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Keywords

Giuseppe Verdi, I masnadieri, censorship

Censorship of *I masnadieri* in Italy

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Censorship of theatrical works in *ottocento* Italy was ubiquitous. Before being performed, all public stage works, including operas and ballets, were subjected to rigorous censorship of the text and systematic regulation of costumes, scenic designs, movements and gestures, and even playbills and programs.¹ Ecclesiastical and municipal authorities imposed precautionary and repressive restrictions on theatrical material if it was found to be objectionable on religious, moral, ethical, political, legal, patriotic, or even philological grounds. The censor's duty, in sum, was to prohibit the performance of works that might "in any way offend the conscience and the principles of modern times."²

In pronouncing their judgment on operas by excising certain elements and substituting others, the censors, of course, often eliminated vital details of the plot, damaging both the dramatic substance and the musical structure. Their disregard for the integrity of the drama was not easily tolerated by librettists. For example, in 1844 Francesco Piave lamented his plight at the hands of the Roman and Venetian censors:

Finally as for the cancellations of the censors here [Venice] and in Rome it displeases me to see what they plan to substitute in my work, but it will teach me that the inspectors tend to remove what, reasonably or not, worries them. Regarding the substitutions, they are not done with much care and the poor author always runs the risk of seeing the blame owed to others fall upon himself.³

Verdi's recurring difficulties with Italian censorial procedures throughout his career are well-documented. He often encountered problems with censorship both before an opera's premiere as well as at its subsequent productions. His operas suffered from changes of title, alterations to the names and roles of characters, modifications of scenic elements, and textual cuts and substitutions. Substantial censorial changes imposed after an opera's premiere could prove especially detrimental and undoubtedly affected public reception of an opera.⁴

The following discussion examines the nature and extent of such censorial modifications imposed upon a single Verdi opera -- *I masnadieri* -- in its early performances in Italy.

Prior to its premiere in London on 22 July 1847 *I masnadieri* escaped the censorial inspection of the Lord Chamberlain's Office unscathed,⁵ but in Italy the religious, moral, and political elements did not elude the authorities. A brief review of censorship procedures in Italy during the *ottocento* clarifies the situation.

During and after the *Risorgimento* censorship in Italy was widespread. Until Italian unification censorial activity varied according to the state, duchy, or kingdom in which a theatrical work or an opera was to be performed. In some cases a special theatrical commission was formed to censor public spectacles. But more often the procedure was entrusted to a civil authority, e.g., a public official, the internal ministry, or even the chief of police; or it fell under the jurisdiction of religious authorities; or often it became the responsibility of both. To complicate the procedure, although censors abided by specific codes, they often based their judgments on personal criteria as well. It was, therefore, difficult -- if not impossible -- for even an experienced composer or librettist to avert censorial objections to a specific text or plot element for a specific city prior to an opera's premiere. And surely it was futile for a composer and his librettist to anticipate objections censors in other cities may have in subsequent productions.⁶

For Italian performances of *I masnadieri*, then, the libretto had to be approved repeatedly by individual censors. The usual procedure would have been for a theater to obtain a copy of the libretto (from the publisher, Francesco Lucca,) and to submit it to the authorities. When necessary, usually the theater's staff librettist would rewrite problematic passages.⁷ An examination of libretti from the 1850s has revealed that in several cities *I masnadieri* suffered censorial mutilation at the hands of the Italian censors. The modifications range from changes of a few objectionable words or phrases to drastic, large-scale alterations to the text, including

omissions of entire scenes. Substantial censorial alterations were incorporated into libretti for the performances listed in Table I (page 7).⁸

Depending on the location of a performance, censorship of opera libretti focused primarily on religious, moral, or political elements.

Libretti used in the Milanese theaters illustrate that the Lombardian censors forbade texts they perceived to be capable of inciting social upheaval. One need only consider the precarious political climate of the era, in particular the *Cinque Giornate* of 1848, to understand why the authorities' concern centered on such matters. Thus, in the Milanese "version" of *I masnadieri*, rather than dwelling on the heinous qualities of humanity as in the original libretto, in his opening recitative Carlo ponders his plight through a text emphasizing human nobility. (see Example 1, page 7)

In Milan as well as in several other cities reprobate behavior and corruption were excised from the text by civil and religious censors. References to violence, terror, or evil were softened and allusions to liberation and brotherhood were excised, as in Example 2, page 7 (cf. also Example 1).

In the Papal States (*I masnadieri* libretti for Rome 1847-48 and Spoleto 1849-50), and in Senigaglia and Palermo⁹, religion and morality, not surprisingly, represented the censors' main concerns; since at this time, under the reign of Pio IX (1846-78), papal censorship was especially stringent. All explicit and implicit references to religious words, e.g., "croce" ("cross") and "paradiso" ("paradise"); to religious personages, e.g., "Dio" ("God"), "santo" ("saint"), "martiri" ("martyrs"), "pastore" ("pastor"); and to evil forces and immorality, e.g., "dimon" ("demon"), "ira" ("anger"), "druda" ("lover"), and even "folle" ("mad") were, therefore, eliminated. In short, any word or phrase that may have offended the Church on moral or religious grounds was replaced - from "baci" ("kisses") to "giuramenti" ("oaths") and from "cielo" ("heaven") to "inferno" ("hell"). Within these strict religious regulatory standards, the banning of explicit divine and sacred terms was to be expected; but the prohibition of words with implicit or vague religious references, such as "punire" ("to punish"), "estasi" ("ecstasy"), "boia" ("executioner"), "eternità" ("eternity"), and "pietoso" ("merciful"), certainly seems extraordinary. While such objections prevailed in the Papal States, they were a primary concern of censors in other cities as well.

The authorities in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (*I masnadieri* libretti for Naples 1849 and

Palermo 1851-52) exhibited a special concern with morality. Text that evoked images of amorous physical contact, e.g., "baci" ("kisses"), "nelle sue braccia" ("in his arms"), and any references to the uniting or reuniting of the hero and heroine; were censored. The words, "paradiso" ("paradise"), "riso" ("laughter"), or any text indicative of excessive joy related to the love between the hero and the heroine were subject to change. A comparison of Maffei's original text for Amalia's Act I *Scena e Cavatina* (Example 3, page 8) with the censored versions from various cities illustrates the extent and nature of such censorial intervention.

Religious offenses of a different nature accounted for other censorial alterations in *I masnadieri*. One of the most prominent changes involves Francesco's *sogno*. Act IV opens with Francesco's account of his dream of the Last Judgment and his own condemnation. In Cagliari and Senigaglia the *sogno* was cut entirely.¹⁰ Removing the *sogno* weakens the drama and detracts from Francesco's characterization. From a modern viewpoint, the excision of the *sogno* reduces the baritone to a one-dimensional character, a conventional villain, a man devoid of conscience. Having nothing to sing in the final act, Francesco inexplicably disappears from the opera after his duet with Amalia in Act II, an all-but-forgotten character. The *sogno* also represents one of the most poignant musical moments in *I masnadieri*. It is a departure from "le solite forme" in its formal structure, its declamation, and its key scheme. Its omission destroys the musical balance and the dramatic impact of the opera.

In Rome and Spoleto the censors permitted the baritone to perform his aria but imposed alterations on the text, removing references to the Last Judgment and to eternal damnation or salvation.¹¹ Compare, for example, the original text with that in the Rome and Spoleto libretti. (See Example 4, page 9).

One passage that presented a problem to censors in general was the *brindisi* sung by the *masnadieri* in Amalia's Act II *Scena ed Aria*. These verses contain elements that censors would have found objectionable for a variety of religious, moral, civil, and political reasons as outlined above. This passage, therefore, repeatedly underwent censorial revision. (See example 5, page 10).

In addition to substituting and deleting text, the censors modified the names and roles of characters. In the Milan performances of the mid-1850s, for

TABLE I:

| |
|---|
| Papal States: |
| Rome, Teatro Apollo: Carnival 1847-48 (one of the first performances of <i>I masnadieri</i> in Italy) |
| Spoleto: Carnival 1849-50 |
| Kingdom of the Two Sicilies: ¹² |
| Naples, Teatro San Carlo: 1849 |
| Palermo, Teatro Carolino: Carnival 1851-52 |
| Lombardy: ¹³ |
| Milan, Teatro alla Scala: Autumn 1853 |
| Milan, Teatro Carcano: Spring 1854 |
| Senigaglia, Teatro Comunale La Fenice: Fiera 1855 |

Fewer censorial changes occur in the libretti for:

| |
|--------------------------------------|
| Ravenna: Spring 1850 |
| Milan, Teatro Re: Carnival 1848-49 |
| Cagliari, Teatro Civico: Autumn 1849 |

EXAMPLE 1 Carlo's Act I opening recitative

London, Her Majesty's Theatre 1847:

Quando io leggo in Plutarco, ho noia, ho schifo
 Di questa età d'imbelli! -- Oh! se nel freddo
 Cenere de' miei padri ancor vivesse
 Dello spirito di Arminio una scintilla!
 Vorrei Lamagna tutta
 Far libera così, che Sparta e Atene,
 Sarieno al paragone serve in catene.

Milan, Teatro alla Scala 1853 & Teatro Carcano
 1854:

Quando io leggo in Plutarco, il cor s'eleva
 A pensieri sublimi.
 Oh come un tempo gli uomini
 Eran prodi e sagaci! e come forti
 Eran l'alme loro! Oh, se tal fosse
 L'umana razza ancor, sì spesso l'ira
 Non farebber la terra inorridire.

EXAMPLE 2 Chorus in Act II Finale

London, Her Majesty's Theatre 1847:

Carlo: Su, fratelli! stringetevi insieme,
 Non temete di gente che teme!
Carlo and the Masnadieri: Su, fratelli! corriamo
 alla pugna
 Come lupi di questa boscaglia!
 Trionfar d'una schiava ciurmaglia
 Ne farà disperato valor.
 Nella destra un esercito impugna
 Che brandisce la libera spada.
 Basta un sol della nostra masnada
 Per la rotta di tutti costor.

Milan, Teatro alla Scala 1853 & Teatro Carcano
 1854:

Carlo: O compagni, contarli non giova
 Affrontiam la terribile prova.
Carlo and the Masnadieri: Sì, ben dici, corriamo,
 corriamo
 La destrezza può trarci d'impaccio,
 La speranza di prenderci al laccio
 Noi sapremo rapire a costor.
 O compagni, corriamo, corriamo
 Come lupi di questa boscaglia,
 Ben sfuggir dalla vila ciurmaglia
 Ne farà disperato valor.

EXAMPLE 3 Amalia's Act I Scena e CavatinaLondon, Her Majesty's Theatre 1847:

Lo sguardo avea degli angeli
 Che Dio creò d'un riso! --
 I baci suoi stillavano
 Gioir di paradiso!
 Nelle sue braccia! --
 un vortice
 D'ebbrezza n'avvolgea.
 Come due voci unisone,
 Sul core il cor battea!
 Anima uniasi ad anima
 Fuse ad un foco istesso,
 E terra e ciel pareano
 Stemprarsi in quell'amplesso.
 Dolcezze ignote all'estasi
 D'un Immortal gustai;
 Sogno divin! ma sparvero,
 Nè torneran più mai!

Rome, Teatro Apollo 1847-48:

La sua diletta immagine
 Sempre ho nel cor scolpita
 Ei sol di rose spargere
 Ei sol poté mia vita.
 A lui d'appresso un vortice
 Di gioia m'avvolgea
 Come due voci unisone
 Sul core il cor battea.
 Anima uniasi ad anima
 Fuse ad un foco istesso,
 Giurai con esso vivere
 Giurai morir con esso!
 Giorni d'amor, di giubilo
 Al fianco suo passai...
 Sogno divin! ma sparvero,
 Nè torneran più mai!

Palermo, Teatro Carolino 1851-52:

Lo sguardo avea degli angeli
 Che Dio creò un riso
 I detti suoi rendeano
 Di gioia il cor conquiso.
 Seco parlando, un vortice
 D'ebbrezza m'avvolgea
 Per inusato giubilo
 Nel seno, il cor battea.

Senigaglia, Teatro Comunale La Fenica 1855:

Avea lo sguardo etereo
 Brillante di un sorriso
 I detti suoi stillavano
 Le gioie dell'Eliso.
 A lui d'appresso! ... un vortice
 Di gioia m'avvolgea
 Come una voce unisone
 Il nostro cor battea.
 Piene di gaudio, l'anime
 Ardean d'un foco istesso,
 Un gaudio inconcepibile
 Seco recando impresso.
 Dolcezza qual d'un estasi
 Io nel mio cor piovai;...
 Ore di gioia! ... Ah, sparvero,
 Nè torneran più mai.

EXAMPLE 4 Francesco's *sogno* in Act IV

London, Her Majesty's Theatre, 1847:

Francesco: Pareami, che sorto da lauto convito,
Dormissi fra l'ombre d'un lieto giardino;
Ed ecco, percosso da sordo muggito,
Mi sveglio, ed in fiamme la terra m'appar:
E dentro quel fuoco squagliati, consunti
Gli umani abituri -- poi sorgere un grido:
"O terra rigetta dal grembo i defunti!
Rigetta i defunti dai vortici, o mar."
Ed ossa infinite coprir le pianure --
Fui tratto in quel punto sui gioghi del Sina;
E tre m'abbagliano splendenti figure --

Arminio: L'immagine è questa dell'ultimo di!

Francesco: Armata la prima d'un codice arcano,
Sclamava: "Infelice che manca di fede."
E l'altra, uno specchio recandosi in mano,
Dicea: "La menzogna confondesi qui."
In alto una lance la terza librava:
"Venite, gridando, figliuoli d'Adamo."
E primo il mio nome fra nemi tuonava,
Che il Sina copriano d'un orrido vel.

Ogni ora, passando, d'un nuovo misfatto
Gravava una coppa che crebbe qual monte;
Ma il Sangue nell'altra del nostro Riscatto
Tenea la gran mole sospesa nel ciel.

Quand'ecco un vegliardo, per fame distrutto
Spiccosi una ciocca di bianchi capelli,
E dentro la tazza di colpe e di lutto
Quel veglio a me noto la ciocca gittò.

Allor, cigolando, la coppa giù scese,
Balzò l'avversaria sublime alle nubi,
E tosto una voce di tuono s'intese:
"Per te, maledetto, l'Uom-Dio non pendò.

Rome, Teatro Apollo 1847-48 and Spoleto 1849-50:

Francesco: Tremendo un fragore sull'aure s'innalza
Poi fero una voce di tuono ribomba.
Lo sdegno del Cielo t'insegue, t'incalza,
Tue colpe punisca l'eterno penar,
Io fremo ... vacillo ... nel petto, anelante
Già manca lo spirito ... fuggir non m'è dato,
al suol infuocato confitto ho le piante

Arminio: Il sogno tremendo mi gela d'orror!

Francesco: Quand'ecco un vegliardo per fame cadente
Ver me trasciarsi da lunge vid'io:
Mirai paventando quel volto languente ...
E in petto mi scese novello terror.

Mio padre era quello ... ne scorsi l'aspetto.

Udii la sua voce più forte del tuono:
 Dal Ciel, dalla terra tu sei maledetto
 Sul capo ti pende decreto fatal.
 L'atroce minaccia, l'accento tremendo
 Destar nel mio petto rimorsi e tormenti
 Sull'orlo del vento, sull'aure l'intendo,
 Ancora son preda d'angoscia mortal.
 Quel sogno, que' detti scolpiti ho nel core
 Per sempre la pace, per sempre ho perduta
 Mi opprime, m'agghiaccia ignoto terrore ...
 Ahi tardi mi strazi rimorso crudele!
 Perchè sulla fronte sollevasti il crine?
 Da vane chimere perchè son turbato?
 Ti sento, ti sento ... tu m'agiti alfine,
 Punisci mie colpe giustizia del ciel

EXAMPLE 5 Chorus in Amalia's Act II *Scena ed Aria*

London, Her Majesty's Theatre 1847:

Godiam, che fugaci
 Son l'ore del riso;
 Dai calici ai baci
 Ne guidi il piacer.
 La fossa, la croce
 Ne manda un avviso:
 "La vita è veloce,
 T'affretta a goder."
 Lasciamo i lamenti
 Di stupidi rito,
 Plorar sugli spenti
 E folle dolor.
 Non turbino i negri
 Colori il convito,
 Qui brilli e n'allegri
 La tazza e l'amor.
 La sorte futura
 De' fiacchi è terrore,
 Ma sillaba oscura
 De' forti al pensier.
 [repeat of verse 1]

Rome, Teatro Apollo, Carnival 1847-48:

Godiam che al riso
 Fugaci son l'ore
 Dal vino all'amore
 Ne guidi il piacer.
 L'etade fuggita
 Ne manda un avviso:
 "La vita è veloce,
 T'affretta a goder."
 Lasciamo, i lamenti
 La gioia si desti
 Pensare agli spenti
 E troppo dolor.
 [omitted]
 [omitted]
 [repeat of verse 1]

Milan, Teatro 1853 & Teatro Carcano 1854:

Godiam, che fugaci

Son l'ore del riso;

Dai calici ai baci

Ne guidi il piacer.

Del mondo la voce

Ne manda un avviso:

"La vita è veloce,

T'affretta a goder."

Dei verdi nostr'anni

Cediamo all'invito

Le cure, gli affanni

Sbandiamo dal cor ...

Non turbino i negri

Pensieri il convitto

Qui brilli e n'allegri

La tazza e l'amor.

Lasciamo agli insani

La tema e il terrore

Di ciò che domani

Potrebbe accader.

[repeat of verse 1]

Naples, Teatro San Carlo 1849 and Palermo, Teatro Carolino 1851-52:

[verse 3 only was censored]

Sien brevi i lamenti

Di funebre rito,

Non desta gli spenti

Il nostro dolor.

Ravenna 1850:

Godiam, che fugaci

Son l'ore del riso;

Dai calici ai baci

Ne guidi il piacer.

La tomba e la culla

Ne manda un'avviso:

La vita è un bel nulla

T'affretta a goder.

Lasciamo i lamenti

Di stupidi rito,

Plorar sugli spenti

E folle dolor.

Non turbino i negri

Colori il convito,

Qui brilli e n'allegri

La tazza e l'amor.

La sorte futura

Non sembri terrore,

Non senta rancura

De' forti il pensier.

[verse 6 omitted]

EXAMPLE 6 Act IV Duet for Francesco and Moser

London, Her Majesty's Theatre 1847:

Francesco: È la prima -- Odimi, eterno!
E sarà la volta estrema,
Ch'io ti prego -- Ah no, l'inferno
Non si dee beffar di me!

Moser: Trema, iniquo! il lampo, il tuono
Ti sta sopra -- iniquo, trema!
Dio ti nega il suo perdono,
Sta l'abisso innanzi a te.

Naples, Teatro San Carlo 1849 & Palermo, Teatro
Carolino 1851-52:

Francesco: I tuoi sdegni, Eterno, ammorza..

La possanza tua suprema
Prono invoco ... Arcana forza
La preghiera vieta a me!

Moser: Trema, iniquo! il lampo, il tuono
Ti sta sopra -- iniquo, trema!
Dio ti nega il suo perdono,
Sta l'abisso innanzi a te.

example, "Francesco" was changed to "Tebaldo" to avoid reference to the Austrian Emperor.¹⁴ This change did not damage the tragic essence of the work. But, in other cases, the character alterations could not have failed to have an impact on the dramatic substance and on public "understanding" and acceptance of the opera.

In the Palermo libretto, for example, Francesco became the son of Massimiliano's brother, viz., Massimiliano's nephew rather than his son; and Amalia became Massimiliano's niece by "una defunta consorte". These role changes resulted in minor alterations in wording, e.g., in Francesco's Act I Scena ed Aria where "zio" ("uncle") replaced "padre" ("father"), in the Duetto between Amalia and Francesco in act II where "il mesto Conte" ("the sad Count") replaced "il tuo genitor" ("your parent"), and in the Act III Finale where "il nipote" ("nephew") replaced "figlio mio" ("my son") and "Francesco inumano" ("inhuman Francesco") replaced "un figlio infernale" ("an infernal son"). They also eliminated the pathos evoked by the destruction of close human relationships. But, the elimination of the paternal relationship between Massimiliano and Francesco and of the sibling relationship between Carlo and Francesco removed from the drama all vestiges of patricide, fratricide, and incest, thereby complying with the authorities' concerns with moral issues.

By far the most prominent alteration censors made to the cast of characters was the elimination of Moser, the Priest. He was expunged from *I masnadieri* in Rome, Spoleto, Ravenna, and Cagliari; and in Palermo he was demoted to "un antico

consigliere in casa Moor" ("an old counselor in the Moor household"). While by removing Moser the censors satisfied the stringent religious rules, in the process they obliterated one of the basic premises of the drama - religious pathos - and eliminated one of the most effective scenes - Francesco's desperate, though futile, plea for forgiveness in the Duetto between Francesco and Moser in Act IV. Eliminating Moser necessitated the deletion or at least the modification of this duet. In the uncensored version of *I masnadieri*, as a result of his terrifying dream, Francesco attempts to repent and asks Moser to pardon him. In Schiller's drama and Maffei's libretto, the Priest explains that he cannot absolve Francesco; only God may do so. The scene thus discloses an indispensable underlying philosophical tenet of the plot - divine forgiveness and salvation for those who repent. But Moser's refusal to pardon a repentant sinner undoubtedly accounted for the censors' objections to the scene.

The text and the music for Francesco's and Moser's duet was cut entirely in Cagliari¹⁵ and Ravenna. In Palermo and Naples the censors allowed the scene between Moser and Francesco to be performed, albeit with textual modifications. (See Example 6, above)

The Rome and Spoleto versions of *I masnadieri*, too, retained the music for the duet but, due to Moser's absence, replaced the text with a dialog between Francesco and Arminio. (See Example 7, below).

The censored *I masnadieri* was a substantially different -- and a much less dramatically poignant --

opera than the one Verdi and Maffei had written. The elimination of the Priest and the drastic text substitutions and deletions in the final act demonstrate the damaging effects of censorial mutilation on *I masnadieri*. The modifications to Act IV prove to be the most detrimental to the opera in that they distort its dramatic and musical structure. Without the pathos created by religious references,¹⁶ the contrast of good and evil, and the concept of repentance so aptly expressed in the final act, the story loses its meaning and the libretto loses its impact. The plot becomes no more than a skeleton of Schiller's original play; the opera, a distortion of Verdi's and Maffei's original conception.

Verdi himself believed that such alterations damaged his works and vehemently objected to performances of his operas in cut and censored versions. Concerning a performance of *I due Foscari* in 1846, in which the Paris Opéra had decided to use a censored and cut Neapolitan version, Verdi wrote

to Léon Escudier:

I am surprised that in doing *Foscari* in Paris you have resorted to the version that was performed in Naples, which in altering the drama to the point of rendering the most interesting moments ridiculous, has horribly mistreated the music. . . . I find it reasonable for Coletti [the baritone] to transpose those things ill-suited to his voice, but the true artist, the conscientious artist cannot and must not alter the words, the dramatic points, the musical forms, the instrumentation, etc. . .

Verdi concluded: "If *Foscari* is to be effective, it can do so just as it is, not in any other way."¹⁷ He surely would have said the same about *I masnadieri*.

EXAMPLE 7 Act IV Duet for Arminio and Francesco (Moser and Francesco)

Rome, Teatro Apollo 1847-48 & Spoleto 1849-50:

Francesco: Giusto ciel! pietà, perdono (s'inginocchia)

Deh! soccorri un disperato!

Io t'imploro ... (s'alza in furore) Ah no, non sono

Non sono degno di mercé!

Arminio: Il rimorso è tardo omai

Ti sovrasta orrendo fato

Non sperar pietà giammai

Sta l'abisso innanzi a te!

NOTES

1. See, for example, Article 12 from the Papal Edict of 10 January 1847 [cited by Carlo Di Stefano, *La censura teatrale in Italia (1600-1962)* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1964), p. 53] which states: "Public spectacles will be regulated with precautionary measures established by law. Theatrical works, before being presented, are therefore subject to censorship."

2. Di Stefano (p. 61) cites an anonymous mid-nineteenth-century Tuscan censor.

3. Cited by Di Stefano, p. 80: "Quanto poi alle cancellature della censura di Roma e di costà non mi spiacerebbe vedere cosa intendono sostituire a quello da me fatto, poichè ella mi insegnerà che li revisori tendono a levare quello che ragionevolmente o no gl'inquietà, circa poi le sostituzioni non si danno gran cura ed il povero autore corre sempre il pericolo di vedersi cadere addosso il biasimo dovuto ad altri."

Di Stefano assigns Piave's letter to 1844 but gives no further information; thus far I have been unable to locate additional references. It is conceivable, however, that the opera to which Piave referred in this letter was *Lorenzino di Medici*, a subject that had already suffered from political censorship by the time he and Verdi discussed it as a possibility for the 1844 commission for the Teatro Argentina in Rome [cf., e.g., Franco Abbiati, *Giuseppe Verdi* (Milan: Ricordi, 1959) vol.1, pp.512-516]. Alternatively the opera could be *Ermani*, which shortly after its premiere (Teatro La Fenice, Venice, 9 March 1844) was performed in a censored version at the Teatro Argentina in Rome (29 May 1844), [cf. Mario Rinaldi, *Due secoli di musica al Teatro Argentina* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1978), vol. 2, p. 778, n.35; and *La rivista* no. 21, 30 May 1844].

4. Despite the importance of such modifications to the reception history of Verdi's operas, however, few detailed studies exist concerning censorial intervention after an opera's premiere. The published studies include Marco Spada, "Ermani e la censura napoletana," *Studi verdiani* 5 (Parma: Istituto di studi verdiani, 1989), pp. 11-34; Diana Dionisi Ascari, "Da *Stiffelio* a *Guglielmo Wellingrode*: gli interventi della censura," in *Tornando a "Stiffelio"*, ed. Giovanni Morelli (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1987), pp. 129-39; "A Note on Censorship," in *Verdi's "Macbeth": A Sourcebook*, pp. 356-58; and concerning *Rigoletto*, Mario Lavagetto, *Un caso di censura* (Milan: Il Formichiere, 1979).

5. The office of the Lord Chamberlain was responsible for licensing theaters and for exercising censorship over stage works performed throughout Britain. According to the Theatre Regulation Act of 1843 (10 Geo. II cap. 28 and 6 and 7 Vict. cap. 68), every tragedy, comedy, farce, opera, interlude, melodrama, and pantomime -- in short, any stage entertainment -- had to be approved by the Office of the Lord Chamberlain prior to public performance. [Cf. Frank Fowell and Frank Palmer, *Censorship in England* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1913, Reprint 1969), p. 293.]

6. Even though Verdi wrote *I masnadieri* for London, he, of course, knew that it would be performed in Italy where it would be subjected to scrutiny by the censors. It is conceivable that, despite having already written ten operas for Italy, Verdi found it difficult to anticipate objections by the Italian censors. For example, Verdi had experienced first-hand the idiosyncracies of the Papal censors when in 1844 he wrote *I due Foscari* for Rome. One would assume, therefore, that he was well aware of words and phrases that would cause them to call for alterations. *I due Foscari*, however, was staged prior to the Papacy of Pio IX. What Verdi, in all probability, did not know in 1847 was the unwarranted and often ridiculous extremes of papal censorship under Pio IX.

More likely, however, Verdi simply may have refused to alter or destroy the drama or Maffei's libretto by making major changes. Previously, in *I Lombardi alla prima Crociata* (1843), despite the censor's objections to enacting religious ceremonies on stage (which included an ecclesiastical procession, a baptism, and sections of the liturgy), Verdi refused to allow his opera to be dismembered. [Cf., e.g., Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi. Vol 1: From "Oberto" to "Rigoletto"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 116.]

7. There is no evidence to suggest that Verdi participated in any of these censored Italian productions. Nor is there any reason to believe that Maffei was responsible for new texts.

It is also worth noting that even when the libretto was heavily censored, Verdi's music was not subjected to recomposition because of censorial textual changes. Francesco's *sogno* and the duet between Francesco and the priest Moser in Act IV were cut from performances, as was the *giuramento* between Carlo and the *masnadieri* in the Act II Finale. This does not preclude the likelihood that in subsequent productions *I masnadieri* suffered, as did so many other operas, from alterations incorporated to accommodate singers, i.e., from substitute arias and *puntature*.

8. A complete concordance of the censored passages in these libretti can be found in my *Verdi's "I masnadieri": Its Genesis and Early Reception*, Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1992 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1992), vol. 2, Appendix D.

9. Religious censorship of the Senigaglia and Palermo libretti was slightly less stringent than that of the Rome and Spoleto texts.

10. The *sogno* was treated as expendible in several uncensored contemporary libretti as well. Dashes or *virgole* often appear printed in the text with a note that the text could be omitted for brevity, this indicated that the number could be cut in performance. It is, however, inconceivable that Verdi would have condoned such a cut.

11. In Naples minor text changes were incorporated into Francesco's *sogno*.

12. Many, though not all, of the changes in the Naples and the Palermo libretti are identical.

13. The two Milanese libretti contain identical texts.

14. Cf. Di Stefano, p. 79.

15. The Cagliari libretto contains the complete text for Act IV, but a note on the cast page reads: "Le scene 1^a, 2^a, 3^a, 4^a della parte quarta si omettono." ("Scenes 1, 2, 3, and 4 of part four are omitted.") Although Moser's name is listed on the cast page, no singer's name is assigned. These peculiarities may be easily explained. Publishers routinely used a single engraving of a libretto for several productions, provided the text did not need to be altered to comply with censorship. They would substitute only the title page to provide the information concerning the place and season of a specific performance and the cast page containing the singers (often on the verso of the title page). The libretto used in Cagliari is one such "standard" libretto printed by Francesco Lucca with new title and cast pages.

16. The changes Verdi and Maffei made in text details during the genesis of the opera are discussed in Chapter 3 of my *Verdi's "I masnadieri": Its Genesis and Early Reception*.

17. Verdi to Escudier, 25 August 1846 [photocopy in Parma at the Istituto nazionale di studi verdiani 33/17, published in Italian and Russian by L. Muzika in *Lettere di musicisti stranieri* (1967), pp. 94 and 270; original in Publicnaia Biblioteka M. E. Saltikova Scedrina, Leningrad]: "Sono sorpreso che per fare i *Foscari* a Parigi vi sia ricorso alla partizione che si eseguiva a Napoli, la quale alterata nel dramma fino al punto di rendere ridicoli i momenti più interessanti, è maltrattata orribilmente nella parte musicale. . . . Trovo ragionevole che Coletti trasporti le cose non adatte alla sua voce, ma l'artista vero, l'artista di coscienza non può nè deve alterare le parole, i punti drammatici, le forme musicali, l'istromentazione, ecc. . . . Se i *Foscari* possono ottenere effetto, lo possono così, ma non in nessuna altra maniera."