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Chapter Six

Galileo and Opera: Music, Science, Religion, and Politics in the Seventeenth Century

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Like musical theatre in every age, themes of mythology, cosmology and theology permeate Florentine theatre. The *ingegni* of Filippo Brunelleschi, Bernardo Buontalenti and others for *sacre rappresentazioni* and *intermedi* sought to embody the great ideas of their time through theatrical architecture, machinery, costumes, music, and other arts. In metaphysical terms, theatre was an ideal place to convey the idea of totality. It is difficult to imagine a better artform to visualize Dante's universe than the *intermedi* of the sixteenth century[1]. It is also not surprising that the operas of the next century were full of infernal, heavenly and earthly scenes, which helped shaping a comprehensive *theatrum mundi*[2].

Although it is often taken for granted that opera is an artform in which music-theatrical content is central to any analysis, the metaphor of the theatre of the world also leads us to understand opera as a stage for the truths of philosophy, science, theology, cosmology, and politics, something that the myth of art tends to hide. The role of this metaphor is especially illuminating in the seventeenth century when the lines between the different arts, and those

1. Mamone 1981, Mamone 2003, Saslow 1996, and Fenlon 2002.
2. Martín Sáez 2020a.

Ill. 6.1: Ottavio Leoni, *Galileo Galilei* (engraving, 14 × 11 cm; 1624). Copy NL-Ar, RP-P-1950-421.

between art, science, and religion, became blurred. In Florence, there are many examples of this cross-fertilisation of the arts, especially when the Medici achieved their greatest power after Tuscany was elevated to a Grand Duchy. The Uffizi building, which was simultaneously a space for government offices, an art museum, a spectacular theatre (where several operas were performed), and a scientific cabinet, might serve as an example of this synthesis.

Seen in this light, it would be strange if opera and the new cosmology of the Early Modern Age, which were developed in the same city and even in the same court, did not end up coinciding. At least eleven operas performed in Florence and Rome from 1613 to 1638 can be directly or indirectly connected to the new discoveries and theories of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642; Ill. 6.1). This is particularly interesting in view of the interaction between Florence and Rome, which ultimately represented the most influential institutions of their time, namely the State and the Church. In fact, these 'Galilean operas' coincided with key episodes in Galileo's life such as the theological debates of 1613-1615, the condemnation of Copernicanism in 1616, the disputes with the Jesuits about the comets of 1618 which culminated in Galileo's *Il*

saggiatore (The Assayer; 1623), his conviction by the Inquisition in 1633, and the publication of his *Discorsi* in 1638. These episodes should be placed against the background of the tension between Protestants and Catholics over their interpretation of the Bible and, from 1618 onward, the Thirty Years' War. Accordingly, historic research can serve to clarify the history of opera, and vice-versa: opera can help to illuminate some aspects of what has come to be called the 'Galileo affair'.

Table 6.1: Popes in Galileo's Lifetime

Pontificate	Pope	Personal name
1592-1695	Clement (Clemens) VIII	Ippolito Aldobrandini (1536-1605)
1605	Leo (Leo) XI	Alessandro Ottaviano de' Medici (1535-1605)
1605-1621	Paul (Paulus) V	Camillo Borghese (1550-1621)
1621-1623	Gregory (Gregorius) XV	Alessandro Ludovisi (1554-1623)
1623-1644	Urban (Urbanus) VIII	Maffeo Barberini (1588-1644)
1644-1655	Innocent (Innocens) X	Innocenzo Pamfilj (1574-1655)
1655-1667	Alexander (Alexander) VII	Fabio Chigi (1599-1667)

Galilean and Anti-Galilean Operas

References to Galileo and his controversies in opera prove to be particularly relevant considering that there seems to be no similar case in other artforms. No other art seems to have been as close to science as opera in this period. Yet, of the eleven Galilean or anti-Galilean operas discussed in this chapter, only three have been connected to Galileo to date. Frederick Hammond (1992) has interpreted *Sant'Alessio* (1634) as a smokescreen to mitigate the criticism caused by the condemnation of 1633[3]; Mario Biagioli (1993) has studied *Amor pudico* (1614) in his work about the astronomer as a courtier[4]; and Paolo Fabbri (2003) has suggested a connection between Endymion and Galileo in *Diana schernita* (1629)[5]. Other scholars studied the relationship between opera and science in an indirect way: some investigated Galileo's musical environments, his generic references to music or the relationship with his father, the lutenist, composer and music theorist Vincenzo Galilei[6]. Fred Kersten (1997) has compared the

3. Hammond 1992.
4. Biagioli 1993.
5. Fabbri 2003.
6. Coelho 1992, Fabbri 2008, and Cypess 2016.

birth of opera with Galileo's new science from a phenomenological perspective, but he did not refer to any of these operas[7]. The subject does not seem to have interested art historians either, possibly due to the lack of multidisciplinarity in their approaches[8]. Given this situation, it may be useful to offer an overview of the Galilean operas first. I propose that these can be organized into six groups.

Table 6.2

Overview of the Galilean and anti-Galilean operas discussed in this chapter. In the column 'Authors', names in roman font are librettists, names in italic font composers. In the column 'Libretto', place-plus-year markings refer to printed librettos; the figures between paratheses, to Sartori 1990-1992. In the column 'Music', place-plus-year markings refer to printed editions. In the columns 'Librettos' and 'Music', RISM sigla refer to manuscript librettos and scores.

Year(s)	Place	Title	Authors	Libretto	Music
Group (1)					
1613	Florence	Barriera	Jacomo Cicognini	Florence, 1613	
1614	Rome	*Amor pudico*	Jacomo Cicognini *Cesare Marotta* *Pellegrino Mutij* *Hipp. Macchiavelli*	Viterbo, 1614 (S 1455, 1456)	
Group (2)					
1622	Rome	*Apotheosis sive consecratio SS. Ignatii et Francisci Xaverii*	Orazio Grassi *Gio. Gir. Kapsberger*		A-Wn, MS Mus. 16013; D-Mbs, MS Coll. mus. Max. 98
Group (3)					
1623	Florence	*Il Medoro*	Andrea Salvadori *Jacopo Peri*	Florence, 1623 (S 15377)	
1624	Florence	*La regina Sant'Orsola*	Andrea Salvadori *Marco da Gagliano*	Florence, 1624 (S 19704, 19705)	
1625	Florence	*La liberazione di Ruggiero*	Ferd. Saracinelli *Francesca Caccini*	Florence, 1625 (S 14223)	
1628	Florence	*La Flora*	Andrea Salvadori *Marco da Gagliano*	Florence, 1628 (S 10734, 10735)	
Group (4)					
1629	Rome	*Diana schernita*	Francesco Parisani *Giacinto Cornacchioli*	None	Rome, 1629

7. Kersten 1997.
8. See, for example, Reeves 1996.

Group (5)					
1632-1634	Rome	*Sant'Alessio*	Giulio Rospigliosi *Stefano Landi*	I-Rvat, various	Rome, 1634
1633-1637	Rome	*Erminia sul Giordano*	Giulio Rospigliosi *Michelangelo Rossi*	I-Rvat, various	Rome, 1637
1637	Florence	*Le nozze degli dei*	Carlo Coppola *five composers*	Florence, 1637 (S 16712)	
Group (6)					
1638-1639	Rome	*San Bonifatio*	Giulio Rospigliosi *Virgilio Mazzocchi*	I-Rvat, Lat. 10192	I-Rvat, Ottob. 3394

(1) The earliest staged work is a Florentine *barriera* (a danced combat) of 1613 designed by Jacopo Cicognini. The relation to Galileo is clear since the moons of Jupiter, whose discovery he reported in 1610, appear on the stage as companions of Jupiter. Furthermore, the libretto refers to him explicitly by name. A similar element is found in Cicognini's opera *Amor pudico* (1614), performed in Rome in 1614. Both pieces fell in the period between the publication of Galileo's *Sidereus nuncius* (Venice, 1610) and the condemnation of Copernicanism in 1616.

(2) The creation of a Roman melodrama coincided with Galileo's dispute with the Jesuit Orazio Grassi over the nature of comets from 1618 to 1623. Grassi wrote a libretto to demonstrate the power of the Jesuit order in the *theatrum mundi* entitled *Apotheosis sive consecratio SS. Ignatii et Francisci Xaverii*, on the occasion of the canonization of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and Saint Francis Xavier in 1622. It was set to music by Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger.

(3) In 1623, when Maffeo Barberini was elected as Pope Urban viii and Galileo's *Saggiatore* was published, Galileo strengthened his relations with Rome. From 1623, the Florentine bookseller and printer Pietro Cecconcelli published several opera librettos with a printer's mark on the title page showing Jupiter and its four moons. As a deliberate reference to Galileo, Cecconcelli called his shop «alle stelle Medicee» (at the Medicean Stars) in the imprint of his editions. The first libretto to appear under Cecconcelli's imprint was Andrea Salvadori's *Medoro* (1623). Librettos of three more operas have the printer's mark with the Medicean stars: *La regina Sant'Orsola* by Andrea Salvadori (text) and Marco da Gagliano (music; 1624); *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* by Ferdinando Saracinelli (text) and Francesca Caccini (music; 1625); and *La Flora* by Andrea Salvadori (text) and Marco da Gagliano (music; 1628).

(4) In 1629 *Diana schernita* by Giacomo Francesco Parisani (text) and Giacinto Cornacchioli (music) was performed in Rome. The mythical love between Endymion and the

Moon, who gave her lover a telescope so that he could observe her every night, refers to Galileo and his observations of the Moon.

(5) The condemnation of Galileo in 1633 was a direct consequence of the publication of his *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo, Tolemaico e Copernicano* the year before. According to Frederick Hammond (1992), the condemnation left its traces in two operas: *Sant'Alessio* (1634 version) by Cardinal Giulio Rospigliosi (future Pope Clement IX; text) and Stefano Landi (music), and *Erminia sul Giordano* (1637 version) by Rospigliosi (text) and Michelangelo Rossi (music)[9]. Here I offer further support for Hammond's thesis.

(6) The last 'anti-Galilean opera', *San Bonifatio*, by Rospigliosi (text) and Virgilio Mazzocchi (music), was premiered in 1638, the year when Galileo published his *Discorsi e dimostrazioni matematiche intorno a due nuove scienze*. The libretto contains a new critique of the curiosity of scientists predicated on the theological view of *curiositas* as a vice. Significantly, the opera does not seem to condemn Galileo as a heretic, but rather to rebuke him for forcing the Church to condemn him at a difficult moment in its existence.

It is useful to recall that opera in this period was used as a tool of international propaganda, both *in situ* and *ex situ*. The performance itself was a political event: courts staged operas as part of religious festivals and diplomatic celebrations such as dynastic weddings or visits of princes and ambassadors. The audience of opera was an international one. Virtually all libretti, scores, engravings, and descriptions were conceived in geopolitical terms, and were destined for the entertainment or honouring of specific religious and political personalities; therefore, opera was a meditated genre where all kinds of political, theological and academic messages were implicitly or explicitly included in various subtle ways. So far as the Galileo case was concerned, it is interesting to note that the vast majority of operas from the first half of the seventeenth century were staged in Catholic countries, often produced by popes or cardinals. Galileo's 'appearance' in these operas cannot therefore be separated from contemporary geopolitical concerns of Catholicism.

The Starry Messenger Takes the Stage

The *Sidereus nuncius* (The Starry Messenger; Venice, 1610; see Chapter 10, Ill. 10.2a) earned Galileo a position at the court of his pupil Grand Duke Cosimo II de' Medici. The first edition had an obvious propagandistic character, whereby art and science were deployed for political goals. Its magnificent drawings were designed to astonish the reader. In the *Siderius*

9. Hammond 1992.

nuncius, Galileo described the telescope, the mountains of the Moon (some of them, as rightly conjectured, higher than the terrestrial ones; see Chapter 10, Ill. 10.2b), and new stars. In addition, he provided an explanation of the nebulae and the Milky Way. In all, Galileo drew a more expansive universe than hitherto understood. The Grand Duke disseminated the *Sidereus nuncius* with the intention that all of Europe could learn about the achievements of his new protégé.

The discovery of the moons of Jupiter was followed by many other discoveries in the successive months. In the summer of 1610, Galileo informed Belisario Vinta and Giuliano de' Medici of an anomaly he had observed for Saturn, which he could not explain[10]. (Some decades later Christiaan Huygens discovered that the anomaly was caused by rings around the planet.) Galileo's discovery at the end of 1610 of the phases of Venus was even more important. The fact that the phases could not be observed with the naked eye was commonly used as an *a priori* argument against Copernicanism[11]. Galileo had reported his discovery to Giuliano de' Medici using an anagram, although it was necessary to explain the anagram's solution in a subsequent letter to Giuliano de' Medici (and Johannes Kepler — they both resided in Prague) dated 1 January 1611[12]. Galileo not only maintained that the planets had, like the Earth, no light of their own, but also that Venus necessarily moved around the Sun, as did Mercury and other planets. Soon afterwards, Galileo also published the results of his research on sunspots in his *Istoria e dimostrazione intorno alle macchie solari* (History and Demonstration of the Sunspots; Rome, 1613), which features engraved illustrations of his observations (Ill. 6.3a). In a few years, Galileo had contributed many new and convincing arguments in favour of Copernicus's cosmology.

In the same period, Galileo began to defend himself against religious attacks, as is evident in the famous letter to Benedetto Castelli of 21 December 1613[13]. On 20 December 1614, the Dominican Tommaso Caccini spoke against Galileo in a sermon in Santa Maria Novella in Florence. His attack was in keeping with a long tradition, dating back at least to the criticisms against Copernicus by the Dominican Giovanni Maria Tolosani and by Martin Luther in the previous century. In 1612 and 1613, Galileo had already been severely criticized by Martin Horky, Ludovico delle Colombe and his brother the Dominican Raffaello delle Colombe, Francesco Sizzi, Giulio Cesare Lagalla, another Dominican, Niccolò Lorini, and Ulisse Albergotti. There were also Christina of Lorraine's inquiries of 1613 that led to Galileo's letters to Castelli, Piero Dini and Christina herself. The last of these letters followed Bellarmino's own critical letter to Paolo Antonio Foscarini[14], regarding the publication of the latter's *Lettera sopra l'opinione de'*

10. Galileo to Belisario Vinta, 30 July 1610 (Galilei 1900, pp. 409-410); Galileo to Giuliano de' Medici, 13 November 1610 (*ibidem*, p. 474).

11. Galileo to Giuliano de' Medici, 11 December 1610 (*ibidem*, p. 483).

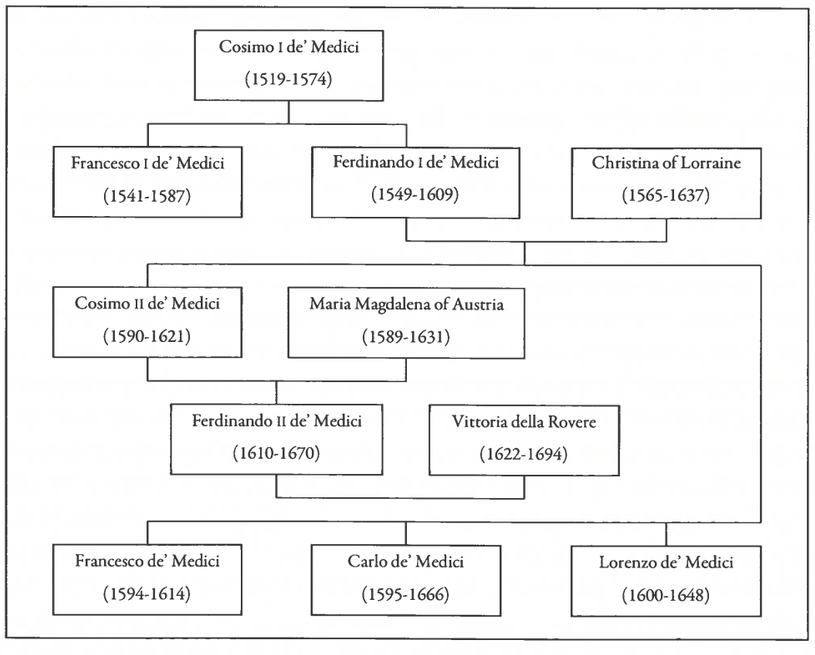
12. Galileo to Giuliano de' Medici, 1 January 1611 (Galilei 1901, pp. 11-12).

13. Galileo to Benedetto Castelli, 21 December 1613 (Galilei 1895, pp. 281-288; Galilei 1901, p. 610).

14. Galileo to Piero Dini, 3 March 1615 (Galilei 1902, pp. 183-185); Roberto Bellarmino to Antonio Paolo Foscarino, 12 April 1615 (*ibidem*, pp. 170-171); Galileo to Christina of Lorraine, 1615 (Galilei 1895, pp. 309-

Pittagorici, e del Copernico della mobilità della terra e stabilità del sole (Letter about the Opinion of the Pythagorians and Copernicus about the Mobility of the Earth and the Stability of the Sun; Naples, 1615), a defence of Galileo's theories[15]. All argued that heliocentrism contradicted the Bible, forcing Galileo to reinterpret some biblical passages to defend the Copernican theory. One of them was Joshua 10:12-13, where it was said that God stopped the moving of the Sun to lengthen the day. It was obvious to everyone that God stopped the revolution of the Sun, but Galileo argued that precisely because the Sun was in the center of the universe, stopping its rotation (not its revolution) was the better way to stop the entire universe without changing all the natural laws[16]. Another argument against Galileo, put forward by Francesco Ingoli in 1616, was that the Hell, the farthest place from Heaven, was in the center of the Earth.

Table 6.3: Partial Family Tree of the House of the Medici



348; modern edition Galilei 2000). See Finocchiaro 1989, Finocchiaro 2010, and Finocchiaro 2019, Feldhay 1995, Guerrini 2009 and Guerrini 2010, Speller 2008, and Donati 2014.

15. In the form of a letter to Sebastiano Fantone, General of the Carmelite Order, dated 6 January 1615.

16. Galilei 1895, p. 286.

On 17 February 1613, occasioned by the visit of Federico Ubaldo della Rovere, Prince of Urbino, to the Medicean court in Florence, a *barriera* (a theatrical entertainment derived from what originally was a danced combat) was created, conceived and set up by Giovanni Villifranchi (1570-1614), in the theatre of the Sala degli Uffizi[17]. Jacopo Cicognini, Alessandro Adimari, Ottavio Rinuccini and Andrea Salvadori collaborated on it; each composed a stage action in addition to the five already written by Villifranchi. Later in 1613 a description of the event by Villifranchi was published in Florence. Political messages are evident from the very start. The stage action contributed by Cicognini tells the story of Cupid, who, tired of the Olympic gods, chose to make his empire in Tuscany. This caused a war between Cupid and other mythological characters, until Jupiter descended from heaven with four companions to bring peace. These four companions were the four moons discovered by Galileo; they represented the power of the Medici. In the *Descrizzione della barriera*, Jupiter's descent is described as follows:

> Jupiter appeared sitting on a very high cloud, all luminous, and Deceptive Love sat next to him. And further down in the clouds appeared the four wandering stars around Jupiter, discovered by Mr. Galileo Galilei od Florence, Mathematician to His Highness, a very rare genius, and unique in our times by the work of the marvelous Telescope. And just as the ancients translated the deserving Heroes to Heaven for their actions, and assigned a Star to them, so, having discovered these Stars, he called them Medicean, assigning the first to His Highness, the second to Lord Prince Don Francesco, the third to Lord Prince Don Carlo, and the fourth to Lord Prince Don Lorenzo[18].

Cicognini transformed his stage action in the *barriera* into a *festino*, that is an opera entitled *Amor pudico* (Chaste Love) and performed in Rome during Carnival of 1614 in the Palazzo della Cancelleria on the occasion of the wedding of Prince Michele Peretti, brother of Cardinal Alessandro Montalto, and Anna Maria Cesi[19]. Music was provided by Cesare Marotta

17. See Giovanni Villifranchi, *Descrizzione della barriera, e della mascherata, fatte in Firenze a' XVII & XIX di Febbraio MDCXII* (Florence, 1613). The year MDCXII (1612) in the title of the publication should be read as Old Style, which is, for February, New Style 1613.

18. *Ibidem*, pp. 32-33: «Comparse Gioue sopra una altissima Nube, tutta luminosa, & appresso de lui sedeua l'Inganno amoroso. E più à basso tra le nuuole appariuano le quattro Stelle erranti intorno à Giove, ritrouate dal Signor Galileo Galilei Fiorentino, Mathematico di Sua Altezza, ingegno rarissimo, e singolare a' tempi nostri per opera del maraviglioso Occhiale; E si come gl'antichi traslatauano in Cielo gl'Eroi meritevoli per l'azioni loro, & à quelli assegnauano una Stella, cosi egli havendo ritrouato queste Stelle, l'ha nominate Medicee, assegnando la prima à S. A., la seconda al Signor Principe Don Francesco, la terza al Signor Principe Don Carlo, e la quarta al Signor Principe Don Lorenzo».

19. Giacomo Cicognini, *Amor pudico: Festino e balli danzati in Roma nelle nozze* [...] *Michele Peretti* [...] *e Anna Maria Cesis* (Viterbo, 1614; two editions: Sartori 1990a, nos. 1455-1456, p. 152). See also Franchi 1994, p. 218, and Hill 1997, pp. 279-297.

(*Prima-Seconda hora* [First-Second Hour]), Pellegrino Mutij (*Terza hora* [Third Hour]), Hippolito Macchiavelli (*Quarta-Quinta hora* [Fourth-Fifth Hour]) and Bernardo Nanino (*Cori* [Choruses])[20]. From the libretto (Ill. 6.2A) we know that the new circumstances required some changes in the text. For example, the city where Cupid decided to make his empire was now Rome, instead of Florence, and instead of finishing the action with the appearance of Jupiter and the Medicean Stars, it finished later by an extension of the plot. The scenes of the opera include virtually the entire universe, from Heaven to Hell, from the Elysian Fields to the Sea, and from ancient to new Rome (a reference to the Rome of Sixtus V, from the Peretti family: Felice Peretti da Montalto, pope from 1585 to 1590).

Yet, all this did not seem to pose a problem for the Church. The libretto was dedicated to Cardinal Scipione Borghese, cousin of Pope Paul V (Camillo Borghese). In a long letter by Romolo Paradiso to Giovanni Battista Strozzi, which was published as an appendix to the libretto of *Amor pudico* (Ill. 6.2B), Paradiso underlined that the ceremony was attended by «all the nobles of Rome» (*tutta la nobiltà Romana*), and that they did not have any qualms about praising Galileo. This is how the appearance of the Medicean stars was described:

> Amid so much light sat Jupiter, enthroned well corresponding to his greatness [...]. Around him were four young boys, like custodians, with silver armor, & gilded helmets; from which among many blue plumes a star rose in each one as a crest. I was told, that these four represented the stars that have the name of the Serene House of these Highnesses. It seems to me that in this Mr. Cicognini has not only shown his devotion to his Prince; but also the affection that he has towards Mr. Galileo, who was the first observer of the said stars; and when it was recognized what they were, there were honourous discussions around his person among many scholars[21].

This did not mean that the organizers were unaware of the precariousness of the situation. Federico Cesi, cousin of the bride, was the founder of the Accademia dei Lincei in Rome, to which Galileo belonged since 1611. Cesi was very attentive to the audience's reaction to the Galilean scene. After the celebration, he wrote to Galileo on 1 March 1614 that a small

[20]. See the letter of Romolo Paradiso to Giovanni Battista Strozzi, 15 February 1614, published as *Copia d'una lettera del Sig. Romolo Paradiso, Con la quale dà avviso dell'apparato e grandezza, con che si è rappresentato il Festino dell'Eccellentiss. Sig. Principe Peretti* (Rome, 1614; Sartori 1990b, no. 6642, pp. 229-230), pp. 64-65.

[21]. *Copia d'una lettera del Sig. Romolo Paradiso* (1614), pp. 27-28: «Nel mezzo à tanta luce sedeva GIOVE, in trono ben corrispondente alla sua grandezza [...]. Attorno à lui erano quattro Giovanetti, à guisa di custodi, con armature d'argento, & elmetti dorati; da quali tra molti pennacchi di color turchino sorgeva in ciascuno per cimiere una stella. Fummi detto, che questi quattro, quelle stelle rappresentavano, le quali hanno il nome della Serenissima Casa di coteste Altezze. Parmi, che in ciò il Sig. Cicognino habbia non solo mostrato devotione verso il suo Principe; mà anco l'affetion, che porta al Sig. Galileo, che di dette Stelle è stato il primo osservatore: e riconosciute che furono, tra molti eruditi si tenne ragionamento honorato intorno alla sua persona».


AMOR PVDICO
FESTINO, E BALLI
DANZATI IN ROMA
NELLE NOZZE
mi mi
De gl'Illuſ. & Ecc.SS. D. Michele Peretti
Principe di Venafro, e Sig. Princi-
peſſa D. Anna Maria Ceſis
Nel Palazzo della Cancellaria l'Anno 1614.
Del Sig. Iacomo Cicognini ne l'Accademia de-
gli Humoriſti di Roma detto il Confidente.
IN VITERBO,
Preſſo Girolamo Diſcepolo. 1614.
Con licenza de' Superiori.


COPIA
D'VNA LETTERA
DEL SIG.
ROMOLO PARADISO.
Con la quale dà auuiſo dell'Appa-
rato, e grandezza, con che ſi è
rappreſentato il Feſtino
Dell'Eccellentiſs. Sig.
PRINCIPE PERETTI.
IN ROMA,
Appreſſo Girolamo Diſcepolo. 1614.
Con licenza de' Superiori.

Ill. 6.2AB: Jacopo Cicognini, *Amor pudico* (Viterbo, ²1614), title pages, and *Copia d'una lettera del Sig. Romolo Paradiso* (Rome, 1614), describing the performance of *Amor pudico*. Copies I-Rn.

part of the Roman audience was upset by the Medicean Stars. Cesi called them «Peripatetic [=Aristotelian] primates»:

> Cicognini certainly satisfied me, since, finding myself at the evening scenic feast in the wedding of Princess Peretti, my cousin, I saw that among the other planets he had, with great grace, placed the Medicean stars as a choir around Jupiter. Everyone liked the show, and the novelty inserted in its place. It is true that I had to speak with some Peripatetic primates, who could not contain themselves from growling, like conservatives and enemies of everything new[22].

In this sense, *Amor pudico* can be connected to other instances of favourable attitudes to Galileo's work, like the reception of his works in 1611 by the Jesuits, the widespread use

[22]. Federico Cesi to Galileo, 1 March 1614 (Galilei 1902, p. 29): «Mi sodisfece certo il Cicognini, poiché, trovandomi alla veglia o festino scenico nelle nozze della Principessa Peretti, mia cugina, vidi che fra l'altri pianeti haveva, con molto garbo, posti i Medicei in choro intorno Giove. Piacque lo spettacolo a tutti, e la novità inserta al suo luogo. Ben è vero ch'io mi feci sentire ad alcuni primati Peripatetici, che non potevano contenersi di ringhiare, come veternosi e nimici d'ogni cosa nuova».

of telescopes by the Society of Jesus, and the fact that Rome allowed the depiction of the mountains of the Moon in Ludovico Cardi detto il Cigoli's fresco *The Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* in the ceiling of the Cappella Paolina in the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome[23]. Cardinal Scipione Borghese was one of the cardinals who received a telescope from Galileo in 1610, along with Cardinals Francesco Maria del Monte and Alessandro Montalto, both of whom were involved from the beginning in the history of Florentine opera[24]. In addition, Galileo gained the respect from religious figures such as Paolo Antonio Foscarini, Tommaso Campanella and Giovanni Ciampoli, along with renowned scientists such as Johannes Kepler. It is not surprising that Galileo, in a letter to Giovanni Battista Baliani of 12 March 1614, rejected some opinions of Tycho Brahe (which seemed derived from Ptolemy) and openly accepted heliocentrism:

> As for Copernicus's theory, I really consider it true, and not just because of the observations of Venus, the sunspots and the Medicean stars, but for his other reasons, and for many other details of mine that seem conclusive to me[25].

But things were about to change. In 1615, the Dominicans Niccolò Lorini and Cosimo (Tommaso) Caccini accused Galileo of heretical views before the Inquisition. On 12 April 1615, Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino wrote a letter to Antonio Paolo Foscarini, in which he stated that Galileo should act with prudence and present his ideas «as hypothesis and not in absolute terms, as I have always believed Copernicus worded the matter», because the opposite could «harm Holy Faith by rendering untrue Holy Scripture»[26]. But the Bible was not the only authority the Church sought to protect. Bellarmino also insisted on the importance of not contradicting the Holy Fathers of the Church. There was a lot at stake at the time of the Thirty Years War and the war against Protestantism.

The Congregatio pro Indice librorum prohibitorum (Congregation of the Index of Forbidden Books) condemned Copernicanism on 26 February 1616 and issued the corresponding decree on 5 March. The decree banned Copernicus's *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (On the Revolutions of Heavenly Bodies; Basle, 1543) and other Copernican works,

23. Ostrow 1996. See also Chapter 10 of the present volume.

24. Galluzzi 2017, pp. 20-22, and Hill 1997.

25. Galileo to Giovanni Battista Baliani, 12 March 1614 (Galilei 1902, pp. 34-35): «Quanto all'opinione del Copernico, io veramente la tengo sicura, e non per le sole osservazioni di Venere, delle macchie solari e delle Medicee, ma per l'altre sue ragioni, e per molt'altre mie particolari che mi paiono concludenti». See Finocchiaro 2010, p. 57.

26. Roberto Bellarmino to Antonio Paolo Foscarino, 12 April 1615 (Galilei 1902, p. 171): «*ex suppositione* e non assolutamente, come io ho sempre creduto che habbia parlato il Copernico [...] nuocere alla Santa Fede con rendere false le Scritture Sante».

such as *In Job commentaria* (Commentaries on Job; Toledo, 1584; Rome, 1591) by the Spanish scholastic philosopher Diego de Zúñiga and Foscarini's *Lettera sopra l'opinione dei Pitagorici e del Copernico* (1615); it did not explicitly mention Galileo. The latter's social position seems to have prevented him being condemned at the same time. On 26 February 1616, Bellarmino met with Galileo and asked him not to defend Copernicanism. In fact, many believed that Galileo had recanted to avoid condemnation. For this reason, he asked Bellarmino for an official statement denying that he had recanted his views; the cardinal granted this request on 26 May 1616[27].

In a letter of 12 March 1616 to Curzio Picchena, Galileo wrote that he had met with the pope for forty-five minutes. They talked about «the malignity of my persecutors and some of their false slanderous accusations». The pope acknowledged «his integrity and sincerity», safeguarding him from future persecutions[28].

The condemnation of Copernicanism affected the artistic reception of Galileo's work. In the words of Mario Biagioli (1993), «Galileo's discoveries did not continue their career in the Medici mythology they had begun so brilliantly, and they do not seem to have reappeared in Rome either. Their visibility declined even further after 1621 when, following Cosimo II's death, Grand Duchess Christina of Lorraine and her counsellors took over the government of Tuscany and the management of court culture»[29]. As far as opera was concerned, however, the conclusion of Biagioli must be nuanced. During the Duchess's regency, several opera librettos were published in Florence that featured the emblem of the Medicean Stars. In Rome Galileo's discoveries were also acknowledged.

At this point, however, we need to consider Galileo's conflict with the Jesuits.

The Dispute with the Jesuits about the Comets

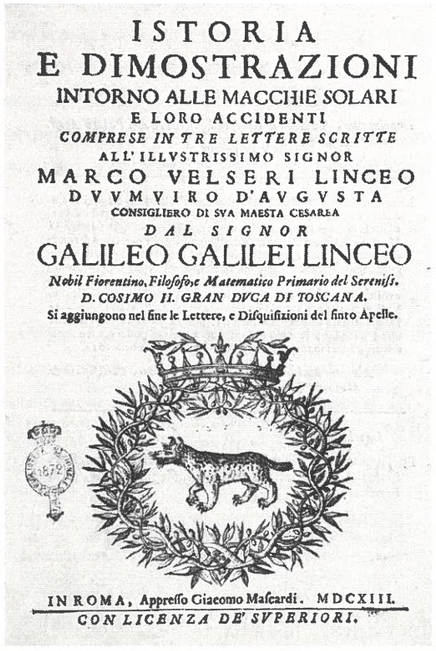
The pontificate of Paul V, during which heliocentrism was absent from public debate, lasted until 1621. Yet, unforeseen astronomical events had led to new disputes in 1618. Between August and December, three comets were observed in several parts of Europe. The Jesuit Orazio Grassi, in a lecture at the Collegio Romano argued that the comets were, as the absence of parallax demonstrated, removed farther from the Earth than the Moon, whereas Galileo had located them nearer to the Earth. Grassi published his theory in *De tribus cometis anni MDCXVIII* (About the Three Comets of the Year 1618; Rome, 1619), arousing Galileo's criticism. Galileo published his response, titled *Discorso delle comete* (Discourse on the Comets;

27. Galilei 1907, p. 342.

28. Galileo to Curzio Picchena, 12 March 1616 (Galilei 1902, p. 248): «la malignità de' miei persecutori et alcune delle loro false calunnie [...] l'integrità mia e la sincerità di mente».

29. Biagioli 1993, p. 142.

Florence, 1619), under the name of Mario Guiducci (Ill. 6.3b), although he had not been able to observe the comets himself (due to illness). This marked the start of a long dispute between the Academia dei Lincei, to which Galileo belonged, and the Jesuits of the Collegio Romano, a dispute in which the international prestige of the Collegio was at stake[30].


ISTORIA
E DIMOSTRAZIONI
INTORNO ALLE MACCHIE SOLARI
E LORO ACCIDENTI
COMPRESE IN TRE LETTERE SCRITTE
ALL' ILLVSTRISSIMO SIGNOR
MARCO VELSERI LINCEO
DVVMVIRO D'AVGVSTA
CONSIGLIERO DI SVA MAESTA CESAREA
DAL SIGNOR
GALILEO GALILEI LINCEO
Nobil Fiorentino, Filosofo, e Matematico Primario del Serenis.
D. COSIMO II. GRAN DVCA DI TOSCANA.
Si aggiungono nel fine le Lettere, e Disquisitioni del finto Apelle.
IN ROMA, Appresso Giacomo Mascardi. MDCXIII.
CON LICENZA DE' SVPERIORI.


DISCORSO
DELLE COMETE
DI MARIO GVIDVCCI
FATTO DA LVI
NELL'ACCADEMIA FIORENTINA
NEL SVO MEDESIMO CONSOLATO.
SOLEMQVE SVVM SVA SIDERA NO[illegible]
IN FIRENZE.
Nella Stamperia di Pietro Cecconcelli, Alle Stelle Medicee. 1619.
CON LICENZIA DE' SVPERIORI.

Ill. 6.3ab: Galileo Galilei, *Istoria e dimostrazioni intorno alle macchie solari* (Rome, 1613), title page, and 'Mario Guiducci' (= Galileo Galilei), *Discorso delle comete* (Florence, 1619), title page, Copies I-Fn and A-Wn, respectively.

In this conflict, Galileo received support from ecclesiastics, the most notable being Cardinal Maffeo Barberini. Barberini included in his *Poemata* (Poems) published in 1620 a poem entitled 'Adulatio perniciosa' (Dangerous Flattery), which was addressed to Galileo and referred to two of his discoveries[31]:

30. Galilei – Grassi 2017.

31. Maffeo Barberini, *Poemata* (Paris, 1620), pp. 46-52. Barberini had sent an autograph copy of the poem to Galileo with his letter to him of 20 August 1620 (Galilei 1903, pp. 48-49; Gattei 2018, p. 281). About the poem, see also Gattei 2018, pp. 281-284 and 304-307.

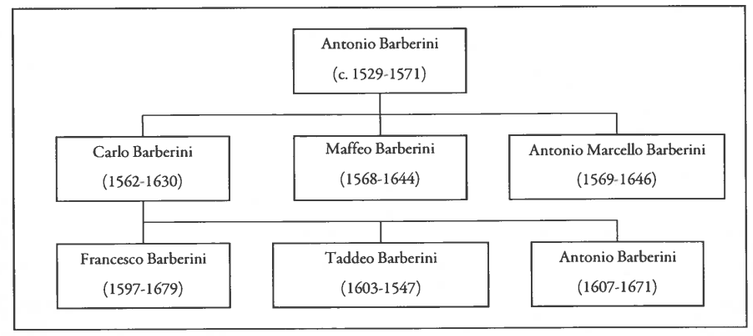
[...]
Seu Scorpij cor, siue Canis facem,
Miratur alter, vel Iouis asseclas,
Patrisue Saturni, repertos
Docte tuo, Galilaee, vitro.
[...]
Non semper extra quod radiat iubar
Splendescit intra: respicimus nigras
In sole (quis credat?) retectas
Arte tua, Galilaee, labes.
[...]

[...]
Another admires to heart of the Scorpion, or the face of the Dog, or the companions of Jupiter or his father Saturn, discovered, Galileo, by your clever glass.

[...]
Not always light that shines from the outside also glows inside: we see the black spots in the sun (who would believe that?) discovered by your art, Galileo.

[...]

Table 6.4: Partial Family Tree of the House of Barberini



New developments in the Church also seemed to favour Galileo: Paul v and Roberto Bellarmino died in 1621 and the new Pope Gregory xv maintained a neutral position in the conflict. But the situation was far from being unambiguous. It was difficult to separate the controversy on the comets from the condemnation of Copernicanism of 1616. Grassi supported the correction of Copernicus's work that was requested in the decree and that was undertaken by the Cardinal Bonifacio Caetani and later by the priest Francesco Ingoli.

It was in this context that the *Apotheosis sive consecratio SS. Ignatii et Francisci Xaverii*, a homage to Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier, with text by Grassi and music by Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger, was performed during the celebration of the Jesuit fathers' canonization in 1622 (Ill. 6.4)[32]. Apparently, the Jesuits considered it an appropriate year to honour their

32. Two early-nineteenth-century manuscript copies of the libretto and the score are preserved: D-Mbs, MS Coll. Mus. Max. 98, and A-Wn, MS Mus. 16013. An eight-page summary was printed as *Argomento dell'Apotesi o*

founder. Not only was the Thirty Years' War raging in the German-speaking countries, but, in addition, Galilean supporters were appointed on prominent positions during the pontificate of Gregory xv and others dared to defend Galileo. The Dominican monk Tommaso Campanella published his famous *Apologia pro Galileo* in the same year, in Frankfurt. For the Jesuits, it was a critical moment, since Europe's most renowned scientist opposed their opinions, especially those of Grassi, the librettist of the melodrama and an important figure in the creation of the Chiesa di Sant'Ignazio di Loyola in Rome.

Ill. 6.4: Orazio Grassi, *Apotheosis sive consecratio SS. Ignatii et Francisci Xaverii* (1622), on text of Orazio Grassi, set to music by Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger. Copy D-Mbs, MS Coll. Mus. Max. 98 (early-nineteenth-century copy), title page.

The libretto of the *Apotheosis* has at the same time a clearly mythical and geopolitical character. The globe appears in one scene, both hemispheres governed by the Catholic Monarchy of Spain. On the globe, countries on all continents revolve around the Sun represented by Phoebus. This Sun god is the same as the one in *Amor pudico*, «driving his chariot pulled by

consagratione de' Santi Ignatio Loiola e Francesco Saverio (Rome, 1622; Sartori 1990a, no. 2486b, p. 260); see also Franchi 1994, p. 804.

horses around the world» (*ubi sol rapidum permensus iter | solvit madidos defessus equos*). Several countries are represented by allegorical roles. 'Hispania' represents Spain, the country «where the sun never sets» (*numquam occiduum visura diem*). Hispania is followed by Lusitania (Portugal), who begins an exchange of eulogies with Hispania; together they praise the work of the new saints. Then follow a 'Ballo' and, after another exchange of eulogies, two 'Cori'. The other acts are similarly structured. In Act ii there is a dialogue between India and Palestina; in Act iii, between Gallia and Japonia; in Act iv, between Italia and Sina (China). This was the worldview that Galileo was confronting, and obviously he was not invited to this 'global theatre'[33]. Only the death of Pope Gregory x in 1623 allowed him to enter the scene again.

Florence Recovers Jupiter's Moons

The relation between printing and politics is visible in the opera librettos to be discussed next. In 1619, *Il Medoro* by Andrea Salvadori (text) and Jacopo Peri (music) was performed in the Palazzo Pitti, the palace of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, to celebrate the election of Ferdinand ii as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. That the libretto was not printed until 1623 can be explained by considering the political situation in Rome.

Gregory xv died in 1623. His successor was Maffeo Barberini, the cardinal who had addressed a poem to Galileo three years earlier. Upon his election to the papacy, Barberini took the name of Urban viii. The Accademia dei Lincei received the news with great enthusiasm. On 12 August 1623, Francesco Stelluti commented to Galileo that «then the creation of the new pope cheered us all up, being of that value and goodness that you know very well, and a particular advocate of the literate, so that we are to have a supreme patron». He also remarked that the new pope had appointed several academicians on key positions, while his nephew Francesco Barberini had become a member of the Accademia[34].

In 1623, Galileo published his *Il saggiatore* (Rome; Ill. 6.5) as a reply to Orazio Grassi's *Libra astronomica ac philosophica* (The Astronomical and Philosophical Scale; Perugia, 1619). Galileo had succeeded in dedicating the work to Urban viii, just as Copernicus had dedicated *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium* in 1543 to Pope Paul iii. The latter sought to confirm his power and influence in this way. The emblems of the Barberini and the Accademia dei Lincei both appeared on the title page of *Il saggiatore*; two telescopes are visible below a figure representing Mathematics, on the opposite side of which appears Natural Philosophy.

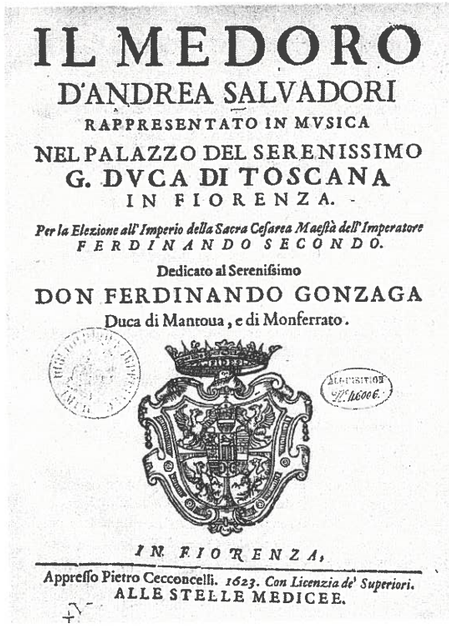
33. Coelho 1997 connect the *Apotheosis* with the colonial politics of the Jesuits rather than cosmological issues.

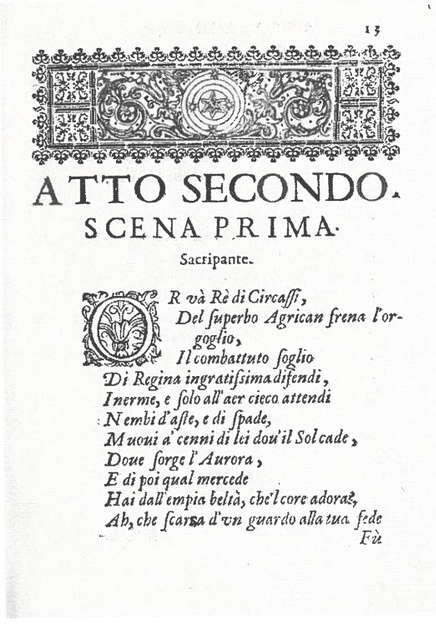
34. Francesco Stelluti to Galileo, 12 August 1623 (Galilei 1903, p. 121): «la creazione poi del nuovo Pontefice ci ha tutti rallegrati, essendo di quel valore e bontà che V. S. sa benissimo, et fautore particolare de' letterari, onde siamo per havere un mecenate supremo».

Ill. 6.5: Galileo Galilei, *Il saggiatore* (Rome, 1623), title page. Copy D-Mdm.

According to a letter by one the founders of the Accademie dei Lincei, Virginio Cesarini, to Galileo on 28 October 1623, the pope was so content with *Il saggiatore* that «he had it read for him at the table». Cesarini hoped to see Galileo's name «in the possession of immortality, and to raise our age, due to your pen, to such a sign of glory not known to us before, nor to be emulated later»[35]. In the same year, Tommaso Campanella published his *Civitas solis* (City

35. Virginio Cesarini to Galileo, 28 October 1623 (*ibidem*, pp. 141-142): «se 'l fa legger a mensa [...] in possesso dell'immortalità, e l'età nostra, mercé la sua penna, alzarsi a tal segno di gloria, che non fu da i primi nostri conosciuta, né sarà da i posteri pareggiata».


IL MEDORO
D'ANDREA SALVADORI
RAPPRESENTATO IN MVSICA
NEL PALAZZO DEL SERENISSIMO
G. DVCA DI TOSCANA
IN FIORENZA.
Per la Elezione all'Imperio della Sacra Cesarea Maestà dell'Imperatore
FERDINANDO SECONDO.
Dedicato al Serenissimo
DON FERDINANDO GONZAGA
Duca di Mantoua, e di Monferrato.
IN FIORENZA,
Appresso Pietro Cecconcelli. *1623. Con Licenzia de' Superiori.*
ALLE STELLE MEDICEE.


13
ATTO SECONDO.
SCENA PRIMA.
Sacripante.
R và Rè di Circassi,
Del superbo Agrican frena l'orgoglio,
Il combattuto foglio
Di Regina ingratissima difendi,
Inerme, e solo all'acer cieco attendi
Nembi d'aste, e di spade,
Muoui a' cenni di lei dou'il Sol cade,
Doue sorge l'Aurora,
E di poi qual mercede
Hai dall'empia beltà, che'l core adora?
Ah, che scarsa d'vn guardo alla tua fede
Fè

Ill. 6.6ab: Andrea Salvadori, *Il Medoro* (Florence, 1623), title page and page 13, with an ornament containing Jupiter and its four moons. Copy F-Pn.

of the Sun), a utopian text, now incorporating some of Galileo's discoveries[36]. It followed the publication of his *Apologia pro Galileo* (Frankfurt, 1622), which he had written in 1616 and sent to Galileo as «a question, where it was proved theologically that your way of philosophizing is more in conformity with Divine Scripture than the opposite»[37]. In 1624, Galileo spent six weeks in Rome, during which Pope Urban VIII received him once a week.

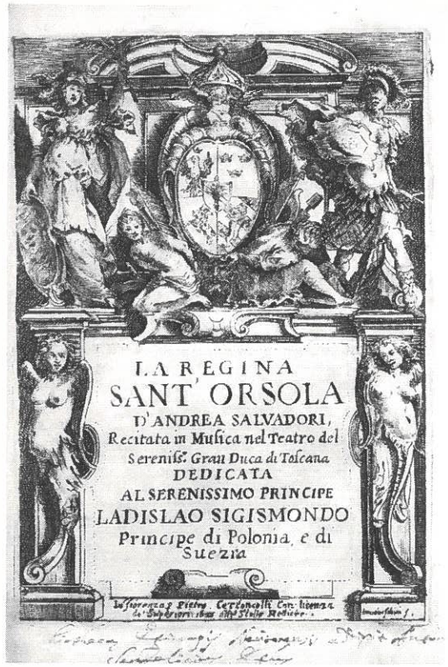
A typographical ornament that includes Jupiter with its four moons is found on several pages in the edition of the libretto of *Il Medoro* published by Pietro Cecconcelli in 1623 (Ill. 6.6ab)[38]. Galileo had a copy of this libretto in his personal library[39]. Jacopo Peri's setting of

36. *La città del sole* was written first in Italian 1602, then translated into Latin by Campanella in 1613-1614.

37. Tommaso Campanella to Galileo, 3 November 1616 (Galilei 1902, p. 287); «una questione, dove si prova theologicamente ch'il modo di filosofare da lei tenuto è più conforme a la Divina Scrittura che non lo contrario».

38. The printer's mark in question is also found in other editions published by Cecconcelli, as the *Discorso delle comete* by 'Mario Giudicci' (= Galileo Galilei; 1619; title page), the *Ricettario fiorentino di nuovo illustrato* (1623; at the end), Pietro Accoli's *Lo inganno de gl'occhi* (1625; at the end), and the *Canzoni* by Gabriello Chiabrera (1628; title page). See Martín Sáez 2020b.

39. Hall 2013, p. 28.


LA REGINA
SANT' ORSOLA
D'ANDREA SALVADORI,
Recitata in Musica nel Teatro del
Serenissᵐᵒ Gran Duca di Toscana.
DEDICATA
AL SERENISSIMO PRINCIPE
LADISLAO SIGISMONDO
Principe di Polonia, e di
Suezia


26

ATTO SECONDO.

SCENA PRIMA.

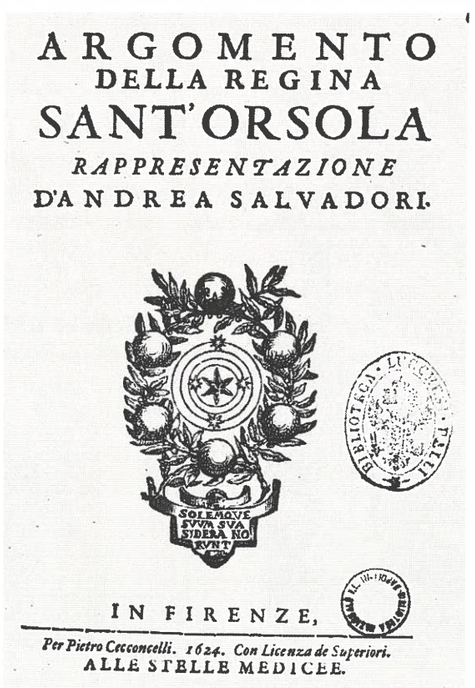
Oronteo, Feraſpe, Coro di Sacerdoti di Marte, Iſmano.

Oron. *E dall'orrida Tana*
Diſceſo armato ſtuol d'Vnni guerrieri,
Fulmin di Tramontana,
Del ſuperbo Occidente arde gl'Imperi;
Nume del quinto Ciel da te dipende:
Tu, quante volte aſcende
Nemiche mura, ò fiere ſquadre aſſale,
Vibri pronta per lui l'Aſta fatale.
Feraſ. *Qual dunque omai preſume*
Colonia ritrouar difeſa, ò ſcampo,
Se tu guerriero Nume
Scendi per gl'Vnni à guerreggiar nel Campo?
Coro. *Dall'oppugnate Mura,*
Ecco,

Ill. 6.7ab: Andrea Salvadori, *La regina Sant'Orsola* (Florence, ²1624), title page, and page 26, with an ornament containing the four moons of Jupiter slightly different from that in *Il Medoro* (Ill. 6b). Copy CDN-Tu.

Salvadori's libretto had premiered in 1619 in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence on the occasion of the election of Ferdinand II as Holy Roman Emperor. The plot reflects the imperial interest of the celebration. The key concept of the opera is *fedeltà*. Medoro venerates King Dardinello so much that, when he dies in a battle near Paris, «with admirable example of fidelity» he decides to go by night in search of the king's body among the corpses «to give it the due honour of burial». There he is discovered by the enemy, who wounds him in the chest. Moved by pity, Queen Angelica decides to come to his aid. Angelica had received marriage proposals from several kings, but from that moment onwards she was to be faithful to Medoro. Accordingly, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany shows its fidelity to the Empire. Just at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, this opera rests on dynastic loyalty and Catholic dogma.

Three librettos printed by Cecconcelli have a printer's mark with Jupiter surrounded by its four moons on the title page, with a quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid* (VI, 641): «solemque suum sua sidera norunt» (And they knew their own sun, their own stars). In 1624, *La regina sant'Orsola*, with text by Andrea Salvadori and music by Marco da Gagliano, was performed to celebrate the visit of Charles of Austria, Bishop of Wroclaw, to Florence


ARGOMENTO
DELLA REGINA
SANT'ORSOLA
RAPPRESENTAZIONE
D'ANDREA SALVADORI.

IN FIRENZE,
Per Pietro Cecconcelli. 1624. Con Licenza de Superiori.
ALLE STELLE MEDICEE.

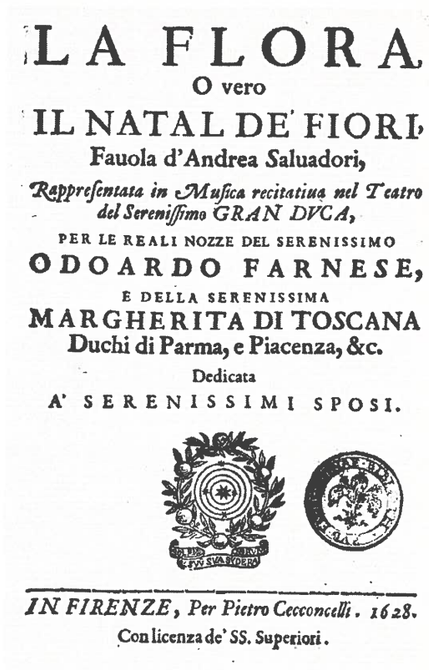
Ill. 6.8: Andrea Salvadori, *Argomento della Regina Sant'Orsola* (Florence, 1624), title page. Copy I-Nn.

(Ill. 6.7ab). An *Argomento* (Summary) was published with the same printer's mark on its title page (Ill. 6.8)[40]. The opera was performed again in Florence on the occasion of the visit in 1625 of Ladislaus Vasa, the future king of Poland, an essential ally of the Catholics against Protestants and Muslims[41]. The plot combines the struggle between Heaven and Hell with the war between the Romans and the Huns. In the dedication to the Polish prince, Salvadori compared both kingdoms with the Greeks and the Persians in the ancient world, and the Europeans and the Turks in modern times. After narrating the martyrdom of the saint, the opera culminates with St. Ursula hurling a thunderbolt from the sky that kills the king of the Huns. The work was sponsored by Maria Magdalena of Austria, who is thus presented as a virtuous and powerful ruler[42]. The engraved titled page of the libretto does not have the

40. Andrea Salvadori, *Argomento della Regina Sant'Orsola* (Florence, 1624; Sartori 1990a, nos. 2504, p. 261).

41. (*Ibidem*; Sartori 1992, no. 19705, p. 27). A new *Argomento* was published the following year (Florence, 1625: Sartori 1990a, no. 2505, p. 261). On the connection between Ladislaus and the history of opera see Martín Sáez 2019.

42. Harness 2006.


LA FLORA
O vero
IL NATAL DE' FIORI
Fauola d'Andrea Saluadori,
Rappresentata in Musica recitativa nel Teatro del Sereniſſimo GRAN DVCA,
PER LE REALI NOZZE DEL SERENISSIMO
ODOARDO FARNESE,
E DELLA SERENISSIMA
MARGHERITA DI TOSCANA
Duchi di Parma, e Piacenza, &c.
Dedicata
A' SERENISSIMI SPOSI.

IN FIRENZE, Per Pietro Cecconcelli. 1628.
Con licenza de' SS. Superiori.

Ill. 6.9ab: Ferdinando Saracinelli, *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* (Florence, 1625), title page, and Andrea Salvadori, *La Flora* (Florence, 1628), title page. Copies I-Fn.

printer's mark, but the emblem with Jupiter and its four moons is found on several pages within the booklet. Interestingly, the famous passage from the Book of Joshua (10:12-13) is referred to in the fourth act, when Prince Ireo asks the sun to stop and to inform his father and his servants of his sadness over the martyrdom of Saint Ursula:

Ferma, pietoso Sole,	Stop, merciful Sun,
Là sopra il Regno mio, ferma le rote,	There, above my Reign, stop the wheels,
Al real Genitore, A' Servi miei fa note	Make known to the royal father, to my servants,
L'alte di lei miserie, e 'l mio dolore	The heights of her misery, and my distress.

The second edition of the libretto includes — for the first time in the history of opera — engravings of several scenes signed by Giulio Parigi.

La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina (1625) by Ferdinando Saracinelli (text) and Francesca Caccini (music) was performed for Prince Ladislaus Vasa as well. The libretto has an

engraved title page, which also includes the image of Jupiter and the four moons (Ill. 6.9a)[43]. It also features engravings representing several scenes. The highlight of the opera was the final *balletto de' cavalli* (horse dance), which was performed in the courtyard of the villa di Poggio Imperiale. The libretto includes a sonnet by Salvadori where the passage from the Book of Joshua is mentioned again. Salvadori stated that the Sun stood in the sky «longer than ever» (*fermossi in Ciel più che mai bello il Sole*), to observe those admirable dances (*l'ammirabili Carole*). The protagonist of the opera is again a woman, the magician Melissa, who saves Ruggiero from the charms of the witch Alcina. The argument stresses the importance of Ruggiero returning to war and abandoning Alcina's siren songs. In the prologue, Neptune recalls how the Polish king had defeated the infidels. Vladislaus is incited to follow the military policy against the heretics.

The last publication in this group is the libretto of *La Flora* (1628), an opera with text by Andrea Salvadori and music by Marco da Gagliano, written to celebrate the accession to the throne of Ferdinando de' Medici. The printed libretto has the printer's mark on the title page (Ill. 6.9b), and an ornament including the four moons of Jupiter at the beginning of the 'Argomento'. The libretto also contains images of the scenes.

The Dangerous Curiosity of the New Endymion

Diana schernita (1629) by Giacomo Francesco Parisani (text) and Giacinto Cornacchioli (music) was the first opera in which Galileo (with his telescope) appeared as a character on stage, under the name of Endymion. The opera was first performed in the palace of the German nobleman Johann Rudolph Baron von Hohen Rechberg. No printed libretto is known. The music was published in Rome, with a dedication by Cornacchioli to Taddeo Barberini[44]. As Paolo Fabbri (2003) has suggested, the opera is related to Giambattista Marino's *L'Adone* (1623). In *Diana schernita*, Galileo is presented as the «new Endymion» (*novello Endimione*), eager to watch the Moon with his telescope[45].

Parisiani's libretto tells of Cupid's anger towards Diana because she loves Endymion but pretends to be chaste. In fact, Diana has given Endymion a new device (the telescope) so that he can watch her whenever he wants. Enydmion invokes the Sun asking him to stop its movement in order to enjoy more time with Diana, another clear reference to the biblical passage from the Book of Joshua. In revenge, Cupid decides to make Endymion jealous by assuring him that Diana has a lover. The god of love invites him to seek this out, inciting him to disguise himself

43. Ferdinando Saracinello, *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* (Florence, 1625; Sartori 1991b, no. 14223, p. 13).

44. Giacinto Cornacchioli, *Diana schernita: Favola boscareccia, posta in musica* (Rome, 1629; RISM A/I, C 3938).

45. Fabbri 2003, p. 56, and Daolmi 2006, p. 31. About the libretto, see Antonicek 2002.

as the hunter Atteone. When Diana discovers that someone is spying on her, she turns him into a deer and kills him, unaware that he is Endymion. At this moment, Pan proposes to turn the deer into a flower, and three golden lilies appear in its place, on which three golden bees rest, a clear reference to the Barberini emblem. *Diana schernita* was meant to be a comedy, with everyone happy at the end, even Diana. Michele Curnis (2018) has compared the libretto with Marino's poem and has shown significant literary influences. Curnis also elaborated on the connection with Galileo, highlighting the implicit reference to Joshua[46]. There is no doubt that *Diana schernita* is a 'Galilean opera'.

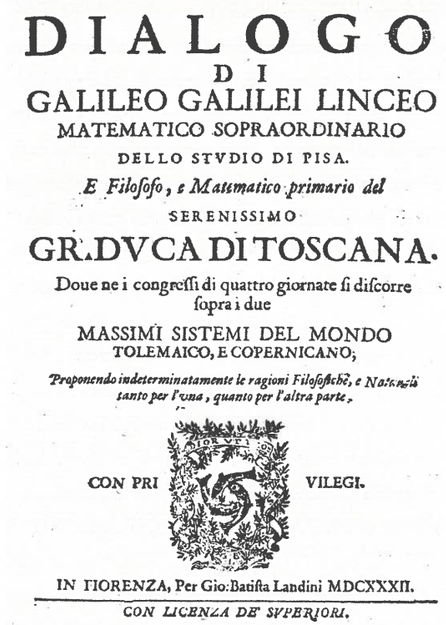
An atmosphere of condemnation hangs over the plot. It is important to remember that Marino's poem was placed on the Index of Prohibited Books in 1624. The message of *Diana schernita* was clearly religious in nature. Endymion represented mortality and science, while Pan stood for immortality and religion. Science could only flourish if it was at the service of religion. This message could be interpreted as an attack against Galileo's curiosity and his uncontrolled love for astronomy. Those who fall in love with the object of their studies, especially in the case of astronomy, are at the risk of being trapped by it. Taddeo Barberini's aim would have been to moderate Galileo's curiosity, transforming the latter's excess into a flower at the service of the Church. In addition to the classic Christian condemnation of curiosity[47], to which I will return later, the message fits with the ambiguous attitude of the Barberini towards Galileo.

In the same year that *Diana schernita* was performed, *De Deo uno* by Agostino Oreggi, a theologian in the service of Pope Urban VIII, was published in Rome. Oreggi articulated the pope's argument about the superiority of God's wisdom and power over human reasoning, according to which any astronomical system could have been created by an omnipotent divinity, with the only condition that it did not involve contradiction. It implied that it was not reasonable to go beyond the realm of hypotheses in astronomy[48].

Opera as a Pontifical Smoke Screen

By 1630, Galileo thought the time was ripe for reconsidering the Copernican theory. He proposed the Pope the publication of a book that would confront the geocentric and heliocentric systems. The book was finished in January 1630[49], but it took several years before it was published as *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo, Tolomaico e Copernicano* (Florence, 1632; Ill. 6.10a). Urban VIII approved publication; at the same time, he asked Galileo not to

46. Curnis 2018.
47. Blumenberg 1999.
48. Biagioli 1993, p. 310, and Machamer 1998, p. 330, note 26.
49. Machamer 1998, p. 22.


DIALOGO
DI
GALILEO GALILEI LINCEO
MATEMATICO SOPRAORDINARIO
DELLO STVDIO DI PISA.
E Filosofo, e Matematico primario del
SERENISSIMO
GR. DVCA DI TOSCANA.
Doue ne i congressi di quattro giornate si discorre sopra i due
MASSIMI SISTEMI DEL MONDO
TOLEMAICO, E COPERNICANO;
Proponendo indeterminatamente le ragioni Filosofiche, e Naturali tanto per l'una, quanto per l'altra parte.
CON PRI VILEGI.
IN FIORENZA, Per Gio: Batista Landini MDCXXXII.
CON LICENZA DE' SVPERIORI.


DISCORSI
E
DIMOSTRAZIONI
MATEMATICHE,
intorno à due nuoue scienze
Attenenti alla
Mecanica & i Movimenti Locali,
del Signor
GALILEO GALILEI LINCEO,
Filosofo e Matematico primario del Serenissimo
Grand Duca di Toscana.
Con vna Appendice del centro di grauità d'alcuni Solidi.
IN LEIDA,
Appresso gli Elsevirii. M. D. C. XXXVIII.

Ill. 6.10ab: Galileo Galilei, *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo, Tolomaico e Copernicano* (Florence, 1632), title page, and *Discorso e dimostrazioni mathematiche intorno à due nuove scienze* (Leiden, 1638), title page. Copies I-Rn and A-Wn, respectively.

defend the Copernican hypothesis as reality, but to present it as a conjecture and to include a theological argument about the superiority of God. Galileo yielded to this request and the book passed ecclesiastical censorship. The success was immediate. Campanella, Benedetto Castelli, Vincenzo Renieri, Fulgenzio Micanzio and others wrote to Galileo to congratulate him, but the criticism also increased. Galileo had ridiculed the arguments of the famous Jesuit Christoph Scheiner, which undoubtedly contributed to his subsequent conviction[50]. Filippo Magalotti wrote to Mario Guiducci on 7 August 1632 that the Jesuits had taken the decision «to do with pleasure everything to have the book prohibited»[51].

Galileo's position was weakened by the problems with which Pope Urban VIII was beset. The Barberini were going through their greatest political crisis. In 1631, Sweden's intervention in the Thirty Years' War, led by the Protestant King Gustavus Adolphus II, had inflicted great defeats on the Catholic forces, in what is considered the most international period of

50. Beltrán Marí 2006, p. 70.
51. Filippo Magalotti to Mario Guiducci, 7 August 1632 (Galilei 1904a, p. 370): «lavorar gagliardissimamente perché l'opera sia proibita».

the war, during which alliances began to have an increasingly political character (as the French intervention would confirm in 1636). The opposition of Sweden against Spain, and the French alliances against the Habsburgs, reinforced the pressure of Spain on Rome to clarify its position. Urban VIII had spent a decade closing alliances with France, to diminish the power of Spain in Italy, and the imperial ambassadors began to accuse the pope of favouring the Protestant cause and not daring to declare it a holy war[52]. The Spanish Cardinal Gaspar de Borja (Borgia) y Velasco went so far as to «read (in front of all the other cardinals present) a harsh protest against the pope's lack of support for his king's military efforts against the Protestants in Germany»[53].

This situation likely contributed to the condemnation of Galileo. The mere suggestion that the Church was defending a heretic seemed to be a good excuse to use the astronomer as a scapegoat[54], like the deer in *Diana schernita* that had to be neutralized and was turned into papal lilies. By condemning Galileo, Urban VIII could clean up his image and present himself as a great defender of Catholicism. The use of scapegoats was common in court and consisted of choosing someone well known for the greatest possible impact, something that Galileo's international fame could guarantee. That he was a protégé of Urban VIII fulfilled the requisite needed for the «fall of the favourite», which would allow the pope to present himself as someone who was purifying his own institution[55].

The document of 1616 that recounted the meeting Bellarmine had with Galileo in February of that year appeared at just the right moment. According to this document, Bellarmine had not only forbidden Galileo to defend Copernicanism, but also to teach it *in any way*. Moreover, Urban VIII had expressly asked Galileo to present the Copernican thesis as a hypothesis and, although it was a dialogue, Salviati's character seemed to defend it from a positive position. Finally, the Copernican thesis seemed to be better argued than the Ptolemean, which would break the equilibrium that Galileo was obliged to preserve, not only as a scientist, but also as a courtier. Behind all this, there could also be a personal resentment. In addition to the misgivings of the Jesuits, the inquisitors charged that the pope's theological argument was put in the mouth of a clearly foolish character (*in bocca di un sciocco*)[56].

In this context, the opera of *Sant'Alessio* possibly holds special significance[57]. It was the first opera directly commissioned by Francesco Barberini. The words were written by Cardinal Rospigliosi, future Pope Clement IX, who was well-known as a librettist. Stefano Landi provided the music. *Sant'Alessio* was performed many times between 1629 and 1634, the period in which

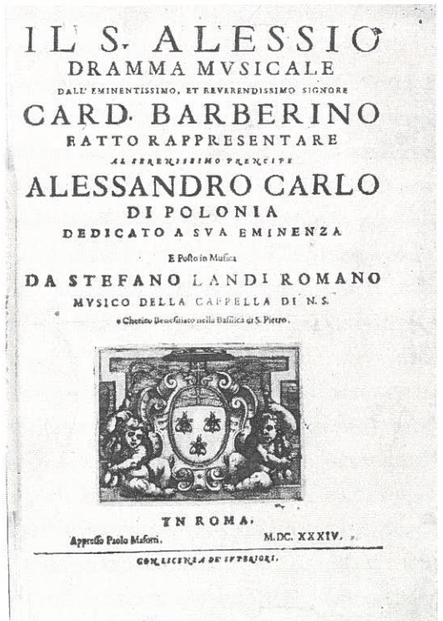
52. Finocchiaro 2010, p. 147, and Finocchiaro 2019, p. 20.
53. Biagioli 1993, p. 335.
54. Finocchiaro 1989, pp. 12-13.
55. Biagioli 1993, p. 313.
56. Galilei 1907, p. 326.
57. Murata 1981, Hammond 1994, and Tamburini 2003.

Galileo's *Discorsi*, his condemnation and the propaganda around the affair were conceived and developed. Frederick Hammond (2010) has argued that the performance of 1634, dedicated to Alexander Charles Vasa, brother of Ladislaus IV, now King of Poland, could be interpreted as a reaction to the condemnation of 1633. Convicting the most famous scientist in history had a gigantic impact, and the Church made a great effort to justify its action and to mitigate the discontent it had aroused, which included personalities such as René Descartes, Giovanni Battista Doni, Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, and Marin Mersenne[58]. Peiresc's letter of 31 January 1635 to Francesco Barberini, in which he compared the Galileo affair with the trial of Socrates, thereby calling into question the reputation of the pontificate, is perhaps the most eloquent document on this flurry of letters[59]. The comparison was inevitable. Hugo Grotius also compared Galileo to the Greek philosopher in 1636[60].

In fact, despite its numerous performances, it was not until 1634 that it was decided to print the music of the work (Rome; Ill. 6.11a)[61]. *Sant'Alessio* served to present the Church as an advocate of culture through music, arts and literature. At the same time, it exhibited the Church's connection to a Catholic dynasty of great importance — the Vasa kings of Poland — and defended the Jesuits in a new prologue. This was part of a propaganda program that included many other festivities. Hammond (1992) has called attention to the unusual dissemination of the printed score, which was sent not only to various courts, but also to scholars critical of the condemnation. He cited a letter from Fabri de Peiresc to Mersenne of 23 July 1635, in which Peiresc described the opera and asked Mersenne to mention the work in his *Harmonie universelle*, noting the contribution of Cardinal Francesco Barberini[62]. Doni cited *Sant'Alessio* in his 'Trattato della musica scenica', written around 1635 (but published only in 1763), remarking that it was received «always with universal applause»[63].

We can strengthen Hammond's thesis by relating the operatic propaganda to the publicity of the Inquisition about the trial and abjuration of Galileo. In the summer of 1633, all papal nuncios and inquisitors in Europe received copies of Galileo's condemnation and abjuration, as well as orders to publicize them. In a letter to Giacomo Tinti, inquisitor of Modena, Antonio

58. Hammond 1992 and Hammond 2010.
59. Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, 31 January 1635 (Galilei 1905, p. 202).
60. Elia Diodati to Galileo, 23 September 1636 (*ibidem*, p. 490).
61. Stefano Landi, *Il S. Alessio: Dramma musicale* (Rome, 1634; RISM A/I L 534). A libretto was never printed, but there is a printed *Argomento del S. Alessio* (Rome, 1634; Sartori 1990a, no. 2480, p. 259). The text is edited in Della Corte 1958, vol. I, pp. 195-265.
62. Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc to Marin Mersenne, 23 July 1635 (Mersenne 1959, p. 328). See Hammond 1992, p. 88, Hammond 2010, pp. 99-100.
63. Giovanni Battista Doni, *De' trattati di musica tomo secondo* (Florence, 1763), Appendice, 'Trattato della musica scenica', p. 7: «sempre con applauso universale».


IL S. ALESSIO
DRAMMA MVSICALE
DALL' EMINENTISSIMO, ET REVERENDISSIMO SIGNORE
CARD. BARBERINO
FATTO RAPPRESENTARE
ALESSANDRO CARLO
DI POLONIA
DEDICATO A SVA EMINENZA
E Posto in Musica
DA STEFANO LANDI ROMANO
MVSICO DELLA CAPPELLA DI N.S.
IN ROMA,
Appresso Paolo Masotti. M.DC. XXXIV.
CON LICENZA DE' SVPERIORI.


LE NOZZE
DEGLI DEI
FAVOLA
FERDINANDO II. E VITTORIA
PRINCIPESSA D'VRBINO

Ill. 6.11ab: Stefano Landi, *Il S. Alessio* (Rome, 1634), title page, and Giovanni Carlo Coppola, *Le nozze degli dei* (Florence, 1637), title page. Copies US-NH and US-MAL, respectively.

Marcello Barberini, brother of the pope, ordered the news to be reported to «all the professors of philosophy and mathematics, so that they, knowing how was dealt with the aforementioned Galileo, understand the gravity of the error he committed»[64]. As Maurice Finocchiaro (2010) has noted, «such publicity was unprecedented in the annals of the Inquisition and was never repeated in subsequent inquisitorial practice»[65].

In this sense, the connection of Ladislaus Vasa with this Galilean opera seems significant. The occasion seemed to merit an edition with engravings, the first in the history of Roman opera. Nor should we forget that the King of Poland was an advocate of Galileo[66]. The Church seemed determined to prove that it still admired Galileo, but the situation had forced it to condemn him. On 19 April 1636, the King of Poland asked Galileo for new lenses for his telescope. The king took the opportunity to remind Galileo that «the wish to do him a favour is still with

64. Antonio Marcello Barberini to Giacomo Tinti, 2 July 1633 (Galilei 1904b, p. 169): «tutti li professori di filosofia e di matematica, perché, sapendo eglino in che modo si è trattato con il detto Galileo, comprendino la gravità dell'errore da lui commesso».

65. Finocchiaro 2010, p. 161.

66. *Ibidem*, p. 167.

us»[67]. In fact, on 19 December Roberto Giraldi wrote to Galileo that the king wanted «to talk with you about your interests»[68].

The Church had serious reasons to lessen the impact of the condemnation of Galileo. The very message of the libretto shows how the opera was used for that purpose. The story of Saint Alessio emphasizes the priority of religious life over any other, salvation before science. As the saint himself says in the opera, the truly important things are «beyond the stars» (*sopra le stelle*). We should not forget that Galileo's own *Dialogo* was written, according to the official message the Church included in the Prologue, «to prove non-Catholics that Catholics knew all the arguments» in favour of Copernicanism[69]. Thus, in this case, religion seemed more important than science.

In this context, the performance of Rospigliosi's *Erminia sul Giordano* also merits attention. It was performed in 1633, but the libretto was published only in 1637, with beautiful engravings[70]. This was one year after the publication of Galileo's letter to Christina of Lorraine[71].

The last opera to be published with engravings in the libretto before the opening of the Venetian theatres might be also important from a negative perspective. Giovanni Carlo Coppola's *Le nozze degli dei* (1637; Ill. 6.11b), with music by various composers, was performed in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence to celebrate the wedding of Ferdinando II de' Medici and Vittoria della Rovere[72]. This opera is from beginning to end a theatre of the world with maritime, earthly, celestial and infernal scenes (Ill. 6.12). Four divine weddings are the pretext for introducing them. The wedding of Proserpina and Pluto takes place in Hell; that of Nettuno and Amphitrite, in the Sea; that of Giove and Giunone, in Heaven; and that of Vulcano and Venere, on Earth. In his dedication, Coppola described the grand ducal couple as «favourable planets» (*favorevoli Pianeti*) and the opera includes all kinds of gods, constellations, and stars. It would have been a perfect excuse to introduce Galileo's discoveries, but nothing suggests a heliocentric influence. The Church had once again achieved its objectives.

67. Ladislaus IV a Galileo, 19 April 1636 (Galilei 1905, p. 420): «vive anco con noi volontà di favorirla».

68. Roberto Giraldi a Galileo, 26 December 1636 (*ibidem*, p. 532): «discorrer con lei circa a' sua interessi».

69. Finocchiaro 2019, p. 126.

70. Michelangelo Rossi, *Erminia sul Giordano: Dramma musicale* (Rome, 1637; RISM A/I, R 2743).

71. Galileo Galilei, *Nov-antiqua sanctissimorum patrum, & probatorum theologorum doctrina,* [...] *in gratiam Serenissimæ Christinæ Lotharingæ* (Strasbourg, 1636), with Italian text and Latin translation printed in two columns.

72. The libretto: Giovanni Carlo Coppola, *Le nozze degli dei* (Florence, 1637; Sartori 1991b, no. 16712, p. 252). Other publications related to the performances are the *Argomento delle nozze degli dei* (Florence, 1637; Sartori 1990a, no. 2511, p. 262), the *Descrizione delle feste fatte in Firenze* (Florence, 1637; Sartori 1990b, no. 7646, p. 338), and the *Relazione delle nozze degli dei* (Florence, 1637; Sartori 1992, no. 19749, p. 32).

Ill. 6.12: Giovanni Carlo Coppola, *Le nozze degli dei* (Florence, 1637), engraving representing the first scene of the first act, by Stefano della Bella after a design of Alfonso Parigi. Copy US-MAL.

The Circle Closes: Galileo versus Saint Boniface

In 1638, Galileo published his *Discorsi e dimostrazioni matematiche intorno a due nuove scienze* (Leiden, 1638; Ill. 6.12). In the same year, he reappeared — that is, metaphorically speaking, in an opera — on the Roman scene, in the Palazzo della Cancelleria, where *Amor pudico* had been produced in 1614. *San Bonifatio* was written, again, by Cardinal Rospigliosi. The figure of Saint Boniface had great symbolic meaning during the Thirty Years' War since he was credited for having converted the Germanic people to the Christian faith and having founded the abbey of Fulda. In a context of disputes with Protestant heretics, Galileo's desire to reinterpret the Bible could be a danger, contrasting with the pious attitude of the saints, who in wartime helped to increase the influence of the Church.

One scene in the opera clearly underlines the superiority of religion over scientific discovery. It is done in the most comical passage of the opera, Scene 4 of Act 1, where the servant Fagotto complains about those who dedicate themselves to the study of distant things while forgetting human affairs. Specifically, this complaint refers to those who are obsessed with the

Moon, the planets, and the stars. The unpublished libretto is preserved in several manuscripts kept in the Vatican Library. Given that it is little known, it is worth transcribing the entire passage:

Azione 1, Scena 4.

Fagotto. Sens'essere indovino
Ogn'un distingue il pesce dalla carne
Gli storni dalle starne
Il pan da sassi, e dal aceto il vino
Ogni poca avertenza
Con chiare distintioni,
riconosce i baiochi da testoni,
e pure vi è così poca conoscenza
et è la gente poi si mall'accorta
quel che tanto importa:
che sia pur un cervel sagace e scaltro
sapra difficilmente
riconoscer ben bene un huom dall'altro,
quanti e quanti s'infrascano il cervello
per conoscer le stelle ad una ad una
per osservar questo pianeta, e quello,
e saper quanti passi fa la Luna?
O diligenze vane?
Che s'ha da far di cose si lontane?
Uno studio eccellente
Sarebbe l'imparare
A conoscer la gente
Come si fa dell'un l'altro colore,
perche in questo si vede
che si piglian de granchi a tutte l'ore:
A me cosi sucede
Che possomi à servire un capitano
Mi credevo per certo
Fosse tutto bravura:
alla fine ho scoperto
che egli è vile, da poco abbietto e vano,
per professione, per arte, et natura.
Il peggio è che ogni cosa
si finisce in canzoni in dame et armi,
ne io posso vantarmi d'haver mangiato
mai quanto ho bisogno
e s'ho da dire il vero,
non mi satollo mai se non in sogno[73].

Act 1, Scene 4

Fagotto. Without being a fortune-teller
Each one distinguishes fish from meat.
Starlings from partridges,
Stone from bread, and wine from vinegar.
Every little alertness
With clear distinctions,
Recognizes *baiocchi* from *testoni*,
And yet there is so little knowledge
And people are so little shrewd
About what matters so much:
Who has yet a smart and sagacious brain,
Will hardly know,
To recognize one man well from another.
How many and how many break their brain
To know the stars one by one,
To observe this planet, and that one,
And know how many steps the Moon takes?
Or vain diligence?
What must you do with things so far away?
An excellent study
Would be learning
To get to know people
How they change from one to another colour,
Because in this you can see
That they are mistaken all the time.
Therefore, it happens to me
That I can serve a captain.
I believed for sure,
That he was all good.
I eventually found out
That he is vile, just abject, and vain,
By profession, by art, and by nature.
The worst is that everything
Ends up in songs on ladies and weapons.
Nor can I boast of having eaten
Ever as much as I need,
And if I must tell the truth,
I am never satisfied except in my dreams.

[73]. I-Rvat, MS Lat. 10192 (Giulio Rospiglioso, *Sant'Ales*sio), pp. 53-54.

As in *Diana schernita*, this scene can be understood through the Christian critique of curiosity. Curiosity could be a vice in at least two basic ways, depending on whether its object was trivial (*negligentia*) or heretical (*haeresis*). In the context of the Counter-Reformation, it was common to oppose the vice of *curiositas* to the virtue of *sancta ignorantia*. Already Saint Augustine had stated that «faithful ignorance is better than reckless science»[74]. For this reason, Campanella distinguished between good and bad curiosity. In his *Discorsi della liberta* (Jesi, 1633), he defined vain curiosity (*curiosità vana*) as «the mother of the arts not founded in natural causes, neither in effects, nor signs, placed by nature, or by God; but in signs placed by human art, and ill-affected will». This kind of curiosity would be the origin of «superstition, idolatry, heresy, schism and ruin of the people». In fact, Campanella immediately referred to the Protestant context and its geopolitical scope: «as seen in France, and Germany, and Greece, and throughout the North; with sedition of peoples, tyranny of princes, and fall of kingdoms, and diminution of obedience, and of strengths and virtues». Yet, there was also the curiosity of the true sciences (*vere scienze*), in which he would undoubtedly include Galileo. Campanella charges the Church for mistaking the curiosity of the true sciences as vain curiosity, thus attacking the papacy in a surreptitious manner. The phrase stating that «the Pope cannot prohibit them [the true sciences], because he is the Vicar of Christ, the Wisdom of God, and every science is the splendour of that» has gone unnoticed, but clearly refers to Galileo[75].

Although the Church accused Galileo of heresy, in *Diana schernita* the scientist seems to be criticized not for his heresy but for his dangerous superficiality. In fact, this fits with the theological argument of Urban VIII: science is as small compared to theology as men are to God, so no reasoning is more than hypothetical and, in a way, irrelevant. Ultimately, science could never damage religion. One can be «a shrewd and cunning brain» in astronomy, but these studies are «vain diligences». It is much better to «know the people» than the moon's steps, as stated in the libretto. Boniface is the best example: he knew people and helped them by converting them, just like the Jesuits extended the Catholic credo across the globe. As a saint (a figure undervalued by Protestants), Boniface achieved something as foreign to science as salvation. With his knowledge of men, he created a world far from those heretics and seditious people of whom Campanella spoke. So maybe the alleged mistake of the scientist was not to be heretical, as stated in the sentence condemning Galileo, but to be a superficial and imprudent person who could favour enemies in wartime. While Galileo gazed at the stars, the pope and

[74]. Saint Augustine, *Sermones*, XXVII, Cap. 3, 4: «[...] *melior est fidelis ignorantia, quam temeraria scientia*». See Vega 2014, p. 172.

[75]. Tommaso Campanella, *Discorsi della libertà* (Jesi, 1633), p. 11: «madre dell'arti non fondate in cause naturali, né negli effetti, né ne i segni, posti dalla natura, ò da Dio; ma in segni posti dall'arte humana, & volontà mal'affetta [...] come si è visto in Francia, & Alemagna, e in Grecia, & in tutto il Settentrione; con seditione de popoli, tirannide de' Prencipi, e caduta de Regni, e diminutione d'obedienza, e di forze e di virtù [...] non può il Papa prohibirle, perche è Vicario di Christo, Sapienza di Dio, & ogni scienza è splendor di quello».

orders like the Jesuits oversaw dozens of institutions all over the world. The propagandistic message seems to be that Galileo talked too much about irrelevant matters, and someone could use it against the Church; so he had to be controlled. This could explain why the Church refused to see Galileo's arrest as a tragedy in this opera. Galileo's condemnation was, in the end, unimportant. Or that is at least what it wanted the world to believe.

Conclusion

With the advancement of the sciences in the Modern Age, many philosophers have attempted to distinguish major areas of knowledge and to organize them into binary opposites: philosophy *versus* religion, science *versus* letters, humanities *versus* engineering, and so on. This has served to justify the need for various specializations, which were often isolated from each other. The Galileo affair undoubtedly contributed to this phenomenon. Urban VIII defended the need to keep religion out of disputes by arguing that God exceeded human science. Galileo himself — as Descartes or Kant would later do — considered that the Scriptures were not intended to explain nature, just as science was not meant to save souls. Galileo's life and work served rather to stress the opposite. Astronomy, theology, theatre, music, and so on, behaved as communicating vessels, not as watertight compartments.

The history of opera is a unique example of this multidisciplinary porosity. The Galileo affair not only helps us to understand the allegorical meaning of some librettos, their connection with certain academic disputes, and the appearance of new scientific devices such as the telescope, but also to understand the function of the printed sources and the value of operatic materials (scores, librettos, descriptions, etc.) for the propagation of new ideas. Operas are useful for understanding the cultural transition from geocentrism to heliocentrism, the social position of the new scientist, the new idea of curiosity and the modern defense of the freedom to philosophize.

Moreover, the history of opera provides unique examples for understanding the complexity of the disputes at hand. The religious wars between Catholics and Protestants and the existence of several dynasties with diverse geopolitical interests, force us to consider the cultural projects of very diverse European institutions. Although these operas are always performed in Catholic territories, the actors involved dealt with states as different as the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Papal States, the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania, and the Holy Roman Empire. Moreover, we must not only consider the differences between Church and State, but also between civic dynasties and religious orders, and even between people in the same social group who had opposing worldviews.

All this is only possible from a multidisciplinary approach. We do not need to abandon the existing disciplines, but we can question their limits by letting ourselves be led by the

sources. If those sources speak about philosophy, theology, science, mythology, politics, music, etc., why limit us to one of them? Galileo became a heretic because he was not confined to a discipline. His works were as much about philosophy, religion, and literature as they were about physics and mathematics; his activities as a courtier and an engineer were no less important than his work as an astronomer. The very complexity of opera, with its collaboration of artists, writers, musicians, architects, and engineers, reveals something similar. What is essential is not the elements that we can study separately, but that total image of the *theatrum mundi* that both opera and Galileo wanted to understand.

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