effigiata.
M'accompagnò mai sempre
memoria così grata.*

I know the ways of your chaste mind,
I know that your pure bed,
which none have seen, save Ulisse,
is adorned and covered every night
with a silken cloth made by your hand,
in which can be seen
the likeness of Diana,
with her Virginal Chorus.
That pleasant memory
has accompanied me always.

Penelope

*Hor sì ti riconosco, hor sì ti credo,
antico Possessore
del combattuto core.
Honestà mi perdoni,
dono tutte ad amor le sue ragioni.*

Now I recognize you, now I believe you,
old possessor
of my battered heart.
Forgive my directness,
love was the reason for it all.

Ulisse

*Sciogli, la lingua, deh sciogli
per allegrezza i nodi,
sciogli un sospir, un' "ohimè,"
la voce snodi*

Loosen, tongue, ah,
loosen your knots for happiness,
loose a sigh, let the voice
release an "alas."

Example 5.9. Penelope and Ulisse's Recognition Scene in Act III, Scene 10, mm. 1-46.

ULISSE

Del tuo ca-sto pen - sie-ro io so io so'l costu-me so che'l letto pu - di-co chetranne U- lisse so-lo al-tro non vi-de

8

o'gni not - te da te s'a-dor - na e co - pre con un se - ri - co drappo di tua ma - no con - te - sto in cui si

13

ve - de col virgi-nal suo co - ro Di - a - na effig - gia - ta m'accom - pa - gnò mai sempre me-

PENELOPE

18

mo-ria me-mo-ria co-si gr - ta Hor si hor si ti ri - co - no - sco si

25

si si si hor si ti credo — si si an - ti - co posses -

Example 5.9. (Continuation).

31
-so - re del combat - tu - to co - re ho- nestà mi per - do-ni do - no tutto ad A-mor le sue ra-gio - ni.

38
ULISSE
Scio - gli scio - gli scio - gli la lin - gua deh scio - gli per al - le-grez - za i
(Allegro)

43
no - di sci - gli un so - spir un sospir un ohi - mè la vo - ce ano - di.

Penelope answers the passionate Ulisse’s request to “unfetter her tongue and unleash her voice” with—finally—an aria in C, one of the tonalities of Fortuna (and applied by Ulisse throughout the opera to express joy). For similar reasons, emphasis is placed on the major third, instead of its minor counterpart so strikingly accentuated at the beginning of Penelope’s lament. Reminiscent of the start of its third section, Penelope recalls the elements of nature (see Example 5.10). Yet unlike in that scene, Penelope is now free to sing of the joys of nature and love in full aria style rather than the comparatively restrained arioso, to celebrate the return of her husband, rather than contemplate an image of the past.

Penelope

*Illustratevi o Cieli,
rinfioratevi o prati, aure gioite!
Gli augelletti cantando,
i rivi mormorando
hor si rallegrino,
quell'herbe verdeggianti,
quell'onde sussurranti
hor si consolino,
già ch'è sorta felice
dal cenere Troian la mia Fenice.*

Shine, O Heavens,
Flowers, O fields, breezes, rejoice!
The little singing birds,
the little murmuring brooks
now are happy again,
these green grasses,
these whispering waves
now console each other,
since my Phoenix has happily risen
from the Trojan ashes.

The melody of the aria contains florid passages expressing Penelope's joyful emotions, for example, on *rinfioratevi* [fill with flowers] (m. 3-4), and *gioite* [rejoice] (m. 9-12). If the earlier arioso reinforced her constraint, her inability to speak or feel freely, the aria, instead, embodies her freedom and joy with triple-meter dance rhythms expressed in the tonalities of Fortune (see the cadence at the end of one of her stanzas at m. 13). The optimistic mood extends to the end of the aria (see Example 5.11), when Penelope cadences in A (m. 8), the harmony of Amore.

Example 5.10. Penelope's Aria in Act. III, Scene 10, mm. 1-13.

PENELOPE

Il - lu - stra - te - vi o Cie - li rin - fio - ra - - - tevi o pra -

(Andante)

5

9

Au - re gio - i - - te gio - i - - - - - te au - re_ gio - i - te

From this point, at the end of Penelope's aria (see Example 5.11) with her use of *cantus durus* (mm. 1-8), both she and Ulisse proceed to sing together (m. 9) although she always adopts a relatively narrower range when compared to that of Ulisse (unusual for a main operatic character) and maintains her mid-low register. The reunion of the two, however, is represented in their vocal lines, which become closer in range until, at the word *caro* [dear] (m. 28), they are singing the same pitch. This unity continues when Penelope's final note (e') becomes the first for Ulisse on the word *imparo* [learn] (mm. 31-33).

Shifting between triple and duple time (beginning in measure 9) they both express their deep feelings of happiness and their chaste as well as their physical love for one another (the latter in mm. 54-68). At the end of this scene, the victory is not of Humana Fragilità and Penelope (D) or Tempo and Ulisse (G), but of Amore (A), and the hero and heroine are reunited.

Ulisse

Sospirato mio sole!

My sighed-for sun!

Penelope

Rinnovata mia luce!

My light restored!

Ulisse

Porto, quiete e riposo.

Harbor, stillness, and repose.

Penelope e Ulisse

Bramato, sì, ma caro.

Yearned for, yes, but precious.

Penelope

*Per te gli andati affanni
a benedir imparo.*

Because of you
I learn to bless my past sorrows.

Ulisse

*Non si rammenti più de' tormenti;
tutto è piacer.*

Penelope

*Fuggan dai petti dogliosi affetti;
tutto è goder.*

Penelope e Ulisse

*Del piacer, del goder
venuto è 'l di.*

*Sì, sì, sì, vita, sì, sì, sì,
core, sì, sì, sì, sì.*

Let us not recall torments any more,
all is pleasure.

Sorrowful feelings fly from our breasts;
all is delight.

The day of pleasure, of delight has come.
Yes, yes, yes, my life,
yes, yes, yes, my heart,
yes, yes, yes, yes.

Example 5.11. Final Part of Penelope's Aria and Her Duet with Ulisse, Act III, Scene 10, mm. 1-67.

Già che sor - ta fe - li - ce del ce - ne-re Tro - jan la mia fe - ni - ce.

A 2 VOCI
 9 PENELOPE
 Rinno - va - ta mia lu -

ULISSE
 So - spi - ra - to mio So - le

(Allegro)

15
 ce broma-to si ma ca - ro bra-ma-to
 por - to qui - e - to e ri - po - so broma-to si ma ca - ro

22
 si ma ca-ro ca-ro ca-ro broma-to si ma ca-ro ca-ro ca - ro per te gli an
 broma-to si ma ca-ro ca-ro ca-ro ma ca-ro ca-ro ca - ro

Example 5.11. (Continuation).

30

da - ti af - fan - ni a be - ne - dir im - pa - ro. Non si ram - men - ti più de tormen -

36

si si si vi - ta si si - ti più de' torment - ti tut - to è pia - ce - re

42

si si si vi - ta si si fug - gan dai tut - to è pia - cer tut - to è pia - cer

48

pet - ti doglio - si af - fet - ti doglio - si af - fet - ti si si si co - re si si

Example 5.11. (Continuation).

54
tut - to e go - de - re tut - to è go - der tut - to è go - der
si si si co - re si

60
del pia - cer del go - der ve - nu - to è l'
si si si del pia - cer del go - der ve - nu - to è l'

65
di si si si vi - ta si si si co - re si si si si
di si si si vi - ta si si si co - re si si si si.

The musical score consists of three systems, each with three staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs). The lyrics are written below the staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The music features a mix of whole, half, and quarter notes, with some rests. The lyrics are in Italian and describe a character's state of mind.

Conclusion

Monteverdi depicted, through *stile molle* and *temperato*, a character whose stoic suffering lasted for over two decades. Despite the *molle* expression for her grief, Penelope's main affect throughout the opera is one of longsuffering and acceptance of her fate rather than simply complaining, for her values speak louder than mere words. Her temperance and obstinacy are conveyed through her narrow range in the mid-low part of the voice. Stepwise motion predominates—as do recitative and simple melodic lines—more

than arioso, occurring at times in contrast with Ulisse's agitation and *concitato* passages. At key moments of recognition, however, Penelope's music finally matches her husband's emotional expression.

Ulisse's Character

Ulisse's various actions as he approaches Penelope are measured against her immobility and constancy. As previously assessed, her rigidity is reaffirmed in every act: her long recitative lament (Act I, Scene 1), her counterarguments against Melanto's thoughts of loving again (Act II, Scene 2), her refusal to love someone else, notably the suitors (*Non voglio amar, non voglio* [I don't want to love, no, no], Act III, Scene 3); and her response to Telemaco's praise of the beauty of Helen, which was the ultimate cause of the Trojan Wars and of Ulisse's absence (*Beltà troppo funesta, ardore iniquo* [Too-deadly beauty, shameful passion], Act IV, Scene 1). While Ulisse moves closer to the object of his desire (in musical terms and in physical space), Penelope remains unyielding until almost the end of the opera. The character of the hero, a man of action, contrasts with that of his wife, who has been anchored in her long-suffering pain as she awaited his return.

As a literary work, Homer's *Odyssey* can be approached from several perspectives, as indicated by Charles Segal: through the mythical journey, by means of the heroic poetry, or via the "poem as a journey through mortal time as the aging and much-enduring hero experiences the losses and recuperations of human life."⁷³ The latter seems to

⁷³ Charles Segal, *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the Odyssey*, ed. Gregory Nagy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 9.

have been the emphasis in the opera *Ulisse*, both from the perspective of the librettist and from Monteverdi's musical construction of the characters. Evidence resides in the inclusion of the character Tempo in the prologue and of Humana Fragilità (as well as Fortuna and Amore, all added after revisions to the libretto by Badoaro). Affected by mortal contingency and ephemerality, Ulisse, "the king who is disguised as a beggar and talks like a bard, embodies the poem's power of mimetic representation, its ability to render the multiple guises and disguises of reality in the changing, precarious world that the *Odyssey* depicts."⁷⁴ Like the tragedians after him, Homer approached mythology not always in terms of the idealistic presentations of gods but with accurate depictions of human reality. He created a level of authenticity that in this specific case encompasses violence and bloodthirsty revenge, despite the fact that, according to Charles Segal, "the hero is famed for his wiliness, restraint, and prudence."⁷⁵

The first appearance of Ulisse in the opera corresponds to Book XIII in the *Odyssey*, when he is flung on the shore of his homeland and wakes up disoriented, angry at the Phaeacians for abandoning him, or so he believes. The Phaeacians, instead, accepted Ulisse's curse: by taking him to Ithaca's coast against the will of the god Nettuno, the latter turns them and their ship into stone. The fulfillment of Ulisse's curse is inevitable:

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 10. See also Sheila Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

⁷⁵ Charles Segal, *Singers, Heroes, and Gods*, 11. For the brutality of the slaughter, see Luigia Achillea Stella, *Il poema d'Ulisse* (Firenze: Nuova Italia, 1955), who considers it as "the final act—in a certain sense, the epilogue—of the *grievous war*" and finds throughout the *Odyssey* a humane pity for the horror of death (my translation). See Appendix A for original text in Italian.

the Phaeacians are affected because they are mortal (and so is Ulisse).⁷⁶ Shortly after arriving on Ithaca's shores, Ulisse is informed of the situation at home by Pallas (Minerva in the opera *Ulisse*, Roman counterpart to Pallas in Greek mythology).

The suitor-train thy early'st care demand,
Of that luxurious race to rid the land:
Three years thy house their lawless rule has seen,
And proud addresses to the matchless Queen.
But she thy absence mourns from day to day,
And inly bleeds, and silent waftes away:
Elusive of the bridal hour, she gives
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.⁷⁷

Ulisse rejoices at and is encouraged by Penelope's faithfulness. Disguised as a beggar to avoid Nettuno's rage (for he has blinded the god's son Cyclope) as well as to mitigate the danger posed by the suitors, Ulisse plans his return to Penelope. According to Marylin Katz, he "becomes a stranger in his own land, and his return ... is now a matter if his *xenia* [guest / friendship] will be extended to him. The problem of a hostile reception to the master of the house has been converted into one of a friendly reception to a stranger."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Charles Segal, "The Phaeacians and Odysseus' Return: Part 2, Death and Renewal," *Singers, Heroes, and Gods*, 37.

⁷⁷ Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Alexander Pope, 13.429-36, 219.

⁷⁸ Marylin Katz, *Penelope's Renown*, 74. On Ulisse and his disguise between semblance and truth, see Pietro Pucci, *Odysseus Polutropos: Intertextual Readings in the Odyssey and the Iliad* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987) and Sheila Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*. According to Katz, the main narrative of the second half of the *Odyssey* is, for many scholars, disguise and recognition. See Marylin Katz, "Duplicity, Indeterminacy, and the Ideology of Exclusivity (Book 23)," *Penelope's Renown*, 155-91. Scholar Uvo Holscher described the basic motifs of the return of Odysseus as "hiding and revelation" ["*Verbergung und Enthüllung*"]. See Holscher Uvo, *Untersuchungen zur Form der Odyssee. Szenenwechsel und gleichzeitige Handlungen* (Berlin: Wiedmann, 1939), 67.

In the *Odyssey* both Ulisse and Penelope accuse the suitors of improper behavior.⁷⁹ When Penelope appears before Antinoo in Book XVI, she complains that the suitors are dishonoring Ulisse's house, wooing his wife, trying to kill his son, and, consequently, causing her great unhappiness.⁸⁰ As the angry Ulisse reveals himself to the suitors and proceeds to slay them, he proclaims these final words:

Dogs, ye have had your day; ye fear'd no more
Ulysses vengeful from the *Trojan* shore;
While to your lust and spoil a guardless prey,
Our house, our wealth, our helpless handmaids lay:
Not so content, with bolder frenzy fir'd,
Ev'n to our bed presumptuous you aspir'd:
Laws or divine or human fail'd to move,
Or shame of men, or dread of Gods above;
Heedless alike of infamy or praise,
Or Fame's eternal voice in future days:
The hour of vengeance, wretches, now is come.
Impending Fate is yours, and instant doom.⁸¹

Different readings of Ulisse's character can be observed in contemporary translations to Italian. The idea of the hero as "wise" has not always been the case. In the Cinquecento and Seicento, while Federico Malipiero (1603-1643) saw Penelope as faithful and Ulisse as wise⁸² and Giovan-Battista Gelli (1498-1563) and Lodovico Dolce (1508 /

⁷⁹ See Marilyn Katz, *Penelope's Renown*, 170-73, for the construction of wooing viewed as a crime. The representation of wooing as such is tied, according to Katz, to the exclusivity of Ulisse and Penelope's relationship. *Ibid.*, 172-73.

⁸⁰ Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Alexander Pope, 95 [16.434-51].

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 95-96 [16.41-52].

⁸² See Homer, *La Iliade trasportata della greca nella toscana lingua da Federico Malipiero aggiuntovi nel fine il Ratto d'Elena*, trans. Federico Malipiero (Venice: Presso Taddeo Pauoni, 1642), 10.

10-1568) still placed a positive value on his wisdom,⁸³ Lorenzo Loredano (1436?-1521) in the *Iliada giocosa* called him *saggio Ulisse* [wise Ulisse], although with great irony, according to musicologist Hendrik Schulze.⁸⁴ With Giulio Cesare Grandi's translation, *astuto Ulisse* [astute Ulisse] replaces the expression *saggio Ulisse*.⁸⁵ This final attribution disappears during the Seicento.⁸⁶ To what extent did Monteverdi incorporate such views? Was Ulisse depicted as a hero, as a wise man, and / or as an astute warrior?⁸⁷

Ulisse's Music

In contrast to Penelope, Ulisse is a character marked by action, flexibility, and freedom, one able to adapt to his surroundings and to overcome difficulties (albeit not without the help of Minerva [Pallas]). The wider vocal range of Ulisse compared to that of Penelope is a reflection of this freedom. His voice encompasses more than one octave (from d-g'), whereas his tessitura varies according to with whom he is interacting: if with Penelope and Telemaco, he is usually assigned a middle-range register of f-d', whereas in

⁸³ Giovan-Battista Gelli, *La Circe* (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550); Homer, *L'Ulisse di M. Lodovico Dolce, da lui tratto dall' Odissea d' Homero*, trans. Lodovico Dolce (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1573).

⁸⁴ See Hendrik Schulze, "Il saggio ulisse," *Odysseus in Venedig*, 48-52.

⁸⁵ Giulio Cesare Grandi, *L'Epopèia: Diuisa in cinque Libri Aggiuntair il Sesto di Critiche Considerationi* (Lecce: Appresso Pietro Michele, 1637). See also *Aggiuntione per l'Epopèia del signor Giulio Cesare Grandi aggiuntai dal medesimo autore. All'illustriss. & reuerendiss. sig. Luigi Pappacoda vescouo di Lecce* (Lecce: Appresso Pietro Michele, 1641).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁸⁷ See Ellen Rosand, "Ancients and Moderns," *Monteverdi's Last Operas A Venetian Trilogy*, 132-213.

his monologues or when talking to the suitors while expressing anger or warlike emotions, his tessitura sits higher in his voice, from a-e'.⁸⁸

The most common tonalities assigned to Ulisse throughout the opera are, as previously mentioned, G (the same as Tempo), with some instances of C (one of the harmonies associated with Fortuna). Rosand claimed that Ulisse is represented by Humana Fragilità although her harmony is not the most frequently assigned to the title role. Monteverdi sets this character in this tonality in only a few instances in the opera. It is accurate, however, to assert that Ulisse is subject, as is Penelope, to the whim of the gods (Nettuno and Giove) and exists at the mercy of Tempo (*Il tempo che mi crea, quel mi combatte* [Time, which begat me, now combats me]), Fortuna (*Frail vita è di Fortuna un gioco* [Frail life is Fortune's play-thing]), and Amore (*Al tiranno d'Amor serva sen giace* [I am a servant at the feet of Love]).⁸⁹ Tempo (Time) is closest to Ulisse in terms of key relation and to what affects Penelope most: her long wait for him to return. The fact that Ulisse was absent for twenty years makes such a connection pertinent. Ulisse and Tempo express a different *ethos*, however, for their voices and intentions differ substantially: as a reminder, Tempo's range is F-d', the tessitura A-a, and, in the quality of a god, he sings elaborated melismatic passages as a *deus ex machina*. On the other hand, Ulisse, despite how brave and heroic he might be, is still a human character and is depicted as such.

⁸⁸ Although no δ^{va} sign is indicated below the staff in musical examples assigned to the tenor voice, it is to be assumed that the notated pitches will be sung an octave below. The musical analysis narrative, however, refers to the tenor pitches using the Helmholtz method and reflects the range where the pitches are actually sung.

⁸⁹ Ellen Rosand, "Ancients and Moderns," *Monteverdi's Last Operas A Venetian Trilogy*, 138.

Act I, Scene 7

Unlike with Penelope's lament, Monteverdi has interfered little in the libretto for this scene, with no cuts to the text and only a few word repetitions. Ulisse's long scene lacks the expressive focus and clear sections of his wife's monologue, with its two interruptions from Ericlea and two refrains.⁹⁰ Yet, as Rosand determined, Monteverdi managed "to invest Ulisse with heroic potential for action"⁹¹ and an increasing level of emotional intensity.

When Ulisse first appears in the opera, he has been cast ashore by the Phaeacians and, unaware of the truth, fears that they have deceived him. When he awakens after the ordeal of the storm in a state of confusion, he believes that the shores of Ithaca, which extend before him, are simply a dream. Such uncertainties in the reliability of his senses are communicated with striking harmonies, bold shifts depicting fear and distrust, and the dread of new torments as he awakens. With a less rigid structure than in Penelope's lament and a continuous renewal of phrases for every line, typical of *stile recitativo*, it is still possible to identify different sections: the gradual awakening and the gaining of awareness that he has been abandoned by the Phaeacians (or so he believes).

Monteverdi divided the scene in five unified musical sections.⁹² In the first Ulisse is presented in all his vulnerability, confused and abandoned on the shores of Ithaca. The initial indication of his disoriented state is through a similar motive and the

⁹⁰ For an additional analysis of this scene, see Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Venetian Operas: A Trilogy*, 278, in the subchapter "The Wily Hero."

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 278-85.

same harmony that accompanies Penelope's first words, *Di misera regina* in her lament. The opening motives in both instances feature a dotted rhythm and a brief, lower neighbor (see Example 5.12). The predominant harmonic interval is that of a minor third above the bass C (mm. 1-3).⁹³ Both sections also feature an extensive use of flat harmonies, mainly on E \flat and B \flat . As with Penelope in her lament, the use of *cantus mollis* at the beginning of this scene with Ulisse illustrates his fragile condition, although it is only a temporary one.

Ulisse's text itself reveals a state of disorientation that is one of the most susceptible states of human powerlessness: between sleep and waking.⁹⁴ In such a condition, Ulisse asks several questions in succession and separated by rests in his monologue: "Am I awake? Where am I? What air do I breathe? What has transformed my rest into misfortune?" all set in speech-like recitative. The opening text *Dormo ancora* [Am I awake?], repeated five times, is set to a brief dotted motive that will be applied throughout the monologue. Monteverdi emphasized Ulisse's uncertainty by beginning each measure in which this question occurs with a rest, reserving the initiation of the question itself for a weak beat. All these elements, including the low tessitura, reinforce the image of Ulisse's weak state. Only later in his scene is a more assertive version of his character introduced.

⁹³ In tonal terms, both the beginning of Penelope's "Di misera regina" and Ulisse's "Dormo ancora" are cast in C minor instead of C major.

⁹⁴ Hendrik Schulze, *Odyssey*, 109.

<i>Dormo ancora, o son desto?</i>	Am I still asleep, or am I awake?
<i>Che contrade rimirò?</i>	What country do I behold?
<i>Qual aria, ohimè, respiro?</i>	What air, alas, do I breathe?
<i>E che terren calpesto?</i>	And what ground do I tread?
<i>Chi fece in me, chi fece</i>	Who has made me, who made
<i>il sempre dolce e lusinghevol Sonno</i>	ever-sweet and pleasing Sleep
<i>ministro de' tormenti?</i>	the minister of torments?
<i>Chi cangiò il mio riposo in ria sventura?</i>	Who changed my rest into bitter
	misfortune?
<i>Qual Deità de' dormienti ha cura?</i>	What Deity watches over the sleeping?

For the first ten measures as Ulisse awakens, his voice remains low in his register (here the tessitura is d-g, lower than is usual when compared to his other scenes). As he rouses himself, his melodic line does likewise and gradually ascends to a higher range, yet continues to employ the same motive (eb-d-eb). At the words *lusinghevol sonno* [pleasant sleep], the line moves up to an f² (m. 14) as Ulisse asks himself why sleep should be the reason for his misfortune. The unpleasantness that is cast on the notion of pleasant slumber is underscored with the dissonance of seconds between the vocal line and the bass (mm. 15-16). In a rather rapid overall descent in which the flat third and sixth degrees of the F harmony are featured, Ulisse's line returns to a lower register to cadence in F, an octave lower (m. 21). His rest has been changed to bitter misfortune. Even the great Ulisse is vulnerable to the whims of the gods.

Sleep is, in the words of Segal, "perhaps the most obvious means of transition between the real and unreal worlds.... Like any passage or change of state, sleep is ambiguous. It can be like death or it can restore to new life."⁹⁵ The continuing monologue, during which Ulisse finally becomes fully aware that sleep has brought his misfortune—

⁹⁵ Charles Segal, "The Phaeacians and Odysseus' Return: Part 2, Death and Renewal," *Odyssey*, 68.

O sonno, o mortal Sonno, fratello della Morte altri ti chiama [O Sleep, O mortal Sleep, brother of Death others call you] represents a new section (beginning at m. 22). It is expressed musically with a shift to D, longer units, and, most strikingly, a shift from the flat side to the sharp one. *Cantus durus* here emphasizes the deceit and delusion that Ulisse perceives as his anger begins to grow. Although rests are still present, his speech is less hesitant in this section than the previous and is often harmonized in root position with the bass.

*Ò Sonno, ò mortal Sonno,
fratello della Morte altri ti chiama.
Solingo e trasportato,
deluso ed ingannato,
ti conosco ben io, Padre d'errori.
Pur degli errori miei son io la colpa:
ché se l'Ombra è del Sonno
sorella o pur compagna,
chi si confida all'Ombra
perduto alfin contro ragion si lagna.*

O Sleep, O mortal Sleep,
brother of Death others call you.
Alone and carried off,
deluded and deceived,
I know you well, Father of errors.
Yet I alone am guilty of my sins:
for if Darkness is the sister
or companion of Sleep,
whoever entrusts himself to the Dark
loses in the end, and complains against
reason.

The shift to a higher tessitura begins most convincingly in the third section, once Ulisse expresses his rage and complains about the severity of the gods: *O Dei sempre sdgenati* [Oh ever-angry Gods] (m. 44). His line advances even higher to a g' (mm. 58-85) when he curses the Phaeacians—"Arianna-like," as Rosand termed it—for abandoning him.⁹⁶ This passage represents the most energetic section so far: Ulisse's melodic line is constructed with far less stepwise motion and moves instead by wider leaps and dissonances from the very beginning. This greater animation is initiated with a leap of an

⁹⁶ Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 283.

octave on the exclamation “o” to a brief retardation (mm. 42-43) before ultimately coming to rest at the distance of a tenth in the span of four notes. The remainder of the section is punctuated by striking sonorities including tritones (e.g., m. 53 on *ahimé* [Alas]) at the outset, which serve to depict Ulisse’s sense of injustice and anger.

<p><i>Oh Dei sempre sdegnati, Numi non mai placati, contro Ulisse che dorme anco severi! Vostri divini Imperi contro l’human voler sien fermi e forti, ma non tolghino, ahimè, la pace ai morti.</i></p>	<p>Oh ever-angry Gods, Gods never pacified, still severe against sleeping Ulisse! Your divine Commands against the human may be fixed and strong, but do not take away, alas, peace from the dead.</p>
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When Ulisse blames the Phaeacians for abandoning him (*Feaci ingannatori* [Deceitful Phaeacians]) (beginning in m. 56), the utilization of *semicrome* on repeated notes and high pitches (between b-e’) with percussive rhythm on a single pitch (first d’, then e’) becomes the primary means of expressing *ira* and resembles the *concitato* style with its fast sixteenth-note rhythms. Ulisse’s rage explodes during a brief respite in the bass, drawing additional attention to his foul mood before his anger propels him to the highest point of the vocal line, a g’ on *voi* [you] (m. 58). The repetition of this word three times reinforces his accusatory and energetic warlike speech, as if he is already plotting his revenge.

<p><i>Feaci ingannatori, voi pur mi promettete di ricondurmi salvo in Itaca mia patria con le ricchezze mie, co’ miei Tesori. Feaci mancatori, hor non so come ingrati, mi lasciaste in questa riva aperta,</i></p>	<p>Deceitful Phaeacians, you too promised to lead me safely back to my country of Ithaca with my riches, with my Treasures. Misleading Phaeacians, now I know not how ungrateful, you left me on this open shore,</p>
--	--

*su spiaggia erma e deserta,
misero, abbandonato,
e vi porta fastosi
e per l'aure e per l'onde
così enorme peccato.
Se puniti non son sì gravi errori,
lascia, Giove, deh, lascia
de' fulmini la cura,
ché la legge del caso è più sicura.*

on a deserted and lonely beach,
wretched, abandoned,
and you carry proudly
on the breezes and on the waves
such enormous sin.
If you are not punished for such great sins,
leave, Jove, oh, leave off
your thunderbolts,
for the law of chance is more certain.

From measure 55 until the end of his scene, Ulisse sings *g'*—the top of his range for the entire opera—several times with only rare dissonances. Few appearances of flats in the harmony or melody and the absence of *molle* convey his strong desire for vengeance. This higher tessitura and vocal *concitato* style have here replaced dissonance and chromaticism as the vehicle for his hatred towards those who, reportedly, abandoned and betrayed him.

Following a perfect cadence in D (m. 80), the short pause and a new harmony (m. 81) mark the beginning of a new passage that concludes with another perfect cadence, this time in C. The decisiveness of this short section is reinforced by the near absence of dissonance but mainly by the rhythmic acceleration in the bass line (mm. 84 and 87).

*Sia delle vostre vele,
falsissimi Feaci,
sempre Borea nemico,
e sian qual piume al vento o scoglio
in mare
e vostre infide navi:
leggere agli Aquiloni, all'aure gravi.*

May your sails,
false Phaeacians,
be the enemy of Boreas,
and may your unfaithful ships be like
feathers in the wind or reefs in the sea:
Lightweight in the Storms, and heavy
in the wind.

Example 5.12. Ulisse's "Dormo ancora" in Act I, Scene 7, mm. 1-87.

Musical notation for measures 1-6. The vocal line is in treble clef with a common time signature. The lyrics are: "Dormo anco-ra Dormo anco-ra o son de-sto che contra-de ri - mi - ro qual a - ria vi re-". Below the vocal line, the bass line is in bass clef with a common time signature. The tempo marking "(Lento, ma libero)" is placed below the first measure.

Dormo anco-ra Dormo anco-ra o son de-sto che contra-de ri - mi - ro qual a - ria vi re-

(Lento, ma libero)

Musical notation for measures 7-11. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "spi - ro e che ter - ren calpesto_ dormo anco-ra dormo. ancora_ dormo ancora o son desto_". The bass line continues with sustained notes.

spi - ro e che ter - ren calpesto_ dormo anco-ra dormo. ancora_ dormo ancora o son desto_

Musical notation for measures 12-17. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "chi fece in me chi fe - ce il sempre dol - ce e lu-sin - ghe - vol son-no mi - ni - stro de'tor-men-ti chi can". The bass line continues with sustained notes.

chi fece in me chi fe - ce il sempre dol - ce e lu-sin - ghe - vol son-no mi - ni - stro de'tor-men-ti chi can

Musical notation for measures 18-23. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "gio il mio ri-po-so in ria_ sventu - ra qual De-i-tà de'dormi - en-ti ha ca-ra o son - no o mor-tal". The bass line continues with sustained notes.

gio il mio ri-po-so in ria_ sventu - ra qual De-i-tà de'dormi - en-ti ha ca-ra o son - no o mor-tal

Musical notation for measures 24-27. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "son - no fra - tel-lo del-la mor-te al-tri ti chia-ma so - lin - go trasporta - to de - lu - so et inganna - to". The bass line continues with sustained notes.

son - no fra - tel-lo del-la mor-te al-tri ti chia-ma so - lin - go trasporta - to de - lu - so et inganna - to

Example 5.12. (Continuation).

29

ti co-no-sco ti co nosco_ben i - o Padre d'erro - ri pur degli er - ro - ri miei son i - o la col - pa___ che se

1)

36

l'ombra è del son-no so - rel - la o pur com - pa gna, chi si con - fi - da al - l'ombra per-du-to al - fin contro ra - gion si la -

42

gna o___ o Dei sempres degna___ ti Numi non mai pla - ca - ti contro U - lisse che dorme

48

anco. severi___ vostri di-vini im - pe - ri contra___ l'human vo - ler sien fermi e for - ti Ma non tolgano___ ahi-

54

mè la pa-ce ai mor-ti Fe - a - ci ingannato - ri voi voi voi pur mi prometteste___ di ri - condurmi___

Example 5.12. (Continuation).

60

salvo in Ita - ca mi - a pa - tria con le ricchezze___ mie co'miei te-so - ri Fe - a - ci manca - to - ri hor___ non

65

so co- m'ingra - ti mi lascia - ste in questa ri - va aper - ta su spiaggiaerma e deser - ta mi - se ro abban do -

70

-na-to e vi porta fa - sto - si e per l'au - re e per l'onde cosi e - norme.pec - ca - to! Se puni - ti non son si gravi erro - ri

76

la - scia Giove deh lascia de ful - mini la cu - ra che la leg - ge del ca - so è più si - cu - ra sia del - le no - stre ve - le fal -

82

sis - simi___ Fe - a - ci sempre___ Borea___ ini - mi - co e sian qual piu ma al ven - to o sco - glio in

85

ma - re le vostre in - fi - de na - vi leggie - re agli Aqui - lo - ni all'au - re gra - vi.

Ending in the same tonality as it started (*i.e.*, C), this scene still does not represent a strong large-scale structure, especially in comparison with Penelope's lament. The vocal line appears loosely organized often with wide leaps and percussive repeated pitches. At the beginning of the scene, as Rosand observed, "the passionate ebb and flow of [Ulisse's] opening monologue conveys his volatility, his potential for action."⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the emotional intensity increases from the moment of Ulisse's awakening with small melodic units interrupted by rests within a narrow range accelerating to his climatic rage against the Phaeacians. Quick syllabic delivery of text in *stile concitato* to portray the affect of anger, combined with the high tessitura, form an effective example of the Monteverdian *concitato* genus.

Act I, Scene 8

It does not take long for Ulisse to learn the facts. Once Minerva appears to inform him of the Phaeacians' true fate, he returns to a middle tessitura, between d'-bb'. His melodic line, more speech-like than sung, contrasts with that of Minerva. As demonstrated previously for opera in general, and particularly in *Ulisse*, song and florid virtuosic passages are assigned mostly to the gods (see Example 5.13).⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 285.

⁹⁸ Minerva (Pallas in *Odyssey*) appears disguised as a shepherd to help Ulisse. Her appearance brings a variety of musical styles, beginning with a canzonetta melody, the idiom of Minerva. The style changes rapidly as Ulisse recognizes her. There is a concerted form with the running bass; a section in triple meter with florid melody; and an acceleration of changes in meter, rhythm, and style, matching the increasing tension that culminates in Ulisse's joy at returning home. When singing about the destruction of Troja, the martial *stile concitato* reappears in the voice of Ulisse, developing into a virtuoso coloratura (the latter as also assigned to the demigod Orfeo).

Example 5.13. Minerva to Ulisse in Act I, Scene 8, mm. 1-21.

Quinci imparate voi stolte mortali all'ignavia del ciel non
 (Lento)
 po... ner bocca
 6
 il giudizio del Ciel a voi non tocca che
 11
 son di terra i nostri tribunali
 16

Minerva’s singing style, similar to that of the other gods, is a machine-like display of power, even though, in the words of Francesca Zardini, she “represents the connection between both worlds, the divine and the human one; she is the *deus ex machina* par excellence.”⁹⁹ As a human character, Ulisse is assigned some melismatic passages, more elaborate and frequent than those created for Penelope but far simpler when compared to those for the gods and for Minerva in particular. Ulisse’s simple melismas on the word

⁹⁹ Francesca Zardini and Grazia Lana, *Gli Ulissi di Giacomo Badoaro*, 49. “Minerva costituisce il legame tra i due mondi, il divino e l’umano, è il *deus ex machina* per eccellenza.” Minerva’s tessitura is generally from f’-d’ and her range extends from d’-g’.

vento [wind] are not intended to compete with those of the goddess, for her singing style is not for humans, no matter how brave Ulisse may be.

When describing the events of his arrival, Ulisse expresses anger again, returning via an ascending sequence to *g'* with the words *Ma dal cruccioso mar, dal vento infido fummo a forza cacciati in questo lido* [But we were driven to this shore by the angry sea, by treacherous winds]. Monteverdi reinforced this moment by repeating the words *a forza cacciati*, set sequentially as leaping fourths and echoed homophonically by the continuo, while resembling Ulisse's warlike style.

Act II, Scene 3

Ulisse's main harmony (G), starts to be heard more consistently after the beginning of the second act, when he interacts first with Eumete and then Telemaco.¹⁰⁰ In the

¹⁰⁰ Eumete, a swineherd in the *Odyssey*, becomes a shepherd in *Ulisse*. He is characterized from the beginning of the *Odyssey* as a good and faithful servant who loves Ulisse and his family (Homer, *Odyssey*, 218 [13.405-06]; 235-34 [14.12-26]). See also Charles Segal, *Singers, Heroes, and Gods*, 120-39, as well as Douglas Olson, *Blood and Iron*, 121, who claims that Eumete's dedication "should not be mistaken by entirely selfless behaviors. Eumete has always worked in expectation of a reward (200 [19.62-67]). Indeed, he manages to construct what seems to be a relatively comfortable life for himself in the country (262 [14.449-52])." In the *Odyssey* Ulisse has been disguised by Minerva so as to be unrecognizable to family and friends (397 [13.190-03]) and warned against giving anyone reason to suspect his identity (201 [13.308-09]). He has also been told to talk at length to his servant and ask him 'everything' (157 [12.411]) but not to reveal who he is. "Indeed, Eumete is characterized almost from the very first as extraordinarily loquacious." Douglas Olson, *Blood and Iron*, 126. According to Olson, Eumete's "obvious love of talk and gossip poses a potential danger should he learn more than he ought, and Athena accordingly turns Odysseus back into an old man ... out of fear that were Eumete to recognize him, he would run off to town immediately and announce the news to his mistress rather than 'shutting it up [in] his mind' (97 [16.454-09])." Olson, *ibid.*, 126. In the *Odyssey*, Eumete is thus a blessing and a problem for Ulisse. The latter needs the shelter Eumete can offer, but he cannot let him know more than is absolutely necessary. Such a depiction is less evident in the opera *Ulisse*. Nevertheless, the title character does not disclose his true identity to Eumete when he meets him, and he does so for good reason.

duet between father and son, Ulisse's lower voice contrasts with Telemaco's higher tessitura. The distinction is understandable given their age difference.¹⁰¹ Despite the fact that Ulisse is set as a tenor while Tempo (his counterpart in the prologue) is cast as a bass, the tessitura of the former indicates that his role is not for a light tenor and that there should be a contrast between the young, high, and lighter voice of Telemaco and that of the more experienced and older Ulisse.¹⁰²

In the scene in which Telemaco sees his father or, rather, accepts him as such, the two characters sing a duet (see Example 5.14). Here the casting of a "high" and "medium" tenor emphasizes the difference between youth (Telemaco) and adulthood (Ulisse). Telemaco takes the lead in this exchange (mm. 1-2). Despite beginning in A, the duet concludes in Ulisse's key: the latter suddenly modulates to G on the words *Paterna tenerezza* [Paternal tenderness], now taking the harmonic lead before they sing together in parallel thirds as a mutual expression of solidarity and joy:

¹⁰¹ See Marilyn Katz, *Penelope's Renown*, 9. With Telemaco in the *Odyssey*, the biological fact anchors his identity and "provides the reference point for his assumption of the role of Ulisse's replacement, the role of 'double,' as it were. Telemaco is invited by Ulisse to play a part in which his capacity for duplicity will reveal the truth of his 'blood': If you are truly mine and [born] of our blood" [6.300]. Telemaco is required to accept his father with no sign given but based on paternal authority alone (70 [16.190 ff.]). See also Douglas Olson, "The Return of the Father," *Blood and Iron*, 161-83. Katz also noted that victory is revenge in the *Odyssey*. Penelope and Telemaco facilitate such victory. Telemaco's glory is not his own, but it is a "matter of recovering that of his fathers and transferring it to himself, or of approximating himself to his father and thus acquiring his father's *glory* by association." Marilyn Katz, *Penelope's Renown*, 64. In fact, in the first four books of the *Odyssey*, Telemaco offers an account of himself that stresses his similarity to Ulisse. See Marilyn Katz, *ibid.*, 64: "In his quest for his own heroic identity, Telemachus is confronted with a double frame of reference in the figure of his father." See also Gregory Nagy, *The Best of Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1979), 39-40.

¹⁰² Telemachus, from the Greek *Telemakhos*, means "fighting from afar"; therefore, adopting the same key as his father is not surprising.

<u>Telemaco</u> <i>O padre sospirato!</i>	O sighed-for father!
<u>Ulisse</u> <i>O figlio desiato!</i>	O longed-for son!
<u>Telemaco</u> <i>Genitor glorioso!</i>	Renowned parent!
<u>Ulisse</u> <i>Pegno dolce amoroso!</i>	Sweet loving pledge!
<u>Telemaco</u> <i>T'inchino o mio diletto.</i>	I bow to you, O my delight.
<u>Ulisse</u> <i>Ti stringo</i>	I embrace you.
<u>Telemaco</u> <i>Filiale dolcezza...</i>	Filial sweetness...
<u>Ulisse</u> <i>Paterna tenerezza...</i>	Paternal tenderness...
<u>Telemaco</u> <i>...a lagrimar mi sforza.</i>	...forces me to weep.
<u>Ulisse</u> <i>...il pianto in me rinforza.</i>	...intensifies my weeping.
<u>Telemaco e Ulisse</u> <i>Mortal tutto confida e tutto spera, che quando il Ciel protegge Natura non ha legge: l'impossibile ancor spesso s'avvera.</i>	A mortal trusts and hopes for all, for when heaven protects, Nature has no law: the impossible still can come true.

Even though the text conveys an affect of love and sweetness, it is about paternal / filial love between two men who are also associated with courage / manly heroic deeds, not two lovers singing a languid scene or a lament that conveys human vulnerability. The *cantus durus* harmonies A and G with major third and sixth and the long held notes

throughout their interaction are two of the elements that help to reflect the nature of these characters and of their encounter. As previously observed, Ulisse's tessitura changes according to his emotions; this moment is one of a joyous reencounter, matching his medium tessitura.¹⁰³

Example 5.14. Duet between Telemaco and Ulisse in Act II, Scene 3, mm. 1-11.

TELEMACO

Oh Padre sospira - to Ge - ni - tor glo - ri - o - so

ULISSE

oh figlio de - si - a - to

t'inchi - no t'inchi - no

pegno dolce amo - ro - so ti stringo ti stringo

¹⁰³ In Act II, Scene 7, Ulisse tells Telemaco that he is alive without revealing his identity to the shepherd. When he makes himself known to his son, they sing a duet—despite Badoaro's design of their dialogue as purely recitative.

Act II, Scene 12

The last scene of the second act leads to a dramatic climax with several conflicts and victories, ending in the martial *stile concitato*. The first event, Ulisse's victory over Iro, is cast in a comic style (resembling intermezzo episodes) with the continuity of action requiring *stile recitativo*.¹⁰⁴ A different emotional content is required for Ulisse's second conflict and victory: after the suitors offer Penelope gifts, she decides to award the prize of her own consent to marriage to the one able to string Ulisse's bow. She does not believe her own words, however, for her heart still belongs to Ulisse, whom she has not yet recognized.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, she is positive that no one will be able to pass the test she has proposed.

In the victory over the suitors, in which Ulisse strikes the bow and kills all his rivals, the prominent reliance on the key of G is associated with his heroic nature and noble victory, as portrayed in Example 5.15 and in the following words:

¹⁰⁴ Leo Schrade, *Monteverdi*, 355. For Iro and his position as a comic character, see Ellen Rosand's articles: "Iro and the Interpretation of *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*," *The Journal of Musicology* VII/2 (Spring 1989), 141-64; and "Operatic Madness: A Challenge to Convention, *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 241-87.

¹⁰⁵ See the two articles by Ellen Rosand: "The Bow of Ulysses," *The Journal of Musicology* XII/3 (Summer 1994), 376-95; and "L'arco d'Ulisse," *Claudio Monteverdi: Studi e prospettive: Atti del convegno Mantova, 21-24 ottobre 1993*, ed. Paola Besutti, Teresa M. Gialdroni, Rodolfo Baroncini (Florence: Leo S. Olschky, 1998), 287-85.

Ulisse

Giove nel suo tuonar grida vendetta!

Così l'arco saetta.

Sinfonia da guerra

Ulisse

Minerva altri rincora, altri avvilisce!

Così l'arco ferisce.

Alle morti alle stragi alle ruine!

Giove cries for vengeance with his
thunder!

This is how the bow shoots!

Sinfonia of war

Minerva heartens some, others she
discourages! This is how the bow wounds.
To death, to carnage, to destruction!

In this part of the scene Ulisse sings in the range between g and g' with the triadic motion typical of *concitato* style, applied not only for the passion of anger, but also for heroic deeds (mm. 7-17). This passage is preceded by a *Sinfonia da guerra* [Sinfonia of war] as confirmation of Ulisse's heroic achievements. It is suitable then that this is the *genus* chosen by Monteverdi to end the second act when Ulisse achieves victory over the suitors—but not yet over Penelope's heart.

Example 5.15. Ulisse's Victory over the Suitors in Act II, Scene 12, mm. 1-16.

ULISSE

Mi-ner - va al - tri rin - co - ra altri avvi - li - sce co-si l'arco_ fe-ri-sce co-si l'ar - co fe-ri-sce:

7

f

f

f

f

Al - le mor - ti al - le stra - gi al - le mor - ti al - le stra - gi al - le ru -

12

i - ne al-le ru - i - ne a le ru - i - ne a le ru - i - - ne.

Fine del secondo atto.

Act III, Scene 10

While he is unable to reach Penelope with his music, he can do so with his speech (*i.e.*, recitative). Monteverdi's setting of this scene can be described as one of controlled eloquence, with no signs of the anger expressed by Ulisse when he was cast upon the Ithacan shore. Instead, he is rather decorous and vocally restrained when requesting his bow from Penelope although he is ready to abandon such restraint when necessary, as described in the previous scene when he strings the bow and adopts the *stile concitato*, first to rally the gods and then to enact the suitors' demise.

When compared with Penelope's vocal lines in general throughout the opera, the ones of Ulisse are freer in terms of melodic gestures and emotional expression. He often conveys his thoughts and affects in passionate recitative and arioso but may also express these through song.¹⁰⁶ He does not adopt arioso when singing with Penelope, however. Alternatively, he employs recitative of controlled eloquence in the last act, as if trying to match her style of speech. To her "stolid denial of her feelings and refusal to trust her senses, Ulisse enlists all his powers of persuasion."¹⁰⁷ Words alone will not help him prove his identity to his faithful but skeptical spouse. On several occasions Ulisse turns to song to express his optimism, whether it be to Minerva, Eumete, or Telemaco. When addressing Penelope, however, he turns to recitative, the musical language adopted by

¹⁰⁶ See Ellen Rosand, "Monteverdi's Last Operas," *The Cambridge Companion*, 234. Telemaco also employs song to express an excess of emotion: an aria as he flies back to Ithaca in Minerva's chariot, a duet with the goddess, and a passionate duet with Ulisse. Melanto and the suitors, too, are fairly quick to express themselves through song rather than speech (*i.e.*, recitative), which, according to Rosand, is the language of love and lust.

¹⁰⁷ Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 289.

Penelope (see Example 5.8).¹⁰⁸ He tries to harmonically dislodge Penelope from her fixation on D, the symbol of her faith: more than once he cadences in A, but Penelope inevitably returns to her key. One such instance occurs when Penelope affirms *Consorte io sono, ma del perduto Ulisse, / nè incantesmi o magie / perturberan la fé, le voglie mie* [I am the Consort, but of the lost Ulisse; / neither charms nor magic / will disturb my constancy or my will] and cadences in D (m. 25). In the following measure Ulisse begins with same harmony but on the fifth above the root (*i.e.*, a) to cadence later in A, when explaining that in order to remain faithful to her, he has spurned eternity and nearly lost his life (mm. 26-33). Penelope is not moved by his words and again cadences in D (mm. 44-45). Once again Ulisse attempts to convince her of his identity, starting from D but cadencing in A (mm. 46-54), only to be dismissed by Penelope, who, parallel to Ulisse, begins in A but cadences in D (mm 55-59).

Employing another tactic when these attempts fail to persuade Penelope (see Example 5.9), Ulisse moves to the key of G as he discloses details that are known only to him (mm. 1-20). Penelope is finally convinced and acknowledges the truth (mm. 20-38). Until this moment, Ulisse's melodic lines are more active and higher in his range when compared to those of Penelope (see Example 5.8), whose assertive speech is punctuated by rests and shorter units (mm. 1-6 for Ulisse and mm. 7-11 for Penelope).

Although more constrained and situated in a middle register overall, Ulisse's opening address to Penelope (Example 5.8), when appearing in his real clothing rather than that of a beggar, starts high and off balance on a first inversion of the dominant (m.

¹⁰⁸ Ellen Rosand, "Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria," *Monteverdi Companion*, 243.

1). Combined with short rhythmic values, this passage effectively expresses his emotional distress at not being recognized by his wife. In the ensuing responses to Penelope, Monteverdi's setting of Ulisse's text depicts the title character's vulnerability and despair as he reminds his wife that he almost died in order to remain faithful and to return to her. His desperation can be observed in Example 5.8 as well in the wide descending and often dissonant leaps, such as the melodic tritone d' to g# on the word *corro* (*al riposo*) [hasten (for repose)] (m. 6) and c' to f# on the word (*l'eternità*) *sprezzai* [spurned (eternity)] (m. 28); as well as the minor sixth on *sospirati* (*amplessi*) [sighed-for (embraces)] (mm. 15-17); and the minor seventh for *son giunto* (*a morte*) [I nearly perished] (m. 32). With the exception of the sleep scene, this is the only moment when Ulisse is exposed in all his human susceptibility. He is captive to Penelope's skepticism; only she can change the course of the action.

As seen in Example 5.9, Ulisse's line becomes progressively less dissonant as he reveals the description of their marital bed (mm. 8-20), particularly in the ascending stepwise motion (mm. 10-14). He now understands that the only way he can convince her is with facts, which he relates in the tonality of G.

*Del tuo casto pensiero io so 'l costume,
so che 'l letto pudico
che tranne Ulisse solo, altro non vide,
ogni notte da te s'adorna e copre
con un serico drappo
di tua mano contesto, in cui si vede,
col Virginal suo Coro,
Diana effigiata.
M'accompagnò mai
sempre memoria così grata.*

I know the ways of your chaste mind,
I know that your pure bed,
which none have seen, save Ulisse,
is adorned and covered every night
with a silken cloth
made by your hand, in which can be seen
the likeness of Diana,
with her Virginal Chorus.
That pleasant memory
has accompanied me always.

Following her subsequent aria in C, one of the harmonies of Fortuna (Example 5.10), Penelope cadences in A, and the two finally sing together, primarily in triple meter. They often sing in D (illustrating Ulisse's closeness to this wife), and they both cadence in A, the key of Amore, at the end of the duet (Example 5.11). The two parts exchange common motives throughout, overwhelmed by joy and love after Time and Fortune have separated them for twenty years. They finally sing together in parallel sixths at the conclusion of the duet and of the opera (beginning with m. 61), signifying both their union and their reunification.

Conclusion

As complex characters who display numerous emotions, Penelope and Ulisse have more than one *genera* associated with them; their vocal expression matches their emotional grief, restraint, and warlike *ethos*. It is possible, nonetheless, to observe certain patterns that allow specific deductions regarding their voice types, *ethos*, and *genera*, according to Monteverdi's system. Penelope's focus on the middle range of her voice and simple melodic lines are most often presented in D harmony in a narrow range and middle register to express temperance, as well as modesty, chastity, and patience—her prevalent states and virtues, hence associating Penelope with *genus temperato*. Her lament in *genus molle* can be interpreted as a representation of her human frailty, of the emotional state that resides behind her controlled stoic nature, although this is only depicted in the first scene of the opera.

As for Ulisse, his voice is often placed in a high range with *concitato* style; he tends overall to be associated with “heroic deeds.” Yet his pitches are not so high that his

tessitura competes with that of his son Telemaco, who is young but also brave. Ulisse's delivery in the middle register of his voice and his ability to match the restrained style of Penelope (and Humana Fragilità) in certain instances provide some rationale to interpret him as "wise." Yet he appears to be more "astute" and active than stoic and contemplative, the latter of which better describes his wife. Ulisse sings (aria and arioso) more than Penelope because he is a hero—in the sense of performing heroic deeds—and because he is joyful at the realization that his wife has waited twenty years for him. Penelope must resist the temptation and the pressures to re-marry; she is determined to stay faithful despite her pain. She does not sing until the final scene: until then, she has nothing to celebrate.

Due to the complexity of their human natures, it must be taken into consideration that there is, naturally, more than one *genera* associated with the two main characters in *Ulisse*. The most prevalent is *temperato* for Penelope—with one scene in *stile molle*—and *concitato* for Ulisse, with several instances in *stile temperato*. These styles are conveyed through their vocal ranges and tessitura as well as rhythm and several expressive devices (*e.g.*, dissonances and repeated notes). Their *ethoi* (constancy and temperance for Penelope and courage and perseverance for Ulisse) are portrayed throughout their emotional journey toward reuniting with each other.

In comparison with *Poppea*, *Ulisse* displays an epic simplicity despite the complexity of the main roles that is conveyed with relative clarity in the characters' actions. In Monteverdi's last opera, however, the search for verisimilitude is reflected in a more realistically human manner with a libretto based on historical facts rather than mythology and through a plot complicated by ambiguity, deceit, and conflict.

CHAPTER SIX

L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA (1642)

Introduction and Opera Overview

L'incoronazione di Poppea, composed at the end of Monteverdi's life, is based not on a mythological theme, as with *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, but instead on a lurid moment in Roman history, when Emperor Nero (37-68)—Nerone in the opera—rejected his wife Octavia (Ottavia) for his high-born mistress Poppaea Sabina (Poppea) against the advice of his tutor, the philosopher Seneca.¹ While *Ulisse* features both mythological and

¹ Several musicologists, notably Wendy Heller and Tim Carter, have argued that the opera was completed by one of Monteverdi's students. See Wendy Heller, "Anatomy of Opera," *Music in the Baroque* (New York: Norton, 2014), 98. According to Carter and Paolo Fabbri, it is commonly accepted that composers other than Monteverdi contributed to the score in its present form. For instance, a version of the text of the duet "Pur ti miro," Act I, scene 8, appeared in 1641 in Bologna, the year before the completion of *Poppea*, during a revival of Benedetto Ferrari's *Il pastor regio* (Venice, 1640). Furthermore, the opening *sinfonia* was reworked for Francesco Cavalli's *Doriclea* of 1645. See Paolo Fabbri and Tim Carter, "New Sources for 'Poppea,'" *Music & Letters* LXXIV/1 (February 1993), 16-23. Two manuscripts of *Poppea* have survived, both untitled and anonymous: one in Venice (Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, It. IV.439 [=9963]) and the other in Naples (Conservatorio di Musica S. Pietro a Majella, Rari 6.4.I). Both scores contain only the vocal line and the continuo with the exception of the *sinfonia* and ritornelli, which are given in three parts in the Venice manuscript and in four parts in most of the Naples source. See Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, trans. Tim Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 259-60, and Tim Carter, "Re-reading 'Poppea': Some Thoughts on Music and Meaning in Monteverdi's Last Opera," *Journal of the Royal Music Association* CXII (1997), 173-204. According to Fabbri, Monteverdi's name began to be associated with *Poppea*, also known as *La coronatione* and *Il Nerone*, in the second half of the seventeenth century, due to Francesco Cavalli's Venetian score that later became part of the collection of the noble music-lover Marco Contarini (1631-1689). The attribution of Monteverdi as its composer became official only in the first published catalogue of operas inserted by historian Cristoforo Ivanovich (1629-1688) in his *Minerva al tavolino* (Venice: Nicolò Pazzana, 1681). A bibliography of libretti had already appeared in the volume by Greek scholar and theologian Leone Allaci (1589-1669) titled *Drammaturgia di Leone Allaci divisa in sette indici* (Roma: Il Mascardi, 1666). See Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, 260.

human characters, Monteverdi's last opera is concentrated entirely on the realistic depiction of human emotions.² There is a difference of only two years between the completion of *Poppea* and *Ulisse*, yet their distinctions are pronounced and can be observed on several levels. Apart from the gods' interventions and the singing competition of the suitors, the text in *Ulisse* is set primarily as recitative, whereas in *Poppea* there is a greater emphasis on arias and ariosos. Both operas end with the triumph of love. In *Ulisse*, love is conjugal, mature, and chaste.³ In *Poppea* it is just the opposite. In the latter, love is cast as sexual allure and constitutes the overwhelming sensual power that drives the plot. It induces Nero to repudiate Ottavia, to exile her and Ottone, to suppress Seneca, to marry Poppea, and to proclaim her as empress. Although Amore is victorious, historical facts indicate a hollow triumph for Rome itself, which falls into decay at the hands of Nero. The emperor's love is violent and choleric; Poppea's love is ambitious and opportunistic. The unfaltering morality of Seneca, illustrated in his detachment from power and the material world, is made manifest in his warning against such vain desires that lead only to destruction: reason is defeated when sensuality prevails. Therefore, unlike *Ulisse*, *Poppea* is a "display" of characters dominated and commanded by passion.⁴ Although Monteverdi composed his last opera in 1642, the date 1643 appears as the first performance

² For questions regarding verisimilitude in *Poppea*, see Ellen Rosand, "Monteverdi's Mimetic Art: *L'incoronazione di Poppea*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1/2 (July 1989), 113-37, and Tim Carter, "Re-reading *Poppea*, 173-204.

³ Nino Pirrotta, "Monteverdi and the Problems of Opera," *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque: A Collection of Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 252.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 253.

date.⁵ The premiere was staged at the Teatro Grimani in SS. Giovanni e Paolo. The full libretto of the opera was not published for the premiere but only a *Scenario dell'opera reggia intitolata La coronatione di Poppea che si rappresenta in musica nel teatro dell'illustr. Sig. Giovanni Grimani*.⁶ The complete libretto appeared several years later in the literary edition of Busenello's libretti published in the volume *Delle ore ociose* (1656).⁷

The libretto for *Poppea* is based on historical events from classical Rome, taken mainly from the accounts of Cornelius Tacitus (c. 56-c. 120) as related in *Annals* (109) and the play *Ottavia*, presumably written before the year 65 and attributed to Lucio Annaeus Seneca [Seneca the Younger] (c. 4 B.C.-65 A.D.).⁸ Two additional sources, as observed by Rosand, were those of Roman historian Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (c. 70-c. 130) and Lucius Cassius Dio (150-235), Roman administrator and historian: Books VI

⁵ See Nino Pirrotta, "Early Venetian Libretti at Los Angeles," *Ibid.*, 454, n. 16. Pirrotta indicated that the premiere of *Poppea* is often listed as 1643 because the carnival season in Venice in 1642 began on 26 December.

⁶ See Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, 259. "Scenario of the royal opera called *La coronatione di Poppea*, which is represented in music in the theater of the most illustrious Signor Giovanni Grimani." The text of this scene was published by Giovan Pietro Pinelli (Venice, 1643).

⁷ Giovan Francesco Busenello, "L'incoronazione di Poppea," *Delle ore ociose = Les fruits de l'oisiveté*, trans. Jean-François Lattarico (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2016), 449-606. For further readings on the libretto of *Poppea*, see Robert C. Ketterer, "Neoplatonic Light and Dramatic Genre in Busenello's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and Noris's *Il ripudio d'Ottavia*," *Music & Letters* LXXX/1 (February 1999), 1-22, and Francesco Degrada, "Gian Francesco Busenello e il libretto della *Incoronazione di Poppea*," *Congresso internazionale sul tema Claudio Monteverdi e il suo tempo: Relazioni e comunicazioni: Venezia, Mantova, Cremona, 3-7 Maggio 1968*, ed. Raffaello Monteroso (Verona: Stamperia Valdona, 1969), 81-102.

⁸ Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals of Tacitus*, ed. and trans. George Gilbert Ramsay (London: J. Murray, 1904); Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Octavia: A Play Attributed to Seneca*, trans. Rolando Ferri (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

and VIII of the former's *The Lives of the Caesars* (121) and Books XLI and XLII of the latter's *Roman History* (211-233).⁹

The tendency to adapt libretti from literary works started in Florentine and Roman circles and was quickly adopted in Venice (as was the case with Monteverdi's *Ulisse* and also with his lost opera *Le nozze d'Enea con di Lavinia*, written in 1641, both to libretti by Badoaro).¹⁰ The aims of Giovanni Francesco Busenello (1598-1659), however, were to appeal to modern taste rather than to follow classical doctrine. Instead of selecting topics from mythology, he concentrated on historical facts and human characters that, with the exception of the brief appearances and interjections from certain gods, notably Pallade, Venus, and Mercurio, bore no relationship to classical myth. Wendy Heller alleged that the choice of the unconventional story of Nerone and Poppea had its origins in the interests of the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, which fictionalized events drawn from the history of imperial Rome as can be seen in the *novelle* of Federico Malipiero (1603-1643), titled *L'imperatrice ambiziosa* (1642),¹¹ and in *Agrippina, madre di Nerone*

⁹ Ellen Rosand, "Monteverdi's Last Operas," *The Cambridge Companion to Monteverdi*, ed. John Whenham and Richard Wistreich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 236. See also Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *Lives of the Caesars*, trans. Catharine Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); original in Latin: Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *Vitae Caesarum* (Treviso: Johannes Rubeus, 1480); and Lucius Cassius Dio, *Roman History, Books XLI-XLV* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); original in Greek: Lucius Cassius Dio, *Tōn Diōnos Tou Kassiou Tou Kokkēianou Rōmaikōn Historiōn Ta Sōzomena* = *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae Quae Supersunt* (211; reprinted Hamburgi: Sumtibus Christiani Heroldi, 1750).

¹⁰ For a study of the libretto of *Enea*, see Ellen Rosand, "Sources and Authenticity: Three Librettos," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 61-68. Monteverdi's *Le nozze d'Enea con Lavinia*, with libretto by Giacomo Badoaro, was premiered in the Teatro SS. Giovanni e Paolo in 1641. That the score is lost is not unusual as it was the customary practice of the time to consider the poet as the creator of the drama, more so than the musician / composer.

¹¹ Federico Malipiero and Giovanni da Pesaro, *L'imperatrice ambiziosa di Federico Malipiero Nobile Veneto: Libri due. All' Illustrissimo ... Giovanni da Pesaro Caualiere Procurator di S. Marco* (Venice: Surian, 1642).

(1642) and *Agrippina, moglie di Britannico* (1642) of Ferrante Pallavicino (1615-1644),¹² whose protagonists revel in sensuous luxury.¹³ The *Incogniti* also published satirical novels that focused on the sexual and political misconduct of figures from imperial Rome:

The badly-behaved Romans served Venetian republican interests, since the Roman Empire offered an excellent example of the questionable moral values of monarchy. Both libretto and music encapsulate the Academy's fascination with moral ambiguity and its preoccupation (as expressed in the writings of other *Incogniti*) with the allure and danger of female power and sexuality.¹⁴

As observed in Chapter Two, the political and cultural context in Venice during the 1630s and 1640s was one of rebellion against the monarchic system and of favoring the Republic.¹⁵ For these reasons, it was justifiable, according to the philosophy of the *Incogniti*, to depict in *Poppea* imperial intrigues, blind ambitions, and power-seeking actions, resorting even to murder.

Such portrayals of moral decay, resident primarily in the roles of Nerone and Poppea, contrast with the character of Seneca, who evokes an authority subject to reason and

¹² Ferrante Pallavicino, *Le due Agrippine* (Venice: Appresso il Turrini, 1654).

¹³ Political intrigue exceeded the boundaries of ancient Rome, of course, and was also the focus of historian and writer Maiolino Bisaccioni's *Demetrio moscovita* (1643): Maiolino Bisaccioni (1582-1663) and Edoardo Taddeo, *Il Demetrio Moscovita: Istoria Tragica* (Florence: Olschki, 1992). Similarly, sensuality (spread through many works by the *Incogniti*) was expressed through the irrational licentiousness of a despot described in Giovan Battista Moroni's *Lussi del genio esecrabile di Clearco* (1640): Giovanni B. Moroni and Gioseffo Gironi, *I lussi del genio esecrabile di Clearco ... Corretti in questa terza impressione* (Ferrara: Gioseffo Gironi, 1640).

¹⁴ Wendy Heller, "Anatomy of Opera," 100.

¹⁵ Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, 262.

law. In Act I, Scene 9, Seneca affirms that *consigliere scellerato è il sentimento / ch'odia le leggi e la ragion disprezza* [Emotion is a wicked counselor / that despises laws and scorns reason] and calls attention to reason of the State: *Siano innocenti i regi / o s'aggravino sol di colpi illustri* [Kings should be guiltless, / Or at least be weighed down by noteworthy crimes].¹⁶ While Seneca advises to rule by reason, the tyrant Nerone governs by caprice and blind instinct. The prevalence of anti-conformism in this opera can be seen not only in the confrontation between Nerone and Seneca (Act I, Scene 9) but also in the derision of Seneca by the page Valletto (Act I, Scene 6) after the philosopher tried unsuccessfully to console the betrayed Ottavia.

Although the libretto is based on historical figures, facts of their existence have been distorted. In reality Ottavia was killed by Nerone, not exiled; and Seneca's death, portrayed in the middle of the opera, occurs before Nerone weds Poppea, rather than years later following Octavia's murder and the crowning of Poppea as empress.¹⁷ In addition, Busenello added new characters: Drusilla, who is in love with Ottone, two elderly nurses for Poppea and for Ottavia, two young servants who sing an erotic duet, and a prologue with allegorical figures in which Love (as Cupid) triumphs over Fortune and Virtue.

¹⁶ As translated by Ellen Hargis in "Boston Early Music Festival & Exhibition, Claudio Monteverdi, and Gian Francesco Busenello, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*," *Boston Early Music Festival, June 7-14, 2015: Invention & Discovery* ([Boston]: Boston Early Music Festival, 2015). All translations from the libretto are taken from this source.

¹⁷ In history, Emperor Nero also killed his own mother, Agrippina the Younger, a few years after becoming Emperor, as well as Poppaea in 65 AD, approximately three years after their marriage.

Table 6.1. Characters (by Order of Appearance)¹⁸

Fortuna	[Fortune]	soprano
Virtù	[Virtue]	soprano
Amore	[Cupid / Love]	soprano
Poppea	[Poppaea, noble lady, Nerone's mistress]	soprano (Anna di Valerio)
Nerone	[Nero, Roman emperor]	soprano castrato (? Stefano Costa)
Arnalta	[aged nurse and Poppea's confidant]	alto
Ottavia	[Octavia, empress repudiated by Nerone]	mezzo-soprano / sopr. (Anna Renzi)
Seneca	[Philosopher, Nerone's preceptor]	bass (Giacinto Zucchi)
Ottone	[Otho, noble lord, Poppaea's husband]	alto castrato (? Fritellino)
Drusilla	[lady of the court]	soprano
Nutrice	[Nurse, empress Ottavia's nurse]	alto
Lucano	[Lucan, a poet, Seneca's nephew]	tenor
Valletto	[a page of the empress]	soprano
Damigella	[a lady-in-waiting to the empress]	soprano
Liberto	[a captain of the Praetorian Guard]	bass
Littore	[Lictor, an officer of imperial justice]	bass
Pallade	[Pallas Athene, goddess of wisdom]	soprano
Mercurio	[Mercury, the god's messenger]	bass
Venere	[Venus]	soprano
Two soldiers of the Praetorian Guard		tenors
Famigliari	[friends of Seneca], consuls, tribunes, cupids	

Prologue: Fortuna and Virtù appear in the clouds and dispute who holds more power over humankind. They are interrupted by Amore, who claims greater power than either of them. The story of Poppea and Nerone to follow reveals the truth of Amore's assertion.

Act I, Scenes 1-4, Poppea's palace: Ottone arrives at Poppea's house ("E pur io torno qui, qual linea al centro"), intent on pursuing his beloved wife. Seeing the house guarded by the Emperor Nerone's soldiers, who are asleep at their posts, he realizes he has been deceived, and his love song ("Ah, perfida Poppea!") turns to anger. When he

¹⁸ The cast is given by order of appearance in the opera and with known singers indicated as shown in Tim Carter, "Giovanni Francesco Busenello and Claudio Monteverdi, *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Venice, 1643)," *Understanding Italian Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 26-27.

leaves, the waiting soldiers complain about their job, their master's affairs, Nerone's neglect of matters of state, and his treatment of the Empress Ottavia. Nerone and Poppea enter and exchange words of love before he departs with a sensuous farewell from Poppea, who is seeking to guarantee their marriage. Poppea is warned by her nurse, Arnalta, to consider the Empress's wrath and not to trust Nerone's infatuation for her. Poppea dismisses her words, for Fortune and Love are on her side ("Per me guerreggia Amor e la Fortuna"). Arnalta complains about her mistress's unwise decisions ("Ben pazza sei, se credi").

Scenes 5-13, City of Rome: Ottavia bemoans her humiliation ("Disprezzata regina") while her nurse suggests that she should take a lover of her own ("Se Nerone ha perso l'ingegno"), advice that Ottavia angrily rejects. Seneca, Nerone's former tutor, addresses the Empress, appeals to her dignity, and urges her to practice restraint. Valletto, Ottavia's page, mocks his pedantry and threatens to set fire to the old man's beard. Left alone, Seneca reflects on power and the ephemeral nature of life ("Le porpore regali e imperatrici"). He receives a warning from the goddess Pallade (Pallas Athene) that his life is in danger, a revelation that he accepts with equanimity. Nerone enters and confides that he intends to displace Ottavia and marry Poppea ("Son risoluto insomma"), but Seneca counsels reason. Poppea joins Nerone and seeks to manipulate his anger against his aged tutor ("Come dolci signor, come soave") by suggesting a drastic solution—that Seneca should be killed, an action that Nero can easily implement by instructing his guards to order the philosopher's suicide. After Nero leaves, Ottone steps forward to confront Poppea about her infidelity ("Ad altri tocca in sorte"). After failing to persuade his wife to reinstate him in her affections, he resolves to kill her. He attempts to return to his senses

(“Otton, torna in te stesso”) and then vows revenge. He is then comforted by the noblewoman, Drusilla. Realizing he can never regain Poppea’s love, he offers to marry Drusilla, but he knows that his words contradict his emotions: “Drusilla is on my lips, Poppea is in my heart.”

Act II, Scenes 1-3, Seneca’s villa: In the garden Seneca learns from the god Mercurio that he is soon to die and prays in stoic solitude (“Oh me felice, adunque”). The order duly arrives from Nerone through Liberto, the captain of the Praetorian Guard, and Seneca instructs his friends to prepare the suicide bath. His *famigliari* try to convince him not to take his own life (“Non morir, Seneca”), but he rejects their pleading.

Scenes 4-9, City of Rome: After a flirtatious scene between Valletto and Damigella, Nerone and the poet Lucano celebrate the death of Seneca with wine and music (“Or che Seneca è morto”) and sing love songs in honor of Poppea (“Son rubini pretiosi”). Elsewhere in the palace, Ottone, in a long soliloquy, realizes how much he is still in love with Poppea and ponders how he could possibly have considered killing her (“Sprezzami quanto sai”). He is interrupted by Ottavia, who commands him to murder Poppea. Threatening to denounce him to Nerone unless he complies, she suggests that Ottone assume the guise of a woman to commit the deed. Ottone agrees but privately calls on the gods to take his life. He then persuades Drusilla to let him borrow her clothes.

Scenes 10-12, Poppea’s garden: Poppea rejoices over Seneca’s death (“Or che Seneca è morto”) and asks Amore for protection. Arnalta sings her mistress to sleep (“Obliviom soave”) while Amore looks on (“O sciocchi, o frail”). Ottone, now disguised

as Drusilla, enters the garden and attempts to kill Poppea but is prevented by Amore. Arnalta and the now awakened Poppea witness Ottone as he flees the garden, believing that he is Drusilla. They sound the alarm as Amore sings triumphantly of success (“Ho diffeso Poppea”).

Act III, Scenes 1-7, City of Rome: Drusilla rejoices with the expectation of Poppea’s death (“O felice Drusilla, oh che sper’io) but is arrested once Arnalta arrives with a lictor and recognizes her.¹⁹ Nerone sentences Drusilla to death, but Ottone confesses instead. Drusilla, in an attempt to save her beloved and amid persistent attempts to protect him, claims that she is the guilty party. Nerone, impressed by Drusilla's fortitude, allows her to stay in Rome and, in an act of clemency, spares Ottone's life and orders that he be banished instead. Drusilla chooses exile with him, and Ottone rejoices (“Signor, non son punito, anzi beato”). Nerone knows that he has to act against Octavia as well and sends her into exile for her involvement in the plot to murder Poppea. The way is now clear for Poppea and Nerone to marry. Poppea is overjoyed for she has obtained what she has sought all along (“Non più s’interporrà noia o dimora”). Ottavia enters and bids a quiet farewell to Rome in a lament (“Addio Roma, addio patria, addio amici”) while in the throne room of the palace the coronation ceremony for Poppea is prepared. Arnalta rejoices for her new empress (“Oggi sarà Poppea”).

¹⁹ In ancient Rome, a lictor is an officer attending the consul or other magistrate, bearing the fasces, and executing sentences on offenders.

Scene 8, Nerone's palace, with gods in the heavens: The Consuls and Tribunes enter, and after a brief eulogy Nerone crowns Poppea as Empress ("Ascendi, o mia dilletta"). Amore proclaims triumph ("io mi compiaccio, o figlio"), and a divine chorus of cupids celebrate the wedding. Nerone and Poppea sing a final rapturous duet ("Pur ti miro, pur ti godo").²⁰

L'incoronazione di Poppea: Music

Busenello's libretto gave Monteverdi the opportunity to express a variety of emotional states through musical means, as indicated by poet Michelangelo Torcigliani (1618-1679) in the *Argomento et scenario delle Nozze d'Enea e Lavinia*:

Rapidly shifting affections ... offered Monteverdi the opportunity of showing the marvels of his art with a full range of pathos, adapting the notes to the words and the passions in such a way that the singer laughs, cries, becomes enraged, compassionate, and does everything else they ask of him, and the listener is drawn by the same impetus into experiencing the variety of those same passions.²¹

²⁰ See Paolo Fabbri, "La coronatione di Poppea (1643)," *Monteverdi*, 260-61; Alessandra Chiarelli, "L'incoronazione di Poppea o Il Nerone: Problemi di filologia testuale," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* IX (1974), 117-51; and Lorenzo Bianconi, *Il Seicento* (Torino: E.D.T., 1991), 195-96, for further readings concerning the authenticity of the duet and possible composers. See also Alan Curtis's two articles: "Il ritorno di Poppea: A New German Source Provokes Some New Thoughts—and Old Arguments," *Word, Image, and Song: Essays on Early Modern Italy*, ed. Rebecca Cypess, Beth L. Glixon, and Nathan Link (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2013), 26-36; and "La Poppea impasticiata, or Who Wrote the Music to *L'incoronazione* (1643)?," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XLII/1 (Spring 1989), 23-54. Curtis selected Francesco Saccati (1605-1650) as a strong candidate for authoring the text. Benedetto Ferrari (1603-1681) is another possibility. Although the selection appears in the score and manuscript libretti, it is not contained in those printed after the première: the *Scenario*, published at the time of the first performance, seemingly does not refer to the duet. Other composers who may have written the music are Filiberto Laurenzi (1620-1651) and Francesco Cavalli (who was probably the editor of the Venetian score). See also Anthony Pryer, "Authentic Performance, Authentic Experience and *Pur ti miro* from *Poppea*," *Proceedings of the International Congress on Performing Practice in Monteverdi's Music: The Historic-Philological Background*, ed. Raffaello Monterosso (Cremona: Fondazione Claudio Monteverdi, 1995), 191-214.

²¹ Michelangelo Torcigliano, *Argomento et scenario delle Nozze d'Enea con Lavinia, tragedia di lieto fine. Da rappresentarsi in musica* (Venice, 1640), 19-20. Translation by Ellen Rosand in "Monteverdi's Last

Monteverdi portrayed characters as human beings in all their complexity with strong emotions, desires, and fears. Each one maintains his or her most distinctive traits in the process: Poppea's overwhelming ambitions and Nerone's perversity tend to be expressed in hedonistic lyricism through arias and arioso passages in a high range and tessitura; Ottone's music lacks focus and is hesitant, his range limited, and his vacillating emotions articulated in a low tessitura; Ottavia speaks only in etched recitative, whether motivated by bitter anger (high tessitura) or extreme grief (medium to low tessitura); Seneca, who occupies the moral high ground, is cast (often) as a bold and assertive bass.

Monteverdi's artful manipulation of Busenello's text, according to Rosand, can be reduced to two general types: intercalation or displacement (rearrangement) of lines and word repetition, ranging from individual words to entire phrases.²² Intercalation increases the interaction between characters. One of the more effective moments in *Poppea*, reinforced by word repetition, takes place in the confrontation between Seneca and Nerone in Act I, Scene 9, addressed later in this chapter. While intercalation does occur in *Ulisse*, it is much more frequent in *Poppea*.

Operas," 229. The complete text of this work is presented in Ellen Rosand, "Appendix 2," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 388-89.

²² Ellen Rosand, "Monteverdi's Last Operas," *Cambridge Companion*, 239. For issues regarding printed libretti and their differences from what appears in the musical scores, see Ellen Rosand, "Sources and Authenticity," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 45-68. On repetition and its function within communication, see linguist Deborah Tannen, "Repetition in Conversation: Toward a Poetics of Talk," *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 36-97, as well as Roberto Pasani, *Ivan Fónagy, La ripetizione creativa. Ridonanze espressive nell'opera poetica, Dedalo, Bari 1982* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1986). For repetition in music specifically, see Mauro Calcagno, *Staging Musical Discourses in Seventeenth-Century Venice: Francesco Cavalli's Eliogabalo (1667)* (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2000), 228-35.

The main subject of Monteverdi's last opera is the gradual defeat of reason by passion. The Prologue, in which Amore is victorious over Fortuna and Virtù, anticipates this theme that controls the remainder of the drama. Several characters make choices driven by emotion that are morally suspect—even the wronged ones, Ottone and Ottavia. Unlike the score of *Ulisse*, there is not a strong tonal relation in *Poppea* between the allegorical / god characters in the prologue and the human ones in the remainder of the opera. Nevertheless, according to Paolo Fabbri, the work is “a demonstration of the argument presented in the prologue, almost in a manner of a *quaestio*—with an academic flavor and a classical format—of who has most influence over the affairs of mankind, whether Fortune or Virtue.”²³ The answer to this question is unexpected because it differs from the traditional opposition, given that victory is won and, indeed, claimed by Amore as predicted in the words: *Oggi in un sol certame / l'una e l'altra di voi da me abbattuta, / dirà che 'l mondo a' cenni miei si muta* [Today in a single contest, / both the one and the other of you conquered by me / will say that the world turns on my instructions]. This conclusion “emerges not from the active capacities of men nor from the blind will of chance, but rather from the irrational impulse of the emotions,” for Amore in *Poppea*, as seen before, embodies blind passion against morality and, as demonstrated in its prologue, against virtue as well.²⁴

²³ Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, 262.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Every event in the opera, whether (as Rosand termed it) Nerone's "sexual enslavement" by Poppea,²⁵ Seneca's death, Ottone and Ottavia's exile, or Poppea's coronation, is determined—or at least encouraged—by Poppea herself. Although Nero has the last word as far as decisions are concerned, Poppea is the inciter of those decisions and successfully convinces the Roman Emperor to follow her advice without recognizing that she, not Nero, is the one in power.

Poppea / Nerone

As previously stated, Poppea and Nerone often express themselves in arioso and triple-meter arias. Unlike recitative, songs (understood as arias) are often assigned not only to gods and goddesses but also to lovers, for, according to Rosand, this manner of delivery is frequently one of the means by which love and lust are communicated.²⁶ As Wendy Heller indicated,

The lyrical moments, usually in triple meter and featuring an expansion of a single phrase through word repetition or more virtuosic vocal writing, convey a spontaneous expression of emotions, or are calculated rhetorical gambits designed to seduce or persuade a given character.²⁷

²⁵ Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 297.

²⁶ Ellen Rosand, "Monteverdi's Last Operas," *Cambridge Companion*, 234. Songs (arias) are frequently prescribed for the gods and goddesses, for, according to Rosand, "they possess supernatural attributes, [and] sing as easily as they fly: roulades, elaborate passage work, and trills decorate their every word, displaying their natural superiority over mere mortal singers." See Ellen Rosand, *ibid.*

²⁷ Wendy Heller, *Music in the Baroque*, 101.

Poppea and Nerone express themselves with recitative far less often than their counterparts in *Ulisse*. Their characters are also substantially different, not only regarding what they affirm in the text, but how they convey their intentions and actions musically. For Poppea, “her chief means of seduction is song,”²⁸ in contrast to Nerone, whose only real victory in the opera, his triumph over Seneca (Act I, Scene 9), “is achieved through brute force, not song: excessive text repetition and the *stile concitato*, rather than embodying self-control, demonstrate his lack of it,”²⁹ as Rosand affirmed. This is not to presume that recitative is excluded from Poppea’s and Nerone’s means of expression, as can be observed already in the first scene in which they appear together (Act I, Scene 3).

Fully in control of her own emotions, Poppea feeds Nerone’s ego as well as his anger in her attempt to ascend in social status.³⁰ Her tessitura in notated pitch generally depends on whom she is addressing (in recitative) or singing (in aria / arioso). Most frequently, it lies between f’-e’’ with a range from d’-g’’. It is no coincidence that her future husband has the same vocal range and a similar tessitura. Yet in contrast with Poppea, who takes the lead in both declamatory and lyrical passages in her singular quest to seduce Nerone, the Emperor’s behavior varies considerably between falling prey to his lover’s manipulative nature and displaying excessive force against those who are subject

²⁸ Ellen Rosand, “Constructions of Character,” *Monteverdi’s Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 304.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ See Ellen Rosand, “Operatic Ambiguities and the Power of Music,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* IV/1 (March 1992), 75-80, for the issue of realism and ambiguity and the dichotomy between real and operatic portrayed through song in *Poppea*.

to him. These distinctions are apparent from the first time the two appear together in the opera.

Act I, Scene 3

As the scene opens, it is evident that the relationship between Nerone and Poppea, although still kept secret, is driven by intense carnal passion and complete disregard for their respective current spouses. As Nerone attempts to leave Poppea after spending the night with her, she attempts to dissuade him—first through recitative with sensuous chromatic inflections before continuing to passages of arioso—and to entice him openly and officially to commit to their relationship. As the erotic recitatives, arioso solos, and duet sections unfold, Poppea's dominance over Nerone becomes progressively clearer. From a dramatic standpoint, a striking characteristic of this scene overall is the way in which Poppea, rather than Nerone, takes the lead in determining the course of events and establishing the disposition of their conversation.

The aspiring Empress begins her delivery (Example 6.1) in a subdued manner—at least, on the surface—with an initial plea: *Signor, signor, deh non partir!* [My lord, my lord, ah, don't leave me!] (mm. 1-4). Following the normal accent of the text and in imitation of speech, the rising pitch on the two syllables of the word *signor* [my lord] is repeated after a short rest, both times occurring on an offbeat. The ascending melodic interval mirrors the normal questioning inflection of a plea when spoken and intensified by higher repetition, suggesting an attitude of submissiveness to which Poppea will return throughout this scene. Her exclamation on *deh* [ah] (m. 2) follows immediately (on a de-

scending leap of a fourth) after the vocative *signor*. Occurring on a weak beat and dissonant against the bass, the note is held into the next measure, creating a sense of syncopation and resulting uncertainty appropriate to voicing the remainder of her plea. Thus, Monteverdi has skillfully drawn attention to Poppea's feigned weakness, adopted in order to dissuade her lover not to leave her presence. Her opening line, with its languid and erotic nature, effectively sets the mood of the first section. The first entry of *signor* and the consequent statement of *partire* [leave] are both set to comparatively longer note values without embellishment while the trajectory of the petition begins and ends in the same low register in Poppea's voice. These compositional choices contribute to the depiction of her sensuous manipulation, one that will continue to develop throughout the scene.

In a continuation of her attempt at seduction, Poppea now appeals to Nerone's ego. In the melodic descent (from a' to d') following an eighth rest on the beat (mm. 4-11) she makes her second request: *Sostien che queste braccia / Ti circondino il collo, / Come le tue bellezze / Circondano il cor mio* [Let my arms / Entwine your neck, / As your beauty / Entwines my heart]. With a stepwise descending melodic sequence, a-g-f-g (mm. 4-6) and g-f-e-f (mm. 6-7) partially repeated twice (mm. 7-9)—marked by an unbalanced structure with the second portion more than twice the length of the first—and several dissonances against the bass (mm. 5-6), Poppea continues her quest to engage Nerone further. Noteworthy are the dissonances on *che queste (braccia)* [that my (arms)] and *circondano* [surround] and its repetition, which draw attention to her languid and sensuous speech. The unbalanced structure of this sequence provides further musical drive and expressive effect as she makes her most direct appeal to Nerone's ego with the

words *le tue bellezze* [your beauty]. Demanding particular attention is Monteverdi's harmonic shift on the word *bellezze* [beauty]: *cantus mollis* is created by introducing B flat in the bass (m. 7) when the aspiring Empress refers to Nerone's physical allure in order to dissuade him from leaving. After expressing her desire to have him near her, Poppea returns to her initial low note of d', the tonality by which her influence is identified in her interaction with the Roman Emperor.

Example 6.1. Poppea and Nerone's Interaction in Act I, Scene 3, mm. 1-37.³¹

POPPEA

Si-ignor, si-ignor, deh non par-ti - re, so - stien, che que-ste brac-cia ti cir-con-di-no il

[Continuo]

7 NERONE

col-lo co-me le tue bel-lez-ze cir-con-da no il cor mi - o Pop-pe - a, la-scia ch'io par-ta.

15 POPPEA

Non par-tir, non par-tir, si-ignor, deh non par - ti - re. Ap-pe-na spun-ta l'al-ba, e tu che se - i l'in-car-na - to mio

21

so-le, la mia pal - pa - bil lu-ce e l'a-mo-ro - so di de la mia vi-ta, vòì si re pen-te far da me, da me, da

28

me, da me par-ti - - ta? Deh non dir di par - tir che di vo - ce si a-

32

ma - ra a un so-lo ac-cen-to ahi pe-rir, ahi man-car que-st'al - ma sen - to.

³¹ The edition adopted for all the excerpts in this chapter is that of Claudio Monteverdi, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, ed. Hendrik Schulze (Kassel: Barenreiter, 2017).

Poppea

*Signor, deh non partire,
Sostien che queste braccia
Ti circondino il collo,
Come le tue bellezze
Circondano il cor mio.*

My lord, ah, do not leave,
Let my arms
Entwine your neck,
As your beauty
Entwines my heart.

Nerone

Poppea, lascia ch'io parta.

Poppea, let me leave.

Poppea's languid (*molle*) speech is far from the lamenting, grieving state of Penelope in *Ulisse*. Despite using the same tonality (D), Poppea's range and overall tessitura are wider and higher, not only in this scene but throughout the opera. Her manipulative behavior towards Nerone is depicted in her tessitura at the beginning of the scene: medium to low in her voice (d'-d''), conveying a state of near supplication, which in Monteverdi's system is associated with low voice. Such an affect, however, does not correspond to her nature: when addressing other characters, she often expresses herself in higher (notated) pitches and tessitura, a modification that underscores the forcefulness of her ambitious nature. In the present scene Poppea's manipulative drive is reinforced in her sensuous declamation following Nerone's abrupt statement (mm. 12-14): *Poppea, lascia ch'io parta* [Poppea, let me go].

It should be observed that Nerone here first addresses Poppea's pleading, by contrast, in a non-emotional way with a short and abrupt musical line. Despite his parallel vocative with Poppea, the longer rest that follows denotes, in part, his impatience, divided between breaking free from her and heeding her words. Despite ending his statement in root position and in a different tonality (F) than the one started by Poppea (D), his words "let me go" are softened by the *mollis* on the word *lascia* [let]. He may be

more decisive and matter-of-fact than she is at this point, yet his speech signifies more a request than a command.

Poppea does not relent and is determined to have her way. The dramatic harmonic change is noticeable in the bass: from Nerone's cadence in F, Poppea suddenly resumes her speech, and her tonality with a chromatic shift to a D chord in first inversion: *i.e.*, f#² in the bass. Her tessitura is now higher (up to a d²), conveying increasing urgency, as she repeats her request (mm. 15-17): *non partir, non partir, Signor, deh, non partir!* [do not leave, my Lord, ah, do not leave!]. Again, Monteverdi provided special emphasis on the words *Signor* and *partire*. Note the upward leaps imitating the natural vocative inflection (mm. 15-17), including the upwardly pleading c#²-d² (mm. 15-16) and the sigh figure (end of m. 17). Whether in the highest pitches (mm. 15-16) or with the flatted b² in *partire* (m. 17) now in the melody, Poppea expresses supplication, juxtaposing *cantus mollis* and *durus* in the same measure. Poppea wastes no time in pursuing her goal and continues to feed Nerone's vanity. With a² as a grounding pitch, Poppea proceeds with repeated notes almost entirely to the words *Appena spunta l'alba* [the dawn is just breaking] to ascend gradually as she feeds Nerone's narcissism: he is Poppea's *incarnato sole, palpabil luce, e l'amoroso di della [sua] vita* [incarnated sun, light made tangible, and beloved day of (her) life] (mm. 20-24). It is important to notice that the sensuous, physical words ("incarnate," "tangible," "beloved / loving") and the words related to Nerone in his F harmony ("sun," "light," "day") are all put on display by being placed in the highest part of Poppea's range heard so far (c² and d²), all the while with a seductive and languorous bb² in all three comparisons. After her highest and longest note on *di* [day], she returns to complete her thought (mm. 24-25)—*della mia vita* [of my

life]—in a lower range to conclude, not surprisingly, on Nerone’s F. She returns to her tonality again after dissonant leaps in the bass (m. 27), conveying again Poppea’s control over the situation. Her use of high and low pitches and of different harmonies is a reflection of her manipulation of Nerone in order to make him believe that she is utterly overwhelmed by his presence and that he will be missed when he leaves her.

<p><i>Non partir, Signor, deh non partire. Appena spunta l’alba, e tu che sei L’incarnato mio sole, La mia palpabil luce, E l’amoroso dì della mia vita, Vuoi sì repente far da me partita? Deh non dir di partir, Che di voce sì amara à un solo accento, Ahi perir, ahi mancar quest’alma io sento.</i></p>	<p>Do not leave, my lord, ah, do not leave. The dawn is just breaking, and you who are My incarnate sun, My light made tangible, And the beloved day of my life, Do you so quickly wish to leave me? Ah, do not say that you are leaving, For at the sound of that bitter word, Alas, I feel my soul perish</p>
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In an especially strong rhythmic position following a rest and set to the highest note to this point, Poppea’s cry (m. 30) on *deh* [ah] commands notice as does the more resigned *ahi* [alas] on a weak beat that results in syncopation (mm. 32-35) and the harshness of a b-natural’ tritone with the bass. Her descending line is further marked by eroticism with the shift between *cantus durus* and *mollis*. The last four measures of this section unveil her cunning intentions in assuming an attitude of false weakness (soft) with the flatted b’ and a’, the latter for the first time.

Poppea’s pleas are balanced by her adulation of Nerone. She is not a weak character, however, and her hesitations and submissive façade are anything but spontaneous. They are, in fact, fully calculated. It is not surprising, therefore, that she is assigned the D tonality, as was the temperate and faithful Penelope. Despite the extent of her seemingly erratic immoral behavior, Poppea is in full control of her emotions.

The more extended opening monologues for Poppea and Nerone are fragmented through rearrangements of the verses, word repetition, and multiple interruptions.³² Such fragmentation is evident when Nerone must decide the fate of his wife Ottavia, who stands in the way of his relationship with Poppea. The soon-to-be Empress exploits her lover's hesitation in her favor, forcing him to commit to a plan of action (see Example 6.2). Monteverdi calls for Poppea to interrupt Nerone's recitative repeatedly, turning his partial statements into her own questions to force him to continue (mm. 5-15).

Nerone

*La nobiltà de' nascimenti tuoi
Non permette che Roma
Sappia che siamo uniti,
In sin ch'Ottavia...*

The fact that you are nobly born
Does not permit that Rome
Should know that we are united
As long as Ottavia...

Poppea

In sin che...

As long as...

Nerone

...in sin ch'Ottavia non rimane esclusa...

...as long as Ottavia has yet to be
banished...

Poppea

Non rimane...

...yet to be banished...

Nerone

*...in sin ch'Ottavia non rimane esclusa
Dal repudio da me.*

...as long as Ottavia has yet to be banished
From me by divorce.

In his description of Poppea as nobly born, as well as in providing a testament to the control Poppea exerts over him, Nerone begins this section on a repeated note A over a held note D (Poppea's tonality) in the bass (m. 1). As his statement proceeds in the manner

³² See Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 298-302.

Poppea wants, the D / A relationship recurs on *esclusa* [excluded] (m. 10), with D as the root of the interval.

Example 6.2. Nerone and Poppea's Dialogue in Act I, Scene 3, mm. 1-15.

NERONE

La no-bil-tà de' na-sci-men - ti tuo - i non per-met - te che Ro - ma sap-pia che sia-mo u - ni - ti in-sin ch'Ot

POPPEA

In - sin che? In - sin che? Non ri - ma - ne?

ta - via... ..in - sin ch'Ot-ta - via non ri - ma - n'e-sclu - sa...

11

Non ri - ma - ne?

...in - sin ch'Ot-ta - via non ri - ma - ne e-sclu - sa dal re - pu - dio da me.

As Nerone finally completes his decision to a cadence in A (m. 15), a common tonality between the chords of both D and F, Poppea proceeds in a dancelike and celebratory triple meter with singing *Vanne, vanne ben mio* [Go, then, my beloved,], repeating her words and musical motive three times in only twelve measures. Monteverdi shifted to *durus* again, with Poppea reiterating several times the higher note E. To this Nerone replies (see Example 6.3):

*In un sospir che vien
Dal profondo del sen,
Includo un bacio, o cara, ed un à dio:
Ci rivedrem ben tosto, idolo mio.*

In a sigh that comes
From the bottom of my heart,
I enclose a kiss, my dear, and a farewell.
We shall meet again soon, my idol.

Example 6.3. Nerone's Aria "In un sospir" in Act I, Scene 3, mm. 1-24.

[Aria]

NERONE

In un so - spir, so - spir che vien dal pro - fon - do del

[Continuo]

5

sen, in un so - spir, so - spir che vien, so - spir che vien dal pro -

9

fon - do del sen in - clu - do un ba - cio, o ca - ra, ca - ra ed un a di - o; si ri - ve -

15

drem ben to - sto, si, si, si ri - ve - drem, si ri - ve - drem ben to - sto, i - do - lo

19

mi - o, si ri - ve - drem en to - sto, i - do - lo mi - o.

The passage beginning with the text *in un sospir* [in a sigh] (Example 6.3) from the same scene shows the construction of Nerone's fragmented (sighing) line in the A tonality with constant rests and repeated text units in a celebratory triple time. Descending scales—Monteverdi's most typical manner of driving the music forward in the bass—support Nerone's voice. The sequential regularity of phrases of equal length and similar rhythm for the words *in un sospir*, separated regularly by rests, creates a sense of reassurance and security. The sequential modulatory changes enhance the directional force, with Nerone's progressively higher pitches culminating on g'. Nerone changes to duple meter on the word *bacio* [kiss] (m. 11), pausing momentarily in his forceful assertions to communicate his devotion with an interjection of erotic chromaticism and softness that ends with *addio* [goodbye] and a dissonant *mollis* sigh figure on the minor third of the approaching cadence (m. 13). Nerone's reassurance is expressed in high notated pitches and matching tessitura (g'-g') within his range of d'-g'. Several reiterated phrases, e.g. *ci rivedrem ben tosto* [we will see each other again] (mm. 14-22), strengthened by wide ascending leaps in the melody (mm. 5, 7, 16-17), confirm his resolve to Poppea.

The soon-to-be Empress responds to Nerone's words with song (arioso) instead of speech (recitative). Despite her lover's claims, Poppea mocks him in lightly complaining manner via a well-worn poetic conceit that he does not truly see her in the way she aspires:

*Signor, sempre mi vedi,
Anzi mai non mi vedi,
Perchè s'è ver, che nel tuo cor' io sia,
Entro al tuo sen celata,
Non posso da tuoi lumi esser mirata.*

My lord, you always see me,
Yet you never see me,
For if it is true that I am in your heart,
Hidden in your bosom,
I am invisible to your eyes.

The joking character of her statement is reflected in the higher tessitura compared to what was so far characteristic for her sections of recitative and, for the first time, frequent rapid and graceful ornamental notes.

Poppea's arioso (Example 6.4) begins, as did the opening of the scene, with her address to Nerone as *Signor* [my Lord]. Instead of repeating her first entreaty to the Emperor, where Monteverdi communicated her calculated pleading with a rising interval, Poppea now reveals her more confident side with a decisive descending third (e'' to c''), the stressed second syllable of *Signor* occurring in a strong rhythmic position on scale degree one. From her position of control, she teases her lover with the repetition of key words, notably *sempre* [always]. Her moderately florid passages that carry this word also reinforce her longer statement *sempre mi vedi* [you always see me], and, more importantly, the shorter note values to which it is set increase the level of energy in the passage. Also noteworthy is how Poppea lingers on the word *anzi* [but] (mm. 5, 10) to draw attention to her feigned perception that Nerone sees her without truly seeing her as she is, *i.e.*, she is flirting for more attention from her lover. The repeated melodic motives restate this idea, and the continuing erotic juxtaposition of flat / sharp accidentals—in particular at the high f#'' and then at the cadence (mm. 23-25)—reflect Poppea's continuing seduction of the Emperor, this time by an almost frivolous flirtation. Note that the cadence (mm. 23-25) is melodically identical to Nerone's in Example 6.3 (mm. 13-14) but with the bass displaced to avoid its minor seventh dissonance with the eb''. It renders Poppea's eb'' an emotionally softer flat sixth in keeping with the lighter nature of this arioso.

Example 6.4. Poppea's Aria "Signor, sempre mi vedi" in Act I, Scene 3, mm. 1-26.

[Aria]

POPPEA

Si gnor, sem-pre mi ve-di, sem-pre, sem - pre, sem-pre mi ve-di, an - zi mai non mi ve -

[Continuo]

7

di. Si-gnor, sem - pre mi ve-di, sem-pre, sem - pre, sem-pre mi ve - di, an - zi mai non mi ve -

13

di per- ché, s'è ver che nel tuo cor io si-a en - tr'al tuo sen ce-la - ta, non pos-so, non

19

pos - so, non pos - so da' tuoi lu - mi es - ser mi - ra - ta, non pos - so, non

23

pos - so, non pos - so da' tuoi lu - mi es - ser mi - ra - ta.

Nerone, now truly engaged and under Poppea's spell, sings a triple meter arioso. Unlike the prior triple meter section—*in un sospir* [in a sigh]—assigned to him, Nerone's next passage is not cast as a dance but is considerably more sophisticated. At *rimanti, ò mia Poppea* [remain, oh my Poppea] Nerone even adopts duple-meter recitative reminiscent of the sensuous style of Poppea herself. After Poppea repeats her plea for him to stay, Monteverdi amplified his reassurance to Poppea by adding several word repetitions, in particular *non temer* [do not fear], which is sung three times consecutively.

Nerone

*Adorati miei rai,
Deh restatevi omai!
Rimanti, ò mia Poppea,
Cor, vezzo, e luce mia...*

My beloved eyes,
Ah, then cease now!
Remain, Oh my Poppea,
My heart, my darling, my light...

Poppea

*Deh non dir
Di partir,
Che di voce sì amara à un solo accento,
Ahi perir, ahi spirar quest'alma sento.*

Ah, do not say
That you are leaving,
For at the sound of that bitter word,
Alas, I feel my soul perish.

Nerone

*Non temer, tu stai meco a tutte l'ore,
Splendor negl'occhi, e deità nel core*

Fear not; you are always with me,
The light in my eyes,
and a goddess in my heart.

In a musical representation of his surrender to Poppea (see Example 6.5), Nerone subsequently sings long melismas on the words *splendor* [splendor / light] (mm. 1-2) and *deità* [goddess] (mm. 4-6) as he celebrates her beauty before cadencing in Poppea's tonality (D) with the word *core* [heart]. His arioso is broken up with rests, contributing to a certain breathlessness between melismas. Nerone's rhetorical word painting aids in signifying his commitment, but it is not sufficient for Poppea.

Example 6.5. Nerone's Melismatic Passages in Act I, Scene 3, mm. 1-7.

NERONE

splen - dor ne-gl'oc - chi e

4
dei - - - - - tà nel co - re...

In response to his thoughts of love, she anxiously seeks further reassurance, as seen in the following text:

Poppea
Tornerai?

Will you return?

Nerone
*Se ben io vò
Pur teco stò.*

Even if I go,
I am still with you.

Poppea
Tornerai?

Will you return?

Nerone
*Il cor dale tue stelle
Mai non si disvelle.*

My heart can never be separated
From your eyes.

Poppea
Tornerai?

Will you return?

Nerone
*Io non posso da te viver disgiunto
Se non si smembra la unità del punto.*

I cannot live apart from you
Any more than the unity of a point
can be subdivided.

Poppea
Tornerai?

Will you return?

<u>Nerone</u> <i>Tornerò!</i>	I will return.
<u>Poppea</u> <i>Quando?</i>	When?
<u>Nerone</u> <i>Ben tosto!</i>	Very soon!
<u>Poppea</u> <i>Ben tosto.</i> <i>Me 'l prometti?</i>	Very soon. Do you promise me?
<u>Nerone</u> <i>Te 'l giuro!</i>	I swear to you!
<u>Poppea</u> <i>E me l'osserverei?</i>	And will you keep your word?
<u>Nerone</u> <i>E s'a te non verrò, tu à me verrai.</i>	If I do not come to you, you will come to me.
<u>Poppea</u> <i>Addio</i>	Goodbye.
<u>Nerone</u> <i>Addio</i>	Goodbye.
<u>Poppea</u> <i>Nerone, Nerone, addio...</i>	Nerone, Nerone, goodbye...
<u>Nerone</u> <i>Poppea, Poppea, addio...</i>	Poppea, Poppea, goodbye...
<u>Poppea</u> <i>Addio, Nerone, addio.</i>	Goodbye, Nerone, goodbye.
<u>Nerone</u> <i>Addio, Poppea, ben mio.</i>	Goodbye, Poppea, my dear.

Example 6.6. Poppea and Nerone's Farewell Scene in Act I, Scene 3, mm. 1-40.

POPPEA
Tor-ne-rai? Tor-ne-rai?

NERONE
Se ben io vo, pur te - co sto, pur te - co sto. Il cor - da le tue

[Continuo]

6
Tor-ne-rai?
stel-le mai, mai non si di - vel - le. Io non pos - so da te, non

12 NERONE
pos - so, non pos - so da te, da te vi - ver di - sgion -

18
to, se non si smem - bra la u-ni-tà dal pun - to, se non si smem -

23 POPPEA
Tor-ne-rai? Quan-do? Ben to-sto, mel pro-met-ti?
bra la u-ni-tà dal pun - to. Tor-ne-rò. Ben to-sto.

Example 6. 6. (Continuation).

31

E me l'os-ser-ve-ra - i? E me l'os-ser-ver-ra - i?

Tel giu - ro. E s'a te non ver-rò, tu a me ver-ra - i.

#

36

A di - o,

E s'a te non ver-rò, tu a me ver-ra - i. A di - o,

#

44

Ne-ro - ne, Ne-ro - ne, a di - o.

Pop - pe - a, Pop-pe - a, a di -

#

50

A dio, Ne-ro - ne, a di - o.

o. A dio, Pop - pe - a, a di - o.

b

In the libretto Nerone's solo lines continue until *Se ben io vò / Pur teco stò* [Even though I go, / I stay with you,] and only then does Poppea ask *Tornerai?* [will you return?]. To communicate Poppea's growing power over Nerone better, Monteverdi has her repeat her question several times, interspersed with his affirmations of devotion. Only when Nerone answers her in the most direct fashion—"I will return" (m. 20)—does she abandon that query, but Poppea is still not satisfied. He will return, but "when?" Her incessant interrogatives are reflected in smaller goading units both in the music and in the text.

The back-and-forth does not end here. Nerone's promise to return only leads to Poppea's demand that he swear it (mm. 23-24), and when he does, she then questions whether he will keep his promise. As Poppea sings higher, Nerone's tessitura becomes lower when compared to the beginning of the scene and to Poppea's voice until he finally satisfies her with a repeat of *e se a te non verrò tu a me verrai* [and if I don't come to you, you shall come to me] at the same pitch level as her demand (mm. 25-29). Poppea continues to lead, both in her demands and in the harmony; she is the one in control of the interchange as well as both her own and Nerone's emotional reactions.

The aria and arioso styles are among the rhetorical tools Monteverdi assigned Poppea for her seduction of the Emperor. Her attempts are successful. Unlike at the beginning of the scene Nerone does not want to leave, for he succumbs, declaring *Adorati miei rai, / Deh restatevi omai! / Rimanti, ò mia Poppea, / Cor, vezzo, e luce mia...* [My beloved eyes / Ah, then cease now! / Remain, oh my Poppea, / My heart, my darling, my light,] as previously analyzed. Despite his attempts to finish in a different tonality, the scene ends in D, the tonality with which Poppea began the seduction and the finalis for

Virtue, Fortune, and Amore in the Prologue. Nerone's unsuccessful attempt to assert his key of F reflects the overall point of the opera: it is Poppea's will, not his own, that is the controlling force.

Poppea

During her farewell to Nerone, Poppea returns to a medium register and submissive *ethos* with languid pleas to her lover. Her ambition is clearly revealed in her sudden vocal change once Nerone leaves and she is left alone with her nurse, Arnalta.

Act I, Scene 4

With Nerone's exit, Poppea expresses her joy in song in the presence of Arnalta (See Example 6.7). Despite Arnalta's warning that Nerone's betrayal will lead to retribution from the Empress Ottavia, Poppea trusts entirely in Amore and in Fortuna to protect her and help in realizing her aspirations. Her confidence is expressed in a higher tessitura than in the scene with Nerone. In contrast, she reaches the top of her range (g'' in notated pitch) several times and maintains a tessitura between c' and f' (mm. 7-13). While in *Ulisse* Penelope's nurse echoes and empathizes with her mistress's feelings, Arnalta is quite the opposite. She presents a sharp contrast to Poppea's attitude of defiance and triumph and, in a fairly low tessitura, is the first character to warn Poppea of Ottavia's jealousy and of the dangers of her husband's unfaithfulness.

Poppea

*Speranza, tu mi vai
Il cor accarezzando,
Speranza, tu mi vai
Il genio lusingando,
E mi circondi intanto
Di regio sì, ma imaginario manto.
Nò, nòn temo, nò, di noia alcuna,
Per me guerreggia Amor, e la Fortuna.*

O Hope, you
Caress my heart,
O Hope, you
Seduce my mind,
And you wrap me
With a royal, but imaginary mantle.
No, no, I fear no adversity;
Amore and Fortuna do battle for me.

Arnalta

*Ahi figlia, voglia il cielo,
Che questi abbracciamenti
Non sian' un giorno i precipizi tuoi.*

Ah child, I hope to Heaven
That this affair
Is not your downfall one day!

Poppea

Nò, nòn temo, nò, di noia alcuna,

No, no, I fear no adversity!

Arnalta

*L'Imperatrice Ottavia hà penetrati
Di Neron gli amori,
Ond'io pavento e temo
Ch'ogni giorno, ogni punto
Sia di tua vita il giorno, e'l punto estremo.*

The Empress Ottavia has discovered
All of Nerone's love affairs,
So I fear and tremble
That every day and every moment
Could be your last.

Poppea

Per me guerreggia Amor, e la Fortuna.

Amore and Fortuna do battle for me!

Example 6.7. Poppea and Arnalta's Scene in Act I, Scene 4, mm. 1-24.

POPPEA

ARNALTA

Ahi fi - glia, fi - glia, vo - gl' il Cie - lo che que - sti ab - brac - cia - men - ti non sian un

[Continuo]

5

No no no, no no no no no, non te - mo

gior - no i pre - ci - pi - zi tuo - i.

10 POPPEA

no, no no, non te - mo no, no no, non te - mo no di no - ia al - cu - na.

14 ARNALTA

L'im - pe - ra - tri - ce Ot - ta - via ha pe - ne - tra - to di Ne - ron gl'a - mo - ri, on - de te - mo e pa -

19

ven - to ch'o - gni gior - no, o - gni pun - to sia di tua vi - ta il gior - no e' l pun - to e - stre - mo

While the vocal differences between Poppea and Arnalta could be interpreted as the dichotomy between passion and reason, it should also be noted that the role of *nutrice* was typically set for a contralto, as noted in Chapter Four. In Monteverdi's system detailed in the Preface to Book VIII, the low voice is associated with humility. Therefore, assigning Arnalta to a low voice and a low tessitura (in comparison with Poppea's range and tessitura) is also a reflection of her social status as servant.

Poppea refuses to heed Arnalta's advice; she is determined to achieve her aims and is confident in her future (see Example 6.8). Her vocal line is active as she reiterates several times the words *No, no!* to musical motives ascending sequentially (mm. 9-12). Her high repeated pitches (mm.1-5) on the words *non temo, no!* [no, I do not fear!] reflect her decisiveness and daring nature as she repudiates both the moral code and the law. Her repeated pitches on a notated d'' and g'' are reinforced homophonically in G harmony by the bass in root position and resemble the *concitato* style (mm. 1-5), along with its typically associated triadic motion (mm. 8, 10). As stated in the previous chapter, the *genus concitato* is often set in the G tonality. Despite the level of activity in the scene overall, it is still under Poppea's control as emphasized by the ending in D tonality with the word *Fortuna*.

Example 6.8. Poppea and Arnalta's Scene in Act I, Scene 4, mm. 1-14.

[Aria]

POPPEA

Non te - mo, non te - mo no, non te - mo, non te - mo

[Continuo]

5

no di no - ia al - cu - - na: per me gue-reg-gia, gue-reg - gia A - mor,

10

per me gue-reg- gia, gue-reg - gia A - mor e la For - tu - na, e la For - tu - na.

In a style both sensuous and warlike Poppea celebrates her powers of persuasion, for they will enable her to become the Empress of Rome. Such a victory is implicit in her melodic line and in the text she sings (*e la Fortuna*) [and Fortune] when she adopts a descending motive similar to that of Fortuna in the last solo line of the Prologue: a'-g'-f#'-e'-d' (mm. 12-14),

Act II, Scene 10

As previously noted, Poppea's tessitura when speaking with Nerone differs from that assigned to her when she addresses other characters. It is usually one step lower in recitative passages with the Emperor—with a notated tessitura of e'-a'—and one step higher when engaging with other characters. Such tactics reinforce the image of submission she adopts when interacting with Nerone. In contrast, her tessitura is higher when

speaking with Ottone in Act I, Scene 11 as well as in her brief recitative with Arnalta in Example 6.9 (mm. 31-35).

In this scene Poppea, in the company of her nurse Arnalta, rejoices over Seneca's annihilation. With ascending short sequences on the word *Amor* (mm. 4-6) and a longer descending melisma on *sposa* [wife], also constructed from a series of sequences (mm. 20-23), Monteverdi set these two keywords essential to understanding her character: becoming Nerone's wife through lustful love (*i. e.*, passion) is the manner by which she will realize her ambition to become his wife and the new Roman Empress. Indeed, her nurse draws attention to her persistent ideas and, later, to the dangers of it: *Pur sempre sulle nozze / Canzoneggiando vai* [You're always singing / About this wedding!]. In response to this criticism, Poppea shifts to recitative with the words: *Ad altro, Arnalta mia, non penso mai* [I never think of anything else, my Arnalta] and delivers them in an unusually high range for speech. In fact, the words *mia* [mine] (m. 32) and *penso* [I think] (m. 34) are notated at the top of her range.

Poppea

*Or che Seneca è morto,
Amor, ricorro a te:
Guida mie spemi in porto,
Fammi sposa al mio re.*

Now that Seneca is dead,
Amor, I turn to you:
steer my hopes to harbor,
make me the bride of my king.

Arnalta

*Pur sempre sulle nozze
Canzoneggiando vai.*

You're always singing
About this wedding!

Poppea

Ad altro, Arnalta mia, non penso mai.

I never think of anything else, my Arnalta.

Nerone

Nerone's lack of control is apparent not only in his interactions with Poppea. It also surfaces in Act II, Scene 2 with Lucano when they are celebrating the death of Seneca. Nerone's behavior seems unmanly in its lack of assertiveness in contrast with that of Lucano, poet and friend to the Emperor. To the vocal lines of the former are assigned a high notated pitch level and high tessitura (he was indeed cast as a soprano castrato). The same gender reversal occurs between Poppea and Nerone, with Poppea the dominant personality and Nerone assuming the role of submissive servant, seemingly unaware of her manipulation.³³

Act II, Scene 5

The first long melisma at the beginning of this scene (see Example 6.10) on the word *cantiam* [let us sing] (mm. 5-9) should, for its virtuosity alone, draw attention to Nerone's exuberance.

³³ Rachel Lewis, "Love as Persuasion in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*: New Thoughts on the Authorship Question," *Music & Letters* LXXXVI/1 (2005), 16-41. Lewis concluded that "Nerone's unmanly behavior in his scene with Poppea resonates with the writings of the seventeenth-century Venetian patrician Giovanni Francesco Loredano ... who was the founder of the Venetian *Accademia degli Incogniti* [and] often discusses the devastating consequences of a female rhetoric of seduction upon an impressionable male audience." *Ibid.*, 26.

Example 6.10. Nerone and Lucano's Duet "Or che Seneca è morto" in Act II,
Scene 5, mm. 1-16.

A due

NERONE

Or che Se-ne-ca è mor - to, can-tiam, can-tiam, Lu-ca - no, can-tiam,

LUCANO

Can-tiam, can- tiam,

[Continuo]

5

can- tiam, can- tiam, Lu-ca- no, a- mo - ro

9

se can - zo - ni in lo- de di quel vi - so, che di sua ma- no a- mor nel cor,

13

nel cor, nel cor, nel cor m'ha in- ci - - so.

can - tiam,

Nerone's virtuosity, however, is soon eclipsed by Lucano's vocal prowess (Example 6.11).

Although Busenello wrote longer phrases for Nerone in this particular scene, Monteverdi rearranged the text so that Nerone was reduced to exclamations of desire (against Lucano's more active interventions), *e.g.*, over descending tetrachords on the words *Ahi destino!* [ah, destiny!] (mm. 1-16), to illustrate better the Emperor's state of mind.³⁴ His effeminate behavior is particularly apparent in this duet, the musical setting of which was inspired by an historically documented poetry contest between the two, in which Lucano was declared the winner.³⁵

Nerone

*Or che Seneca è morto,
Cantiam, cantiam Lucano,
Amorose canzoni
In lode d'un bel viso,
Che di sua mano
Amor nel cor, m'ha inciso.*

Now that Seneca is dead,
Lucano, let us sing
Amorous songs
In praise of a beautiful face,
Which Amore has etched
Upon my heart with his hand.

Lucano

Cantiam, Signore, cantiamo,

Let us sing, my lord, let us sing,

Nerone e Lucano

*Di quel viso ridente,
Che spira glorie, ed influisce amori;
cantiam
Di quel viso beato,*

Of that smiling face,
Which inspires glory and arouses love;
Let us sing
Of that blessed face,

Lucano

In cui l'idea d'Amor se stessa pose,

In which the notion of Love took form,

³⁴ Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 304.

³⁵ Rachel Lewis, "Love as Persuasion," 26.

Nerone e Lucano

*E seppe su le nevi
Con nova meraviglia,
Animar, incarnar la granatiglia.
Cantiam, di quella bocca
A cui l'India e l'Arabia
Le perle consacrò, donò gl'odori.*

Lucano

*Bocca, che se ragioni o ride,
Con invisibil arme pungi, e all'alma
Doni felicità mentr'ella uccide*

*Bocca, che se mi porge
Lasciveggiando 'l tenero rubino
M'inebria il cor di nettare divino.*

Nerone

Bocca, ahi, destino!

And knew how to bring
A pomegranate to life in the snow,
By a new miracle.
Let us sing of that mouth
To which India and Arabia
Dedicated their pearls and gave their
scents.

That mouth, which whether it reasons
Or laughs, wounds with invisible weapons
And to the soul gives happiness
while it kills.

That mouth, which if it wantonly
Offers me its soft ruby,
It inebriates my heart with divine nectar.

That mouth, ah, destiny!

Monteverdi rearranged Busenello's text almost beyond recognition to assign to Nerone a vocal line depicting the moment he is overcome with erotic feelings for Poppea (see Example 6.10) and dissolves to "incoherent, inarticulate babble,"³⁶ shortly after his lucid statement, *Or che Seneca è morto, / cantiamo, cantiamo Lucano, / amoroze canzoni / in lode di un bel viso* [Now that Seneca is dead / Lucano, let us sing / Amorous songs / In praise of a beautiful face] with long melismas on *cantiam* [let us sing] (mm. 5-6) and *amoroze* [amorous] (mm. 7-8). Although Nerone delivers the first statement in the duet, it is Lucano who assumes its main focus for the remainder. It is important to notice that

³⁶ *Ibid.*

the imitative sections and parallel homophonic passages, before Nerone's utterances, are features associated with the Venetian love duet.³⁷

Once Lucano wrests control from his political superior, Nerone's part is reduced to sparse interjections. The single exclamation *That mouth, ah, destiny!* becomes a series of shorter ones on subdivisions of the short text—*bocca* [mouth], *Ahi!* [Ah], and *Ahi, destiny!* [Ah, destiny!]. The exclamation *Ahi* [ah] (see Example 6.11) appears six times in eighteen measures, five of which are on D, Poppea's harmony. Not only does this setting reflect Nerone's infatuation, but the high tessitura (d''-g'' for eighteen measures) exaggerates his passion that will result in the acquiescence of his power.

³⁷ See by Ellen Rosand: *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 338, regarding the typical compositional devices used in the Venetian love duet.

Example 6.11. Ending of Nerone and Lucano's Duet in Act II, Scene 5, mm. 1-18.

NERONE

LUCANO

ahi,

boc - ca che, se mi por - ge la - sci - veg - gian

7

ahi, a - hi de - stin,

- do il te - ne - ro, te - ne - ro ru - bi - no, m'i -

13

ahi, ahi, ahi,

ne bria il cor di net - ta - re, net - ta - re,

Nerone / Seneca

Seneca was not a character added to the opera merely to provide contrast with the stubborn and childish emperor. As a matter of history, Seneca was Nerone's tutor, and his impact on the tyrannical ruler's life should not be ignored.³⁸ In the words of Victoria Rimell,

³⁸ The end of Nerone's boyhood is dramatized by Tacitus in *Annals* 14.53-56. See Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals*, trans. A. J. Woodman (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2004).

In Seneca's fourteenth year as a guru ... and six years after Nero took the reins of power, the tutor's seniority is no longer required. Yet succession, generational tension, and the problem of dialogue between the two in an autocratic regime are themes constantly remapped in Seneca's work.³⁹

One of Seneca's most important writings is *De clementia* (55-56),⁴⁰ in which he addressed Nerone and confronted his youthful impulse directly, announcing in the opening lines that he will perform a mirror's function to guide the young emperor in the thought process and governance necessary for a great leader. In fact, Tacitus reported that Nerone was the youngest emperor ever to have ascended the throne.⁴¹ In *De clementia* Nerone and Seneca are at once doubles and opposites at radically different stages of life: "the oxymoron of their partnership offers a significant frame in Seneca's texts for thinking through change over time."⁴² Nero was seventeen when he became emperor, not yet ready for the demanding role of *pater patriae*, and he needed to be propped up by a father figure, *i.e.*, Seneca. Unlike his portrayal in Busenello's libretto, Seneca might have been middle-aged, but he was "a populist and crowd pleaser, prized as 'the voice of youth.'"⁴³

³⁹ Victoria Rimell, "Seneca and the Neronian Rome: In the Mirror of Time," *The Cambridge Companion to Seneca*, ed. Shadi Bartsch and Alessandro Schiesaro (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 123.

⁴⁰ See Lucius Annaeus Seneca, "De clementia," *Opus Senecae*. (55/56; reprinted Venice: Joannes and Gregorius de Gregoriis de Forlivio, 1492). For a translation to English, see Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *De clementia*, ed. and trans. Susanna Morton Braund (55/56; reprinted Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁴¹ Cornelius Tacitus, *Annals*, trans. A. J. Woodman, 1.11.3.

⁴² Victoria Rimell, "Seneca and the Neronian Rome," 123.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 123-24.

Not only did he adjust his performance to his circumstances, but he exemplified an “unlikely combination of experienced sobriety and teen spirit.”⁴⁴ It is not surprising that

Tacitus named Seneca guardian of the imperial youth.⁴⁵

As Rimell observed,

The scenes of father-figure lecturing young pupil (and soon to be Father) on self-love also looks like an updating of Sophocles’ *Oedipus* [Rex] for spectacle-hungry Neronian Rome: this kind of intimacy—as Seneca’s own *Oedipus* has worked out from the start—is unlikely to end well.⁴⁶

As Seneca reminded Nerone in *De clementia* (I.11.4), “Good kings grow old, but the reign of tyrants is short.”⁴⁷

Act I, Scene 9

Against the stern advice of Seneca, Nerone informs the philosopher of his resolution to marry Poppea and name her the new Empress. The scene that follows witnesses reason and passion in direct opposition. Nerone is driven by blind desire for Poppea and by anger that his decision is being questioned. Seneca’s logical arguments are futile

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Cornelius Tacitus, *Annals*, 13.3.

⁴⁶ Victoria Rimell, “Seneca and the Neronian Rome,” 124.

⁴⁷ Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *De clementia*, ed. and trans. Susanna Morton Braund, I.11.4. See original in Latin in Lucius Annaeus Seneca, “De clementia,” *Opus Senecae*, I.11.4, reprinted in Appendix A. For further reading on Seneca and Neronian literary culture, see Gordis Willis Williams, *Change and Decline: Roman Literature in the Early Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Vassily Rudich, *Dis-sidence and Literature under Nero: The Price of Rhetorization* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Y. L. Too, “Educating Nero: A Reading of Seneca’s ‘Epistles,’” *Reflections of Nero: Culture, History, & Representation*, ed. J. Elsner and J. Masters (London: Duckworth, 1994), 211-24; and Villy Sørensen, “Seneca and Nero,” and “Nero and Seneca,” *Seneca: The Humanist at the Court of Nero*, trans. W. Glyn Jones (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 132-89, 291-315.

against such irrational emotions; his persistence will, in fact, lead to his own death. Monteverdi masterfully presented the dichotomy between reason (Seneca) and emotion (Nerone) through his treatment of text, harmony, and contrast in vocal ranges and techniques. Seneca expresses his advice mainly in the C tonality and in a medium tessitura (c-a) for his bass voice, in a range of approximately one and a half octaves (G-d'). Nerone is cast as a soprano castrato; his tonality of G also occupies a range of one and a half octaves (d'-g'') but his tessitura is considerably higher (g'-e'').⁴⁸

While some scholars read the plot as a victory for immorality and love⁴⁹ and, consequently, as the defeat of rational thought, it is necessary to remember that the decay of Rome under the aegis of Emperor Nero is an historical fact, and, therefore, the triumph of love and the defeat of morality and reason is transitory.⁵⁰ The libretto of *Poppea* is permeated with philosophical and moral considerations questioned by Busenello and the *Incogniti*, i.e., the value of instinct over morality and religious assumptions concerning the immortality of the soul. In the words of Rosand, *Poppea* “is concerned with the dialectic body and soul, between Nerone’s instant gratification and Seneca’s reward beyond the grave,”⁵¹ even though the members of the *Incogniti* viewed immortality of the soul with

⁴⁸ John Bokina, *Opera and Politics: From Monteverdi to Henze* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 27: “Ruled by passion and impulse rather than reason, motivated by self-interest rather than the good of the state, Nerone fulfills both the Platonic and the Aristotelian conceptions of the tyrant.”

⁴⁹ See Rachel Lewis, “Love as Persuasion,” 16-41.

⁵⁰ Ellen Rosand, “Seneca and the Interpretation of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXXVIII/1 (Spring 1985), 34. See also Ellen Rosand, “Il ritorno a Seneca,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* XXI/3 (2010), 199-237.

⁵¹ Ellen Rosand, “Seneca and the Interpretation,” 39. As indicated by the author, *ibid.*, 34-39, these concepts were influenced by the peripatetic Cesare Cremonini at the University of Padua.

skepticism and were concerned more with the “here and now.”⁵² This hedonistic view does not always have repercussions in the music, and Monteverdi was not an *Incognito*.⁵³ The discrepancy between the interpretations of librettist and composer, as argued by Rosand as well as by Fenlon and Miller, can be observed in how Monteverdi rearranged the text and set the music, attributing psychological depth to the characters whether individually or in confrontation, as this scene illustrates.⁵⁴

The heated conflict between Nerone and Seneca in Act I, Scene 9 (transcribed in full in Example 6.12) reveals their contrasting *ethoi*, the irascible Emperor versus his wise teacher who delivers long precepts. The instances of intercalation and intense word repetition, but also the musical setting, depict the effect of this passionate argument between a wise philosopher and a stubborn Emperor.⁵⁵

Nerone

*Son risoluto al fine
O Seneca, o maestro,
Di rimover Ottavia
Dal posto di consorte,
E di sposar Poppea.*

I am resolved at last,
Seneca, my teacher,
To remove Ottavia
From her role as consort,
And to marry Poppea.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵³ *Ibid.* As observed by Rosand, Monteverdi was no *Incognito* in the double sense of the word, nor was he a member of the academy, and neither were his aesthetics hidden (“incognito”) but instead were clearly expressed in words, as in the preface of Book VIII of Madrigals.

⁵⁴ See Iain Fenlon and Peter Miller, *The Song of the Soul: Understanding Poppea* (London: Royal Music Association, 1992) and Wendy Heller, “Tacitus *Incognito*: Opera as History in *L’Incoronazione di Poppea*,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* LII/1 (Spring 1999), 39-96.

⁵⁵ Ellen Rosand, “Monteverdi’s Mimetic Art: *L’Incoronazione di Poppea*” *Cambridge Opera Journal* I/2 (July 1989), 114. “In presenting his music to express emotion, Monteverdi often obscured the rhyme scheme, meter or even the sense of the poetry through exaggerated emphasis on a particular line or even a single word conveying some significant meaning.... Monteverdi was not the first madrigalist to sacrifice poetic form to musical exigency, but he was likely to be the most extreme deconstructor in the history of the genre.” In *Monteverdi’s Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 295, Rosand affirmed that “excessive repetition of key words can sometimes go beyond the content of the text itself to reveal the speaker’s deeper feelings.”

Nerone

Ottavia è infrigidata ed infeconda.

Ottavia is frigid and sterile.

Seneca

Chi ragione non hà, cerca pretesti.

He who is not in the right
has to look for excuses.

Nerone

A chi può ciò che vuol ragion non manca.

He who can do as he likes
does not lack any right.

Seneca

Manca la sicurezza all'opre ingiuste.

Unjust deeds betray a lack of confidence.

Nerone

Sarà sempre più giusto il più potente.

He will always be most just who is the most
powerful.

Seneca

Ma chi non sà regnar sempre può meno.

But he who does not know how to govern is
always the lesser.

Nerone

La forza è legge in pace.

Power is the law in peace.

Seneca

La forza accende gli odi.

Power incites hatred,

Nerone

e spada in guerra,

...and in war, the sword...

Seneca

e turba il sangue.

...and boils the blood.

Nerone

E bisogno non ha della ragione.

And has no need of being right.

Seneca

La ragione regge gl'uomini e gli dei.

Reason governs men and Gods.

Nerone

*Tu mi sforzi allo sdegno; al tuo dispetto,
E del popolo in onta e del Senato
E d'Ottavia, e del Cielo, e del abisso,
Siansi giuste o ingiuste le mie voglie,
Oggi Poppea sarà mia moglie!*

You push me into a rage;
Despite you and the people, and the Senate,
And Ottavia, and Heaven, and hell,
Whether my wishes be just or unjust,
Today Poppea shall be my wife!

Seneca

Siano innocenti i Regi

Kings should be guiltless,

O s'aggravino sol di colpe illustri;

*S'innocenza si perde,
Perdasi sol per acquisitar i Regni,
Ch'il peccato commesso
Per aggrandir L'Impero
Si assolve da se stesso;
Ma ch'una feminella abbia possanza
Di condurti agl'errori,
Non è colpa da Regge o Semideo,
È un misfatto plebeo.*

Or at least be weighed down
by noteworthy crimes;
If innocence is lost,
Let it be lost only to acquire Dominion,
For the sin which is committed
To enlarge the Empire
Absolves itself;
But that a silly woman should have the power
To lead you into error
Is not a fault worthy of Kings or Demigods;
It is a common crime.

Nerone

*Levami dinanzi, Maestro impertinente
Filosofo insolente!*

Get away from me, Impertinent teacher,
Insolent philosopher!

Seneca

*Il partito peggior sempre sovrasta
Quando la forza alla ragion contrasta.*

The worst side always prevails
When force contends with reason.

The contrast between Nerone and Seneca is made particularly clear by the use of *stile concitato*, repeated notes, and ascending lines in sequential patterns (mm. 100-08) along with shifting meters that repeatedly accompany Nerone's lack of control and impetuosity⁵⁶ against Seneca's more restrained musical setting. The latter often presents conclusive answers and solid utterances to the Emperor, with strong cadences that close on the tonic in the voice instead of weaker ones that close on the third or fifth as in Nerone's part on the words *infeconda* [infertile] (m. 76), *potente* [powerful] (m. 85), *ragione* [reason] (m. 98), *voglie* [wishes] (m. 111), and *insolente* [insolent] (m. 145). In contrast,

⁵⁶ Nerone's lack of control is not exclusive to this scene but is present throughout the opera: with Poppea, in Act III, Scene 3, there are several indications that call for *stile concitato* as on the words *Flagelli, funi e fochi* [whips, lashes, and fire]. Nerone portrays such a fury that Drusilla drops her pretense of innocence when accused of attempting to murder Poppea. The commands *conducete* [take (this woman)] and *fate* [have (him)] are treated to downward musical gestures characterizing the Emperor's wrath.

Seneca's cadences are more solid and assertive; therefore, there is less need to repeat the text.⁵⁷ The repetition of text by Nerone, called "hysterical" by Rosand,⁵⁸ communicates his anger and lack of control. Seneca conveys an attitude of moral confidence both in his own integrity and in what he claims in his straightforward, conclusive answers to Nerone, relying only on what is necessary in order to make his point.

In the beginning of the scene at the words *son risoluto al fine* [I am resolved at last], Nerone expresses his decision to Seneca—to repudiate Ottavia as his wife and to marry Poppea instead—on a strong beat but on a third above the bass instead of a more decisive tonic on the first word, *Son* [I am] (m. 1). Due to the weak utterance of what would be a strong ruling, and already on the defensive during his first speech with Seneca as if he feels a modicum of guilt toward his plan, Nerone attempts to balance his speech and to display the strength of his will and of his power, this time with excessive word repetition. In response to Nerone's thrice repeated *e di sposar (Poppea)* [and to marry (Poppea)] (repetitions added by Monteverdi) delivered in a rising sequential pattern and to short note values (eighths and sixteenths in mm. 6-8), Seneca addresses the Emperor with overall longer note values and phrases that commence on a weak beat preceded by rests as with the vocative *Signor* [Sir] (m. 9), *nel fondo (alla maggior dolcezza)* [at the bottom of (great delight)] (mm. 10-11), *spesso (giace nascosto il pentimento)* [(regret) of-ten (lies hidden)] (mm. 12-13), and *consigliar (scelerato)* [wicked counselor] (mm. 14-15). Although initiated on a weak beat, Seneca's words are of crucial importance to the

⁵⁷ See Ellen Rosand, *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 296 for the additions to and rearrangements of the text.

⁵⁸ Ellen Rosand, "Monteverdi's Last Operas," *Cambridge Companion*, 241.

Emperor as they illuminate the disastrous consequences of his decision. The downward motion of Seneca's address (m. 9) informs the listener that he is preparing to make a declamatory statement, yet it begins on a weak part of the measure. While it is possible to speculate that such a placement is meant to signify Seneca's recognition of Nerone's status, which is of greater political strength than his own, the reason for the unaccented entrance may be as simple as Seneca interjecting his voice into Nerone's declaration as soon as it is feasible to do so. The words that follow are set to longer note values and are placed in a medium to low range to represent Seneca's first attempt to dissuade Nerone from his decision.

As in his previous scenes, Seneca again adopts the C tonality when advising others, *i.e.*, when he is detached from emotion (see the cadence in m. 18). Earlier in the opera he applies C to try to console Ottavia after she is betrayed by Nerone, but as with Nerone, his advice yields no results; she finds no comfort in his words. In the present scene, although he would prefer having Seneca's support, the Emperor insists again on having what he wants: he responds with repeated words that signify what is meaningful to him—*mondo terren* [earthly realm] and *scettro* [scepter] (mm. 31-40). *Mondo terren* is set in triple meter (mm. 31-36), which is infrequent in this duet, and returns to duple meter in the word *scettro*. During the brief passage in triple meter Nerone's harmony alternates between G and D, with repeated d' notated pitch in the melody. One of the possible reasons for this, and hence, for the change of meter in the words "earthly realm," is the reference to Nerone's earthly pleasures and passions, *i.e.*, the reference to his lustful desire towards Poppea. As a reminder, her use of triple-meter arioso has been frequent, in order to express joy and triumphant confidence: for example, with Nerone in Act. I,

Scene 3, “Vanne, vanne, ben mio” [Go, then, my beloved,], and with Arnalta in Act I, Scene 4, “Speranza tu mi vai ... Per me guereggia Amor” [O Hope, you ... Amore and Fortuna do battle for me]. The association of worldly values, set in D and in triple meter, with Poppea, appears to only be logical. After returning to simple meter, the word *scettro* [scepter] is repeated twice, the first time with long note values and the second with short ones, as Monteverdi continued to emphasize Nerone’s preference for the material world.

Following Seneca’s madrigalism on the word *furore* [madness] (m. 44-45) in the verse *Sregolato voler non è volere, / Ma (dirò con tua pace) egl’è furore* [Unrestrained will is not will / But (may I say, by your leave) it is madness] and his modulation to A, Nerone rejects reason, cadencing again in G, for reason belongs to those who obey, not to those who command. Seneca, still confident in his position to advise, answers in triple meter and arpeggiated descending motion on the repeated word *distrugge* [destroys] (mm. 54-55), affirming that the lack of reason is what destroys such obedience. He continues to speak in high precepts and moral maxims but attempts in some instances to match Nerone’s speaking style, with word repetition and higher range (up to a d’ in m. 62), in order to emphasize key concepts that could change the Emperor’s point of view.

Nerone has no patience for further philosophies and moral lessons—to Seneca he commands: *Lascia i discorsi, io voglio à modo mio!* [Enough discussion, I want my own way!]. The Emperor’s lack of patience and irrationality become more blatant in the triple reiteration expressed in an ascending arpeggio on the passage *Io voglio, io voglio, io voglio al modo mio* [I want, I want, I want my own way]) (mm. 59-61), which extends to the top of his range. With increasing tension and interaction in the dialogue, Seneca borrows his adversary’s rhetoric of word repetition, echoes his style, and even provokes him

with the words *Non irritar (non irritar, non irritar) il popolo e'l Senato* [Do not anger the people and the Senate] (mm. 61-64), a repetition that will easily anger an irascible person.

The confrontation escalates, and word repetition (added by Monteverdi) continues with Nerone's emphasis on *la forza (la forza, la forza, la forza)* [power] (mm. 88-90). After stating and repeating that *la ragione, (la ragione) regge gl'uomini e gli dèi* [reason, reason (governs men and gods)] (mm. 97-99), Seneca cadences in D and descends an octave, d'-d. This generates an almost neurotic reaction of rage from Nerone in the climax of this scene, punctuated by pauses between the reiteration of the word *tu... (tu... tu...)* [you] (mm. 100-01) and a persistent and repeated musical pattern in *concitato* style at *mi sforzi allo sdegno, (mi sforzi allo sdegno, allo sdegno, allo sdegno, allo sdegno, allo sdegno!)* [You push me into a rage] (mm. 101-03). According to Fenlon, the *stile concitato*⁵⁹ adopted by Nerone

assumes a symbolic dimension through contrast with the calm, repeated advice of ... Seneca for a temperate *ragione di stato*. It is, then, one of the main musical means by which the central message of constancy is highlighted in the opera.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ High voice is associated with rage and the *concitato* style according to Monteverdi's system; Nerone fits this description.

⁶⁰ Iain Fenlon and Peter Miller, *The Song of the Soul*, 61.

Reflecting the Emperor's full fury with little time to breathe, the music is a mirror of his lack of temperance, which is expressed with repeated concepts, circular logic, a high tessitura from g'-e'', and fast note values.

Remarkable contrast permeates Seneca's answer in the last verses of this confrontation. His final remarks on the dangers of this relationship are delivered in mostly stepwise motion, an assured verdict to underscore the weakness of the Emperor at being manipulated by a woman. It is further expressed through the use of *cantus mollis* and a B \flat harmony—on *Ma ch'una femminella abbia possanza / Di condurti agl'errori* [But that a silly woman should have the power / To lead you into error]—to cadence strongly in F (mm. 133-36).

The last words of Nerone—*Levamiti dinanzi, Maestro impertinente / Filosofo insolente!* [Get away from me, Impertinent teacher, / Insolent philosopher!] are marked by a weaker cadence in G with a fifth above the bass in the melody and short note values. As established earlier, Seneca's speech and music differ from that of his opponent. Longer note values in triple meter (mm. 146-56) on *(Il partito peggior) sempre sovrasta / Quando la forza alla ragion contrasta* [The worst side always prevails / When force contends with reason] (mm. 146-56) form the climax of Seneca's forceful argument, while the syncopations and leaps musically reflect the verb (*alla ragion) contrasta* [contends (with reason)] to end with a strong cadence on C.

Seneca's range is still wide at this point of the opera, whereas Nerone is clearly utilizing the high part of his voice to express his angry affect. The extreme vocal contrast between a bass and a soprano (castrato) / tenor further increases the contrasting effect between the two characters. Seneca often expresses himself with longer note values when

compared to those of Nerone but “never with loss of breath,”⁶¹ and, although exploring a wide range (F-d’), tends to favor a middle tessitura (A-a).

Although Seneca as a character is a bit ambiguous in terms of how he is portrayed by the composer and the librettist, the musical and textual differences between the stubborn Emperor and the stoic philosopher are obvious. The dispute scene concludes with Seneca’s perfect cadence as he announces the last of his moral precepts. As observed by Rosand, “Nerone may have had the last word (in his decisions), but Seneca has the music.”⁶²

⁶¹ Ellen Rosand, “Seneca and the Interpretation,” 64.

⁶² *Ibid.*

Example 6.12. Seneca and Nerone's Confrontation Scene in Act I, Scene 9, mm. 1-56.

NERONE

SON RI-SO-LU TO AL-FI - NE, O SEN- ECA, O MA - E - STRO, DI RI - MO - VER OT - TA - VIA DAL PO - STO DI CON - SOR - TE,

SENECA

[Continuo]

6

E DI SPO - SAR, E DI SPO - SAR, E DI SPO - SAR POP - PE - A. SI - GNOR, NEL FON - DO AL - LA MAG - GIOR DOL - CEZ - ZA

12

spes - so gia - ce na - sco - sto il pen - ti - men - to. Con - si - gli - er sce - le - ra - to è il sen - ti - men - to, ch'o - dia le leg - gi e la rag

18

LA LEG - GE È PER CHI SER - VE, E SE VO - GL'I - O POS - SO, POS - SO A - BO - LIR L'AN - TI - CA E IN - DUR LA

gion di - sprez - za.

Example 6.12. (Continuation).

24

no-va. È par-ti-to l'im-pe-ro: è il ciel di Gio-ve, ma del

32

mon-do, del mon-do ter-ren, del mon-do ter-ren lo scet-tro è

38

mi-o, o scet-tro è mi-o.
Sre-go-la-to vo-ler non è vo-le-re, ma (di-rò con tua pa-ce) e-

44

La rag-gio ne è mi-su-ra ri-go-ro-sa per chi ub-bi-di-sce,
gl'è fu-ror, e-gl'è fu-ror, e-gl'è fu-ro-re.

49

e non, non per chi co-man-da.
An-zi, an-zi l'ir-ra-gio-ne-vo-le co-man-do dis-trug-ge,

Example 6.12. (Continuation).

55

La-scia i di-scor-si, io vo-glio io vo-glio, vo - gliò a mo - do

dis - trug - ge l'ob-be-di-en - za.

61

mi - o Del se na-to e del po-po-lo non cu - ro

Non ir - ri - tar, non ir - ri - tar, non ir - ri - tar il po-po-lo e' l' se - na - to. Cu - ra al

67

Trar-rò la lin-gua a chi vor - rà bia-smar-mi.

men di te stes-so e di tua fa - ma. Più mu - ti che fa - rai, più par-le

74

Ot - ta - via è in-fri-gi-di - ta ed in-fe-con da. A chi può ciò che vuol, rag

ran-no. Chi rag - gio-ne non ha, cer-ca pre-te - sti.

80

gion non man ca. Sa-rà sem-pre più giu-sto il più po-ten - te.

Man-ca la si-cu-rez - za a l'o - pre in-giu - ste. Ma chi non

Example 6.12. (Continuation).

86

La for - za, la for - za, la for - za, la for - za è leg - ge in pa -
sa re-gnar sem-pre può me-no.

91

ce... ...e spa-da, e spa-da in guer- ra,...
La for - za, la for - za ac-cen-de gl'o- di... ...e tur-ba il san-gue, tur-ba il

96

NERONE

...e bi - so - gno non ha de la ra - gio-ne. Tu, tu,
san - gue. La ra - gio-ne, la ra-gio-ne reg-ge gl'uo-mi-ni e li dè - i.

101

tu mi sfor-zi al-lo sde-gno, mi sfor-z'al-lo sde-gno al lo sde-gno, al lo sde-gno, al lo sde-gno, al lo sde-gno: al tuo di-spet-

105

to, e del po po-lo in on-ta e del se-na-to e d'Ot - ta-via e del cie-lo e del l'a - bis - so, sian-si giu - ste ed in giu - ste, sian-si

Example 6.12. (Continuation).

110

giu-*ste* ed in-giu-*ste* le mie vo-glie, og-gi, og-gi, og-gi Pop-pe-a sa-rà mia mo-glie, sa-rà mia mo-glie, sa-rà mia mo-glie.

116 SENECA

Si-a-no in-no-cen-ti i reg-gi, o si-a-gra-va-no sol di col-pe il-lu-stri; s'in-no-cen-za si per-de, per-da-si sol

123

per ac-qui-star i re-gni, ch'il pec-ca-to com-mes-so per ag-gran-dir l'im-pe-ro si as

130

sol-ve da sè stes-so; ma ch'u-na fe-mi-el-la ab-bia pos-san-za di con-dur-ti-a-gl'er-ro-ri, non è, non

137 NERONE

è col-pa di re-ge o se-mi-de-o: è un mi-sfat-to ple-be-o. Le-va-mi-ti di-nan-zi, ma-e-stro im-per-ti-

144 SENECA

nen-te, fi-lo-so-fo in-so-len-te. Il par-ti-to peg-gior sem-pre, sem-pre, sem-pre so-

150 <Parte.>

vra-sta quan-do la for-za al-la rag-gion-con-tra-sta.

Seneca

Despite his death midway through the plot (Act II, Scene 3), the aged philosopher triggers the *peripeteia* in the opera, with all the other characters falling into immorality driven by irrational desire after his death.⁶³ The truths revealed by Seneca give him a depth of character in an opera in which those around him lean toward degeneracy when he dies, which precipitates their moral collapse. Such depth is also reinforced by his vocal type: both Rosand and Carter agree that the decision to cast Seneca as a bass is “a rather natural if not yet conventional association between vocal range and age, in this case the low voice with authority,”⁶⁴ shaping his “psychological depth” with a philosophical *gravitas*. As discussed in Chapter Four, Aristotle associated character and voice in *Nichomachean Ethics*, stating that the high-minded person is someone who speaks in a deep voice and deliberate manner.⁶⁵

Seneca is, nevertheless, an ambiguous character in the libretto and also in the music: Nerone’s soldiers call him a pedant and a greedy old man; Valletto calls him a Jove-cheater and a man who does not follow his own precepts, and his stoicism is ineffective in providing Ottavia any consolation.⁶⁶ His death is ambivalent, for the *famigliari* remain

⁶³ Aristotle, “Poetics,” *Rhetoric and Poetics*, trans. by Ingram Bywater (New York: The Modern Library, 1954), 236: “A Peripety is the change of the kind described from one state of things within the play to its opposite, and that too in the way we are saying, is the probable or necessary sequence of events.”

⁶⁴ Ellen Rosand, “Seneca and the Interpretation,” 55.

⁶⁵ Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1125a13-14, 79.

⁶⁶ See Edward Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2005), 89. In real life, the philosopher was reportedly involved in covering Nero’s crimes, such as the murder of Agrippina.

unconvinced that a stoic death is the natural culmination of Seneca's life's work: "there is nothing worth dying for."⁶⁷ The morally dubious integrity of Seneca was commonly understood in the literary and historical reception of the time, which can explain why, in the libretto, Seneca is never successful in convincing those around him.⁶⁸

Act I, Scene 6

Seneca's first speech in the opera, "Ecco la sconsolata" [Behold the unhappy Lady] (see Example 6.13), is set in the same tonality (C) as Penelope's lament and Ulisse's monologue (mm. 1-7), with two crucial differences: Seneca is not singing about his own pain but about (and to) the wronged queen Ottavia.

Seneca

*Ecco la sconsolata
 Donna, assunta a l'Impero
 Per patir il servaggio, o gloriosa
 Del mondo imperatrice,
 Sovra i titoli eccelsi
 Degl'insigni avi tuoi conspicua e grande,
 La vanità del pianto
 Degl'occhi imperiali è ufficio indegno.
 Ringrazia la fortuna,
 Che con i colpi suoi
 T'accresce gl'ornamenti.
 La cote non percossa
 Non può mandar faville;
 Tu dal destin colpita
 Produci a te medesima alti splendori
 Di vigor, di fortezza,
 Glorie maggiori assai, che la bellezza.*

Behold the unhappy Lady,
 Raised to the seat of the Empire
 Only to endure servitude.
 O glorious Empress of the world,
 Higher than the exalted titles
 Of your noble, distinguished,
 and eminent ancestors,
 The vanity of tears
 Is an unworthy occupation for royal eyes.
 You should thank Fortuna,
 Who increases your dignity
 With her blows.
 The flint that is not struck
 Cannot give off sparks;
 You, stricken by destiny,
 Produce the lofty splendors
 Of strength and dominion,
 Glories much greater than beauty.

⁶⁷ Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 332.

⁶⁸ For further readings on Busenello's Seneca, see Rosand "The Philosopher and the Parasite," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 334-37.

Ottavia

*Tu mi vai promettendo
Balsamo dal veleno,
E glorie da tormenti.
Scusami, questi son,
Seneca mio,
Vanità speciose,
Studiati artifici,
Inutili rimedi agl'infelici.*

You promise me
Balm from poison,
And glories from torments.
Pardon me, my Seneca,
These are
False conceits,
Artificial analyses:
Remedies useless to the unhappy.

Seneca's entrance is made in root position in the initial C minor chord (mm. 1-3), with a motive similar to the opening measures of Penelope's and Ulisse's first scenes in *Ulisse* (see Example 5.2) [Penelope's "Di misera regina," Act I, Scene 1] and Example 5.12 [Ulisse's "Dormo, ancora," Act I, Scene 7]). They sing the same pitch with a lower neighbor although they start with a minor third above the bass. Seneca reaches the minor third degree on the repetition of the word *sconsolata* [unhappy Lady].

Example 6.13. Seneca's "Ecco la sconsolata" to Ottavia in Act I, Scene 6, mm. 1-58.

SENECA

Ec-co la scon-so - la-ta don-na as - son-ta al-l'im-pe-ro per pa - tir il ser - vag - gio O glo-ri - o-sa del mon-

[Continuo]

10

do im-pe-ra-tri - ce, so-vra j ti - to - li ec - cel - si de-gl'in - si - gn'a - vi tuoi con - spi - cua e

15

gran - de, la va - ni-tà del pian - to de - gl'oc - chi im-pe-ri - a - li è uf - fi - cio in-de - gno.

20 [Aria]

Rin - gra - zia, rin - gra - zia la For - tu - na,

24

che con i col - pi, i col - - pi suo - i

28

t'ac - cre - sce gl'or - na - men - ti. La

32

co - te non per - cos - sa, non per - cos - sa

Example 6.13. (Continuation).

37
 non può man - dar _____ fa - vil _____

41
 _____ la: tu dal de- stin col-pi - ta, dal de- stin col-pi -

47
 ta pro- du - ci a te me-de-sma al - ti splen - do - ri di vi- gor, di for- tez- za, glo - rie mag- gio- ri as-sai che

54
 la _____ bel- lez - za.

Seneca's austere initial declamation (centered in C until measure) is followed by an active setting (after m. 20) that wanders between the extremes of Seneca's range (E-d'). His speech is undermined by the metric shifts (mm. 20, 44, 59) between recitative and song (mm. 20-43) and literal musical imitations. The shift to triple meter (m. 20) underscores the contrast in Seneca's speech—at first, he expresses empathy with the plight of Ottavia but then tries to advise her to see her misfortune as a positive event before he returns to duple meter to explain how she can make some good from something negative. For instance, words that reflect conflict or force—*i colpi suoi* [With her blows] (mm. 24-

27), *la cote non percossa*, [the flint that is not struck] (mm. 31-36), and *dal destin colpita* [stricken by destiny] (mm. 44-47)—are set to syncopations and accent displacements and, therefore, are rhythmically in conflict with the bass.⁶⁹

The long melismas sung by Seneca illustrate several words to which Monteverdi wanted to draw attention. A wandering line illustrates the textual meaning of *favilla* [spark] within a wide range descending from d' to G (mm. 39-42). The melisma on the definite article *la* [the] instead of the noun *bellezza* [beauty] may seem surprising. In fact, Susan McClary read it as a silly madrigalism, and Wendy Heller, as “meaningless” and “inappropriate.”⁷⁰ To Iain Fenlon and Peter Miller it is more than a madrigalesque convention: it is deliberate irony.⁷¹ Monteverdi may have chosen to set the three-and-a-half-bar inexpressive ornamentation on an article before the noun itself both for a practical reason (it is easier to sing on an “a” vowel than an “e” vowel) and for the possibility of mocking the concept of *bellezza* itself that emphasizes earthly and mutable desires.⁷²

⁶⁹ Ellen Rosand, “The Philosopher and the Parasite,” 352.

⁷⁰ Wendy Heller, “Tacitus *Incognito*: Opera as History in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* LII (1999), 67.

⁷¹ Iain Fenlon and Peter Miller, *The Song of the Soul*, 64. See also Susan McClary, “Constructions of Gender in Monteverdi’s Dramatic Music,” *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 49: “Seneca habitually reverts to silly madrigalisms, which destroy the rhetorical effect of most of his statements,” and Iain Fenlon and Peter N. Miller, *The Song of the Soul: Understanding Poppea*, 62: “In this context Seneca’s long virtuosic melisma on the word *bellezza* [beauty] is not merely an adaption of a madrigalesque convention, but is also deeply ironic.”

⁷² Mauro Calcagno, “The Possibility of Opera: The Aesthetics of Nothing: Monteverdi, Marino, and the *Incogniti*,” *From Madrigal to Opera: Monteverdi’s Staging of the Self* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 238-62. See also Mauro Calcagno, “Signifying Nothing: On the Aesthetics of Pure Voice in Early Venetian Opera,” *The Journal of Musicology* XX/4 (Fall 2003), 461-97. For the analysis of the phenomena in early Venetian operas related to the *Incogniti* of long melismas accompanying seemingly insignificant words instead of the traditional placement of madrigalisms, see *ibid.*

Considering the skepticism that the *Incogniti* held towards stoicism, it is no surprise that the arguments Seneca engages in to console Ottavia—by putting emphasis on virtue and strength rather than beauty, e.g., *Di vigor, di Fortezza / Glorie maggiori assai, che la bellezza* [Of strength and dominion, / Glories much greater than beauty]—were not successful. Instead of speaking in recitative, Seneca sings that the wronged queen should *ringrazia (re) la fortuna, / Che con i colpi suoi / T'accresce gl'ornamenti* [thank Fortuna / Who increases [her] dignity / With her blows] (mm. 20-31). For Wendy Heller his “failure to persuade or comfort Ottavia is not only because of the apparent futility of his arguments but also by his utter inability to muster his famed rhetorical powers in the service of a coherent oration.”⁷³ After all, Ottavia is no Penelope.

Busenello's text does not offer an opportunity for a serious oration: Seneca is given instead an empty platitude, which Monteverdi treated as such with the triple-meter passage. The first nineteen bars of this passage are much richer rhetorically, and whereas the opening could have led to a serious philosophical argument in duple meter, it results only in meaningless and cold banalities, which, perhaps, reflect Busenello's skepticism of Seneca's stoicism. Monteverdi set such reasonings in a lightweight triple meter to illustrate Seneca's words. Only Busenello's last sentence—*Ma la virtù costante, / usa a bravar le stelle, il fato e'l caso, / giammai non vede occaso* [But in a soul that's constant, virtue defies misfortune. / Though by fate mistreated / its soul is never defeated]—represents a meaningful philosophical statement (one found frequently in the sixteenth cen-

⁷³ Wendy Heller, “Tacitus *Incognito*,” 67.

ture) for which Monteverdi returns to duple meter. That is the reason why the long melisma, whether Monteverdi set it to the article or to the noun itself, has a mocking character: it is the same empty ornamentation that causes Orfeo to fail in persuading Charon to ferry him across the river Styx.

Act I, Scene 8

Seneca does not succeed in convincing Ottavia. From long melismas to the misappropriation of song in his speech to her, Seneca does not sing in triple meter again until the announcement of his death. In Scene 8 he is warned by Pallade (Minerva) of his imminent death, which will be announced later by Mercurio. His nature as a man of virtue has earned him this divine interaction. Initially the attribution of “man of virtue” is made not by Pallade directly but reported by Mercurio in Act II, Scene 1, where he states:

<i>La sovrana virtù di cui sei pieno</i>	The sovereign virtue that fills you
<i>Deifica i mortali,</i>	Makes gods of men,
<i>E perciò son da te ben meritate</i>	And because of this you deserve
<i>Le celesti ambasciate.</i>	A celestial envoy.
<i>Pallade a te mi manda,</i>	Pallade sends me to you,
<i>E t'annunzia vicina l'ultim'ora</i>	To tell you that your last hour
<i>Di questa frale vita,</i>	Of this frail life is upon you,
<i>E'l passaggio all'eterna ed infinita.</i>	And passage to the eternal is near.

The text constitutes a rendering of the gods' level of respect for the philosopher.

In this scene and in the previous one Seneca refrains from the rhetoric of florid singing that proved to be unsuccessful with Ottavia, with the exception of two madrigals on the words *girar* [turn] and *alba* [dawn] (in contrast with the long melismas in the scene with Ottavia). Unlike his interaction with Ottavia and Nerone, he sings in D in-

stead of C. The death scene returns to the same tonality, suggesting an interesting differentiation: when Seneca is detached from feelings and advising others on how to live their lives, he speaks and sings in C. When decisions affect him directly, Seneca expresses himself in D, the same tonality that the characters in the prologue adopt at the end of their lines.

In Scene 8 (see Example 6.14) Seneca's repetition of the words *venga, venga la morte* [come, come, death] reflects his acceptance of what awaits him in the afterlife: *Venga la morte pur costante e forte, / Vincerò gli accidenti e le paure* [May death come then; steadfast and strong / I shall conquer both fear and the blows of fate]. On the surface, such an acceptance is reinforced by the reiteration of the words *forte* [strong] (mm. 3-4) and *vincerò* [I shall conquer] (mm. 5-6), possibly symbolizing the philosopher's acceptance of death. The quick repetitions of *vincerò*, however, can be interpreted to mean that Seneca is trying to convince himself. A true stoic would have proclaimed this once with sustained notes over a stable bass, not repeat it over a quick bass as Seneca does here. Perhaps Monteverdi was attempting to make Seneca more human by exposing some emotional vulnerability, not only with the *vincerò* repetitions but also with the moving bass figure (hardly "constant" or "forte"), which itself recurs five times and extends beyond the vocal cadence.

Seneca's range in this scene is rather wide, from F \sharp -d' with a middle tessitura between c and a. His extremes will be less frequent as he becomes more involved in his own fate. This can be observed in the next scenes with the approach of his moment of death.

Example 6.14. Seneca Receiving News from Minerva in Act I, Scene 8, mm. 1-11.

SENECA Venga, ven-ga la mor-te pur, co- stan - te e for - te, e for - te vin-ce-rò, vin-ce-rò,

[Continuo]

6
vin-ce-rò gl'ac-ci-den-ti e le pa - u - re,

Act II, Scene 1

As Seneca becomes more involved with his personal destiny, his music, with few exceptions, becomes more organized and focused (in C), with fewer extreme high and low points, fewer leaps, and more stepwise motion (see Example 6.15). The aim of word repetition is directed more toward depicting the emotion of the scene, and triple meter is employed for expressive purpose as well: to communicate the intense feeling of joy.⁷⁴ The only word that is not set syllabically but as a madrigalism is *lieta* [joyful] (mm. 13-15). The melisma encapsulates Seneca’s emotional state against a chromatic bass that leads without cadence to a new tonal center on F in response to the text *lungi dalla corte* [far from the court]. His line turns to speech-like recitative and a D tonality as his thoughts are calmed by the solitude and “peaceful repose,” the joys of nature and the intellect, that precede his death, as articulated in the text below.

⁷⁴ Ellen Rosand, “The Parasite and the Philosopher,” 355.

*Solitudine amata,
Eremo della mente,
Romitaggio à pensieri,
Delitie all'intelletto
Che discorre e contempla
L'immagini celesti
Sotto le forme ignobili, terrene,
A te l'anima mia lieta s'en viene,
E lungi dalla corte,
Ch'insolente e superba
Fà della mia pazienza anatomia
Qui tra le frondi, e l'herbe,
M'assiedo in grembo della pace mia.*

Beloved solitude,
Hermitage of the mind,
Refuge of ideas,
Delight of the intellect,
Which discusses and contemplates
Heavenly ideals
In base and earthly forms,
To you my soul comes gladly.
And far from the court,
Which, rude and arrogant,
Is an anathema to my patience;
Here amidst the greenery of nature
I find peaceful repose.

Example 6.15. Seneca's Monologue before Mercurio's Appearance in Act II,
Scene I, mm. 1-26.

SENECA 

So-li-tu-di-ne a - ma-ta, e - re-mo de la men-te, ro-mi-tag-gio a' pen - sie - ri, de-li - zia al-l'in-tel-let-to

[Continuo] 

7 

che di-scor-re e con-tem-pla l'i-ma-gi-ni ce - le - sti sot-to le for-me j-gno-bi-li ter - re - ne, a te, a te l'a - ni-ma



13 

mia lie - - ta, lie - - ta sen vie-ne, e lun-gi dal-la cor-te, ch'in-so-len-te e su



19 

per - ba fa del - la mia pa - zien - za an - no - to - mi - a, qui tra le



23 

fron - di e l'er - be m'as - si - do in grem - bo del - la pa - ce mi - a.



Later in the scene, as Seneca welcomes Mercurio's news (see Example 6.16), he sings in triple time *O me felice* [Oh, happy me] and affirms that death is a blessing: *L'uscir di vita è una beata sorte* [Death is a blessed fate]. Seneca's tendency to sing in triple-time continues through Scenes 2 and 3 as he accepts the fact that his final hour has come. Tim Carter suggested, considering the text and Seneca's musical setting, that the triple meter simply enforces calm acceptance as Seneca, faithful to his philosophical principles, welcomes death.⁷⁵ According to Rosand, in "L'uscir di vita" the shift to triple meter and the stepwise melodic line descending to a cadence, starting with a d' and ending an octave lower, signifies his acceptance of his fate (see Example 6.1.6).⁷⁶

Example 6.16. Seneca's "L'uscir di vita" in Act II, Scene 1, mm. 1-22.

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The time signature is 3/2. The lyrics are: "l'uscir di vita è una beata sorte, se da bocca divina, se da bocca divina e - sce, e - - - sce la mor - te." The score shows a descending melodic line in the vocal part, starting on a high note and ending on a lower note, which is highlighted by a slur and a fermata in the final measure of the third system.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Ellen Rosand, "Seneca and the Interpretation," 66.

Act II, Scene 3

Seneca's neostoic *constantia*⁷⁷ is depicted in his acceptance of death with its attendant *gravitas* when he makes his famous farewell to his disciples.⁷⁸ His longest lyrical passage in the opera, it is a reflection of how Monteverdi interpreted this character at the moment of the philosopher's death.⁷⁹ The cuts the composer made to Busenello's libretto are a clear sign of this point, *e.g.*, he omitted the following passage, which represents a more emotive response of Seneca to his followers:

<i>A dio, grandezze,</i>	Farewell greatness,
<i>Pompe di vetro,</i>	Pomp of glass,
<i>Glorie di polve,</i>	Glories of dust,
<i>Larve d'error,</i>	Shadows of error,
<i>Che in un momento</i>	Which at the same time
<i>Affascinate, assassinate il cor.</i>	Fascinate and assassinate the heart.

This allowed Monteverdi to proceed directly from the passionate pleas of the followers to Seneca's emotionally detached orders for them to prepare the bath for his suicide.

Here his eloquence reaches its apex.⁸⁰ After the initial statement *Amici, è giunta l'ora* [Friends, the hour has come], there are no further text repetitions, and the music is delivered in a steady and evenly phrased *arioso* in stepwise motion. The sequential rising

⁷⁷ For a detailed explanation on Senecan Neostoicism, see Iain Fenlon and Peter Miller, "Neostoicism and the *Incogniti*," *The Song of the Soul*, 32-44. According to Fenlon and Miller, *constantia* is the virtue associated with Senecan Neostoicism, blending the stoic *Apatheia* and Epicurean *Ataraxia*, of strength of mind that is not downcast by outward or joyful circumstances, implanted by judgment and right reason and not by opinion. See also Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 19, quoted in Iain Fenlon and Peter Miller, *The Song of the Soul*, 21.

⁷⁸ Tim Carter, "Poppea," *Italian Opera*, 56.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Ellen Rosand, "The Philosopher and the Parasite," 360.

melisma on the word *fly* [fly]—the only one in the entire scene for Seneca—becomes a sign of his anticipation of a joyful reception by the gods.⁸¹

After an extended plea from his followers, *Non morir, Seneca, no!* [Do not die, Seneca, no!], Seneca’s last words seem assertive and dispassionate. Delivered in recitative style and set syllabically, they fail to address his followers’ emotional requests to save his own life (see Example 6.17).

<i>Itene tutti, a prepararmi il bagno,</i>	Go, all of you, and prepare the bath
<i>Che se la vita corre</i>	for me,
<i>Come rivo fluente,</i>	For, as life runs
<i>In un tepido rivo</i>	Like a flowing river,
<i>Questo sangue innocente io vo' che vada</i>	I want this innocent blood to flow
<i>A imporporarmi del morir la strada.</i>	In a warm stream
	And nobly redden the path to my death.

Example 6.17. Seneca’s Last Words to the Familiari in Act II, Scene 3, mm. 1-16.

The musical score consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (bass clef) and a continuo line (bass clef). The vocal line includes Italian lyrics. The continuo line includes a sharp sign (#) at the end of the first system.

System 1 (mm. 1-6):

SENECA: I - te-ne tut - ti a pre-pa-rar -mi il bag-no, che, se la vi-ta cor-re co-me ri - vo flu-en - te, in un te - pi-do

[Continuo]:

System 2 (mm. 7-10):

ri - vo que - sto san - gue in - no - cen - te io vuo', vuo' che va - da a im - por - po -

System 3 (mm. 11-16):

rar - mi del mo - rir, del mo - rir la stra - da.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Seneca's last words are delivered in D with a minor third and sixth. Despite the minor intervals, his assertiveness and more controlled, mostly stepwise melody are most often heard over a root position chord at the beginning of passages and at cadential points (mm. 7, 15). With a notated range in this scene from G-c' and a tessitura approximately between A and g (within an octave), his line ascends and descends without major dissonances, with the exception of the melodic tritone on *del morir* [death] (mm. 11-12).

Conclusion

As previously stated, Seneca's music is ambiguous at many points in the opera. It becomes more controlled and assertive as the events of the opera unfold, depicting the character's development from his first appearance in Act I, Scene 6, until the time of his death in Act II, Scene 3. His main tonality in C when advising others and in D when affected personally reveal a complex personality: his low voice as a bass but with a tessitura that changes depending on the situation makes him difficult to analyze. By considering the last scenes in which he appears as more stable harmonically, his detachment from material things is foregrounded and can be matched, in Monteverdi's system, with the affection—or virtue—of humility. If analyzing the scene before his final moments in Act II, he conveys (in words) the image of the stoic philosopher who appeals to reason and modesty (as he does with Ottavia and Nerone), while at the same time he adopts wide leaps and dissonant intervals that contradict this categorization. Consequently, his music displays characteristics that are both *molle* and *temperato*. As with Penelope and Ulisse, Seneca can be associated with more than one *genera*, for he appeals to both moderation (*temperato*) and humility (*molle*) although not always successfully. Regardless of the

outcome, however, his intentions are obvious in the text and more or less evident in the music. Beyond issues of musical interpretation, Seneca's importance in the opera is crucial, for while he is alive, he influences directly or indirectly most of the characters. Despite her anger, Ottavia's moral beliefs prevent her from attempting to assassinate Nerone or to find another lover. Ottone can restrain himself from killing Poppea out of a desire for revenge, and Arnalta shows signs of a moral conscience when advising Poppea of the dangers and the immorality of her relationship with Nerone. And finally, when Nerone cannot fight the logic of Seneca's arguments, he bursts forth in anger and commands his suicide. The philosopher's death marks the depth of moral decay and ethical perversion that resides in the opera's main characters. After his demise, all semblance of propriety seems to disintegrate: Ottavia nurtures her murderous tendencies and blackmails Ottone to kill Poppea; Ottone attempts to do so while exploring Drusilla's love for him; Arnalta accepts Poppea's ambitions and rejoices over her own fortune; and Nerone uses the failed murder attempt to exile Ottavia and repudiate her, which is precisely what Seneca has advised against. Thus, even the wronged characters act on their own "psychological disintegration."

The Betrayed Husband: Ottone

Like Ottavia, Ottone also suffers the betrayal of his spouse. His expression of pain, differs, however, from that of Ottavia, whose voice range and tessitura are significantly different. They share the fact that they are both complex characters, yet their responses are often contrasting despite what unites them.

Act I, Scene 1

From his first utterance outside of her balcony Ottone's commitment to Poppea is evident. Unaware of her betrayal, he serenades her during a long scene that alternates between aria and sections of instrumental ritornello, his own text punctuated by melodic and textual repetition, as if to emphasize his commitment to her (see Example 6.18).⁸²

<i>E pur io torno, (e pur io torno) qui, qual linea a centro Qual foco a sfera, e qual ruscello al mare,</i>	Thus do I still return here, Like a radius to its center Like fire to the sun, and like stream to to the sea.
<i>E se ben luce, ben luce alcuna non m'appare Ahi, (ah, ah, ah,) so ben io, Che sta il mio sol qui dentro (E pur io torno, io torno qui, qual linea al centro).⁸³</i>	And though I can see no light Ah, I know well that my sun is within. That my sun is within. Thus do I still return here, Like a radius to its center.

Poppea is Ottone's sun, to whom he continually returns "like a radius to its center." He sings a melody rooted in the note c' as if gravitating around that center, that focal point described by multiple metaphors.⁸⁴ His range is somewhat limited (a-c') and his tessitura likewise narrow and low (c'-g'). After temporarily rising to the pitch g', Ottone's line returns to c' on the word *qui* [here (within)] (m. 36) reinforcing the notion that Ottone is always there for his beloved. The shape of the melody itself embodies his text, with the

⁸² For text added by Monteverdi after Busenello's libretto, see Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 305.

⁸³ The words in parentheses were added by Monteverdi.

⁸⁴ The edition adopted for the excerpts is that of Claudio Monteverdi, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, ed. Hendrik Schulze. According to Rosand in *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 114, Ottone's role was written a whole step higher for a castrato with a slightly higher voice, placing it in D. Such a transposition requiring two sharps in the key signature was not common in Monteverdi's time.

idea that Poppea is Ottone's "line that returns to the center." As Rosand observed in reference to Poppea, "the force of her attraction is like the force of the tonic."⁸⁵

Ottone announces his presence (mm. 1-5) in a semi-declamatory manner in C. While the bass fails to cadence to the tonic until the end of the next line of poetry (m. 20), it moves more steadily than the voice, supplying an ever-present foundation of motion that reflects the "return" articulated in the text.

⁸⁵ Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," 305.

Example 6.18. Ottone's First Stanza in Act I, Scene 1, mm. 1-46.

[Aria]

OTTONE

E pur io tor - no, e pur io tor - no qui, qual li - nea al cen - tro,

[Continuo]

9

qual fo - co a sfe - ra e

17

qual ru - scel - lo al ma - re, e se ben lu - ce, ben lu - ce al - cu - na

25

non ap - pa - re, ah, ah, ah,

32

ah so ben i - o che sta'l mio Sol qui den - tro E pur io

40

tor - no, io tor - no qui, qual li - nea al cen - - - tro.

Monteverdi emphasized the interjection *ah* by having Ottone repeat it four times (mm. 27-33). In this way it is not only Ottone's declamatory style that is interrupted but his very thoughts as he yields to a spontaneous outburst of emotional expression. Such outbursts provide the opportunity for melismatic interjections, drawing attention to the next segment of text (mm. 34-38) where it is revealed that his *Sol* [sun] is with Nerone in the palace. Ottone's words *E pur io torno qui* [Thus do I still return here] are repeated at the end of this section (mm. 39-42) to almost identical music to that which accompanied this statement at the beginning of the scene. According to Carter, the manner in which this text is set is the *modus operandi* in *Poppea* where "key phrases that an audience needs to hear so as to understand the character or situation are set in a declamatory style, whereas less important ones can be an excuse for greater lyricism."⁸⁶

When Ottone sings *Caro tetto amoroso* [Dear beloved home] (see Example 6.19), the text needs to be stated more clearly than before, as it indicates the point when the action occurs. Once again, the text is emphasized through repetition in a declamatory style.

*Caro tetto amoroso,
Albergo di mia vita, e del mio bene,
Il passo e'l cor ad inchinarti viene.*

Dear, beloved home,
Seat of my life and love,
My footsteps and my heart are drawn
to you.

The music circles around d'—just as the first part circled around c'—and eventually cadences on c'. Note the greater intensity, generated in part by a preponderance of minor seconds and by the repetition of a sequential pattern on the repeated text with

⁸⁶ Tim Carter, *Understanding Italian Opera*, 48.

which the passage concludes: *il passo e'l cor ad inchinarti viene* [My footsteps and my heart are drawn to you]. The three subsequent stanzas (“Apri un balcon,” “Sorgi,” and “Sogni”) are set to similar music in a lyrical triple meter preceded by ritornelli. As the text that continues Ottone’s serenade does not indicate a change in the action, it is more sung than spoken.

Example 6.19. Ottone's Second Stanza in Act I, Scene 1, mm. 1-14.

OTTONE

Ca - ro tet - to, ca-ro tet - to, tet-to a mo - ro - so, al - ber - go di mia vi - ta e del mio

[Continuo]

7

be - ne, il pas - so e'l cor ad in - chi - nar - ti vie - ne,

11

il pas - so e'l cor ad in - chi - nar - ti vie - - ne.

The most dramatic point in this scene (see Example 6.20) occurs on the word *ma* [but] (m. 26) marking a rhetorical shift when Ottone realizes he is not alone in front of Poppea's residence. What is of greater significance, however, is that neither is Poppea alone. The remainder of the scene unfolds in recitative as Ottone surmises Poppea's infidelity with Nerone as he recognizes the latter's guards. For Carter, these lyrical passages tend to weaken Ottone as a character: "A 'real man' should be less inclined to sing sappy love-songs at dawn."⁸⁷ Ottone is, nevertheless, the character who suffers the most dramatic and emotional change in the opera. However weak he may be as a man, his psychological being is greatly varied.

Ottone's use of speech after his acknowledgment of betrayal is critical to revealing his mental state. The distinction between lyrical and declamatory, between "singing"

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

and “speaking,” contributes greatly in any understanding of how the characters express their thoughts and emotions. Verisimilitude is at stake the further Monteverdi moves from musical declamation. As Carter observed, “the more a character sings rather than speaks, the more that character seems detached from the world represented on stage, in effect calling time out on the dramatic action.”⁸⁸

Ottone’s songs to his lover, expressions of his passion for her, are characterized with long melismas (mm. 3-7 and 12-1) in C with a minor third and sixth (mm. 1-26). When he makes the heartwrenching discovery (m. 26) that Poppea is unfaithful, the meter changes, the tonality shifts from the flat side of C to A with its G#s, and his melody becomes far more rhythmically and intervallically active and intense. The preceding aria affirms his deep love with elegant, graceful, and sequential melismas and a strongly directional, scalewise bass line (mm. 7-10). But even within this framework, the melismatic sequences are reminiscent of the circular motion with which Ottone’s music began. The significance of this passage to understanding Ottone’s mental state becomes evident when contrasted with his music once he recognizes Nerone’s guards. To rhythmic instability, irrational and irregular text repetition, and a lack of melodic or harmonic focus—“Arianna-like” in the words of Rosand—he questions his fate.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

⁸⁹ Ellen Rosand, “Constructions of Character,” *Monteverdi’s Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 305, 307.

*Sogni, portate a volo,
sù l'ali vostre in dolce fantasia
Questi sospir alla diletta mia.
Ma che veggio, infelice?
Non già fantasmi o pur notturne larve,
Son questi i servi di Nerone; ah! dunque
Agl' insensati venti
Io diffondo i lamenti.
Necessito le pietre a deplorarmi.
Adoro questi marmi,
Amoreggio con lagrime un balcone,
E in grembo di Poppea dorme Nerone.*

O dreams, in sweet fantasy
Carry these sighs to my beloved
On your wings.
But what do I see, wretched me?
Not phantoms or ghosts—
These are Nerone's servants;
Alas, thus to the unfeeling winds
I bewail my sorrows.
I ask the stones to pity me;
I worship marble walls;
With my tears I court a window,
While Nerone sleeps in Poppea's lap.

Example 6.20. Ottone's Fifth Stanza and Recitative in Act I, Scene 1, mm. 1-46.

174 [Aria]

OTTONE

So - gni, so - gni, por - ta - te a vo - - - - -

[Continuo]

7

- lo, por - ta - te a vo - lo, su l'a - li vo - - -

13

- - - - - stre in dol - ce fan - ta - si -

18

a que - sti, que - sti so - spir' a la di - let - - - - - ta mi -

26

- a. Ma che veg-gio, in-fe-li-ce? Non già fan-ta-sme o pur not-tur ne lar ve: son que-sti, son que-sti j ser - vi di Ne

32

ro-ne. Ahi, ahi, dun-que a-gl'in-sen-sa - ti ven - ti io dif - fon - do j la-men - ti? ne - ces - si-to le

Example 6.20. (Continuation).

37

pie - tre a de-plo-rar-mi? a - do - ro que-sti mar-mi? a-mo-reg-gio con la-cri-me un bal-co-ne, e'n grem-bo di Pop

42

pe - a, e'n grem - bo di Pop - pe a dor - me Ne-ro - ne? Ha con-dot-to co - sto-ro per cu-sto

50

dir sé stes - so da le fro-di. O sal-vez-za de' pren-ci-pi in-fe - li-ce: dor-mon pro-fon-da-men-te i suoi cu-

57

sto - di Ah, ah, per-fi-da Pop-pe - a, son que - ste le pro - mes-se e i giu ra-men-ti ch'ac-ce - se-ro il cor

63

mi - o? Que-sta, que-sta è la fe-de, oh di - o, di - o, di - o? lo son quel-l'Ot-to-ne che ti se-gui, che ti bra-mò,

70

che ti ser-vi, quel-l'Ot-to-ne che t'a - do - rò, che per pie - gar-ti e in-te-ne - rir - ti il co-re di la - gri-me im-per-lò

Ottone's rhetoric is unsteady in the recitative, indicative of his distress, once when realizes the betrayal (note the dissonant interval between the voice and the bass on the word *marmo* [marble, m. 40] and the tritone in the vocal line in the word *grembo* [lap] (m. 43]). His melody wanders aimlessly with his loss of center, a condition that becomes increasingly evident in his interaction with others: with Poppea when he confronts her in Act I, Scene 11; with Drusilla in Act I, Scene 13 and Act II, Scene 11; and with Ottavia in Act II, Scene 9. Ottone's quicker speech (here expressed in recitative) is indicative of his change of mood, in this case, the anger and disbelief with which it is permeated. He never expresses himself, nonetheless, in the high tessitura that would give increased force to his anguish.

Act I, Scene 13

At the words *Otton, torna in te stesso* [Ottone, return to your senses] (see Example 6.21), it is obvious that he has lost his anchor, his center, and he embarks on an emotional journey filled with melodic and textual repetitions. The initial words of the phrase *Otton, torna in te stesso* is repeated three times within a narrow range (c'-g') with descending motion that always tends back to c. This trajectory is similar to the music of Penelope in Act I, Scene 1, who returns to a lower range in response to her emotional pain. Suspensions and dissonant intervals such as the tritone at the words *innocenza mia* [my innocence] (mm. 34-35) along with the dissonance against the bass (f against e) on the repeated word *perfidissima* [wicked (Poppea)] (m. 55), accentuate the text in this manner to

bring out Ottone's turmoil and deep sorrow. The final cadence in C, approached by descending step instead of the fifth, is weak, a harmonic mirror of Ottone's own deteriorated state.

Before the cadence on B \flat (m. 44) Ottone recognizes that Poppea's ambition will be the cause of his own destruction. At this point he realizes that his only recourse is to kill her. Ottone's music moves abruptly from B \flat to G (m. 45), a tonality frequently associated with the warlike style, and his decision to murder Poppea is emphasized further with pitch repetitions and triadic motion characteristic of the *stile concitato*. The tessitura of Example 6.21 is limited to d'-a', slightly higher than in Ottone's other scenes but contrasting with the usual high register *concitato* of Nerone, Ulisse, and Ottavia. It should be noted, however, that Ottone does reach up to the top of his register—frequently ascending to a' and b'. Yet his assertiveness at this pitch level is short-lived; his speech ends with an imperfect cadence on C (m. 56).

*Otton, torna in te stesso,
Il più imperfetto sesso
Non ha per sua natura
Altro d'uman in sè che la figura.
Mio cor, torna in te stesso,
Costei pensa al comando, e se ci arriva*

*La mia vita è perduta,
Otton, torna in te stesso; ella temendo
Che risappia Nerone
I miei passati amori,
Ordirà insidie all'innocenza mia,
Indurrà colla forza un che m'accusi
Di lesa maestà di fellonia,
La calunnia, dai grandi favorita,
Distrugge agl'innocenti onor e vita.
Vo' prevenir costei*

Ottone, return to your senses,
The less perfect sex
By its nature has nothing human about it
But its appearance.
My heart, return to your senses:
She dreams of power,
 and if she achieves it,
My life is over.
Ottone, return to your senses;
If she fears that Nerone might learn
Of my past love, she may conspire
Plots against my innocence;
She may induce someone else
To accuse me of the felony
Of insulting the monarch.
Slander, favored by the great,
Destroys the honor and the life

*Col ferro o col veleno,
Non mi vo' più nutrir il serpe in seno.
A questo fine
Dunque arrivar dovea
L'amor tuo, perfidissima Poppea!*

Of the innocent. I shall forestall her
With the sword or with poison;
I no longer wish to nurture a serpent
In my bosom. Thus, to this end
Your love should come,
 Traacherous Poppea!

Example 6.21. Ottone's "Torna in te stesso" in Act I, Scene 13, mm. 1-56.

OTTONE

Ot - ton, Ot - ton tor - na, tor - na in te stes - so. Il più im-per-fet - to

[Continuo]

8

ses-so non ha, per sua na - tu - ra, al-tro d'u-man in sé che la fi-gu - ra Mio cor, mio cor,

15

tor - na, tor - na in te stes - so. Co-stei pen-sa al co-man-do, e se ci-a - ri - va, se ci-a

22

ri - va la mia vi-ta è per - du - ta; Ot - ton, tor - na, tor - na in te stes -

29

so. El - la te - men-do che ri-sap-pia Ne - ro - ne i miei pas-sa - ti a - mo - ri, or-di-rà in - si-die al-l'in-no-cen - za

Example 6.21. (Continuation).

35

mi - a, in-dur-rà col-la for-za un, un che m'ac-cu-si di le-sa ma-e-stà, di fel-lo-ni - a. La ca-lun-nia, dai

40

gran - di fa-vo - ri - ta, di- strug - ge a l'in-no-cen-te o - nor e vi - ta. Vuo', vuo' pre-ve-nir co-

4 3

46

ste - i col fer-ro, col fer - ro e col ve-le - no, non mi vuo' più nu-trir, no, no, non mi vuo' più nu-trir il ser-pe in se - no.

51

A que - sto, a que - sto fi - ne dun - que ar - ri - var do - ve - va l'a - mor

54

tu - o, l'a - mor tu - o, per - fi - dis - si - ma, per - fi - dis - si - ma Pop-pe - a?

Unlike the other characters, Ottone is deeply introspective; his soliloquies provide ample opportunity to reveal himself, but what he discloses is his own vulnerability, his fragile ego.⁹⁰ As with his emotions, his music lacks focus, a harmonic center. This ambivalence is enacted in the music as it vacillates between sharp and flat regions. The weak and suffering Ottone, more than any other character in *Poppea*, represents the vulnerability of human condition,⁹¹ although unlike Penelope in *Ulisse*, he allows such a state to take control of his emotions.

The Betrayed Wife: Ottavia

The other betrayed spouse in *Poppea* is the Empress Ottavia, who is portrayed as a more austere and far more assertive character than Ottone. Her less tuneful moments of recitative contrast accordingly with Ottone's song. As a wronged woman, Ottavia laments her fate. Unlike Penelope, however, her main affect, which first arises in the opening scene, is predominately one of rage.

Ottavia is confined to only three appearances in *Poppea*. In "Disprezzata regina" she first laments her situation as a wronged queen and as a woman born free by nature but now captive in the bonds of marriage: *O delle donne miserabil sesso / se la nature e 'l cielo / libere ci produce, / il matrimonio, c'incatine serve* [O wretched fate of the fair sex, / If nature and heaven / Create us free, / Marriage enchains us].⁹² She is humiliated by

⁹⁰ Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 325.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 327.

⁹² See Wendy Beth Heller, "Disprezzata regina: Women and Empire," *Emblems of Eloquence: Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 136-177.

Nerone's affair with Poppea, refuses her nurse's advice to take a lover, rages at Giove's injustice and impotence, and finds no comfort in Seneca's advice to adopt the guise of stoic acceptance. Instead, she hears only abstract philosophical wisdom to maintain imperial dignity and to follow virtue, in which she finds no comfort.

Act II, Scene 6

Ottavia is steadfastly in command in terms of both her text and music in this scene with Ottone (see Example 6.22). She wants him to kill Poppea, but before articulating her request, she prepares a sturdy foundation by reiterating the words *dammi aita* [help me] primarily in a stepwise ascending sequence (mm. 7-9) and *voglio* [I want] three times to an ascending triad (mm. 20-22). The latter passage—here in G, as often applied in *concitato* passages—resembles Nerone's *Io voglio, voglio, voglio a modo mio* [I want it my way] in Act I, Scene 9 as does Ottavia's sequentially repeated command *vuò ch'uccida* [do you want me to kill] (mm. 26-27).

Ottavia

*Tu che dagli avi miei
Avesti le grandezze,
Se memoria conservi
De' benefici avuti, or dammi aita.*

You, who received your rank
From my ancestors,
If you still recall my assistance
In the past, now give me help.

Ottone

*Maestade, che prega
È destin che necessita: son pronto
Ad ubbidirti, o regina,
Quando anco bisognasse
Sacrificare a te la mia ruina.*

Royalty's wish
Is destiny's command; I am ready
To obey you, O queen,
Even if it be necessary
To sacrifice my own downfall to you.

Ottavia

*Voglio che la tua spada
Scriva gl'obblighi miei
Col sangue di Poppea; vuo' che l'uccida.*

I want your sword to sign off the debt
You owe me with Poppea's blood;
I want you to kill her.

Ottone

Che uccida chi? Chi?

Kill whom? Whom?

Ottavia

Poppea.

Poppea.

Ottone

Che uccida, che uccida chi?

Kill, kill whom?

Ottavia

Poppea.

Poppea.

Ottone

Poppea? Poppea? Che uccida Poppea?

Poppea? Poppea? Kill Poppea?

Ottavia

Poppea, Poppea, perchè?

Dunque ricusi

Quel che già promettessi?

Poppea, Poppea, why?

So, you refuse

What you have already promised?

Ottone

Io ciò promisi?

Urbanità di complimento umile,

Modestia di parole costumate,

A che pena mortal mi condannate!

I promised that?

Smooth humble compliments,

Civility of customary words,

You condemn me to such a deadly
sentence!

Ottavia

Che discorri fra te?

What are you talking about?

Ottone

Discorro il modo

Più cauto, e più sicuro

D'un'impresa sì grande.

O Ciel, o dei,

In questo punto orrendo

Ritoglietemi i giorni, e i spirti miei.

I am considering which method

Is the most cautious and the most safe

For so great an undertaking.

(O Heaven, O gods,

In this horrendous moment,

Take back my days and courage!)

Ottavia

Che mormori?

What are you muttering about?

Ottone

Fo voti alla Fortuna,

Che mi doni attitudine a servirti.

I am praying to Fortuna

To make me fit to serve you.

Ottavia

*E perchè l'opra tua
Quanto più presta fia tanto più grata,
Precipita gl'indugi.*

And since your work
Will please me more the quicker it is,
Let there be no delay!

Ottone

Sì tosto ho da morir?

(Am I to die so soon?)

Ottavia

*Ma che frequenti
Soliloqui son questi?
Ti protesta
L'imperial mio sdegno,
Che se non vai veloce al maggior segno,
Pagherai la pigrizia con la testa.*

But what are these
Constant soliloquies?
You try my imperial anger;
If you do not hasten to do as I say,
You will pay for your laziness
With your head.

Ottone

Se Neron lo saprà?

And if Nerone finds out?

Ottavia

*Cangia vestiti.
Abito muliebre ti ricopra,
E con frode opportuna
Sagace esecutor t'accingi all'opra.*

Change clothing.
Disguise yourself with women's garb,
And, with well-timed deceit,
Like a clever performer, prepare yourself
for the deed.

Ottone

*Dammi tempo, dammi tempo,
Ond'io possa inferocir i sentimenti miei,
Disumanar'il core...*

Give me time, give me time,
That I may inflame my feelings
And brutalize my heart...

Ottavia

Precipita gl'indugi.

Let there be no delay!

Ottone

*Dammi tempo, dammi tempo,
Ond'io possa Imbarbarir la mano;
Assuefar non posso in un momento
Il genio innamorato
Nell'arti del carnefice spietato.*

Give me time, give me time, that I may
Make my hand savage;
I cannot, in a moment,
Change my loving nature
To be a ruthless executioner.

Ottavia

*Se tu non m'ubbidisci,
T'accuserò a Nerone,
Ch'abbi voluto usarmi
Violenze inoneste,*

If you do not obey me
I shall denounce you to Nerone
Telling him that you wanted to abuse me,
To rape me,

*E farò sì, che ti si stancheranno intorno
Il tormento, e la morte in questo giorno.*

Ottone

Ad ubbidirti, imperatrice, io vado.

O Ciel, O dei,

In questo punto orrendo

Ritoglietemi i giorni e i spirti miei.

And I shall see that torture and death
Weary of you by the end of the day.

I shall obey you, empress!

(O Heaven, O gods,

In this horrendous moment,

Take back my days and courage!)

Example 6.22. Ottavia e Ottone's Scene in Act II, Scene 7, mm. 1-41.

OTTAVIA

Tu che da-gli a - vi mie - i a - ve - sti le gran - dez - ze, se me - mo - ria con - ser - vi de' be - ne - fi - ci a - vu - ti,

[Continuo]

7 OTTONE

or dam-mi a - i - ta, dam-mi a - i - ta, dam - mi, dam-mi a - i - ta. Ma - e - sta - de che pre - ga è de -

13

stin che ne - ces - si - ta: son pron - to, son pron - to ad u - bi - dir - ti, o re - gi - na, quan do an - co bi - so - gnas - se sa -

19 OTTAVIA

cri - fi - car a te la mia ru - i - na. Vo - glio, vo - glio, vo - glio che la tua spa - da scri - va gl'o - bli - ghi mie - i col

24

san - gue, col san - gue di Pop - pe - a: vuo' che l'uc - ci - da, vuo' che l'uc - ci - da, vuo' che l'uc - ci - da.

28 OTTONE OTTAVIA OTTONE

Ch'uc - ci - da chi? ch'uc - ci - da chi? Chi? Pop - pe - a. Ch'uc - ci - da, ch'uc - ci - da,

Example 6.22. (Continuation).

34 OTTAVIA OTTONE
 ch'uc-ci - da chi? Pop-pe - a. Pop - pe - a? Pop - pe - a? Ch'uc-ci - da Pop -

39 OTTAVIA
 Pop - pe - a, Pop-pe - a. Per - ché dun - que ri - cu - si quel che già pro-met - te - sti?

OTTONE
 pe - a?

Ottavia's *vo' ch'uccida* [do you want me to kill] reflects her level of anger. Not only does she sing both her lowest and highest notes (d'-g'), the extremes of her range, but she does so in two consecutive measures (mm. 26-27). Ottone's responses reflect his disbelief with a radical harmonic shift to C minor; he inquires several times "To kill whom," each time shifting tonal centers, reflecting his own emotional disorientation and disbelief. Ottavia repeats her imperative, but Ottone does not want to believe that she has just insisted he murder Poppea. While his questions *Chi uccida chi?* [To kill whom] each have a different harmonic orientation, albeit set rather short and punctuated by frequent rests, the dissonance on the word *Poppea* (mm. 36-37) draws attention to the emotional turmoil he is experiencing, for he still loves her. The suspension in the first two occurrences and the surprise harmonic shift to G (m. 39) are all responses to the unresolved question.

Ottone vacillates, but Ottavia reminds him of the promise. His vocal line becomes even more unstable, as does the harmony (between flat and sharp regions), proceeding rather erratically to the extremes of his narrow range. Threatening to denounce him to the Emperor unless he complies, Ottavia is assertive in her questioning. Her affect is conveyed through both speech and accompaniment, with fast percussive repeated notes on the words *Ma che frequenti / Soliloqui son questi? / Ti protesta / L'imperial mio sdegno* [But what are these / Constant soliloquies? / You try / My imperial anger / If you do not hasten]. To Ottone's still indecisive response, Ottavia suggests that he disguise himself as a woman in order to commit the crime. Ottone agrees to do as she commands, but his hesitation is betrayed in his music—in the low tessitura with flat harmonies on the words *Dammi tempo* [Give me time] and by concluding on his lowest note (a). With a juxtaposition of sharp and flat harmonies again at the end of this scene, Ottone privately calls on the gods to take his life and relieve him of his promise.

Ottavia's assertiveness—in a higher tessitura (g'-e'') when compared to that of Ottone (d'-g')—contrasts sharply with his submissive and weak voice as he responds to her words and with the harmonies that support it: he has lost his center and is now exposed in all his vulnerability to the mercy of Ottavia's whims as she tries to convince him to carry out the horrendous act.

Act I, Scene 5

In this scene Ottavia's text *Disprezzata regina* [Despised queen]⁹³ is, as in the scene with Ottone, set mainly as recitative (see Example 6.23). With unpredictable phrases marked by irregular rests and dominated by the unarticulated folding of the text,⁹⁴ this scene is initially punctuated by an almost static vocal line interrupted by an occasional upward leap. A model for this was the famous "Lasciatemi morire," the lament of Arianna when she discovers that she has been abandoned on the island of Naxos by Theseus.⁹⁵ As with Virginia Andreini (1583-1630, known as "La Florinda"), who interpreted the role of Arianna, the soprano Anna Renzi (c. 1620-after 1661) moved the audience to tears when singing as Ottavia.⁹⁶

The recitative progresses from an initially static line (resembling, but with higher pitches, the beginning lines of Penelope's "Di Misera Regina" in *Ulisse*, Act I, Scene 1) to more energetic gestures that depict her anger. Such instances can be heard in the melodic diminished fourth on *regina* [queen] (m. 4) and the harmonic dissonances of A

⁹³ See Wendy Beth Heller, "Disprezzata regina: Women and Empire," *Emblems of Eloquence: Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 136-77. For the role of women in opera in Venice, see also in the same book the chapter "Bizzarrie Feminile: Opera and the *Accademia degli Incogniti*," 48-82.

⁹⁴ Ellen Rosand, "Constructions of Character," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 316.

⁹⁵ See Ellen Rosand, "A Master of Three Servants," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 225. In this lament Arianna moves the listener with the intensity of her pain and self-pity and her efforts to deal with her distress, progressing from despair to disbelief (*Dove, dove è la fede*) to fury (*O nemi, o turbi, o venti*) to shame (*Non son, non son quell'io*) and finally to resignation (*Mirati, ove m'ha scorto empia fortuna*). Although the lament is conceived in recitative style, Monteverdi retained Rinuccini's refrains and word repetition. Patterns of rhythm and meter create a strong sense of overall melodic and rhythmic shape. Despite sharing the scene with other characters, Arianna is not affected by them. She is bounded by her own internal passions. Because of their similar behavior, Penelope and Ottavia become her heirs.

⁹⁶ Tim Carter, *Italian Opera*, 58. On Anna Renzi, see Claudio Sartori, "La prima diva della lirica italiana," *Nuova rivista musicale italiana* II (1977), 335-38.

against b' (m. 5) and on the word *afflitta* [afflicted] (m. 8). To convey her grief, Ottavia begins low in her notated register, between d'-a', before gradually rising to a higher tessitura when expressing her anger. Wide melodic leaps and further dissonances can be observed once she utters Nerone's name with a diminished fifth (m. 40) and later with more dissonant intervals, false relations, and chromaticism in the melody (mm. 44-45) in the word *cordogli* [sorrows], conveying her anguish. Despite her grief, however, Ottavia is not completely innocent: she blackmailed Ottone to kill Poppea in Act II, Scene 7, which contradicts the version of Ottavia presented in the preceding act when she beseeches Seneca to plead her case before the senate while she prays in the temple.

*Disprezzata regina,
Del monarca romano afflitta moglie,
Che fò, ove son, che penso?*

*O delle donne miserabil sesso,
Se la natura e'l cielo
Libere ci produce,
Il matrimonio c'incatena serve;
Se concepiamo l'uomo,
O delle donne miserabil sesso,
Al nostr'empio tiran formiam le membra,*

*Allattiamo il carnefice crudele
Che ci scarna e ci svena,
E siam costrette per indegna sorte
A noi medesme partorir la morte.
Nerone, empio Nerone,
Nerone, ò Dio, marito
Bestemmiato pur sempre
E maledetto dai cordogli miei,
Dove, ohimè, dove sei?
In braccio di Poppea,
Tu dimori felice e godi, e intanto
Il frequente cader de' pianti miei
Pur v'è quasi formando
Un diluvio di specchi, in cui tu miri,*

Despised queen,
Tormented wife of the Roman emperor,
What am I doing, where am I,
what am I thinking?

O wretched fate of the fair sex,
If nature and heaven
Create us free,
Marriage enchains us;
If we conceive a male,
O wretched fate of the fair sex,
We shape the limbs of our own wicked
tyrant,

We nurture the cruel executioner
Who butchers us and bleeds us
And we are forced by Fate
To give birth to our own death.
Nerone, wicked Nerone,
Nerone, O God, husband
Blasphemed for ever
And cursed by my sorrow,
Alas, where are you?
You linger in Poppea's arms
Happy, enjoying yourself,
While the stream of my tears
Creates a sort of deluge of mirrors
In which you may behold

<p><i>Dentro alle tue delitie i miei martiri. Destin, se stai lassù, Giove ascoltami tu, Se per punir Nerone Fulmini tu non hai, D'impotenza t'accuso, D'ingustitia t'incolpo, Ahi, trapasso tropp'oltre e me ne pento, Sopprimo e seppelisco In taciturne angoscie il mio lamento.</i></p>	<p>My suffering amidst your happiness. Fate, if you are there, Jove, hear me, If you have no thunderbolts To punish Nerone, I accuse you of impotence, I blame you for injustice! Alas, I've gone too far, and I repent, I shall suppress and bury My lament in silent anguish.</p>
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Of all the serious characters in *Poppea*, Ottavia is the least likely to “sing.” Poppea and Nerone do so because they are in love; Seneca, because he is focused on a higher truth; and Ottone, although he is sad, because he is identified with the amorous affect, whereas Ottavia is strong but has nothing to celebrate.⁹⁷ The only occasion when Ottavia’s text is set to triple meter occurs when she expresses her disdain towards Nerone and Poppea as she imagines them together. Here (mm. 48-56) she sings in a high tessitura (a’-e’’) as well.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 60-61. The Naples score also contains a soliloquy for Ottavia preceding Ottone’s entrance in Act II, Scene 6, that paints her in a more sympathetic light (“Eccomi quasi priva / dell’impero e ‘l consorte”). The music is set in triple time to a descending tetrachord. According to Carter, however, the text and music are unlikely to be by Busenello and Monteverdi.

Example 6.23. Ottavia's "Disprezzata regina" in Act I, Scene 6, mm. 1-56.

OTTAVIA

Di-sprez-za - ta re - gi - na, re - gi - na, re - gi - na di-sprez - za - ta, di-sprez - za - ta re-gi - na, del mo

[Continuo]

7

nar-ca ro-ma-no af - flit - ta, af - flit - ta, af - flit - ta mo - glie, che fo, o - ve son, che

14

pen - so, che pen - so? O del - le don - ne mi - se - ra - bil ses - so, se la na - tu - ra e' l' cie - lo li - be - re ci pro - du - ce, il ma - tri

20

mo - nio, il ma - tri - mo - nio c' in - ca - te - na ser - ve. Se con - ce - pia - mo l'uo - mo, o del - le don - ne mi - se - ra - bil ses - so,

26

al no - str' em - pio ti - ran for - miam le mem - bra, al - lat - tia - mo il car - ne - fi - ce cru - de - le, che ci scar - na e ci sve - na, e siam co

32

stret - te, siam co - stret - te per in - de - gna sor - te a noi me - de - sme fa - bri - car la mor - te. Ne - ro - ne, Ne

Example 6.23. (Continuation).

39
ro - ne, em - pio Ne - ro - ne, Ne - ro - ne, oh di - o, di - o, ma - ri - to be - stem - mia - to pur sem - pre e ma - le

44
det - to de' cor - do - gli mie - i, do - ve, o - hi - mè, do - ve se - i? In brac - cio di Pop -

49
pe - a, in brac - cio di Pop - pe - a, di Pop - pe - a tu di - mo - ri -

53
fe - li - ce e go - di fe - li - ce e go - di,

Before bursting into anger, Ottavia laments the general fate of women, leading to a cadence in G (m. 37). Only then does she focus her wrath on Nerone. While she begins this passage in C, she quickly shifts back to A (with emphasis on D), before cadencing in C (to a question about where he is) (mm. 46-47).

The rapid change between grief and anger as Ottavia makes the mental transition from *disprezzata* [despised] and *afflitta* [afflicted] to the *sposa abbandonata* reflects her fury at Nerone's actions (see Example 6.24). She calls on Giove (with her highest pitch, g'') to strike Nerone with his thunderbolts. Nature's disquiet is mirrored in her descend-

ing scales and warlike style when she expresses the extent of her anger in a higher tessitura and melismatic reiterations of the word *fulmini* [thunderbolt] descending over an octave and a half.

Example 6.24. Ottavia's Rage, "Disprezzata Regina" in Act I, Scene 5, mm. 1-8.

OTTAVIA

De - stin, de - stin, se stai là sù, Gio - ve a - scol - ta - mi tu: se per pu - nir Ne

[Continuo]

5

ro - ne ful - mi - ni, ful - mi - ni tu non ha - i,

Giove's lack of action prompts her to more intense and virtuosic commands until she recognizes their futility and gradually sinks to the lower part of her range, uncomfortable with her own outburst: *me ne pento* [I regret it]. She is surprised by the vehemence of her own anger and retreats to a lament, vowing to suffer in silence. While Penelope's pain was made manifest as depression, Ottavia's sorrow finds expression in anger, related in a harsher voice reaching the limits of her range and "repeatedly exploited in brief paroxysms of octave-spanning phrases."⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Ellen Rosand, "A Master of Three Servants," *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*, 238.

Act III, Scene 7

In her final appearance in the opera Ottavia bids a heartfelt farewell to her home, family, and friends on being sentenced to exile by Nerone:

<i>Addio Roma, addio patria, amici addio</i>	Farewell Rome, farewell fatherland, friends, farewell.
<i>Innocente da voi partir convengo.</i>	Innocent, I am required to leave you.
<i>Vado a partir l'esilio in pianti amari,</i>	I go to suffer exile in bitter tears,
<i>Navigo disperata i sordi mari</i>	I sail, desperate, the deaf seas.
<i>L'aria, che d'ora in ora</i>	The air which from time to time
<i>Riceverà i miei fiati,</i>	will receive my breaths,
<i>Li porter, per nome del cor mio,</i>	Will carry them in the name of my heart
<i>A veder bacciar le patrie mura,</i>	to see, to kiss, my native walls,
<i>Ed io starò solinga,</i>	And I will stand alone.
<i>Alternando le mosse ai pianti, ai passi,</i>	Alternating my movements between tears
and footsteps,	
<i>Insegnango pietade ai tronchi, ai sassi.</i>	Teaching pity to tree trunks and to rocks.

The formerly angry and now defeated Ottavia is presented in all her vulnerability. Painful downward sobbing is captured by Monteverdi in his setting of *A...a...a...dio Roma* [Goodbye, Rome] (mm. 2-7), with Ottavia's poignant resignation as she contemplates leaving the city forever. There are no rhetorical triple-time passages in her music; as with Penelope in *Ulisse*, she has nothing left to sing about but her pain.

Example 6.25. Ottavia’s “Addio Roma” in Act. III, Scene 7, mm. 1-10.

OTTAVIA

[Continuo]

6

a dio pa - tria, a... - a - mi - ci, a - mi - ci a di - o.

Ottavia’s laments in both Acts I and III are sung in an A tonality with a minor third (*molle*) following the pattern established in *Lamento d’Arianna*: a noble woman who bemoans her fate sings about the reasons for her misfortune (whether caused by human or god), regrets her outburst, and returns to a more “submissive form of womanly voice.”⁹⁹ Ottavia’s vocal extremes symbolize her nature and her *ethos* according to Monteverdi’s system: her range extends from the low voice—with its *stile molle* and focus on supplication / lamentation—to its anger-filled opposite coupled with a high tessitura and *stile concitato*.

Conclusion

In contrast to the “epic simplicity” of *Ulisse*, the opera *Poppea* presents several issues of interpretation through the voices and interactions of five unique and highly complex characters. Without denying the depth of the roles of Ulisse and Penelope, those in *Poppea*, by comparison, are more intricate and developed. Seneca and Ottavia often

⁹⁹ Tim Carter, *Italian Opera*, 60.

reach emotional and registral extremes, Ottone sings in a languid style and narrow range, while Poppea and Nerone alternate between the seductive / lascivious and angry / warlike with their higher voices and wider ranges.

Establishing a correlation in *Poppea* between the harmonies associated with the allegorical characters of the Prologue and those applied to the main roles, which were presented with relative transparency in *Ulisse*, is substantially more difficult than for its predecessor. First, vocal differentiation of characters is not as striking in the Prologue to *Poppea* as in *Ulisse*, where the tessituras are distinctive to their ranges. The sopranos Virtue and Fortune in the Prologue to Monteverdi's last opera have ranges similar to Nerone, Poppea, and Ottavia, the high voices in the same opera, and together with Amore (also a soprano) the allegorical characters all sing their cadences in the same D harmony, making it impossible to associate Virtue, Fortune, and Love unequivocally with their own distinct tonalities and vocal types.

Despite this issue, there are several factors that can distinguish each main character and his or her *ethos*. The correlation between these operatic characters and Monteverdi's *genera* has, for the most part, been demonstrated: warlike ambition, anger, and seduction are represented by Nerone and Poppea (high voice, *concitato*), often through song; Ottone's languid, lament-like songs set in a low tessitura, coupled with his submissive voice and attitude of supplication and their associated actions, match him to the *stile molle* for most of his appearances; the vocal extremes represented by Ottavia and Seneca denote radical differences between the characters, so much so that they can be associated with two different *genera*. Ottavia's tessitura lies either at the bottom of her register or at the top depending on her state of mind. She navigates between *molle*, with her laments

and depiction of her human frailty through the supplication affect, and the *concitato* style, in moments of extreme anger and thirst for vengeance. The second, the pivotal character Seneca, can be associated with both *molle* and *temperato* styles. The *stile molle* is appropriate when he sings in his low voice (in comparison to the other characters) and in the lower part of his range, not because of supplication but because of his association with the virtue of humility (that Monteverdi lists as “emotion”). *Stile temperato* is justified when his tessitura becomes gradually more stable, situated between his vocal extremes and representative of his moral concepts of temperance, modesty, and constancy.

Thus, the principal characters in *Poppea*—with the exception of Seneca—express a range of emotions that encompass all three *genera* according to Monteverdi’s system. The main affects and *genera* with which these characters are associated through both their text and music were the materials for assessment in this chapter and the previous one. The composer’s system is not without inconsistencies. By analyzing the three *ethoi*, *genera*, and voice types in *Poppea*’s operatic roles, I have identified their general traits by observing patterns in their interactions throughout the opera. Because they are human, a wide spectrum of emotions and thoughts are expected. Such variance depends on external events, decisions (by humans and by gods), places, and interlocutors. In the final analysis, what Monteverdi was attempting to depict via the main roles in his last operas is the human condition in all its depth and nuance.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE THREE *GENERA*: FROM THE PREFACE TO THE LATE OPERAS.

APPLICABILITY, CONCLUSIONS, AND FURTHER REFLECTIONS

The primary purpose of this thesis was to study Claudio Monteverdi's application of the three *genera* as described in the preface to Book VIII of Madrigals (1638) to his later published operas, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (1639 / 1640) and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1642). With the exception of the *stile concitato*, the terminology of the Preface is often approached by scholars as confined almost solely to the works in Book VIII. After analyzing Monteverdi's later operatic music and comparing the results to his approach to composition as explained in the Preface, the reasons for the lack of scholarship connecting the two seem clear; the issue is complex and raises many questions. For instance, when the composer referred to the "nature of the voice" as high, medium, and low, was he referring to voice types (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) or to the overall tessitura in which the voices usually sing? When addressing the *genera* of *stile concitato*, *temperato*, and *molle*, to what extent did Monteverdi connect the latter two to rhythmic concerns? And how is one to determine objectively what represents a fast, medium, or slow tempo without tempo markings? The seven-hundred-word Preface leaves several such uncertainties unanswered. It seems unlikely, nevertheless, that Monteverdi intended for these concepts to remain confined to the works in Book VIII.

The musical analysis of Monteverdi's late operas through the lens of his threefold system provided some answers to these doubts. In order to understand the intricacy of this correlation, however, it was first necessary to contextualize his dramatic music and to

explain his aesthetic in terms of contemporary rhetorical practices. Determining the framework of his last operas required a study that embraced more than four decades of theoretical writings by the composer and his contemporaries. For this study it was necessary to approach the music—both by Monteverdi and by others—that was written and performed before and after his first opera *La favola d'Orfeo*; to examine the exchange of correspondence with librettists, patrons, court officials, music theoreticians, and other musicians; and to account for the political, artistic, and intellectual environment in the cities in which the composer lived and worked. This contextualization process encompassed an analysis of the ancient sources as well—namely those of Plato and Aristotle—that influenced contemporary thinkers and, consequently, contributed to Monteverdi's theoretical understanding of the three *genera* and their application in his dramatic music. The process of formulating these concepts naturally took time, effort, and maturation. As Monteverdi admitted in his Preface regarding the *genus concitato*: “I therefore, with no little research and effort, set myself the task of discovering it.”¹

From the Early Stages to the Venetian Stages

No composer is immune to his or her surroundings. After moving from his birthplace in Cremona to settle in Mantua, Monteverdi's life was punctuated by several periods of displeasure. Nevertheless, the court's cultural environment was highly beneficial to the composer's musical, aesthetical, and overall intellectual growth. He was surrounded by

¹ Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII—Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero; reprinted, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1967; reprinted New York: Dover Publications, 1991), xv-xvi; see Appendix A for original.

thinkers and musicians who were knowledgeable of the early opera foundations through the *Camerata Fiorentina* and of the emerging vocal style illustrated by the *concerto delle donne* in Ferrara and (soon duplicated) in Mantua.

Once dismissed from the Mantuan court, Monteverdi was finally at liberty to begin a happier chapter of his life in the *Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia*. For political, commercial, and geographical reasons, this city offered ideal conditions for artistic growth in the seventeenth century and supplied the personal appreciation that Monteverdi longed to receive. Undoubtedly, the disposition of this city toward democracy contrasted strikingly with the despotic rule of Mantua. The generational change of values and ideologies in *La Serenissima* echoed the humanist ideas of *vita activa* against *vita contemplativa*: such a distinction is also important for understanding Monteverdi's practical approach to drama, which directed attention toward emotion and affect rather than theory and abstraction.

Monteverdi's personal aesthetic acknowledged the changes of the time without breaking completely with the past. In a similar manner, the city itself continued to foster the so-called "Myth of Venice," which strengthened its positive image as a center of cultural innovation, spectacle, and wealth. By insisting on preserving this rhetoric of image, the city was able to continue to thrive in many areas. The "Myth of Venice," essential to maintaining the perception of *La Serenissima*, was conveyed and reinforced through art and music. Paintings, sacred compositions in honor of the Virgin Mary, and music in praise of the city were all ways to promote in a panegyric manner this ideal environment for the composition and performance of both sacred and secular music. Therefore, it is not surprising that Monteverdi, who became a Roman-Catholic priest in 1632 (one year

after the 1630-1631 plague in Venice), contributed extensively to the sacred repertoire in Venice during the first half of the seventeenth century.

As a city featuring an open environment and receptive to many visitors and influences, Venice also exhibited a less pious side that was prone to excesses and libertinage, particularly during the Carnival season. Moral indiscretions were fed by hedonistic academies, not least of which was the *Accademia degli Incogniti*. Considering the dualities present in the secular and sacred cultural expressions of the city, it is natural, perhaps, that Monteverdi dedicated himself to both. He was particularly well positioned to contribute to this dualism with his prior success in both types of music. He continued to pursue secular genres not only with his polyphonic madrigals but also with staged dramatic works, such as *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda* (1624), later published in the Eighth Book of Madrigals. This particular work was crucial to put into practice the innovative *stile concitato*. Monteverdi's greatest success in his last decades of life, however, lay in the world of opera.

Monteverdi's great interest in stage music—with its inspiration and aesthetic center in the ability of human speech [*oratione*] to move the affections—was only stimulated further by the environment in Venice. Venetian opera began to flourish in the late 1630s with initial offerings to the public in 1637. The four Venetian theaters—Novissimo, S. Moisè, S. Cassiano, and SS. Giovanni e Paolo²—registered considerable activity in this refashioned genre. As an elaborate carnival entertainment (from the *compagnie delle*

² For the operas performed in these theaters from 1637 to 1642, see Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 2.

Calze [“The Hose Companies”]), opera helped to perpetuate the mythical image of *La Serenissima*.

On Monteverdi’s Aesthetic Credo / Three *Genera* and Their Applications

One of the most problematic conditions in analyzing Monteverdi’s theoretical writings is the small number that have survived—with only a few prefaces and letters—and in the brevity of their contents. A clear example is the Preface on which a considerable portion of this study is based. As I claimed in Chapter Three, the sizeable amount of important information packed into only seven-hundred words is not without problems. The brevity of the introduction raises a number of questions that must remain open due to the composer’s failure to clarify all of his terminology. In reading the entirety of his writings, it becomes clear that certain concepts (*e.g.*, speech / oration, affect / emotion, and *melodia*) are key to understanding the composer’s aesthetic with its emphasis on practicality. As Sabine Ehrmann discovered, it is with *L’Arianna* that three main parameters—*oratione*, *melodia*, and *affetto*—emerged as new considerations in interpreting Monteverdi’s music.³

During the period of compositional change between the *prima* and *seconda pratica* (and the renowned polemic with Artusi), the emergence of early opera initiated through the efforts of the *Camerata Fiorentina*, as well as the results of their discussions on ancient music, took center stage in the innovations to Italian culture. Monteverdi was

³³ Sabine Ehrmann, “The *Arianna* Model: On Claudio Monteverdi’s Musical Conceptions,” *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* XVIII/1 (2016), paragraphs 4-5 [online].

surrounded by individuals who were directly involved in literary, philosophical, and intellectually elite groups (*i.e.*, academies). An example was *L'Arianna's* librettist Ottavio Rinuccini. Such influences (*e.g.*, the speculation surrounding the ancient Greek music system and its applicability to *musica moderna*) proved to be critical to Monteverdi's position as recounted in the Preface, whether he agreed with them or not. As support for my claims, I referred to the detailed analyses of the terminology contained in the Preface by Barbara Russano Hanning and by Sabine Ehrmann.⁴ I traced as much as possible both direct and indirect influences, whether ancient or contemporary, that contributed to the genesis of such a rich one-page introduction to Book VIII. I gave particular emphasis in Chapters Three and Four to the sources with which Monteverdi was surely acquainted. From this vantage point, I also allowed room for speculative comparison that the threefold divisions adopted by Monteverdi in the Preface echo the rhetorical divisions presented in several pre-existing writings, *e.g.* that of Cicero and his *vehemens* rhetorical style as described in *De oratore* when assessed against the Monteverdian *concitato genus*.⁵

Of the threefold classifications of affects of the soul (*ira, temperanza, et umilità o supplicatione*); of the nature of the human voice (*alta, bassa, et mezzana*); of musical genera (*concitato, molle, et temperato*); and of musical functions (theater, chamber, and

⁴ Barbara Russano Hanning, "Monteverdi's Three Genera: A Study in Terminology," *Musical Humanism and Its Legacy: Essays in Honor of Claude Palisca*, ed. Nancy K. Baker and Barbara Russano Hanning (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon, 1992), 145-70; Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi: Die Grundbegriffe seines musiktheoretischen Denkens* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1987).

⁵ See Marcus Tullius Cicero, "De oratore," *Cicero Rhetorica*, Vol. I, Book XXI, ed. A. S. Wilkins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 69. For a translation to English, see Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator*, trans. James May and Jakob Wisse (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

dance) connected to style (*guerriera*, *amorosa*, and *rappresentativa*), my focus throughout this study was on the first three (*i.e.*, the threefold affects of the soul, the three types of voice, and the tripartite musical *genera*) due to their practical application in opera and the nature of the operatic genre itself. Undoubtedly, the *genus concitato* (“agitated”), often connected to a martial quality for the combative emotions it evokes, has been recognized far more often in the scholarly and early-music performance world than the other two (*temperato* and *molle*) as a dominant characteristic of Monteverdi’s music created during the last decades of his compositional career.⁶ The piece that best represents this *genus* is undoubtedly *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda*. Yet certain opera scenes, *e.g.*, the confrontation between Seneca and Nerone in *L’incoronazione di Poppea* (Act I, Scene 9), demonstrate that Monteverdi’s application of this *genus* was not confined solely to the works in the Eighth Book of Madrigals.

That the composer’s influence extended to his students and contemporaries as well as to future generations is undeniable.⁷ The striking effect of the *stile concitato* to depict martial images and to convey anger through musical gestures (*e.g.*, fast repeated *semicrome* [sixteenth notes] combined with fanfare motives and triadic melodic and harmonic motion) can be observed in many dramatic works. One such example is a scene

⁶ As explained in Chapter Three, imitating martial images in music was not Monteverdi’s invention. This solution can also be observed, for instance, in the five-voice secular chanson *La guerre*, also known as *La bataille de Marignan* (1528), of Clément Janequin (*c.* 1485-1558). Part of Monteverdi’s unique contribution to the employment of this device was in justifying its value by linking his rationale directly with the remarks of Plato regarding affect and by developing the instrumental aspect along with the vocal one in order to strengthen the warlike effect.

⁷ Among the composers attracted to the *stile concitato* was *Heinrich Schütz* (Henricus Sagittarius, 1585-1672). See Walter Kreidler, *Heinrich Schütz und der Stile concitato von Claudio Monteverdi* (Stuttgart: Fackel & Klein, 1934).

from the 1656 opera *Oronthea* (Act II, Scene 13) of Antonio Cesti (1623-1669).⁸ Among the considerable number of additional examples providing evidence of Monteverdi's legacy in terms of this musical device are passages in *Jephte* (1650) composed by Giacomo Carissimi (1605-1674) and *Tradimento* (1659) of Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677).

As stated many times throughout this thesis, the *temperato* and *molle genera* have received far less scholarly attention. Study of sources that are either known or suspected to have influenced Monteverdi help in understanding the correlation between the three *genera* and *ethoi*, rhythm, the nature of the voice (delivery / pitches), volume, rhetorical goals, and passions / virtues. While in Chapter Three I listed the terminology adopted by various composers in these categories for comparison, it should be noted that not all were of equal impact on Monteverdi's system. For instance, the *genera* and scales of the Greek music system, and those as discussed by Quintilianus and Cleonides, would not have strongly affected what Monteverdi was trying to convey within the parameters of what he and his contemporaries called "modern music."

Nevertheless, most of the tripartite affective, musical, and rhetorical categories of the ancient sources can be applied to Monteverdi's divisions. While the Cremonese composer explicitly rejected the music system of Greek antiquity while favoring its aesthetic basis, it is also important to note that he lived in a time of transition between the modal and tonal harmonic systems. Not only did the Greek modes fail to serve as the structural foundation for Monteverdi's dramatic music, but the previous dependence entirely on

⁸ In this scene the title character engages in angry, threatening, and agitated recitative precipitated by a burst of violent jealousy. This specific *recitativo* evokes *Oronthea*'s warlike disposition and is punctuated by a prominent persistent rhythm in the accompaniment as well as in the melody sung by the main character. Antonio Cesti died in Venice, strengthening the case for the familiarity he had with Venetian opera.

material generated from the church modes was also diminishing at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Evidence of this transition can be observed in the modal mixture in much of Monteverdi's music and in the tendency toward tonality in his last surviving operas.⁹

While Monteverdi referenced Greek aesthetics, in terms of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and the *Republic* of Plato, in the Preface to Book VIII, the first part of the introduction was found to resonate best in terms of identifying the intersections among passions / virtues, *genera*, and vocal pitch or range. It is also this section that was the most relevant to determining the extent to which Monteverdi applied the threefold categories (*concitato*, *temperato*, and *molle*) beyond Book VIII. Due to the complexity of the expression "the nature of the voice itself" as high, medium or low, I offered two possible interpretations: one in terms of voice type (soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto, countertenor, tenor, baritone, and bass) and the other in terms of the overall tessitura of an operatic character in relation to the singer's range. Whereas the second is observed with the musical analysis of the operas, I expanded the first interpretation before the analysis itself, identifying the different voice categories that are associated with high, medium, and low.

⁹ This aspect of Monteverdi's works has been thoroughly explored by Eric T. Chafe, *Monteverdi's Tonal Language* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992).

Reflections on “the Nature of the Voice”

After consulting Hanning’s detailed article on Preface terminology, I found the degree of influence of Giambattista Doni on Monteverdi’s assessments to be substantial. Not only was the composer likely influenced by Doni’s ideas (as well as those of Vincenzo Galilei and Girolamo Mei) regarding the threefold nature of the voice as presented in the Preface—of high, medium, and low—but also by the theorist’s assessments in *Trattato della musica scenica* on which voice to assign to a certain operatic character.¹⁰ Monteverdi followed Doni’s suggestions—most of them perhaps already becoming established operatic conventions of the time—of associating youth with higher voices and old age with lower ones. In his *Trattato della musica scenica*, Doni focused more on deities, however, than on humans. For the former, Monteverdi created a more elaborate vocal line as a logical means to display their godly powers. For human characters, his typical treatment was to provide them with considerably fewer melismatic passages. Monteverdi also adhered to Doni’s assignment of specific voice types for the roles of Minerva, Giunone, and Nettuno, among others, casting them as sopranos, tenors, basses, or other voice types.

One of the problems encountered with relating the “nature of the voice” strictly to voice types involves the highest male voices that were common in Monteverdi’s era, *i.e.*,

¹⁰ Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” *Lyra Barberina: Amphichordos: Accedunt ejusdem opera, pleraque nondum edita, ad veterem musicam illustradam pertinentia ex autographis collegit, et in lucem proferrri curavit Antonius Franciscus Gorius ... distributa in tomos II. Absoluta vero studio et opera Io. Baptistae Passeri ... cum praefationibus ejusdem*, Vol. 2 (Florence: Typis Caesareis, 1763; reprinted Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1974), 84-87. A translation of the entire chapter is provided in Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” trans. Carol MacClintock, *Readings in the History of Music in Performance*, ed. and trans. Carol MacClintock (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 202-03.

castrato and countertenor. The first implies singing in a female range—whether as a soprano, mezzo, or alto. The castrato may therefore be classified as operating mainly within a high, medium, or low sub-range, but it is still a male voice that resides in a higher tessitura than is normal for its “natural” counterpart (tenor). The second, the countertenor, is the next highest male voice (falling also in the “high voice” category for a male singer) but operates in the mezzo and alto ranges. For centuries, the term represented a synonym for contralto, which today is reserved for the lowest female voice. Hence, in these cases (*i.e.*, countertenor, alto, and castrato voices) the terminology for “high” and “low” voice would have to change depending on whether the role in a certain production was sung by a female or by a male—as in the case of the *nutrice*—making the expression “nature of the voice” problematic in defining certain characters. While it can be explained in absolute terms, it is a relative criterion, nonetheless, is dependent on the opera in question. For example, Ottone, when compared with Nerone cast as a soprano castrato, can be viewed both as a medium and low voice operating within either a mezzo or alto range (depending on the version of *Poppea* being performed). If Nerone is, instead, cast as the highest male “natural” voice (tenor), Ottone’s voice would be considered higher than the former, as a countertenor or castrato.

Another character who exemplifies the difficulty of applying this expression (“the nature of the voice”) is Seneca, who is cast as a bass but who often sings in the extreme high and low ranges of his voice, particularly in the first scenes in which he appears. As a stoic philosopher, the choice of low voice type seems appropriate to convey his *gravitas* despite the absence of a consistently stable vocal line. Instead, Seneca presents his phi-

losophy with a significant number of ironic rises and falls in pitch given that he is speaking of constancy and emotional endurance. As a result, he fails to convince and to console Empress Ottavia, the *sposa abbandonata*.

As demonstrated, interpreting “the nature of the voice” proved to be problematic in light of the vocal types required in specific operas. Applying the criterion to tessitura instead of to a character’s overall range resulted in more satisfactory results, as demonstrated in the musical analysis of Monteverdi’s operas. I have not discarded the former interpretation entirely from my analysis, however, due to Monteverdi’s judicious assignment of certain voice types to specific characters, particularly the non-human ones as described by Doni.

Monteverdi’s quest for verisimilitude in his music is widely appreciated by scholars and performers. Therefore, it is not surprising that the main characters in his operas are humans—not gods—with the exception of Orfeo who, although a demigod, controls the dramatic action according to his human emotions. Thus, the best character to convey realism in terms of emotions is a human one—whether borrowed from mythology, as with Penelope and Ulisse, or history, as with Nerone, Poppea, and Seneca. Support for this deduction emerges from the analysis of *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* and *L’incoronazione di Poppea*.

Monteverdi’s Last Surviving Operas and the Three *Genera*

Through examining the main characters in each opera, it became clear that, in most cases, Monteverdi judiciously applied his threefold system defining *genera*, voice,

and passions / virtues. He also drew a clear distinction, according to the characters' expressed *ethoi*, between "speaking" in recitative and "singing" in arioso and aria. For example, he adopted *stile molle* and a limited vocal range to depict Penelope's poignant emotional pain, a clear consequence of her situation. The low tessitura of her first appearance in the opera is thus accompanied by a succession of *molle* intervals to express grief and longing for her husband Ulisse. Detailed analysis of Penelope's music and of that for the remaining principal characters in *Ulisse* and in *Poppea*—all different and each constructed with great psychological depth conveyed by both the text and the music—illustrates that they are not assigned only one *genus* over the course of the operas. As human beings, their emotions evolve, a process that is made apparent in Monteverdi's music.

Penelope's temperance and loyalty as portrayed in Homer's *Odyssey* is indeed communicated in Monteverdi's music, whether in terms of tessitura or rhythm. Unlike the representation of Seneca, who possesses similar character traits, her firm decisions are matched by her music. Her suffering is shown in Act I, Scene 1, mainly in *molle genus*. After that long scene, however, her depiction is one of true constancy and temperance throughout the opera, even of stubborn refusal in accepting that it is Ulisse who stands before her. This depiction of stability lasts until the final scene of the opera, when facts—not appeals to her emotions—cause her to recognize her husband. Her steadfast qualities are emphasized by her tendency to remain in the middle range of her voice (mezzo-soprano) and are punctuated by the forcefulness with which she asserts herself and her resolution to remain faithful to her husband in interactions with other characters. Hence, temperance (moderation) parallels her decision to reject all suitors and suffer in

silence during Ulisse's twenty years of absence.

The music for Penelope's husband, the image of war and courage, tends to fluctuate between *concitato* and *temperato* styles, often tending to an "heroic deeds" ethos, especially suitable for his character. Ulisse embodies the features Plato described in Book III of his *Republic* and imitates "the utterances and the accents of a brave man who is engaged in warfare."¹¹ Monteverdi depicted Ulisse's warrior nature with *stile concitato* conveyed through shorter note values in a high tessitura within a wider vocal range, which contrasts with the music created for the steadfast Penelope. It is human nature, however, that one cannot remain in such an agitated state for long. In his speech to Penelope Ulisse returns to the middle range of his voice, attempting to match her *temperato* style but not always with success. It is Penelope who has the power to change the course of the action. After her initial slow-paced *Arianna*-like lament, she adopts an attitude of resolve, which is echoed in the corresponding stability of her music.

As with *Ulisse*, it is also a woman in *Poppea* who has the power to change the course of the action. Building on an analysis of rhetorical gestures, I sought to explain the musical choices Monteverdi made in order to portray a highly manipulative woman interacting with a decisive and tyrannical ruler. Her power lies in her capacity to persuade others, in particular the one who has the highest official and recognized position: her future husband, the Roman Emperor Nerone. How did Monteverdi construct such a character musically? *Poppea* alters her tessitura depending on to whom she is speaking,

¹¹ Plato, *Plato's Republic for Readers: A Constitution*, trans. George A. Blair (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998), 399a.

and her tonality prevails even when confronting Nerone's own. In Act I, Scene 3, the juxtaposition of *cantus mollis* and *cantus durus*, with its added flats and sharps, conveys the manipulative but seemingly ambivalent nature of this female character. The movement from recitative to arioso and aria for expressions of triumph and joy, whether by Poppea or Nerone, contrasts with the rigidity of the betrayed Ottavia—whose commitment to recitative is fairly strict—and with the languid mood adopted by Ottone—who suffers similarly because of the infidelity of his beloved. Controlled not by others but by her own aspirations is Poppea, even though the subtlety of her manipulation may at times be mistaken for a more submissive femininity.

After demonstrating how easily Poppea can control Nerone's decisions (Act I, Scene 3), exemplified most directly by Nerone's eventual abandonment of his own F tonality to adopt Poppea's D, I drew attention to Nerone's more consistently dominant characteristic: his stubborn and tyrannical nature. The most successful scene in foregrounding this trait is his confrontation with Seneca. In contrast to Ulisse, the *concitato* style here is not a reflection of a warrior's actions but of Nerone's immature anger and lack of temperance. The excessive word repetition, which calls attention to what matters most to him (his own desires), is imitated by Seneca, although the latter, according to my interpretation, attempts to reveal to the Emperor by doing so the juvenile and egotistical degree of his ruler's behavior and his casual and ignoble determination of the fate of others. The dichotomy between the rational Seneca and the erratic, emotional Nerone is enhanced by the tonality and vocal contrast in their music. The bass Seneca expresses his advice mainly in the C tonality with a mid-range tessitura (c-a within a range of G-d'). His suggestions are countered by Nerone (soprano castrato / tenor) in key of G with a

high tessitura (g'-f' within a range d'-g'), considerably higher, in fact, than that of the stoic philosopher. Although Nerone will insure that his wishes are obeyed, it is Seneca who has the final music and words in the duet. Despite the ambivalence of the stoic tutor as presented by Busenello and Monteverdi, reason remained on Seneca's side, for the Roman Empire was, in fact, set on a path of decay by Nerone's wrath and lack of wisdom.

Seneca's *gravitas*, nevertheless, appears to be questioned in this opera. The *Accademia degli Incogniti's* anti-stoicism is clear in how this character is portrayed in the libretto. Analysis of the cuts to Seneca's scenes in the libretto revealed discrepancies in ideas between Busenello and Monteverdi, a point strongly argued by Ellen Rosand in her article "Seneca and the Interpretation of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*."¹² In search for elements that portray Seneca as a stable character, however, it became noticeable, as Rosand indicated later in *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*,¹³ that his *costanza* [constancy] develops and unfolds throughout the opera in spite of his death in the middle of it. Monteverdi had to create a musical reason for Ottavia to reject his stoic advice. Seneca's unstable vocal line in the scene with the betrayed Empress, vacillating between the extremes of his range, contrasts with his final scenes in which a considerably different Seneca appears: one with a more stable midrange tessitura, as expected for a stoic who "speaks" in recitative during his death scene. His final statements are more assertive and short—without melismas. Despite the variances in his presentation (with Ottavia and in

¹² Ellen Rosand, "Seneca and the Interpretation of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXXVIII/1 (Spring 1985), 34-71. See also Ellen Rosand, "Il ritorno a Seneca," *Cambridge Opera Journal* XXI/3 (2010), 199-237.

¹³ Ellen Rosand, *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

the death scene), one feature is unaltered: when his task is to advise others, detached from personal emotions, Monteverdi assigned him the key of C. When decisions affect him directly, the philosopher responds in the D tonality, the same key adopted by the characters in the prologue. Although Seneca's expected nature is initially in doubt, he is given the opportunity to reveal his level of stoicism, captured in the self-control and courage he displays as he confronts his final act. While he lives, he is the one holding the morality of the characters together—as much as is possible. After his death, moral restraint disappears, murders are attempted, and passion triumphs over reason.

In conclusion, Monteverdi's system of the three *genera* as presented in the Preface of Book VIII is not without its flaws: the *stile temperato* and *molle* are far more problematic to analyze, due to Monteverdi's lack of detailed explanation and the greater subtlety required to express them verbally, than the *concitato* style, whose musical markers are simple to identify. As established in this study, Monteverdi's system in all its parts is not limited to the madrigals in Book VIII but can be observed in his subsequent surviving dramatic works.

The applicability of this system is evident when examining the music assigned to the main characters in his later operas as they express specific *ethoi* in their text and through their style of vocal delivery. The way in which Monteverdi applied the particulars of his system to convey passions / affects, a tactic no doubt designed for the theater-going Venetian public, communicates his characters' strongest traits: their fears, their hopes, their pain, but above all, their humanity.

Epilogue:

Reflections on the Practical Aspect—from Analysis to Performance

Monteverdi's emphasis on practice rather than purely on theory, a premise widely acknowledged in the scholarly world, was emphasized many times in this thesis. A clear example of the composer's position can be found in the *Dichiarazione* to the *Scherzi Musicali* of 1607, written by the brother of Claudio Monteverdi, Giulio Cesare, explaining the principles behind the compositional style after the fact; the *seconda pratica* [second practice] has that name precisely because it is not a *seconda teoria* [second theory]. A second case of practice that precedes theory is the *stile concitato* in *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda*, written in 1624. It took Monteverdi six years to publish (and likely write) the Preface to Book VIII of Madrigals, where the definition and (partial) origins of the *stile concitato* were put into print.

Detailed study on the pivotal roles in *Ulisse* and *Poppea* has shown that Monteverdi applied the three *genera* introduced in the Preface to the different affects and “natures of the voice” when writing his music. His characters were carefully shaped according to these threefold divisions. He emphasized their intentions, their mood changes, and their passions or virtues through rhythm, voice (range, tessitura, and vocal type), key, and harmonic considerations.

To understand the importance of practice in Monteverdi's aesthetic is to understand the application of its principles to performance. The same applies to the concepts in his Preface and the music that followed. By analyzing his dramatic works written after

1638 in light of the Preface's threefold system, I now have deeper insight into what Monteverdi intended to convey in the music—the affects portrayed in certain operatic roles and the methods by which they are communicated as well as the determination of the meaning of rhetorical gestures and the information they provide about a character's actions and dialogue. To understand these aspects of Monteverdi's aesthetics and composition is absolutely essential in order to be successful in translating, as faithfully as possible, his vision for a character from the score to the stage. Only with a detailed musical analysis can the rhetorical gestures, the intent of the character, and the affects themselves—features that are impacted by fluctuations in meter, rhythm, tessitura, and tonality—be accurately determined. Only then can a singer judiciously determine how to interpret musical aspects that, in the practice of the time, are not notated. Ornamentation,¹⁴ volume, accenting some notes more than others, and acting considerations encompassing the broad spectrum of Baroque gesture are dependent on understanding the messages contained in the score. For example, Baroque gestures—depicted in paintings and in

¹⁴ For more information on ornamentation and performance practice in Monteverdi's music, see Bruce Dickey, "Ornamentation in Early Seventeenth-Century Italian Music," and Julianne Baird, "The *Bel Canto* Singing Style," *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Stewart Carter, rev. Jeffery Kite-Powell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 31-44 and 293-316, respectively. These authors examine vocal performance style, mainly ornamentation, in Monteverdi's last operas. See also Denis Arnold, "Performance Practice," *The New Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 319-36, where the author has a small subchapter, "Modern editions and performances," in which he justly criticized the reorchestration, particularly of recitatives, in light of modernity.

writings of the time, such as in *Chirologia* (1644)¹⁵ by John Bulwer,¹⁶ —correspond to a certain affect. Hence, musical analysis must go hand-in-hand with a diligent study of the text. It should go without saying that performers (singers and their instrumentalists) need to understand not only the meaning of the text but the deeper significance and implications of every word they speak or sing. All elements must be coordinated in the moment of performance: text intelligibility, movement, gesture, vocal delivery, facial expression. Before that moment, however, every effort must be made to understand the composer's intentions through diligent study of notational conventions; aesthetics of the period and place; and the individual artist's philosophies, compositional practices, and musical idiosyncracies.

During the final stages of writing this thesis I had the opportunity not only to put into practice what I had been researching over a period of three years but also to enrich and strengthen my knowledge of Monteverdi's rhetorical gestures. In June 2018 I participated in the Baroque Opera Workshop at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens,

¹⁵ John Bulwer, *Chirologia, or the Naturall Language of the Hand: Composed of the Speaking Motions, and Discoursing Gestures Thereof; Whereunto Is Added Chironomia, or, The Art of Manuall Rhetoricke; Consisting of the Naturall Expressions, Digested by Art in the Hand, As the Chiefest Instrument of Eloquence, by Historicall Manifesto's, Exemplified Out of the Authentique Registers of Common Life, and Civill Conversation; with Types, or Chyrograms; a Long-Wish'd for Illustration of This Argument* (London: Tho. Harper, 1644). See also Giovanni Bonifacio, *L'Arte De' Cenni Con La Qvale Formandosi Favella Visibile, Si Tratta Della Mvta Eloqvenza, Che Non È Altro, Che Vn Facondo Silentio; Divisa In Dve Parti* (Vicenza: Grossi, 1616).

¹⁶ John Bulwer (1606-1656) was an English physician, Baconian philosopher, and an educator of the deaf. One of his main interests was the body and human communication.

New York,¹⁷ where performers who had been selected to participate were involved in selected scenes from Monteverdi's operas *Orfeo*, *Ulisse*, and *Poppea*. With the vocal guidance of scholar-performer Julianne Baird, orientation to Baroque gestures and staging by soprano Nell Snaidas, and further staging and musical direction by David Ronis and Crista Patton, the intensive one-week workshop not only confirmed in practice some of the theoretical conclusions I had reached in this thesis, but it also helped clarify and improve my interpretation of the roles I performed (Poppea in *Poppea* and one of the shepherds in *Orfeo*). Determining which gesture, which facial expression, which ornament, if any, to adopt for a certain phrase was to think actively about the affect called for by the situation.

In this workshop I was fully immersed in daily rehearsals, lectures, masterclasses, coaching, and theater classes with emphases ranging from diction, poetry, acting to the history and practice of gestures, ornamentation, rhetoric, and other aspects of performance practice. As an aspiring scholar-performer, I continued to benefit greatly from the knowledge of scholars and performers as well as to be stimulated by new ideas concerning rhetorical elements to refine my analysis of Monteverdi's music following each day's classes and rehearsals. The interpretation of many different roles and the coaching for all the scenes I was able to attend, as well as the exchange of ideas with several Early Music performers (professors and students), reinforced the idea that no word was set without a

¹⁷ *Institute for 17th Century Music at Queens College*, Baroque Opera Workshop from June 17-23, culminating in a final performance of scenes from Monteverdi's trilogy (*Orfeo*, *Ulisse*, and *Poppea*) on 23 June 2018 at the Aaron Copland School of Music in Flushing, Queens, NY.

great deal of thought by the Cremonese composer. Furthermore, my belief was strengthened in the meaningfulness of my joint pursuit of scholarship and performance. Whether expertise in the two complementary fields reside in the same person or in separate individuals, the scholar and the performer should work hand-in-hand. This duality was indeed, represented by Monteverdi, someone who was a “practical thinker,” a performer, a composer of exquisite and thoughtful music, and a man so attentive to human emotions that his creations still have the power to enthrall.

Vivete felici.

APPENDIX A

QUOTATIONS IN ORIGINAL LANGUAGE BY CITATION NUMBER

Footnotes in Chapter One

8. Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII – Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero; reprint, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum (Wien: Universal-Edition, 1967; reprinted New York: Dover Publications, 1991), xv.

Havendo io considerato le nostre passioni od affettioni del animo, essere tre le principali cioè Ira, Temperanza, & Humiltà o supplicatione come bene gli migliori Filosofi affermano, anzi la natura stessa de la voce nostra in ritrovarsi, alta, bassa, & mezzana; & come l'Arte [della] Musica lo notifica chiaramente in questi tre termini, di concitato, molle, & temperato, ne havendo in tutte le compositioni de passati compositori potuto ritrovare esempio del concitato genere, ma ben sì del molle & temperato; genere però descritto da Platone nel terzo [libro] de Rethorica ... perciò mi posi con non poco mio studio, & fatica per ritrovarlo.

12. Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII – Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero; reprint, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum (Wien: Universal-Edition, 1967; reprinted New York: Dover Publications, 1991), xv.

Gli contrarij sono quelli che movono grandemente l'animo nostro.

Footnotes in Chapter Two

32. Francesco Petrarca, *In epistolas Francisci Petrarcae de rebus familiaribus et variis*, ed. Camilli Antona-Traversi and Philippi Raffaelli (Fermo: G. Bacher, 1890), 442.

Augustissima Venetorum urbs quae una hodie libertatis ac pacis, et iustitiae domus est, unum bonorum refugium, unus portus, quem bene vivere cupientium tyrannicis undique, ac bellicis tempestatibus quasseae rates petant, urbs auri dives, sed ditor fama, potens opibus, sed virtute potentior,

solidis fundata marmoribus, sed solidiore etiam fundamento civilis concordiae stabilita, salsis sancta fluctibus, sed salsioribus tuta consiliis.

56. Claudio Monteverdi, letter (26 November 1608) to Cardinal Ferdinando Gonzaga, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax (Florence: Leo D. Olschki, 1994), 20.

Illustrissimo e Reverendissimo Signor mio e Padrone Collendissimo, Non men pronto che desideroso di servire a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima, subito che fu gionto il staffiere cominciai mandar ad esecuzione il suo comandamento della composizione che Li mando. E sibene con verità posso dire che, stando la indisposizione mia della quale non mi sono ancora risolto per le fatiche li giorni passati costi àute, Vostra Signoria Illustrissima non reterà così servita conforme al desiderio mio.

57. Claudio Monteverdi, letter (2 December 1608) to Annibale Chieppio, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax (Florence: Leo D. Olschki, 1994), 20-21.

Io dicco che, se non riposo intorno al faticarmi nelle musiche teatrali, al sicuro breve sarà la vita mia, poiché, per le fatiche passate così grandi, ho acquistato un dolore di testa e un prurito così potente e rabbioso per la vita, che né per cauteri che m'abbi fatto fare, né per purghe pigliate per bocca né per salassi e altri rimedi potenti mi son potuto ancora risolvere, ben in parte sì; e il signor padre attribuisce la causa del dolore di testa a li studi grandi, e del prurito all'aria di Mantoa che m'è contraria, e dubita che solamente l'aria, fra poco di tempo, sarebbe la mia morte ... Io dicco a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che la fortuna mia àuta a Mantoa per dieci nove anni continui m'ha dato occasione di chiamarla inimica a me e non amica, perché: se dal serenissimo signore Ducca m'ha favorito d'esser agraziato di poterlo servire in Ongheria, m'ha disfavorito anco con farmi avere una gionta di spese che la povera casa nostra quasi ancora ne sente di quel viaggio.

58. Claudio Monteverdi letter (6 November 1615) to Alessandro Striggio, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax (Florence: Leo D. Olschki, 1994), 23.

Caro Signore, mi aiuti ad avere bona licenza, ché mi pare che questo sii il meglio d'ogni cosa, perché muterò aria, fatica e fortuna, e chi sa?! ché, alla peggio, che posso altro che restar povero come sono.

59. Claudio Monteverdi letter (6 November 1615) to Alessandro Striggio, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax (Florence: Leo D. Olschki, 1994), 42.

Io non starò a dirLe le mie fatiche passate de le quali ne sento spesso or alla testa or alla vita mia, per il pattir grande ch'io feci nell'Arianna; né starò a dirLe li duoi filioli, aquistati in Mantoa, che pur ne fu cagione del matrimonio mio il signor ducca Vincenzo; né che mi sia partito da quella serenissima corte così disgraziatamente che, per Dio, altro non portai via che vinticinque scudi, dopo il corso di 21 anni.

63. Claudio Monteverdi letter (13 March 1620) to Alessandro Striggio, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax (Florence: Leo D. Olschki, 1994), 92-93.

Questa Serenissima Republica mai a qual altro per avanti mio antecessore, o sii statto Adriano o Cipriano o Zarlino od altro, ha dato che ducento ducati di salario, e a me ne dà quattrocento, favore che non deve così di leggero da me essere passato senza poca di considerazione, poiché, Signore Illustrissimo, questa Serenissima Signoria non innova una cosa senza una ben pesata considerazione onde che – torno – questa particolar grazia deve da me essere molto ben risguardata.... In cappella non si accetta cantore che prima non piglino il parere del maestro di cappella, né vogliono altra relazione de cause de' cantori che quella del maestro di cappella, né accettano né organisti, né vicemaestro, se non hanno il parere e la relazione da esso maestro di cappella; né vi è gentilomo che non mi stimi e onori, e quando vado a far qualche musica, o sia da camera o chiesa, giuro a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che tutta la città corre.... Or Vostra Signoria Illustrissima pesa mo', con la bilanza del Suo purgatissimo giudizio, quel tanto che Ella mi ha offerto a nome di Sua Altezza Serenissima, e vegga se con vero et real fondamento potrei fare il cambio o no.

Footnotes in Chapter Three

- 4a. Giulio Cesare Monteverdi, Dichiarazione della lettera stampata nel Quinto libri de' suoi madregali (1607) in Claudio Monteverdi, Claudio Monteverdi: lettere, dediche e prefazioni, ed. Domenico De' Paoli (Rome: Edizioni De Santis, 1973), 399.

La prima pratica ... versa intorno alla perfettione dell'armonia, cioè considera l'armonia non comandata ma comandante, e non serva, ma signora dell'oratione.... [La] Seconda pratica de la quale è statto il primo

rinovatore ne nostri caratteri il Divino Cipriano Rore ... seguitata, & ampliata ... dal Ingegneri, dal Marenzio, da Giaches Wert, dal Luzzasco, & parimente da Giacoppo Peri, da Giulio Caccini, & finalmente da li spiriti piui elevati & intendenti de la vera arte, intende che sia quella che versa intorno alla perfetione de la melodia, cioè che considera l'armonia comandata, & non comandante, & per signora del armonia pone l'oratione.

- 4b. Adriano Banchieri, "Discorso sopra la moderna pratica musicale," *Cartella musicale nel canto figurato fermo & contrapunto* (Venice: 1614), 165-66.

Hora mo' il moderno compositore, per porgere diletto alla maggior parte (essendo il suo proprio fine) meglio considerando, cerca imitare un perfetto oratore che spiegar voglia dotta et bene istessa oratione. Et sì come scrive Celio Rodigino, lin. 23, cap 3, detto prima da Cicerone parlando di un perfetto oratore, *Optimus orator est vir canorus*, qui in dicendo *animus audienctium delectat, et permovet*. Così ricercasi al moderno compositore di musiche nell' esprimere un madrigale, mottetto o quali sieno altre parole, deve operare imitando con l'armonia gl'affetti dell' oratione, acciò che nel cantare habbino diletto non solo il proprio compositore, ma parimente gli cantori et audienti. Tacia pur chi vuole che la musica (quanto l'armonia) deve essere sogieta all'oratione, atteso che le parole sono esse ch'esprimono il concetto, la onde se la parola ricerca (come detto habiamo) dolore, passione, sospiri, interrogativo? [*sic*] errori o tali simili accidenti, tali parole debbono vestirsi con equivalente armonía.

9. Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII—Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum (New York: Dover Publications, 1991), 304.

Il pianto ... va cantato a tempo del'affetto del animo, et non a quello de la mano.

15. Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi: Die Grundbegrife seines musiktheoretischen Denkens* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus Verlagsgesellschaft, 1987), 29.

Dabei erweist sich Monteverdis Ästhetik al seine im doppelten Sinne praktische Ästhetik, einerseits, weil die kompositionspraktische Arbeit der

unmittelbare Anlass für die ästhetischen Überlegungen ist und andererseits, weil diese Ästhetik ihre Wirkung in der Praxis entfalten soll, da es ihr in erster Linie um die Wirkung der Musik auf den Zuhörer geht.

16. Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi: Die Grundbegriffe seines musiktheoretischen Denkens* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1987), 3.

Bei der Erschliessung der gesuchten musiktheoretischen Konzeptionen Monteverdis hat sich gezeigt, dass Monteverdi immer wieder ästhetische und musikalische Schlüsselbegriffe benutzt, die sein Komponieren sowohl nachträglich legitimieren helfen als auch gleichzeitig Richtschnur für seine Kompositionen sind.

22. Giulio Cesare Monteverdi, "Dichiarazione della lettera stampata nel Quinto libri de' suoi madregali," in Claudio Monteverdi, *Claudio Monteverdi: lettere, dediche e prefazioni*, ed. Domenico De' Paoli (Rome: Edizioni De Santis, 1973), 292.

Vi è anco un'altra consideratione differente dalla determinata, la quale con quietanza della ragione, et del senso differente il moderno compositore.... con quietanza della ragione, percioche appogierassi sopra le consonanze et dissonanze dalla matematica aprobate, percio ha detto intorno al modo di adoperarle.... Con quietanza del senso, perchioche il composto di oratione comandante di ritmo et armonia ... Movono le affettioni del animo.

27. Claudio Monteverdi, letter (9 December 1616) to Alessandro Striggio, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eva Lax (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1994), 49.

Oltre di ciò ho visto li interlocutori essere Venti, Amoretti, Zeffiretti e Sirene, e per consequenza molti soprani faranno de bisogno; e s'aggionge di più che li Venti hanno a cantare, cioè li Zeffiri et li Boreali! Come, caro Signore, potrò io imittare il parlar de' venti, se non parlano?! E come potrò io con il mezzo loro movere li affetti? Mosse l'Arianna per essere donna, e mosse parimente Orfeo per essere omo, e non vento. Le armonie imittano loro medesime, e non con l'oratione, e li streppiti de' venti, e il bellar dele pecore, il nitrire de' cavalli e va discorrendo, ma non imitano il parlar de' venti che non si trova!

34. Plato, "De re publica," *Platonis Opera omnia latine*, trans. Marsilio Ficino (Florence: Laurentiū de Alopa Venetū, 1485), 398d., reproduced in Claude V. Palisca, "The Artusi-Monteverdi Controversy," *The New Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 152.

Melodia ex tribus constare, oratione, armonia, rhythmus.

35. Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi: Die Grundbegriffe seines musiktheoretischen Denkens* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1987), 5.

Die 'oration' ist der sprachliche Ausdruck des Affekts, der sich ihr einprägt und sie formt.

36. Sabine Ehrmann, *Claudio Monteverdi: Die Grundbegriffe seines musiktheoretischen Denkens* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1987), 5.

Jeder Affekt hat eine von aussen kommende Ursache, die im Menschen eine Seelenbewegung erzeugt, die durch ihre musikalische Darstellung beim Hörer den entsprechenden Affekt hervorzurufen vermag.

45. Claudio Monteverdi, letter 123 (2 February 1634) to Giambattista Doni, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Claudio Monteverdi: lettere, dediche e prefazioni*, ed. Domenico De' Paoli (Rome: Edizioni De Santis, 1973), 326.

Prima d'ora anzi venti anni *fa il Galilei* colà ove nota quella poca *pratica antica*, mi fu caro all'ora l'averla vista, per aver visto in questa parte come che adoperavano gli *antichi* gli loro segni praticali a differenza de' nostri, non cercando di avanzarmi più oltre ne lo intenderli essendo sicuro che mi sarebbero riuscite come oscurissime zifere, et peggio essendo perso in tutto quel modo praticale antico. Per lo chè rivoltai gli miei studi per altra via, appoggiandoli sopra a fondamenti de' migliori filosofi scrutatori de la natura. Lascio lontano nel mio scrivere quel modo tenuto dai Greci con parole et segni loro, adoperando le voci et gli caratteri che usiamo ne la nostra pratica; perché la mia intenzione è di mostrare con il mezzo de la nostra pratica quanto ho potuto trarre da la mente di que' filosofi a servitio de la bona arte, et non a principii de la prima pratica, armonica solamente.

68. “Animo,” “Anima,” *Vocabolario della Accademia della Crusca*, 2nd ed. (Venice: Jacopo Sarzina, 1623), 56.

Animo [è] propriamente la parte intelletiva dell’anima ragionevole.

Anima, [rappresenta la] Forma intrinseca de’ viventi, vita degli animanti. L’anima è sustanzia spirituale, che non ha dimensione. E per lo spirito separato dal corpo.

78. Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII—Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum (New York: Dover Publications, 1991), xvi.

Havendo io considerato le nostre passioni od affettioni del animo, essere tre le principali cioè Ira, Temperanza, & Humiltà o supplicatione come bene gli migliori Filosofi affermano, anzi la natura stessa de la voce nostra in ritrovarsi, alta, bassa, &: mezzana; & come l’Arte [della] Musica lo notifica chiaramente in questi tre termini, di concitato, molle, & temperato, ne havendo in tutte le compositioni de passati compositori potuto ritrovare esempio del concitato genere, ma ben sì del molle & temperato; genere però descritto da Platone nel terzo [libro] de Rethorica, con queste parole: (Suscipe Harmoniam illam quae ut decet imitatur fortiter euntis in praelium, voces, atque accentus) [esegui quell’armonia che, come conviene, imita con forza le voci e i ritmi di chi va in battaglia]; & sapendo che gli contrarij sono quelli che movono grandemente l’animo nostro, fine del movere che deve havere la bona musica, come afferma Boetio, dicendo: (Musicam nobis esse conniunctam, mores, vel honestare, vel evertere;) perciò mi posi con non poco mio studio, & fatica per ritrovarlo, & considerato nel tempo pircchio che è tempo veloce, nel quale tutti gli migliori Filosofi affermano in questo essere stato usato le saltationi belliche, concitate, & nel tempo spondeo, tempo tardo, le contrarie, cominciai dunque la semibreve a cogitare, la qual percossa una volta del sono, proposi che fosse un tocco di tempo spondeo, la quale poscia ridotta in sedici semicrome, & ripercosse ad una per una, con agiontione di oratione contenente ira, & sdegno, udii, in questo poco esempio la similitudine del affetto che ricercavo, benchè l’oratione non seguitasse co piedi la velocità del Istromento, & per venire a maggior prova, diedi di piglio al divin Tasso, come poeta che esprime con ogni proprietà & naturalezza con la sua oratione, quelle passioni che tende a voler descrivere, & ritrovai la descrizione, che fa del combattimento di Tancredi con Clorinda, per haver io le due passioni contrarie da mettere in canto, Guerra, cioè preghiera & morte, & l’anno 1624, fattolo poscia udire à migliori de la Nob. Città di Venezia, in una nob. Stanza del Illustr. & Ecc.

Sig. Gerolamo Mozzenigo Cavaglier principale, & ne comandi de la Sere-
niss. Rep. di primi, & mio particular padrone, e partial protettore; fu con
molto applauso ascoltato, & lodato; il qual principio havendolo veduto a
riuscire alla imitatione del ira, seguitai a investigarlo maggiormente con
maggiori studij, & ne feci diversi compositioni altre, così Ecclesiastiche,
come da Camera, & fu così grato tal genere anco a gli compositori di Mu-
sica, che non solamente l'hanno lodato in voce, ma anco in penna, à la
imitatione mia l'hanno in opera mostrato a molto mio gusto & honore. Mi
è parso bene perciò il far sapere che da me è nata l'investigatione & la
prova prima di tal genere, tanto necessario al arte [della] Musica, senza il
quale, è stata si può dire con ragione, sino ad hora imperfetta, non havendo
hauto che gli duoi generi, molle & temperato; & perchè à primo principio
(in particolare à quali toccava sonare il basso continuo) il dover tampellare
sopra ad una corda sedeci volte in una battuta gli pareva più tosto far cosa
da riso che da lode, perciò riducevano, ad una percossa sola durante una
battuta tal multiplicità, & in guisa di far udire il piricchio piede facevano
udire il spondeo, & levavano la similitudine al oratione concitata. Perciò
aviso dover essere sonato il basso continuo con gli suoi compagnamaneti,
nel modo & forma in tal genere che sta scritto, nel quale si trova parimente
ogni altro ordine che si ha da tenere nelle altre compositioni d'altro ge-
nere; perchè le maniere di suonare devono essere di tre sorti: oratoria, Ar-
monica, & Rethmica; la ritrovata da me del qual genere da guerra, mi ha
dato occasione di scrivere alcuni Madrigali da me intitolati Guerrieri; &
perché la Musica dei Gran Principi viene adoperata nelle loro Regie Ca-
mere in tre modi per loro delicati gusti; da Teatro, da camera, & da ballo;
perciò nella presente mia opera ho accennato gli detti tre generi con la in-
titulatione Guerriera, Amorosa, & rappresentativa; sò che sarà imperfetta,
perché poco vaglio in tutto, in particolare nel genere Guerriero per essere
nuovo & perché (omne principium est debile) [ogni inizio è fragile / pre-
cario]; prego perciò il benigno Lettore aggradire la mia bona volontà, la
quale starà attendendo da la sua dotta penna maggior perfettione in natura
del detto genere; perché «inventis facile est adere» [in ciò che si inventa,
risulta facile aggiungere] & viva felice.

81. Giambattista Doni, letter (7 July 1638) to Marin Mersenne, in Marin
Mersenne, *Correspondance du p. Marin Mersenne religieux minime*, ed.
Paul Tannery and Cornelis de Waard (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1933), 17-18.

Touchant ce que vous mettez (à la p. 61 du *Livre 7 Des Instrumens de per-
cussions*) Frescobaldi au rang des plus estimez musiciens d'Italie, avec
Lucas Marenzio et Monteverde, il ne faut pas que vous vous trompiez en
cela. Car il y a aujourd'hui à Rome une douzaine des musiciens qui sont
plus estimez que luy.... Pour Cl. Monteverde il n'est pas homme de
grandes lettres, non plus que les autres musiciens d'aujourd'hui, mais il

excelle à faire des melodies pathetiques, merci de la longue pratique qu'il a eu à Florence de ces beaux esprits des Academies, mesme du sieur Rinuccini, qui estoit camerier du feu roy Henry le Grand et grand poete, lequel (comme je sçay de bonne part), encores qu'il n'entendist rien en la musique, contribua plus que Monteverde à la beauté de ceste Complainte d'Ariadne, composee par lui. On m'asseure qu'il travaille depuis longues années sur une grand ouvrage de musique où il traicte des chants de toutes le nations, où il me contredict en beaucoup de choses. De quoy je ne m'en donne pas grand peine, ains voudrois bien tost voir ces nouvelles curieusesitez; craignant que la mort ne le previenne, veu qu'il est fort vieil. Je suis bien escandalizé de luy en tant qu'il ne m'a jamais escrit depuis que le luy envoyay mon livre, ny mesme accusée ma lettre, au lieu qu'auparavant il m'escrivoit aucunes fois. Et vous sçavez si j'en parlé en ce livre à son desavantage.

83. Matteo Caberloti, "Laconismo delle alte qualità de Claudio Monteverde," Fiori poetici raccolti nel funerale del molto illustre e molto reverendo sig. Claudio Monteverde maestro di cappella della Ducale di San Marco, ed. Giambattista Marinoni (Venice: Francesco Miloco, 1644), 10.

Due altri lustri permise il Cielo, che Claudio Sacerdote praticando tutte le Religiose conditioni, mà più d'ogn'altra il zelo di giouar al prossimo datosi alla Filosofia fosse dietro alla compositione d'un volume, nelquale notificando i più occulti arcani della sua disciplina era per impedire, che mai più ne secoli venturi restassero nascoste à studenti le vere strade per facilitarli l'acquisto della perfettione dell'arte Musica.

91. Claudio Monteverdi, letter (9 December 1616) to Alessandro Striggio, in Claudio Monteverdi, Claudio Monteverdi: lettere, dediche e prefazioni, ed. Domenico De' Paoli (Rome: Edizioni De Santis, 1973), 87.

Con un ordine naturale ad un fine che ... mova.

104. Girolamo Mei, letter (8 May 1572) to Vincenzo Galilei, quoted in Girolamo Mei: Letters on Ancient and Modern Music to Vincenzo Galilei and Giovanni Bardi, ed. Claude V. Palisca (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: American Institute of Musicology, 1960), 92-93.

Con la voce altramente far non si puo che con quelle qualità di lei, sia ella, ò grave, ò acuta, ò mezzana che da la natura l'è stata appropriata per questo effetto, e che è nota propria e naturle di quello che altri vuol commuovere nel uditore. Simigliantemente è cosa notissima che de' tuoni i mez-

zani tra l'estrema acutezza e l'estrema gravità sono atti à dimostrare quieta e moderata disposizione di affetto: e i troppo acuti sono da animo [fol 16v] troppo commosso e sollevato: e i troppo gravi, da pensieri e abbietto e rimesso; nel modo medesimo che il numero mezzano tra la velocità e la tardanza mostra animo posato; e la velocità, concitato; e la tardanza, lento e pigro: et insieme è chiaro che tutte quelle qualità così de l'armonia, come del numero hanno per propria natura facultà di muovere affezioni simiglianti ciascuna à sé, onche i tuoni troppo acuti et troppo gravi furono da Platonici rifiutati ne la loro Republica [Plato, Republic, Book III, 398c]: quelli per essere lamentevoli; e questi, lugubri: e solamente ricevuti quelli di mezzo, così come ancora fu fatto da medesimi circa i numeri e ritmi. Di più tutte le qualità contrarie, ò naturali, ò acquistate che le si siano nel mescolarsi e confondersi insieme indeboliscono, et in un certo modo spuntan le forze l'una a l'altra se le son pari, del pari, se non son pari, proporzionatamente à la potenza et vigore di ciascuna; onde ne nasce che ciascuna di esse mescolata con altra diversa da opera quanto à lei ò imperfettamente, ò pochissimo.

106. Giovanni Bardi, "Discorso mandato da me a Giulio Caccini detto Romano, sopra la musica anticha, e' cantar bene" (1578), *The Florentine Camerata*, ed. and trans. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 92-94.

Sarà adunque principio del mio ragionamento la diffinition d'essa musica, perchè siccome malagevolmente potrebbe altri conoscere che cosa sia huomo, se non sapesse ch'egli è animale rationale, risibile, e conuersabile, o, che cosa sia Città se non sapesse che la città è unione di più case, e borghi insieme poste per cagione di bene, et giustamente uiuere: Così non potrà dar giuditio della musica pratica, e del cantare colui, che non saprà che cosa essa musica sia; la quale così diffinisce Platone nel 30 del suo comune dicendo, la musica essere un componimento di fauellare, [G234] d'armonia, [R4V] e di ritmo; Ma perche queste parole armonie, e ritmo siene ben intese da voi daremo la diffinitione d'esse quanto si potrà per noi breuemente. Armonia è il nome generale, della quale parlando Pitagora, et appresso lui Platone dissero il mondo essere composto d'essa. Ma uenghiamo al particolare et trattiamo di quella della musica diffinita da Platone: la quale per quanto riferisce Pausania, prese questo nome da Armonia moglie di Cadmo, alle nozze della quale cantarono le muse, è adunque l'Armonia proportionone di graue, d'acuto, e di mezzano; e di parole con ritmo; cioè della lunga, e della breve ben diuisate, et altresì l'armonia [F2r] negli strumenti musicali, perche ancora in essi è il graue, l'acuto, e 'l mezzano, e 'l ritmo, cioè moto più veloce, o, più tardo di lunga, e breue. E può essere ancora l'armonia tutte le cose sopradette unite insieme, cioè di parole ben cantante, che habian per loro accompagnatura,

ò questo, o, quello strumento. Il ritmo anch'egliè nome generale nel quale dando la diffinitione Aristide Quintiliano dice essere sistema di tempi con certo ordine composto. Sistema altro non è che ordinatione di cose; Del qual ritmo ragionando Platone, disse esser distinto in tre spetie, perche trascorre per l'armonie, per li movimenti corporali; e per le parole. Quel del corpo è manifesto à gl'occhi, gl'altri due all'orecchie. Ma uegniamo à quel della musica, che altro non è, che dal il tempo alle parole che si cantono, di lungo, o, di breue e veloce, e di tardo; et altresì à gli strumenti musicali, lequal cose raccogliendole tutte insieme dimostrano che la musica pratica è un componimento di parole accommodate dal Poeta in uersi di uari piedi con la lunga, e con la breue, che hora uanno ueloci, hora tardi; hora graue, hora acute, hora mezzane hauenti il suono delle parole dalla voce humana, hora da essa uoce sole cantante, hora accompagnate da strumenti musicali che uada anco esso accompagnando le parole con la lunga, e breue, e moto ueloce, e tarde con graue, mezzano, ed acuto. ... Abbiamo dato la diffinitione della musica secondo Platone, con la quale confronta Aristotle e gl'altro saui.

English translation: Giovanni Bardi, "Discorso mandato da me a Giulio Caccini detto Romano, sopra la musica anticha, e' cantar bene" (1578), *The Florentine Camerata*, ed. and trans. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 93-95.

The beginning of my discourse, then, will be a definition of this music. Just as it would be difficult for another being to know what a man is, if he did not know that he is a rational, laughing, and conversational animal, or to know what a city is, if he did not know that it is a collection of many houses and boroughs gathered together for the sake of living well and justly; so he cannot make judgments about musical practice or good singing who does not know what this music is. Plato defines in the Third [Book] of his *Republic* [Plato, *Republic*, 3.398], saying that music is a composition of speech, harmony, and rhythm. So that you may understand these words, *harmony* and *rhythm*, we shall give a definition of them as briefly as we can.

Harmony is a general term; Pythagoras and, after him, Plato said that the world was composed of it. But let us come to the concrete treatment of that music defined by Plato. According to Pausanias, it took its name from Harmony, wife of Cadmus, at whose wedding the Muses sang [Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 9.12.3]. Harmony, then, is a proportion of low, high, and intermediate [pitches] and of words with rhythm, that is, of the long and of the short well divided, and it is also the harmony of musical instruments, because in them too are found low, high, and intermediate, and rhythm, that is, faster or slower motion, of long or short. And it

may be the harmony of all things just mentioned joined together, that is, of words well sung which have the accompaniment of this or that instrument.

Rhythm is also a general term, of which Aristides Quintilianus, by way of definition, said that it is a system of durations arranged in a certain order [Quintilianus, Περὶ Μουσικῆς (*De musica*)]. A system is simply an ordering of things. In discussing this kind of rhythm, Plato said that it was classified into three species, because it occurs in harmonies, in corporal movements, and in words [see Plato, *Laws*, 672e-673a]. That of the body is evident to the eyes, the other two to the ears. But let us come to [the rhythm] of music, which is simply giving duration of words that are sung, whether long or short, or fast or slow, and also to musical instruments. These things, collected together, demonstrate that musical practice is a composition of words fashioned by a poet into verses of various feet, with long and short durations, that sometimes go quickly, sometimes slowly, sometimes with low, sometimes high, sometimes intermediate [pitch], having the sound of the words of the human voice, sometimes sung by the voice alone, sometimes accompanied by musical instruments, which should also accompany the words with the long and the short, and with rapid or slow motion, and with low, intermediate, and high [pitch].... We have given a definition of music according to Plato, which Aristotle and other sages corroborate.

107. Giovanni de' Bardi, "Discorso mandato a Giulio Caccini detto romano sopra la musica antica e 'l cantar bene," *The Florentine Camerata*, ed. and trans. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 108.

Perche ben sapeuano que' gran filosofi intendenti della natura, che nella uoce graue è il tardo, et il sonnolente, nella mezzana è la quiete, la maestà, et la magnificienza, et nell'acuta il ferir tosto l'orecchia, et il lamentevole. Hora chi non sa che gl'Hebbri, ei sonnolenti parlano per lo più in tuono graue, e tardo, et che gl'uomini de grand'affare in uoce mezzana, magnifica, et quieta ragionano, et che quelli che da ira, o, da gran duolo soprapesi sono in uoce alta, e concitata fauellano. Al qual proposito dice Aristotele nel fine della Politica, che ne canti e ne' ritmi sono effigie dell'ira, della mansuetudine, della forteza, o della temperanza; e d'ogni altra uirtù morale, et di tutte le cose, che à queste contrarie sono; allegando di poco la ragione disse così.

112. Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” *Lyra Barberina: amphichordos: Accedunt ejusdem opera, pleraque nondum edita, ad veterem musicam illustradam pertinentia ex autographis collegit, et in lucem proferri curavit Antonius Franciscus Gorius ... distributa in tomos II. Absoluta vero studio et opera Io. Baptistae Passeri ... cum praefationibus ejusdem*, Vol. 2, chapter 25 (Florence: Typis Caesareis, 1763; reprinted Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1974), 76.

L’usare dunque le sillabe, come hanno fatto alcuni sotto i tempo di Semicrome, massime molto continuate, non è da lodare; e nelle Crome anco parcamente si deve fare, benchè si rappresenti un personaggio nelle furie: ancorchè forte si potrebbe concedere, quando si rappresentasse alcuno totalmente impallidito e furioso.

114. Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” *Lyra Barberina: amphichordos: Accedunt ejusdem opera, pleraque nondum edita, ad veterem musicam illustradam pertinentia ex autographis collegit, et in lucem proferri curavit Antonius Franciscus Gorius ... distributa in tomos II. Absoluta vero studio et opera Io. Baptistae Passeri ... cum praefationibus ejusdem*, Vol. 2, chapter 26 (Florence: Typis Caesareis, 1763; reprinted Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1974), 77.

La Melopeia ... [è] l'arte di fare belle, e vaghe cantilene, e soprattutto accomodate a' soggetti, che si cantano.

116. Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” *Lyra Barberina: amphichordos: Accedunt ejusdem opera, pleraque nondum edita, ad veterem musicam illustradam pertinentia ex autographis collegit, et in lucem proferri curavit Antonius Franciscus Gorius ... distributa in tomos II. Absoluta vero studio et opera Io. Baptistae Passeri ... cum praefationibus ejusdem*, Vol. 2, chapter 26 (Florence: Typis Caesareis, 1763; reprinted Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1974), 79.

[Le] terze ... [fanno] tutta la diversità delle due sorti di melodia Diastaltica, ovvero concitata, allegra, e virile, e Systaltica, cioè mesta, languida, ed effeminata:

117. Giambattista Doni, “Trattato della musica scenica,” *Lyra Barberina: amphichordos: Accedunt ejusdem opera, pleraque nondum edita, ad veterem musicam illustradam pertinentia ex autographis collegit, et in lucem proferri curavit Antonius Franciscus Gorius ... distributa in tomos II. Absoluta vero studio et opera Io. Baptistae Passeri ... cum praefationibus ejusdem*, Vol. 2, chapter 26 (Florence: Typis Caesareis, 1763; reprinted Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1974), 79.

Basti dunque per ora notare questa massima, che il procedure per gradi, o intervalli piccolo, rende la melodia molle, e soave, esprimendo il costume rimesso, e femminile; ma il modulare a salti, o intervalli remoti, rende il canto virile, e sostenuto, e simile costume dimostra, come accenna Cleonide nella sua Induzione [*sic*].

118. Giambattista Doni, *Compendio del trattato de' generi e de' modi della musica*, chapter 10 (Rome: Andrea Fei, 1635), 54.

La prima, quella, che non induce alcun disordinato affetto, ò perturbatione veemente; ma solo diletta piacevolmente l'animo; inducendo una moderata allegoria [*sic*], e rasserenando con pensieri gravi, e tranquili la mente; la quale dicevano Hesychastica, dal verbo ... Che vuol dire quietare.

119. Giovanni Maria Artusi, *Seconda parte dell'Artusi overo delle imperfettioni della moderna musica: nella quale si tratta de' molti abusi introdotti da i moderni scrittori, & compositori. Nuovamente stampata* (Venice: Vincenti, 1603), 23.

Et la melodia si compone di Oratione, di Rithmo, & d'Harmonia insieme Melodia che si compone cosi dichiarata da Platone de Rep. & quelle qualità, che in essa vi concorrono, come è l'acutezza, la grauità, & equalità delle voci, si considerano nella Harmonia.

122. Gioseffo Zarlino, *Sopplimenti musicali: Nei quali si dichiarano molte cose contenute nei due primi volumi, delle Istitutioni & Dimostrations; per essere state mal' intese da molti; & si risponde insieme alle loro calonnie. Con due tauole, l'una che contiene i capi principali delle materie, & l'altra le cose più notabili, che si trouano nell' opera. Terzo volume. In Venetia, Appresso Francesco de' Franceschi, Sanese, 1588, Book VII, chapter 2* (Venice: Francesco dei Franceschi Senese, 1588; reprinted Ridgewood, NJ: Gregg Press, 1966), 270-71.

Si dè dunque sapere, che le Affetioni ò Costumi sono stati da gli Antichi chiamati *ἠθοί* [*ethoi*]; percioche col mezo loro si ueniua ad indricciare & conoscer le humane Costitutioni ò Qualità; lequali se ben le uolessimo chiamar Passioni dell'Animo, non sarebbe per questo mal detto, dei quali erano (come dissi) Tre i Generi loro, & il Primo era quello, che chiamarono *Συστατικὸν* [*sustaltikon*], over l'Intervallare, nelquale col mezo del Parlare si recitaua & dimostraua in esso alcuna cosa detta ò fatta magnificamente con animo forte & virile; com'erano le cose dette & fatte da gli Heroi.... Il Secondo nominavano *Ἡσυχαστικὴν* [*hessuchastikon*]; cioè, Risretto ò Contratto, & era quello, nelquale narrando alcun fatto presente, ò già accaduto, si dimostrava l'animo ridotto & ritirato nella humiltà, & sottoponendosi effeminatamente ad alcuna passione ò affettione, lo dipingevano poco uirile, & senza neruo alcuno.... Il Terzo, che chiamauano *Ἐνυχαστικὸν* [*hexukastikon*], ò Quietò, era quello, nel quale accomodauano cose quiete & libere, & le pacifiche disposition dell'animo, con la moderanza della mente.

126. Gioseffo Zarlino, *Sopplimenti musicali: Nei quali si dichiarano molte cose contenute nei due primi volumi, delle Istitutioni & Dimostrationsi ; per essere state mal' intese da molti ; & si risponde insieme alle loro calonnie. Con due tauole, l'una che contiene i capi principali delle materie, & l'altra le cose più notabili, che si trouano nell' opera. Terzo volume. In Venetia, Appresso Francesco de' Franceschi, Sanese, 1588, Book VIII, chapter 1 (Venice: Francesco dei Franceschi Senese, 1588; reprinted Ridgewood, NJ: Gregg Press, 1966), 278.*

Onde per ritornare alla Melopeia, dico; ch'essendo ella (come s'è detto) quella forza, che fà la Melodia; saprà il nostro Melopeo, che si trouaua appresso i Greci esser di tre maniere; l'una detta *ὑπατόιδες*; l'altra *μεσσοῖδες*; & la terza *νητόιδες*. La Prima era quella, che si faceua nella parte più graue dell'Istrumento, nellaquale era contenuta la chorda Hypate; la Seconda si essercitaua nelle sue chorde mezane, tra lequali era compresa la chorda Mese; & l'ultima s'adoperaua tra le chorde più acute; percioche tra esse era collocata la chorda Nete. Onde tutta la Melopeia si riduceua sotto 'l Genere di tre Modi; de i quali l'uno era detto Nomico, & si udiua tra le chorde più acute dell'Istrumento; cioè, tra le sudette Netoide, ouero Eccellenti, c'habbiamo nominato; l'altro chiamauano Dithyrambico, ilquale si essercitaua nelle Mesoide ò mezane, & il Terzo era detto Tragico, ch'era trattato nelle chorde più graui & principali, dette Hypatoide. Di questi se ne ritrouano molte specie, lequali, per essemplio, erano composte sotto un Genere, che chiamauano Erotico, cioè; Amatorio; & ad esse accomodauano ottimamente gli Epithalamii nominati nel Cap. 1. del Lib. precedente; ch'erano composti in Verso, & anco gli conueniuano gli Encomii.

139. Cicero, “De oratore,” *Cicero Rhetorica*, Vol. I, Book XXVII, ed. A. S. Wilkins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 77.
- In idem genus oratiois—loquor enim de illa modica ac temperate.
141. Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica libri duo, De institutione musica libri cinque*, Book I, chapter 1 (Lipsiae: Godofredus Friedlein, 1867), 178.
- Proemium: Musicam naturaliter nobis esse coniunctam et mores vel honestare vel evertere.
143. Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica libri duo, De institutione musica libri cinque*, Book I, chapter 1 (Lipsiae: Godofredus Friedlein, 1867), 178.
- Nihil est enim tam proprium humanitatis, quam remitti dulcibus modis, adstringi contrariis.
144. Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica libri duo, De institutione musica libri cinque*, Book I, chapter 1 (Lipsiae: Godofredus Friedlein, 1867), 178.
- Unde Plato etiam maxima cavendum existimat, ne de bene morata musica aliquid permutetur. Negat enim esse ullam tantam morum in re publica labem quam paulatim de pudenti ac modesta musica invertere.... Lasciviores modos inverecundum aliquid, vel per asperiores ferox atque imma-
me mentibus illabatur.
145. Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica libri duo, De institutione musica libri cinque*, Book I, chapter 1 (Lipsiae: Godofredus Friedlein, 1867), 181.
- Idcirco magnam esse costudiam rei publicae Plato arbitratur musicam optime maratam pudenterque coniunctam, ita ut sit modesta ac simplex et mascula nec effeminata nec fera nec varia.
146. Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica libri duo, De institutione musica libri cinque*, Book I, chapter 1 (Lipsiae: Godofredus Friedlein, 1867), 187.
- Modestior modus possit adstringere.

148. Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica libri duo, De institutione musica libri cinque*, Book I, chapter 2 (Lipsiae: Godofredus Friedlein, 1867), 188-89.

Humanum vero musicam quisquis in sese ipsum descendit intellegit. Quid est enim quod illam incorpoream rationis vivacitatem corpori miscet, nisi quaedam coaptatio et veluti gravium leviumque vocum quasi unam consonantiam efficiens temperatio? Quid est aliud quod ipsius inter se partes animae coniungat, quae, ut Aristoteli placet, ex rationabili irrationabilique permiscet, aut partes sibimet rata coaptatione contineat?

Footnotes in Chapter Four

4. Vincenzo Giustiniani, “Discorso sopra la musica de' suoi tempi (1628),” *Le origini del melodramma*, ed. Angelo Solerti (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1903; reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969), 106-07.

L’anno santo del 1575 o poco dopo si cominciò un modo di cantare molto diverso da quello di prima, e così per alcuni anni seguenti, massime nel modo di cantare con una voce sola sopra un istrumento, con l’esempio d’un Gio. Andrea napoletano, e del sig. Giulio Cesare Brancacci e d’Alessandro Merlo romano che cantavano ... nella larghezza dello spazio di 22 voci.

8. G. B. Morsolino, quoted in Bruce Haynes, *A History of Performing Pitch: The Story of A* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 62.

Usasi sempre ò la maggior parte delle volte che gli organisti son sforzati [a] suonare fuori di tuon più basso per accomodare li cantori: et così si fa in San Marco in Venezia.

9. Ludovico Zacconi, “Universal dimostrazione di quanto vadino alto & basso tutti gl’Istrumenti Musicali,” *Prattica di musica utile et necessaria si al compositore per comporre i canti suoi regolatamente, si anco al cantore per assicurarsi in tutte le cose cantabili: divisa in quattro libri. Ne i quali si tratta delle cantilene ordinarie, de tempi de prolazioni, de proportioni, de tuoni, et della convenienza de tutti gli istrumenti musicali. S’insegna a cantar tutte le composizioni antiche, si dichiara tutta la Messa del Palestina titolo Lomè Armè, con altre cose d’importanza & dilettevole. Ultimamente s’insegna il modo di fiorir una parte con vaghi & moderni accenti* (Venice: Bartolomeo Carampello, 1596), 218.

Come le voci humane, possano cantar una cantinela un Tuono piu alto & un Tuono piu basso secondo li torna commodo & che li pare è piace, che così ancora gl'Istrumenti passano sonar una cosa hora in un Tuono & hora nell'altro, per rispetto che tutti universalmente sono alti rispetto alle voci. Et così quando che con gl'Istrumente si vogliono accompagnar le voci il piu delle volte per accomodarle, le si sonano alle seconda, alla terza, alla quarta & c.

15. Claudio Monteverdi, letter (13 June 1627) to Alessandro Striggio, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Claudio Monteverdi: lettere, dediche e prefazioni*, ed. Domenico De' Paoli (Rome: Edizioni De Santis, 1973), 256.

Con honesto trillo, la voce è grata assai ma non fonda troppo, et spicca multo la parola, et la voce sua arriva ad un tenore con gratezza del senso et è sicurissimo nel cantare.

19. Vincenzo Giustiniani, "Discorso sopra la musica de' suoi tempi (1628)," *Le origini del melodramma*, ed. Angelo Solerti (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1903; reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969), 107-08.

Era gran competenza fra quelle dame di Mantova et di Ferrara, che facevano a gara non solo al metallo et alla disposizione delle voci, ma nell'ornamento di esquisite passaggi tirati in opportuna congiuntura e non soverchi ... e di più col moderare e crescere la voce forte o piano, assottigliandola o ingrossandola, che secondo che veniva a' tagli, ora con strascinarla, ora smezzarla, con l'accompagnamento d'un soave interrotto sospiro, ora tirando passaggi lunghi, seguiti bene, spiccati, ora gruppi, ora salti, ora con trilli lunghi, ora con brevi, et or con passaggi soave e cantanti piano, dalli quali talvolta all'improvviso si sentiva echi e rispondere, e principalmente con azione del viso e dei sguardi e de' gesti che accompagnavano appropriatamente la musica e li concetti, e sopra tutto senza moto della persona e della bocca e delle mani sconcioso, che non fusse indirizzato al fine per il quale si cantava e con far spiccare bene le parole in guisa tale che si sentisse anche l'ultima sillaba di ciascuna parola, la quale dalli passaggi et altri ornamenti non fusse interrotta o soppressa.

28. André Maugurs, *Response faite à un curieux* (Rome, 1639), 16.

Il y a un grand nombre de castrati pour le Dessus et pour la Haute-contre, de fort belles Tailles naturelles, mais fort peu de Basses creuse.

31. Claudio Monteverdi, letter (9 June 1610) to Vincenzo Gonzaga, in Claudio Monteverdi, *Claudio Monteverdi: lettere, dediche e prefazioni*, ed. Domenico De' Paoli (Rome: Edizioni De Santis, 1973), 48.

Da M. Pandolfo m'è stato commesso da parte de l'A. S. S. Ch'io senta un certo contralto venuto da Modena desideroso egli di servire all'A. S. S. Così di longo l'ho condotto in santo pietro et l'ho fatto cantare un motteto nell'organo et ho udito una bella voce gagliarda et longa, et cantando in sena giungeva benissimo senza discomodo in tutti i lochi cosa che non poteva così bene il Brandini, ha trillo assai bono, et honesta gorgia, et canta assai sicuro la sua parte nei motteti.... Tavolta se la manda nel *naso* et ancora se la lassia sdrusillare tra denti che non fa intelligibile quella parola e non percotte bene la gorgia come bisognerebbe ne la rindolcisse a cert'altri lochi, ma tutte queste cose io sono di certa opinione che subito avertito il tutto si leverebbe.

37. Giovanni Camillo Maffei, *Delle Lettere del Signor Gio. Camillo Maffei da Solofra, libri due. Dove tra gli altri bellissimi pensieri di Filosofia, e di Medicina, v'è un Discorso della Voce e del Modo d'apparare di cantare di Garganta, senza maestro, non più veduto, nè stampato* (Napoli: Raimondo Amato, 1562), 26-27.

E se volesse V. S. sapere quale di queste voci è più perfetta e a cavaliere più condecete, gli direi la grave, dicendomi Aristotele che la perfettione della voce e di qualsivoglia altra cosa consiste nel superare ed eccedere. Onde poi che la voce grave eccede e supera e tutte l'altre abbraccia, si deve più perfetta, più nobile e più generosa riputare.

38. Giulio Caccini, "Le nuove musiche: Ai lettori," *Le origini del melodramma*, ed. Angelo Solerti (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1903; reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969), 69; facsimile in Giulio Caccini, "Ai lettori," *Le nuove musiche* (Florence: Appresso i Marescotti, 1602), 11.

Dalle voci finte non può nascere nobilità di buon canto: che nascerà da una voce naturale.

44. Giambattista Doni, "Trattato della musica scenica," *Lyra Barberina: Amphichordos: Accedunt ejusdem opera, pleraque nondum edita, ad veterem musicam illustradam pertinentia ex autographis collegit, et in lucem proferri curavit Antonius Franciscus Gorius ... distributa in tomos II. Absoluta vero studio et opera Io. Baptistae Passeri ... cum praefationibus ejusdem*, Vol. 2 (Florence: Typis Caesareis, 1763; reprinted Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1974), 86.

Questa voce [tenore] più dell'altre conviene ad un corpo ben temperato, e perfettamente organizzato.

- 52, 57. Giambattista Doni, "Trattato della musica scenica," *Lyra Barberina: Amphichordos: Accedunt ejusdem opera, pleraque nondum edita, ad veterem musicam illustradam pertinentia ex autographis collegit, et in lucem proferri curavit Antonius Franciscus Gorius ... distributa in tomos II. Absoluta vero studio et opera Io. Baptistae Passeri ... cum praefationibus ejusdem*, Vol. 2 (Florence: Typis Caesareis, 1763; reprinted Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1974), 84-87. [Text by order, complete chapter]:

CAPITOLO XXIX

Dell' assegnare a ciascuno Personaggio convenevole Voce, o Tuono.

Per Tuono qui non si ha da intendere quello, che si piglia indifferentemente per Modo, detto in 'τροπός' in Greco, e 'ἁρμονία;' ma per una parte del sistema, più grave, o acuto: intorno al che non sa se non bene dare alcuni ricordi; sebbene poco necessari a' giudiziosi Compositori. Dove intervengono due, o più Attori insieme, tutti uomini fatti, e di egual condizione, ponghiamo caso tre Pastori, non converrà l'assegnare a tutti l'istesso Tuono, o tensione di voce ma tornerà meglio, siccome si sente tra gli uomini, che parlano con gran varietà, assegnare parimente a questo un sistema più acuto, e all' altro un più grave: per esempio, al primo tra E, ed e, al secondo tra F, ed f, al terzo tra G, e g: avvertendo però, che le cadenze per natura contrarie, come quella di E, la , mi, ed F, fa, ut, non si , seguono, se è possibile, immediatamente. Questo si vede giudiziosamente osservato dal Peri, il quale distingue la voce di Arcetro più acuta, da quella di Tirsi più grave, assegnando al primo la chiave di C, sol, fa, ut nella linea di mezzo, e al secondo nella quarta. Onde dove parlassero tre Pastori giovani, si potrebbe ad uno assegnare ad affegnare la voce di un Baritono, al secondo di un Tenore, e al terzo di un Contralto; allontanando i sistemi almeno per terze: e parimente se fossero due Ninfe, all' una assegnare il Soprano più acuto, altr'altra il più grave. Si può dubitare quello, che convenga fare dove entrano Deità, Spiriti Celesti, o Infernali, Virtù, Vizj &c. Ne accennerò dunque qualche cosa, prima parlando delle cose vere, poi

delle finte, e favolose. Introducendosi Gesù nostro Signore (prima che partisse, o poi che resuscitò glorioso; perché in ciò non farei differenza) pare che convenga darli l' istessa voce, cioè un bel Tenore (il quale vorrebbe essere soave, e chiaro, come quello del Sig. Francesco Bianchi) di Tuono ordinario: poiché questa voce più dell' altre conviene ad un corpo ben temperato, e perfettamente organizzato. A Iddio padre, che si rappresenta sempre in forma di Vecchio, meglio al parer mio conviene un Baritono, che ogni altra voce. Agli Angeli, che sempre si figurano in forma di Giovanetti, secondo età che mostreranno, se li darà un Soprano più, o meno acuto, o pure un Contralto; poichè gli Spiriti Celesti, e anco Infernali (che per se stessi non hanno voce alcuna) quando si vestono di corpo aereo, o altrimenti, prendendo effigie umana, ricevono parimente le medesime qualità, ed operazioni. Il Principe de' Demonj, perchè si vuol figurare in forma grande, grossa, e barbata, ottimamente se gli vuole assegnare un Basso profondo, che tanto meglio gli starà, quando farà più grave del Corista; cantando anco sopra qualche Instrumento di Tuono inferiore, e di suono stravagante. Agli altri Demoni, secondo la forma, sesso, o età che rappresentano, se gli possono assegnare differenti Tuoni; ma non mai soprani, o pure qualche falsetto solo. Si deve avvertire anco, che dove sarà copia di voci, le più chiare, belle, e nette si assegnino alli Spiriti buoni, o Deità Celesti, e le fosche, aspre, fesse, e insoavi alli Spiriti maligni, e Deità [sic] Infernali. A Saturno, Giove, Nettunno, Vulcano, Giano, Ercole, e simili dei favolosi, si devono attribuire le voci gravi, cioè Bassi, o Baritoni, ne' Tuoni eziandio inferiori al Corista, quando si potrà; come facevano gli Antichi, che agli Eroi sollevano assegnare il Tuono Ipodorio, o Ipofrigio: il primo de' quali era inferiore del Corista una quarta, e il secondo un Semiditono. A Marte parimente si potrà dare un Basso, o pure un Tenore gagliardo, e pieno. A Mercurio, Apolline, Bacco, e simili, che in età giovenile si figurano, qualche Tenore, o Contralto; se non volessimo più presto a Mercurio assegnare un Falsetto, per meglio esprimere un costume vario, e fraudolente; e così rappresentandosi un Proteo, da' Latini detto 'Vertunno' fari grande artificio farli usare diverse voci, quando fi potrà. Nelle Dee gentili parimente si può fare qualche differenza, come farebbe, a quelle, che si figurano più attempate, o più virili il Tuono più grave, come a Cibele detta Maestra degl'Iddei; ed a Bellona Dea della Guerra il Contralto: a Giunone, Cerere, Minerva e Venere il Soprano più grave: a Diana, e Proserpina più acuto. E perché questi vani Iddei gentileschi si credevano nati chi in un Paese, chi in un altro, dove anco erano più ostinatamente reveriti, secondo che quelle nazioni avevano questo, o quel Tuono, facebbe convenevole assegnarli a quest'istessi Dei: come per esempio il Tuono Dorio, o Ipodorio a Giove di nascita Cretense, Provincia della Nazione Dorica; ma a Bacco il Frigio, benchè nato in Tebe, Città della Scozia de' medesimi Doriesi, almeno ne' tempi più bassi; perché da' Frigj massimamente era venerato, e da' Greci in quel Tuono si cantavano le Musiche de' Sagrifizj di Bacco. A Minerva il Tuono Iastio, o Ionico,

per essere stati di quella schiatta gli Ateniesi, che appresso di loro la tenevano nata. Ma molto più li dovrebbe avere riguardo alla qualità, e propri ufizi di ciascuno; perciocchè a Marte Dio della Guerra starebbe bene i' Ipofrigio; a Venere il Lidio; a Saturno l'Ipodorio; a Nettunno anco Ipofrigio, e rispettivamente agli altri, che si lasciano ad arbitrio dell' crudito Poeta, e giudizioso Musico; massime di quelli, a' quali non fi assegnano proprj natali, come la Fortuna, Nemese &c. Si può dubitare quello, che convenga fare nell' Ombre, o Anime de' passati, che secondo le favole sogliono essere da' Poeti introdotte in Scena. Di qualunque luogo, che si fingano venire, o sia da' Campi Elisi, o dall' Inferno, se si rappresenteranno nella loro solita forma umana, quell' istessa voce se gli darà, come se fossero vivi; ma se s'introdurranno solo i loro simulacri coperti con un velo, o altrimenti, non avrei per inconveniente, che si facessero parlare con una voce più sottile della Ilro naturale, e che con qualche artificio si alterasse in guisa, che non paresse voce di uomo vivente: con questa differenza, che l'Anime beate usassero (per esempio) il Contralto, e le Danate un Tenore forzato, o simile altra voce; ancorchè l'Ombra fosse di qualche Personaggio antico, di natura Eroica, e grande, come di Polydoro nell'Ecuba di Euripide, o di Tantalo nel Tieste di Seneca. Alle Furie infernali alcuni assegnano il Soprano naturale; ma non molto a proposito a giudizio mio; perché più presto gli converrebbe un Falsetto, o anco un Contralto. Sarebbe anco convenevole, che i Tritoni, Nereide, e simili Deità, o Mostri marini cantassero con certe voci strane, e insolite: e così le Arpie, e simili con voce aridula: e proporzionatamente le altre figure chimeriche, e fantastiche degli Antichi. Doverebbsi anco per certi Personaggi usare qualche particolar foggia di melodia; verbigrazia, far cantare le Sirene con spessi piegamenti di voce, o strascini, trilli, tremoli, passaggetti, e altri ornamenti più affettati; massimamente nel genere Diatonico inspettato dale corde Cromatiche.

54. Alexandre Choron, *Dictionnaire historique des musiciens, artistes et amateurs, morts ou vivans: qui se sont illustres en une partie quelconque de la musique et des arts qui y sont relatifs: precede d'un Sommaire de l'histoire de la musique*, ed. Francois Joseph Marie Fayolle (1810; reprinted Washington: Brookhaven Press, 1976), xxxiv.

Le sentiment des nouveaux modes fit reconnaître que cette harmonie était fausse: qu'elle produisait une infinité de mauvaises relations; on étendit la sixte au troisième, et souvent à plusieurs autres degrés de l'échelle, et c'est sur ce principe qu'écrivit Palestrina, et toute son école.

Mais, le pas le plus important n'était pas fait encore. Un maître de l'école de Lombardie (Cl. Monteverde), qui florissait vers 1590, créa l'harmonie de la dominante; le premier, il osa pratiquer la septième de dominante, et

même la neuvième à découvert et sans preparation.; le premier, il.osa em-ploxer comme consonnane la quinte rmineure, reputée jusqu'alors comme dissonnance: et l'harmonie tonale fut connue.

Footnotes in Chapter Five

7. Giacomo Badoaro, *L'Ulisse errante: opera musicale / dell'Assicurato academico incognito; al signor Michel'angelo Torcigliani*. (Venice: Giovanni Pietro Pinelli, 1644), 16-17.

Fu il ritorno d' Ulisse in patria decorato dalla *musica del signor Claudio Monteverde*, soggetto *di tutta fama*, e perpetuità di nome.

17. Hendrik Schulze, *Odysseus in Venedig: Sujetwahl und Rollenkonzeption in der venezianischen Oper des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004), 103-04.

Hinsichtlich der Hexachorde, aus denen die jeweiligen Akkorde stammen, die den verschiedenen Teilen zugrunde liegen, zeigt sich wieder ein auffälliger Unterschied zwischen der Allegorie der Humana fragilità und den anderen Allegorien: Sie verwendet die Akkorde des *Hexachordum molle* (B-F-C-g / G-d / D-a / A) mit einer phrygischen Kadenz nach A, um erst relativ spät auch Akkorde auf E / e zu bringen und so den Akkordraum auf das *Hexachordum naturale* zu erweitern. Die anderen Allegorien hingegen verwenden die Akkorde des *Hexachordum naturale*, teilweise erweitert zum *Hexachordum durum* (C-G-D-a / A-e / E-h), welches dann ausschließlich im Terzett erscheint, in dem die drei Allegorien endgültig ihre Herrschaft über die Humana fragilita erklären. Hier scheint die Absicht klar zu sein, zwei Grundhaltungen voneinander zu trennen, die erleidende (*molle*) und die bewirkende (*durum*). Dieser Parallelismus ist im Laufe der Oper immer wieder zu beobachten.”]

75. Luigia Achillea Stella, *Il poema d'Ulisse* (Firenze: Nuova Italia, 1955), 291.

Episodio del torbido e confuse dopoguerra, la tenzone d'Ulisse piombato di sorpresa sugli usurpatori è ancora l'ultimo atto, in certo senso l'epilogo, della 'luttosa guerra.'

Footnotes to Chapter Six

47. Annaeus Seneca, “De clementia,” *Opus Senecae*. (55/56, reprinted Venice: Joannes and Gregorius de Gregoriis de Forlivio, 1492), I.11.4.

Quid enim est, cur reges consenuerint liberisque ac nepotibus tradiderint regna, tyrannorum execrabilis ac brevis potestas sit?

Footnotes for Chapter Seven

1. Claudio Monteverdi, *Madrigals: Book VIII—Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*, ed. Gian Francesco Malipiero; reprinted, ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1967; reprinted New York: Dover Publications, 1991), xv-xvi.

Perciò mi posi con non poco mio studio e fatica per ritrovarlo.

APPENDIX B

FACSIMILES

Fig. 1. Facsimile of Preface to Book VIII of Madrigals¹

¹ Facsimile as in the first edition of Book VIII of Madrigals. See Claudio Monteverdi, "A chi legge," *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi con alcuni opuscoli in genere rappresentativo che saranno per brevi episodi fra i canti senza gesto. Libro ottavo* (Venice: Alessandro Vincenti, 1638) [no page indicated].

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