A Tale of Five Cities: The Peregrinations of Somma's and Verdi's Gustavo III (and Una vendetta in dominò and Un ballo in maschera) at the Hands of the Neapolitan and Roman Censorship

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A Tale of Five Cities: The Peregrinations of Somma's and Verdi's Gustavo III (and Una vendetta in dominó and Un ballo in maschera) at the Hands of the Neapolitan and Roman Censorship

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Verdi had more difficulties with the censorship during the genesis of Un ballo in maschera than with any other of his operas, and those difficulties are extensively documented. Once the opera was premiered and the opera began to circulate, however, the troubles ceased, partly as a result of the dismantling of the censorship following the creation of a united Italy, partly because the libretto had gained the approval of the Roman censors, usually the strictest in the Italian peninsula. This essay focuses on Verdi's and Somma's struggles with the Neapolitan and Roman censors leading up to the premiere of the work and is therefore complementary to studies about operatic censorship that focus on the censors' "revisions" made after the premiere of the operas, generally in the composer's absence and in venues other than that of the premiere production.2

The Five Versions (Cities)

In sketching the genesis of Un ballo in maschera we shall encounter three versions of Somma's libretto (one of which, Un ballo in maschera, needs to be further divided into the text in the original printed libretto and that in Verdi's autograph score) and two librettos concocted by the Neapolitan censorship and later by the Roman censorship. Table 1 provides an overview of the five versions, with the cities in which they are set and the sigla that will be used in the discussion of a few case studies later.

Table 1 -- The Five Versions/Cities

1. G Gustavo III -- set in Stockholm, March 1792. This was to be performed at the Naples Teatro San Carlo in the Carnival season of 1857-58. Because of the Neapolitan censors, objections to the setting, this metamorphosed into the following version even before Verdi finished composing the opera.

2. V Una vendetta in dominó -- set in Stettin (Pomerania, now Szczecin in Poland), second half of the 17th century. This was the version that Verdi brought to Naples in January 1858 but that the censors would reject.

3. A Adelia degli Adimari -- set in Florence, 1385 (the version concocted by the Neapolitan censorship).

4. C Il Conte di Gotemberg -- set in Göteborg (Gothenburg), Sweden, 1760 (the version concocted by the Roman censorship).

5. B Un ballo in maschera -- set in Boston at the end of the 17th century; BL = the printed libretto; BS = Verdi's score.
Table 2
Changes Required in the Neapolitan censors’ letter of 3 November 1851

1. Change the King into a Duke
2. A Celtic region and an epoch that justifies the superstitions, belief in witchcraft and in the summoning up of spirits—ideas that are distant from our Christian beliefs
3. Anywhere in the north the poet wants except for Norway and Sweden
4. The hero’s love noble and enthusiastic throughout, but from the very beginning struggling with remorse, given his friendship with the husband of his beloved.
5. The hatred of his enemies for hereditary reasons, such as usurpation of property—actual or imagined
6. The party (festa) in conformance with the customs and legends [of the setting] that will have been chosen
7. No firearms.

The more stringent requirements reported in Verdi’s letter of 7 February 1858 to Somma (reporting the censors’ probable rejection of Una vendetta in domino)

8. Change the protagonist into a lord, taking away any idea of sovereignty
9. Change the wife into a sister
10. Change the witch’s [sic] scene, transferring it to a time in which one believed in these things
11. No ball
12. The murder off stage
13. Eliminate the scene with the names chosen by lot.

Two additional concerns evident from the censored libretto, Adelia degli Adimari:

14. No gallows
15. No masks

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\[a\] This letter is apparently lost, but Verdi quotes the seven demands on the final page of the Vendetta/Adelia libretto (see Luzio, 1: 268-69 for a facsimile and transcription), in each case followed by a claim that he had met the demands (e.g., to the first he writes, "I made him a Pomeranian duke" ["Ne feci un Duca di Pommerania"]). The transcription given here is based on a xerox copy of the original document. In the body of the table I number the concerns consecutively.

\[b\] Pascolato, p. 91.
1. **Gustavo III, set in Stockholm, in March 1792.**

In mid-October 1857 Antonio Somma agreed to fashion a libretto based on Scribe's libretto for Aubert's *Gustave III* (premiered at the Paris Opéra, 27 February 1833) and set to work, moving ahead scene by scene, tableau by tableau, backtracking to satisfy Verdi's requests for revision. In the meantime the Neapolitan censors examined the prose version that Verdi had sent, and in early November they sent a list of seven required modifications (Table 2 page 54, #1-7), two of which concerned the time and place of the action. Somma forged ahead with the libretto—he and Verdi would decide what to do about the setting later. Although Somma reached the end of the *Gustavo III* libretto, it would be a mistake to regard this as a finished libretto ready to be set to music, for—in addition to the change in setting—revisions would continue into early January, by which time the libretto had already metamorphosed into

2. **Una vendetta in domino, set in Pomerania, second half of the 17th century.**

In the middle of November—before he had reached the end of his draft of *Gustavo III*—Somma suggested medieval Pomerania, and, in an oft-quoted letter Verdi accepted the place but rejected the period:

I really think that the twelfth century is too distant for our Gustavo. It's such a rough and brutal time, especially in those countries, that I find it sheer nonsense to have characters sculpted in the French manner like Gustavo and Oscar. We should need to find a princeling, a duke, some devil or other—all right, in the North—who's seen a bit of the world and had a whiff of Louis XIV's court. Once the drama's finished you can think about this at your leisure.

Throughout the genesis of the opera Verdi was exigent about the period but surprisingly cavalier about the place. His sense of geography was a little fuzzy too, since he would later insist that Pomerania met the censors' requirement that the opera be located in a Celtic region.

In early December Somma proposed Stettin, the capital of the Duchy of Pomerania, in the second half of the 17th century (it is now Szczecin in Poland), with the Duke Gustavo as the protagonist, and in the ongoing revisions he began to refer to the Duke rather than the King. At the end of the month we find the first reference to the definitive title of the Pomeranian version: *Una vendetta in dominò.* And the libretto and still incomplete score that Verdi brought with him to Naples in January 1858 were *Una vendetta in dominò,* set in Pomerania.

Opera producers who choose to set the opera in Stockholm often prate about "returning the opera to Sweden," but while Verdi may have begun to compose the opera while it was still to be *Gustavo III,* it had already metamorphosed into *Una vendetta in dominò* by the time he completed it: Verdi never composed an opera set in Stockholm.

3. **Adelia degli Adimari, set in Florence, 1385**

As is well known, the Naples censorship rejected the libretto as it stood, demanding substantial changes including six conditions of which Verdi complained in a letter that begins "I'm in a sea of troubles! It's almost certain that the Censorship won't allow our libretto." These demands are shown in Table 2, #8-13.

The increased stringency of the censors' conditions, especially regarding regicide, has been plausibly attributed to the fear occasioned by Felice Orsini's attempted assassination of Louis Napoleon, but clearly not all of these changes were motivated by political considerations. An anonymous librettist, probably Domenico Bolognese, was brought in to concoct a replacement libretto entitled *Adelia degli Adimari* (or, as Verdi would contemptuously style it, *Adelia degli Animali*) set in Florence in 1385. After charges and counter-charges, the matter was settled out of court, with the result that the opera would eventually be premiered not in Naples, but in Rome, and the libretto of *Adelia* would have virtually no influence upon the shaping of that of *Un ballo in maschera.*

In preparation for the lawsuit, a document was drawn up presenting the librettos of *Una vendetta in dominò* and *Adelia degli Adimari,* placed confrontationally in facing columns and with all lines in Adelia containing modifications from Somma's *Una vendetta* marked with a pair of diagonal lines. To this Verdi added vitriolic footnotes mocking the stupidity of the censors' version. Alessandro Luzio discussed this document more than sixty years ago in the first volume of the *Carteggi verdiani,* transcribing all of Verdi's comments, so we need not dwell on it here.

*Adelia* does not incorporate all six changes in Verdi's list—at least the soprano is the wife of the baritone and not his sister, and the murder takes place on stage. But Gustavo becomes Armando degli Armandi, a head of the Guelph faction rather than a ruler; there is no ball, no drawing of lots. Furthermore, although not mentioned by the censors, the libretto of *Adelia* includes two additional important changes (see #14-15 in Table 2): the gallows have been eliminated and there are no masks (the only disguise appears in the fortune-telling scene, when Armando appears disguised as a hunter).

One can't help but feel a little pity for the "reviser," who had to replace the objectionable words or ideas with new text that still observes the rules of rhyme and metrics, can be sung to the same music, and, preferably, still makes sense. (His task was thus similar to that of the "revisers" of...
completed works to be presented in the composer's absence.) His job would have been much simpler if, for example, the censors had ordered Verdi and Somma, back in November 1857, to eliminate the scene of the drawing of lots. But now it was too late: the text had been set to music and it was up to the censor/poet to devise a substitute text. In *Una vendetta in domino* Renato tells Amelia: "V'ha tre nomi in quell'urna - un ne tratta / L'Innocente tua mano" ("There are three names in that urn; may your innocent hand extract one"). The hapless censor replaces this with "Sarrai dunque d'un vendicce ferro / L'Innocente tua mano" ("Let your innocent hand be armed with an avenging blade"). Verdi exploded: "Could there be anything more ridiculous? The husband puts a weapon in the hands of a woman, even though she is timid, and so much the more so because she is believed to be guilty; one does not say to what purpose, and finally, it will be He who will be the killer."14 And, Verdi might have added, without the drawing of lots, what stage action would be conceivable for the intensely dramatic music he provided for the extended pantomime?

Even before the denouement of the battle with the Neapolitan censors, Verdi had initiated negotiations with the Teatro Apollo in Rome. Verdi wanted very badly to teach the Neapolitans a lesson by giving that opera "almost at the gates of Naples to show that even the Roman censorship permitted this libretto."15

4. *Il Conte di Gothemberg*, set in Gothenberg (Sweden), 1760

Interestingly, the libretto Verdi sent to Rome for approval was not *Una vendetta in domino*, at least parts of which he had already set to music, but *Gustavo III*. Through references in the correspondence, Verdi scholars have long known about plans to change the opera into *Il Conte di Gothemberg*, but until recently no source of the libretto — or that of *Gustavo III* — was known. On one visit to the AIVS collection some years ago, Martin Chusid handed me a microfilm that had been shot at the Rome Archivio di Stato in 1986. It had not been catalogued or even examined, but he thought it might be worth looking at. Indeed it was. It includes the redaction of *Gustavo III* that Verdi sent to Rome. It is sometimes hard to read, since the censors have used it to cobble together our fourth version, *Il Conte di Gothemberg*.16 At the end there is an inscription with the "Si permette" — the permission to publish ... if the corrections are observed — signed by the ecclesiastical censor (revisore) Ruggieri and dated 26 March 1858. So this one manuscript presents two previously unknown librettos of proto-*Ballo* operas, as well as some important correspondence between Verdi and his friend Antonio Vasselli — Donizetti's brother-in-law — who by late June 1858 had entered as an intermediary into the negotiations with Rome.

This manuscript of *Gustavo III* is not a fair copy of an earlier, complete libretto of *Gustavo III*, for, as I have argued above, *Gustavo III* had blended into *Una vendetta in domino* even before its completion. This redaction must postdate both *Vendetta* and *Adelicia*, because it incorporates a couple of the Neapolitan censors' readings introduced into Adelia. It is quite close to *Una vendetta in domino*: a quick comparison yielded about fifteen local variants, without major differences. Indeed, both are in turn close to the text of *Un ballo in maschera*.

5. *Un ballo in maschera*

In late May 1858 Verdi sent Somma a copy of the censored libretto, *Il Conte di Gothemberg*,17 and, in a long and bitter letter, Somma washed his hands of the whole affair. "Do what you like with the poetry, and if you find that this *Conte di Gothemberg* can stand, so be it, just so long as my name is left out of it." It would be, after all, an impossible task to satisfy the censors: "...one understands that it's necessary to satisfy the Censura and one can try to come to an agreement, but when in place of [just] a variant there is merely caprice, stupidity, ignorance, and an intense longing to ruin everything, to tell the truth, I despair of succeeding."18 Somma ends by asking where to send the libretto back to Verdi.

Harsh words, but one should put the matter in perspective. The objections of Somma, justified though they may have been, primarily concern local details that could be, and eventually were, resolved. The Roman censors' changes, unlike those of their Neapolitan counterparts, had not affected the dramatic structure. Gustavo remains a political leader; the disguises and the masked ball are all retained. The Roman censors, under Verdi's threat to take his opera and put it on elsewhere — presumably in the more enlightened North — were on their best behavior. In that sense, this case is hardly comparable to their Roman censors' manhandling of works presented in the absence of the composer, e.g., with *Rigoletto* or *La traviata*.19 The main issues to be resolved were the gallows and, more difficult, the drawing of lots to choose the assassin. (It has recently been suggested that the censors had intended to remove not only the drawing of lots, but all of the first tableau of Act III after Amelia's aria, "Moré, ma prima in grazia," but that seems unlikely.)20

In June Antonio Vasselli, now involved as a mediator, assured Verdi that "all the characters and situations would be left just as the poet imagined them. It would just be necessary to move the scene outside Europe, for example in America, like the Governor, viceroy of New York or the like. And, just between us: who wouldn't already know that he is Gustavus of Sweden?"21 It seems then that the suggestion
Vasselli replied in a little known letter of 31 July, excerpts of which deserve to be quoted at length:

"changes imposed by the censors, even Verdi recognized that meeting the exigencies of the theater."

They had treated Cammarano’s libretto with leniency (though not period) already mentioned. Nonetheless, it seems likely that Verdi had accepted Vasselli’s suggestion for North America, although when he conferred with Somma they opted for Boston rather than New York—were they still thinking about the Celtics?

After Verdi and Somma conferred in Venice, Verdi informed Vasselli: “The poet will put all his good will into [dramatic] situations, etc. etc., but would want the action moved outside Europe. What would you say to North America at the time of the English domination? If not America, some other location. The Caucasus perhaps?"

The Censura would permit the subject and the dramatic situations, etc. etc., but would want the action moved outside Europe. What would you say to North America at the time of the English domination? If not America, some other location. The Caucasus perhaps?

There is no reason to view the Caucasus as a bitterly ironic reductio ad absurdum: there was, after all, a Scribe model for a Caucasian setting, as well as Verdi’s indifference to geography (though not period) already mentioned. Nonetheless, it seems likely that Verdi had accepted Vasselli’s suggestion for North America, although when he conferred with Somma they opted for Boston rather than New York—were they still thinking about the Celtics?

The illustrious Somma asks that one allow him the leeway with which Cammarano was treated in Trovatore. And this... has been granted to him by the Censura, except for some concepts and expressions. [Here Vasselli explains that a large part of the changes consist in removing words associated with royalty, since the protagonist is no longer a king.] As for the rest, it will escape neither you nor the illustrious poet that the problem [male] lies more in the form [i.e., the choice of words] than in the concept. I shall explain. I saw in the corrections of the Censura that may he fall assassinated was replaced by may he fall murdered. And it is natural that, having permitting the subject, the dramatic situations, the staging indications etc., the Censura intends to grant that broad range of expressions that is necessary to give liveliness to the dialogue and to manifest the passions that are in play in the drama. Only its position imposes upon it that it recommend excluding the excessive crudeness of some of these expressions. For example, Somma would not have to take great pains if instead of saying assassination awaits you he had to say death awaits you. [Somma would later suggest “a dagger awaits you” (un pugnale t’aspetta”), but Verdi replied that that was even worse. As Luzio noted, a dagger was the weapon of choice for tyrannicide.] If instead of speaking of downtrodden victims and of vengeance, if slow, not less certain, he will speak of the penalty that [his] pride must pay and of the vengeance, that [once] provoked, can descend upon it. What do you say to removing from the first scene of Act II the gallows visible to the audience, substituting instead some building from which the populace would flee in horror because of unfortunate events [that occurred there], and of saying mercy rather than misere, and invoking the aid of heaven rather than the Blessed Angels as in the Dies irae; and being armed where rage and hatred have drawn them rather than to have unsheathed the sharpened knives where a cruel pact united them; and to say expired or something similar, rather than he stains the floor with his own blood [see Example 6 p. 62], and use design or council rather than mandate, and remove vendetta as a password; and instead of delegate of God’s justice say of fate or something similar, etc...."
Note, my dear maestro, that I have not intended to suggest [the precise words that should replace] the prohibited expressions. If I allowed myself to mention them, it is not that they are those prescribed by the Censura, but I have done so to indicate in what form some of the same ideas could obtain the approval of the Censura itself, if it is necessary for the poet to retain [these ideas] because of the situations and the clarity of the action [plot].

It is true that the words are to the poet as the notes are to the composer, but the effect of Somma's drama will not be diminished because these few words [to be changed] are sent to him; in fact, his inventiveness is so great that he will know how to substitute ones that are even more beautiful and appropriate and poetic.

Which, as we will see, Somma would attempt to do. He set to work once more, advising Verdi that he would retouch other lines besides the sixty or so rejected by the censorship "to give, if possible, a unified tone to the whole [libretto]."31 This "unified tone" refers to Somma's attempt, late in the game, to provide some local color, or at least a sense of place, which were almost completely lacking in the earlier versions of the libretto. After the Boston setting was decided upon, Somma set about inserting references to the New World, e.g., "d'un vergine mondo l'amor" (the love of a virgin world - I, i), "O figlio d'Inghilterra" (Oh son of England - I, xii), and Riccardo's dying words, "Addio... diletta America" (Farewell, beloved America - III, viii). It is in this late stage of revision that Ulrica became an "indovina di razza nera" (a black fortuneteller) and Renato became a "creolo." So while some of Somma's changes were direct responses to the dictates of the censors, others were independent changes intended as improvements to the libretto. While it is possible to peel away the layer of corrections made by censors to the text of Il trovatore to reveal the authorially sanctioned text, that is not possible with Un ballo in maschera, for Somma's responses to the censors' demands are inextricably interwoven with his own attempts at improving the libretto. Hence, the text of the Ricordi "standard" libretto was virtually identical to that of the libretto approved by the Roman censors and printed in Rome for the premiere.

When Verdi received Somma's libretto in September, he told him "in my view, it has lost little, and in fact I find that in some places it has improved."32 That Verdi continues by criticizing a "few words that the audience might find to be of bad taste" makes clear that he is not addressing the move from Stockholm to Boston—as has sometimes been suggested—but Somma's revision of the sung text.

In the Bibliographical Note of William Weaver's fine translations of Seven Verdi Librettos we read, "The Italian texts were all taken from the printed piano scores rather than from the printed librettos, which are often inaccurate."33 This reflects one view of the function of the printed libretto: a mere transcription of the words the composer set to music, a "pony" to be followed while attending a performance of the opera or listening to a recording, especially valuable for those who are not conversant with the language being sung. In extreme cases—the series of librettos translated by Ellen H. Bleiler and published by Dover, for example—words repeated over and over in the score are dutifully reproduced and any sense of the libretto as a dramatic poem is lost.34 The sound you hear is the librettists rolling over in their graves. But in another view, the printed libretto that the audience at the premiere of Un ballo in maschera read during the performance is a document in its own right. In this view, operas are bitextual; that is, they possess two texts, that transmitted by the printed libretto (the poet's domain, where the text would be formatted as a dramatic poem) and the text actually set to music (the composer's domain).35 (It is a pity that so few critical editions of operas include a copy of the libretto along with the score—usually a facsimile of the first printed libretto would suffice.) As noted above, there is an enormous disparity between the text that the audience at the premiere of Un ballo in maschera would have read in the printed libretto and that which they would have heard sung. (Sometime after Verdi's death Ricordi altered the text of the printed libretto to reflect the words that Verdi set to music, but a facsimile of Somma's 1859 libretto appears in Rosen and Pigozzi: "Un ballo in maschera" di Giuseppe Verdi—see n. 1.) Some of these variants have been noted, of course. Here is the literary historian Francesco Flora: "the differing verses to be found in the ... score reveal Verdi's efforts to make the dramatic material ever more clear and immediate, even after the libretto seemed definitive."36 This is a typical example of the rhetoric that elevates at every turn the composer of an opera over the other collaborators. It is surely counter-intuitive that Verdi would engage in significant revision of the poetic text without enlisting the aid of his librettist. Indeed, he did no such thing; the disparity between printed libretto and score is more easily explained than that. Verdi had already completed the composition of a substantial part of the opera—under the title Una vendetta in domino—before Somma's eleventh-hour revision of the libretto. He accepted some of Somma's emendations, including many that added a sense of place, but rejected others, preferring to leave intact the text already set to music. In other words, the vast majority of the textual variants occur not because Verdi revised Somma's text, but because he rejected—or, to be less blunt, failed to incorporate—Somma's own revisions.
Another interesting case concerns the deputies of the lower classes. In the opening scene of Scribe's libretto there are deputies of the bourgeoisie and peasants ("députés de la bourgeoisie et de l'ordre des paysans"), and the classes they represent are absent. Somma roughly followed Scribe in Gustavo III; in the list of characters, under the heading Coro e Comparse (chorus and supernumeraries) we find "di Cavalieri — Dame — Ufficiali — Guardie — Deputati del popolo e dei paesani — Donne e Fanciulli del Popolo — Congiurati — e Maschere —" (of knights, women, officers, guards, deputies of the lower classes [or of the people; that is, rather than of the bourgeoisie] and of the peasants — women and children of the lower classes — Conspirators — and masqueraders). As in Scribe, the commoners are represented by their deputies and are not themselves present. The Roman censors predictably objected to the word "popolo" but, more interesting, to the representation of the lower classes by deputies. In transforming Gustavo III into Il Conte di Gothenburg they simply crossed out the text shown above in bold face, and in the opening scene replaced the deputies with "paesani." (Why, after all, in a well run — indeed, divinely run — absolute state, should the workers or peasants feel the need to organize and to have their interests represented by deputies?)

Religious concerns: the principal demands were the distancing of the supernatural and the belief in witchcraft, denying that such beliefs coexisted with Christian ones (Table 2, #2 and 10). And, as usual, the Roman censors in particular objected to religious terms like "Iddio," "angelico," and "Lucifero" (but, curiously, not to "Satana," as Somma noted with some amusement). And in both Naples and Rome "Riccardo"’s exclamation, "Amelia, quell'angelo tu sei"

Example 1

Be silent: then I should
Need to contaminate myself in blood. May it not be;
I do not wish it. May my people's
Love keep watch over me, and may God protect me.

Be silent: I do not want to
Soil myself with blood.
May my beloved friends'
Love keep watch over me, and let God protect me.

Be silent: then I should
Need to contaminate myself in blood. May it not be;
I do not wish it. May my supporters'
Zeal keep watch over me always, and may heaven protect me.
Verdi sarcastically remarked, there is some difference

somewhat, without warmth, without that enthusiasm and that abandon

ces, she replies, reciprocate. In the Act II duet, rather than finally confessing

heavens!

“Riccardo”

Neapolitan censors changed her expression of love

asked? ). Verdi was not pleased by the change:

Roman censors to "Taci perfida!". Note also the censors' rejection of the line

mistake. Note also the censors' rejection of the line "He has contaminated my wife" (see Example 4 p. 61). Similarly, "Renato's "Taci adulteral" is changed by both Neapolitan and Roman censors to "Taci perfida!". "Taci, o perfida!" appears in the printed libretto, but Verdi kept the stronger expression in the score.

A final example: while "Riccardo" may declare his love for "Amelia," the Neapolitan censors would not allow her to reciprocate. In the Act II duet, rather than finally confessing "Ebben, si, t’amo" (Well, yes, I love you) as in all other sources, she replies, "A che lo chiedi?" (Why are you asking?). Verdi was not pleased by the change: "Merciful heavens! If the phrase "t’amo" doesn’t slip out of Amelia’s lips the whole piece will turn out without life, without passion, without warmth, without enthusiasm and that abandon that is necessary in scenes of this type...". Similarly, after "Riccardo" recognizes "Amelia" in the finale of Act III, the Neapolitan censors changed her expression of love "Tamo, si, t’amo" into an exhortation to flee: "Fuggi, deh fuggi." As Verdi sarcastically remarked, there is some difference between the two. In both cases, however, the Roman censors allowed "Amelia" to acknowledge her love.

Moral concerns: The hero must be remorseful about his love for "Amelia," and in the more extreme demands, the potential adultery must be removed or at least mitigated (Table 2, #4 and #9). The Neapolitan censors explain that "Amelia" fell in love with "Riccardo" because he had saved her father’s life in battle, and "her gratitude turned into a stronger affection." Similarly, in the other two Italian librettos based on the Scribe libretto (Gaetano Rossi’s and Vincenzo Gabussi’s Clemenza di Valois [1841] and Salvatore Cammarano’s and Saverio Mercadante’s Il reggente [1843]), the soprano and tenor had been in love before, yielding to parental pressure, she married the baritone—always a mistake. Note also the censors’ rejection of the line "He has contaminated my wife" (see Example 4 p. 61). Similarly, "Renato’s "Taci adulteral" is changed by both Neapolitan and Roman censors to "Taci perfida!". "Taci, o perfida!" appears in the printed libretto, but Verdi kept the stronger expression in the score.

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Violence or horror: the prime example is the censors' objection to the gallows, which Verdi had to struggle to retain. Vasselli’s objections to the "unsheathed sharpened knives" and the rather gory image of staining the floor with his own blood seem to fit into this category as well.

Other demands of the censors, however, are less easily categorized—how to capture the elimination of masks, the ball, firearms, the drawing of lots? And some changes can fit into more than one category. For example, the desire to mitigate the male protagonist’s adulterous desires for "Amelia" can be viewed as motivated by either moral or political concerns: the censors might not have objected to the immorality per se, but to ascribing it to a ruler. For example, as Martin Chusid has pointed out, while in most censored versions of Rigoletto the tenor kept his noble rank but was no longer depicted as a libertine, in the case of Leonello (the censored version of Rigoletto produced in Naples, 1855), he was allowed to keep his vices but not his rank: he is demoted to a Venetian patrician.

Some Case Studies

Now I would like to trace the history of a few passages of text, using the sigla introduced in Table 2 to refer to the various versions of the libretto. A note on the examples: even when the different versions agree on words, there are frequently variants in the punctuation and capitalization. I note all differences in the words (as in Example 1, page 59, note 1) but do not indicate minor variants in punctuation or capitalization for each block of text (for example, that in the last line of Example 1, G lacks the comma after "guardi" present in V and B5). For each block of text, I have
regularized capitalization and punctuation, preferring sources with the most complete and careful readings.

In Example 1 “Riccardo,” having been warned of a plot against him, refuses to hear the names of the conspirators (Ballo, I, iii). The sigla G, V, and B show the initial reading in Gustavo III and Una vendetta in domino, which was carried over into Verdi's score (B) unchanged. The passage with the siglum A is the “corrected” version found in Adelia degli Adimari. The Neapolitan censors objected to “popol mio”—like "patria," "popolo" was viewed as highly dangerous, except in contexts like "uornini e donne del popolo" or “popolani.”

The Neapolitans took "Iddio" in their stride here, while, predictably, the Romans did not - see the final excerpt, with the sigla C (Il Conte di Gothemberg) and B (the printed libretto of Un ballo in maschera). And, naturally, here too "popol mio" has been replaced.

Unusually, Somma adopted the reading in Il Conte di Gothemberg without any alteration in the libretto of Ballo. This is a loss, as the reference to the people usefully supports an important theme in Act I of the opera, Riccardo's misguided notion that the love of the people will protect him against his enemies. And indeed, Verdi ignores the change, leaving the line just as it was in Gustavo and Vendetta.

More often, Somma responds to the censor's objections but changes the line in a different way, attempting to improve it. Directly following the preceding example Renato begins his solo, “Alla vita che t'arride”—Example 2 shows the first stanza in Gustavo III, with the variants introduced in the final couplet found in the other versions.

Since “la Svezia” is no longer appropriate, and the new setting, Pomerania, would not scan, in Vendetta Somma substituted “la patria.” Again, both Neapolitan and Roman censors rejected this politically sensitive word. The reading in C makes little sense—whose glorious future? the only available antecedent is “fate” (destino)—and Somma completely reworked the first line of the couplet. But Verdi objected that the new lines were unclear, and that "the expression is weaker than before." That 'Te perduto' gave an opportunity for declamation, he wrote: "that was theatrical and I put it to use. Try to keep it, and it doesn't seem to me difficult to say in two lines: Te perduto, a questa terra e tolto ogni avvenire [with you lost, any future is removed from this land]."44

In the printed libretto Somma keeps his final variant, but in the score Verdi keeps the version he wanted, that of
Vendetta. Three observations might be made about this example:

1. It is an instance in which Somma heeded the objections of the censors, but rather than adopting their suggested text, provided his own.

2. Since Verdi then rejected Somma's text, it is an example of the opera's bitextuality, where Somma's libretto and the text in Verdi's score are at odds.

3. The revision also removes one of the very few lines in the proto-Ballo librettos that gave a precise sense of place.

While these two examples show the censors' concern about politics, Example 3, from the opening of the tenor's first solo, shows the Roman censors' objections to language with religious overtones.

The Neapolitan censors raised no objection to "Amelia"s "angelico pallore," but their Roman counterparts replaced it with the curious "D'insolito pallore ("unusual or unwonted pallor"), as though "Riccardo" noticed some physical change in the scene.

**Example 5**

| G, V, B | Ecco l'orrido campo ove s'accoppia  
Al delitto la morte.  
Ecco là le colonne...   |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------
| A       | Ecco l'orrido campo ove s'accoppia  
Al periglio la morte  
Ecco gli alberi tetti... |
| C       | Ecco quel triste campo ove s'accoppia  
Il terror alla notte  
Velata è in Ciel la luna... |

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**Example 6**

| G, V, B³ | Là tra le danze esanime  
La mente mia sel pinge  
Ove del proprio sangue  
Il pavimento tinge  
Spira, dator d'infamie,  
Senza trovar pietà.   |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------
| A        | Là tra le feste esanime  
La mente mia sel pinge,  
S'inebrìa del suo strazio,  
Il suo morir si finge.  
Cadrai, dator d'infamie[,]  
Senza trovar pietà.   |
| C        | Là tra le danze esanime  
La mente mia sel pinge,  
A tal eccesso, o perfido,  
Geloso ardor mi spinge...  
Spira, dator d'infamie,  
Senza trovar pietà.  
Ecco il codardo afferro...  
Ferma la punta vindice...  
E là dov'io l'atterro.  
Spira dator d'infamie  
Senza trovar[p] pietà. |

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The Neapolitan censors raised no objection to "Amelia"s "angelico pallore," but their Roman counterparts replaced it with the curious "D'insolito pallore ("unusual or unwonted pallor"), as though "Riccardo" noticed some physical change in the scene.
to be interpreted in retrospect as a sign of her distress at loving him. In any event, Somma changes it to one of his most notorious oxymorons. This final change, found in both the libretto and score, was both a response to the objections of the censors and an attempt to effect an independent improvement. Judging from the criticism this line has sustained, some readers would not agree that he was successful.

And in Example 4, from the “laughing chorus” at the end of Act II, we see the censors’ worries about immorality. The Neapolitan censors eliminated both the suggestion of the physical contamination of “Amelia” and the mark on the forehead suggesting the horns of a cuckold. The Roman censors preferred to avoid any type of contamination, whether that of “Renato”’s wife or of his honor, although they accepted the following line. But Somma’s libretto for Ballo simply ignored the censors, retaining the readings of Gustavo III and Una vendetta in dominò, while Verdi adopted yet another reading.

The remaining two examples follow up on two points raised in Vasselli’s letter quoted above, examples of “excessive crudeness” of some of the expressions. As will be recalled, Vasselli suggested that Verdi eliminate from Act 2 “the gallows visible to the audience.” Verdi had been furious when the Neapolitan censors had removed the gallows, and he was not about to give in here. “Don’t worry about the gallows in the second act,” he wrote Somma, “I’ll find a way to get permission for them.”

Example 5 (p. 62) compares the various readings of Amelia’s opening lines in Act II. Both the printed libretto and the score of Ballo preserve the original text found in Gustavo III and Una vendetta in dominò, rejecting the variants provided by both the Neapolitan and Roman censors. Verdi had scored a partial victory, but he was not able to keep the entire description of the gallows as given in Gustavo and Vendetta: “Dal lato sinistro nel fondo biancoggiiano due pilastri riuniti alle sommità da un grosso ferro orizzontale. E il luogo del supplizio.” (From the backstage left there shine two pillars joined at the top by a large horizontal iron bar. It is the place of execution.) The text in italics here appears neither in the score nor in the printed libretto: Verdi was able to keep the pillars, but not the cross bar or the explicit identification of the scene as “the place of execution.” This and the following example exemplify the censors’ aversion to the depiction of terror and violence, although the reminder that the state executes its citizens may shade over into the realm of politics. Six years earlier Roman censors had rejected the reference to political prisoners in the Act IV of Il trovatore: “la torre ove di Stato gemono i prigionieri” (“the tower where the state prisoners moan”) was replaced with “la torre ove fu tratto / Prigionier l'infelice...” (the tower where the unfortunate prisoner was taken).

Example 6 shows “Renato” fantasizing about the death of “Riccardo” in the quintet ending the first tableau of Act III. In Adelia the masked ball was replaced by a banquet, so naturally the “danze” needed to be replaced. The rest shows a reaction to the bloody floor, one of the “crude” expressions to which Vasselli also had objected. Even the “spira” (“Die”) was apparently found overly strong.

The Roman censors objected only to the third and fourth lines, replacing them with a curious self-analysis where the character recognizes and diagnoses his excessive behavior. At first glance it may also seem similar to the Count de Luna’s “Abuso io forse del poter che pieno / In me tramisil il prense! A tal mi traggi, / Donna per me funesta...” (Perhaps I am abusing the power that the Prince gave me fully! That is what you drive me to, O woman fatal to me!” —Il trovatore, IV, ii). But of course the situation is completely different: the Count represents the state, while Renato threatens it. Not surprisingly, the censored Roman libretto for Il trovatore did not allow the Count such doubts about the abuse of power. To return to Ballo, Somma provided a new opening to the sestet, but Verdi made no change to the lines in Una vendetta in dominò.

* * *

The case of Un ballo in maschera is instructive for a number of reasons. Although most atrocity stories about the censors are set after the premiere and in the absence of the composer, here we are able to see the Neapolitan censors requiring extreme changes both before and after the completion of the libretto, and we are able to read Verdi’s reactions. We can observe the demands they posed as the libretto was being shaped, as well as their botched attempts at producing a substitute libretto, Adelia degli Adimari. At first glance, it might seem that Verdi’s encounters with the Roman censors, seen both in the libretto of Il Conte di Gothenberg and in the comments transmitted through Vasselli, would allow us to compare the concerns of the Bourbon censors in Naples with the censors in the Papal States, i.e., Rome. To a very limited extent that is the case—it is certainly true that the Roman censors objected more strenuously than their Neapolitan counterparts to words with religious connotations, such as “Iddio” and “angelico”—but the main difference was that the Neapolitans apparently assumed that because Verdi was under contract to stage the opera he was in their power and they could compel him, under threat of legal action, to accept the far-reaching changes they demanded, while the Roman censors were on their best behavior, making (nearly) every accommodation to prevent Verdi from putting his score under his arm and taking it to Milan, Turin, or some other northern city where the censorship would not be a problem. It has been suggested that Pope Pius IX himself may have been involved in the negotiations in Rome. The hard-line approach of
Naples seems closer to the usual behavior of the censors when the composer was absent and therefore had no control over the form of the work that would be presented. In this case, however, Verdi was not only present but was able to prevent the production of the work in a form he deemed unacceptable, leaving us with detailed documentation of the reasons for his dissatisfaction. While Roman censors certainly showed more tolerance than their Neapolitan counterparts, we should certainly ascribe that less to a spirit of liberalism than to pragmatism.

One of the most interesting points about the genesis of the libretto of *Un ballo in maschera* is what might almost be termed an unwilling collaboration between the censors and Somma. While I, a card-carrying member of the American Civil Liberties Union, have no great desire to argue against the conventional casting of the censors as the villains of the piece, it remains true that they effectively forced Somma into a last-minute bout of revisions where their demands and Somma’s attempts to improve the libretto were inextricably intertwined. The situation is made more complicated, more paradoxical, since Verdi, already having completed his task of setting the uncensored libretto in its guise as *Una vendetta in domino*, sometimes chose to ignore these changes, whether “dictated” by the censors or Somma’s own (attempts at) improvements in the libretto.

The primary goal of Somma’s changes was to satisfy the Roman censors, but also to provide a unified tone, by which he apparently meant providing some references to the New World. But was this a mistake? Should Somma have let well enough alone, leaving the setting completely undetermined, rather than providing references to America? Those who criticize the Boston setting as historically inaccurate to the point of absurdity might believe so. There is no time to develop this point here, but I have argued elsewhere that, contrary to the view of many critics, Boston at the end of the seventeenth century is an appropriate setting for *Un ballo in maschera* after all.51 Their criticism is based on both a misunderstanding of Puritan culture and a failure to understand that at the end of the seventeenth century, after the Crown had revoked the charter of the colony and had sent Anglican governors, the power of the Puritans was on the wane. Nonetheless, better yet would be the setting stipulated in a source that has not received much attention in the Verdi literature, a manuscript libretto in the hands of Verdi and Strepponi: “Boston in the first half of the eighteenth century.”52

NOTES


2. For example, a fine essay by Martin Chusid in volume 25 of this journal, “On Censored Performances of *Les Vêpres siciliennes* and *Rigoletto* Evidence from the Verdi Archive at New York University.”

3. It was normal procedure for librettos to be published by a local publishing house for the premiere production, while Verdi would issue a “standard” libretto suitable for all other theaters (a page with the name of the theater, date, cast, etc. could be glued into the standard libretto to “customize” it for the specific production).

4. But we should not exaggerate the scope of the censors’ interventions in the case of *Il trovatore*, since, as we shall see, even Verdi recognized that they had cut Cammarano more slack than was their wont. See Andreas Giger, “Social control and the censorship of Giuseppe Verdi’s operas in Rome (1844-1859),” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 11 (1999): 233-65, here 251-3.


6. Their censors’ letter has not survived; however, Verdi transcribed their demands in a document described below, an annotated transcription of *Una vendetta in domino* and Adelidia degli Adimari. See Alessandro Luzio, “il librillo dal Ballo in maschera massacrato dalla censura borbonica,” in *Carteggi verdiani* 1: 241-75, here 268-70.


8. After the second stipulation in Table 2, Verdi wrote “The region is Celtic: in the second half of the seventeenth century one believed in witches. Lucifer is spoken of, and Lucifer is a pagan.” (“La regione è celtica: Nella seconda metà del secolo XVII si credeva alle streghe. Si parla di Lucifero, e Lucifero è pagano!”—from the manuscript containing the *Vendetta*/Adelidia librettos mentioned in n. 4 and described below).


10. For example, see Budden loc. cit. and Andreas Giger, “Social control,” 254.

11. I am grateful to Sebastian Werr for this suggestion (private communication). On Bolognese, see Werr’s *Die Opern von Errico Petrella: Rezeptionsgeschichte, Interpretationen und Dokumente* (Vienna: Edition Praesens, 1999), 64-65 and passim.

12. See note 6.

13. Fifteen years earlier the more lenient Venetian censors had allowed the name of the assassin of King Carlo to be chosen by lot - Ernani was the
lucky winner. Not surprisingly, in at least some productions of the opera, Neapolitan censors suppressed the entire Cunegonda scene.

14. "Si può dare cosa più ridicola?... Il manto arma la mano di una donna, la quale è pur si timida, e tanto più quanto è creduta colpevole; non se si dice a quale scopo, e in fin de' conti sarà poi Lui che si ucciderà.


16. Roma Archivio di Stato (Miscellanea carte politiche riservate, busta 140, fasc. 5111: Censura teatrale ed altre carte relative al teatro) - this is the same source used by Carlo Matteo Mossa in his discussion of the Roman censorship of Il Trovatore in the Introduction to David Lawton's critical edition of the opera in The Works of Giuseppe Verdi.

17. Somma's citation of some passages suggests that it is a copy of the same libretto mentioned above.

18. "... fate de la poesia quello che credeste, e se trovate che ci possa stare il Conte di Gothenberg, e sia pure così, ma che il mio nome non e centri... si capisce che s'ha da fare per soddisfare la Censura e si può cercar di accordarsi, ma quando in luogo d'una variazione, s'è il capriccio, la stupidità, l'ignoranza, la smania di guastar tutto, dico si capisce che s'ha da fare per soddisfare la Censura e si accordarsi, ma quando in luogo d'una variazione, s'è il capriccio, la stupidità, l'ignoranza, la smania di guastar tutto, dico si dispero di riuscirvi." Carteggio verdiani 1: 238. Translation after Budden, 373.


20. See Marcello Conatti, "Ve' la commedia mutò in tragedia?" in the programma di sala cited in note 1, 11-28, at 20, followed by Philip Gossett, "La composizione," at 48. I do not want to make a categorical statement without having examined the manuscript material in Rome, but on the basis of the microfilm it seems probable that these scenes were canceled - with a single diagonal line - only after it was decided to prepare a fair copy incorporating the censors' sometimes heavy changes to these scenes and restoring the drawing of lots, which had already been eliminated by the censors even before the wholesale cancellation of scenes ii-v. Had the censors spared to eliminate these scenes, it surely would have been mentioned in the correspondence among Verdi, Somma, and Vasselli; indeed, it would have been a provocation that would inevitably have led Verdi to abandon the project of producing the opera in Rome. Monsignore Matteucci, director of police and president of the Deputation of Public Performances, had asked the impresario Jacovacci to have a copy of the lottery scene made, expressing his intention to permit the scene after reconsidering the question (Giger, "Social control," 256).

21. "... si lascerebbero i personaggi e le situazioni tali e quali li ha immaginati il poeta... Solo sarebbe necessario trasportare la scena fuori dell'Europa, per esempio in America, come Governatore, e sia pure così, ma che il mio nome non e centri... si capisce che s'ha da fare per soddisfare la Censura e si può cercar di accordarsi, ma quando in luogo d'una variazione, s'è il capriccio, la stupidità, l'ignoranza, la smania di guastar tutto, dico si dispero di riuscirvi." Carteggio verdiani 1: 238. Translation after Budden, 373.

22. That the proposal for North America seems to have originated from a "sirnili." As seen in America, as Governor, the weakness, the ignorance, the mania of spoiling everything, I từng that it is a copy of the same libretto mentioned above.

23. Letter of 8 July 1858 to Somma, Pascolato, 92. "La Censura di Roma ha fatto nuove facilitazioni..."

24. "La Censura permetterebbe soggetto e situazioni ecc. ecc., ma vorrebbe trasportata la scena fuori d'Europa. Che ne direste del Nord dell'America al tempo della dominazione inglese? Se non l'America, altro sito. Il Caucaso forse?"

25. See note 22.

26. "Il poeta metterà tutta la buona volontà per secondare l'esigenza della censura domanda... che si lasci quella latitudine per l'espressione, che si lasci al Cammarano nel Trovatore."

27. The letter was published in Luigia Rivelli, "G. Gioacchino Belli 'Censore' e il suo spirito liberale," Rassegna storica del risorgimento 10 (1923): 318-93, here 375-8. My transcription differs in a few details from that published by Rivelli, who perhaps examined a different version of the letter. The original Italian of the excerpts is as follows: E' accettato il titolo: Un ballo in maschera, il luogo della scena a Boston, e il protagonista qual Governatore della Città. Solo avrete a contentarvi di titolar costui: poiché il titolo di Duca gli è negato per tale ragione che voi stesso riconcorderete giustissima quando sarrete qui. Ma nel caso presente, fa che quel Governatore sia Riccardo Surrey e non Duca di Surrey? L'importanza politica e sociale viene a quel personaggio dalla carica governativa, e non dal titolo di Duca, che ora vi sarebbe a significare la dignità ereditaria della famiglia. Fosse anche un burraco di Londra che S. M. Britannica avesse mandato a rappresentarla a Boston, non avrebbe egli la stessa potenza e la stessa corte come un baronetto o Conte o Duca e che so io? ...

Il ch'ha fatto? Somma chiede gli si lasci tatta la larghezza onde usò Cammarano (sic) nel Trovatore? E questa, e quella da lui tenuta nel suo dramma, è giusta dalla Censura, tranne alcuni concetti ed espressioni... Quanto all'altra [the part of the revisions not concerned with merely avoiding terms associated with royalty], non sfraggerà a Voi ne al ch'ha fatto quei poeta che il male sta più nella forma che al concetto. Mi spiego. Ho veduto nelle correzioni della Censura che al cadavere assurdo era sostituito cadavere trucidato. Ed è naturale che permettendosi l'argomento, le situazioni, la sceneggiatura ecc. la Censura intendere accordare tutta quella larghezza di espressioni che è necessaria a dar vivacità al dialogo e a manifestare le passioni che giuocano nel dramma. Soltanto l'imposto dalla sua posizione di raccomandare l'esclusione della troppo crudezza di alcune. E per es. il Somma non si brigherà gran fatto se invece di dire l'assassinio t'aspetta dovrà dire la morte t'aspetta, se invece di parlare di vittime compresse, e di vendetta se le tanta non men certa, parlerà di fio che deve scontare la superbia e della vendetta che provocato può scendere sopra di essa. Così [crete cose?] dite l'esclude a circunvenza; la morte t'aspetta invece di misericordia, e invocare il Soccorso del cielo invece di chiedere aiuto degli Angeli Sant' Antonio che sieno quelle delle cotelle armate dove l'ira e l'odio li ha tratti invece di aver snudato, o esclamando invece di daverne lavato di nuovo la scena dove l'odio e l'ira li hanno detto che uscirebbe come parola d'ordine; e invece di delegato della giustizia di Dio dire della sorte o simil ecc....

Avvertite, mio caro maestro, che io non ho inteso già suggerire in modo assoluto le sostituzioni da farsi alle espressioni violate. Se mi son fatto leggi accennarle, non è già che sieno quelle prescritte dalla Censura, ma l'atto per indicare in qual forma alcune di quelle medesime idee potrebbero ottenere l'approvazione della Censura stessa, se al poeta sia necessità di ritenere a cagione delle situazioni, e della chiarezza dellazione.

E vero che le parole sono al poeta quel che le note al Maestro; ma il dramma del Somma non verrà meno all'effetto, perché vi manchino quelle poche parole: anzi tanto è il suo ingegno che saprà sostituirviene di più belle e proprie e poetiche.
Although it does not offer an explanation for their opposition to the drawing of lots, it is worth noting that the Roman censors thought that the drawing of lots would be more problematic if the plot were directed against a Duke (see Giger, "Social control," 256).

34. Chusid, "On Censored Performances."

35. "...altrice non mi riescono ben chiari i due versi Nel tuo core il genio palpita / Del suo splendido avvenire, trovo che l'espressione è più debole di prima. Quel "te perduto" dava un rilievo e campo alla declamazione: ciò era teatrale e mi faceva piacere. Procurate di conservarlo, e non mi par difficile in due versi dire: "Te perduto, a questa terra è toto ogni avvenire." Letter of 11 September 1858, the last of the letters concerning Ballo in Pasciolo (94-5).

46. "In quanto alle forche del secondo atto, non ci pensate, che io procurerò di ottenne il permesso." Pascoli, 93.

47. The cross bar is found only in a set of printed set diagrams in one of the known copies of the disposizione scenica.

48. Similarly, in the 1851 Rome libretto of Viscardello (the censored version of Rigolotto) Viscardello is allowed to refer to "vendetta," but he defines it as "stolta" (stupid) rather than "giusta" (just). Two years later Giuseppi Gioacchino Belli would suggest to his superiors removing five other instances of "that ugly word vendetta that sounds malissimo and especially today and in the mouths of the people" but leaving this instance because of the word "stolta." That word vendetta was left only in the last scene of the opera thanks to the epithet stolta joined to it ("...quel brutto vocabolo di vendetta che suona malissimo e specialmente oggi e in bocca di popolani. Soltanto nella scena ultima del melodramma si è lasciata quella parola vendetta in grazia del congiuntivi epiteo stolta"). Luigia Rivilli, "G. Gioacchino Belli 'Censore' e il suo spirito liberale," Rassegna storica del Risorgimento, 10 (1923): 318-93, here 393.

49. The Roman libretto reads: "Severity is appropriate; that is a wicked stock, / filled with every crime... And she loves him! / O woman fatal to me!..." ("Giusto è rigor...perversa stirpe è questa, / D'ogni delitto piena... Ed essa l'ama!... / Donna per me funestal!...")

50. See the previously unpublished letters of Jacovacci to Verdi reproduced in Giger, "Social control," 254-60 and Carteggi verdiiani 4: 141-2. Monsignor Matteucci was surely involved in facilitating acceptance of Verdi's libretto, but to my knowledge the only document that might suggest the Pope's direct involvement. Jacovacci, who had just received a letter of Verdi that apparently threatened to cancel the contract, wrote, "I will see Monsignor Matteucci at 3 p.m. with your letter, upon his return from the audience with the Pope, so that I can make every effort to obtain something in this matter" ("...mi porterò da Monsignor Matteucci alle 3, pomeridiane al suo ritorno dall'Udienza del Papa con la vostra lettera onde procurare per quanto posso di ottenere qualche cosa in proposito," 255). Whether the purpose of Matteuccio's audience with the Pope was to discuss Verdi's opera is not clear from Jacovacci's statement; indeed, if it had been Jacovacci who would have had every reason to emphasize the point to reassure the composer. Furthermore, it seems that the visit to the Pope occurred before Matteucci was informed of Verdi's letter that galvanized Jacovacci into action.

51. Rosen, "La disposizione scenica" (see note 1).

52. This libretto was auctioned by Sotheby's in May 1989: the present location of the manuscript is unknown and my efforts to contact the anonymous buyer were in vain. From the description in the catalogue this seems to be a penultimate version, in the hands of Verdi (the first two acts) and Giuseppina (the third act), with corrections in Verdi's hand throughout the manuscript. See the Sotheby's auction catalogue, "Music, Continental Manuscripts and Printed Books, Science and Medicine," 18-19 May 1989.