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CHARPENTIER’S TWO PASTORALETTE: QUESTIONS OF AUTHENTICITY
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Marc-Antoine Charpentier was unusual amongst French composers of his generation in setting a significant number of Italian texts. His two pastoralette are among the most substantial of these works. Neither piece survives in Charpentier's extensive body of autograph manuscripts, the Mélanges autographes. Instead, they are bound together in a non-autograph source in the collection of Sébastien de Brossard (1655–1730), now located in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (shelf-mark Vm'71). The first piece, entitled 'Amor vince ogni cosa Pastoraletta I.' del Sig.' Charpentier, occupies pages 1–79, and the second, 'Pastoraletta italiana II.' continues on pages 81–110. The first of these titles is preceded by an additional heading, recognizable in Brossard's own hand: 'Pastoreletta [sic] del M. Ant. Charpentier.' It is impossible to establish whether the other references to Charpentier in these titles were in place when Brossard procured the manuscript, though the entry in his library catalogue would suggest that only the first was attributed at that stage:

Marc Antoine Charpentier[;] two pastorales of which the texts are in Italian, and of which the first […] is entitled 'Amor vince ogni cosa'. It seems to me very good. The second, which I believe is by the same composer, is entitled Pastoreletta [sic] italiana.¹

Brossard's known connection with Charpentier's circle, as well as the fact that his collection includes a considerable number of other works by this composer, gives considerable credibility to his authenticisation of these pieces. Furthermore, as we will see, the attribution is strengthened by internal details of the pieces themselves.

For the sake of clarity, these works will be identified subsequently in this essay by the abbreviated first line of their texts – Amor vince and Cupido perfido – and/or by the catalogue numbers assigned to them by H. Wiley Hitchcock, respectively H492 and H493.²

Information is lacking about the precise circumstances in which these works were written. We do not know the identity of the scribe or the author of the texts. An annotation above bars 2–4 of the continuo line in H492 – ‘la viole doit parler davantage’ (‘the viol must project more’³) – is the single indication of instrumentation in these scores, though Brossard's catalogue entry described above identifies the obbligato instruments as violins. Interestingly, the physical appearance of this instruction bears a striking resemblance to Charpentier's own handwriting. While we should be cautious about concluding that the composer himself made some contribution to this otherwise non-autograph manuscript, the possibility should not

¹ For a survey of Charpentier's settings of Italian texts, as well as further background on his Italian connections, see Shirley Thompson, 'Charpentier and the Language of Italy,' in Caroline Giron-Panel and Anne-Madeleine Goulet (eds), Musique à Rome au XVIIe siècle (Rome: L'Ecole française de Rome, 2012), pp. 417–32. Subsequent references in this essay to specific locations in the facsimile edition: H. Wiley Hitchcock, respectively H492 and H493.


³ Marc-Antoine Charpentier, Mélanges autographes, Bibliothèque nationale de France (F-Pn), Rés. Vm'259. Facsimile edition: Marc-Antoine Charpentier, Œuvres complètes, I: Mélanges autographes, 28 vols, published under the direction of H. Wiley Hitchcock (Paris: Minkoff, 1990–2004). Subsequent references in this essay to specific locations in the Mélanges autographes provide the volume and folio number(s), as well as the page number(s) in the facsimile edition.


⁷ The reference to ‘Sf’ Theobaldo’ and ‘Sf Lorenzani’ in Brossard's hand on the first page of H492 (see the facsimile reproduced in Charpentier, Amor vince ogni cosa, p. iv), may at first appear to be an intriguing clue to the performers involved and thus to the possible dating of these pastoralette: Theobaldo di Gatti and Paolo Lorenzani were two Italian composers active in Paris in the late seventeenth century. However, this is a red herring: the appearance of these names here merely alludes to the fact that works by these composers were preserved in the same ‘carton’ in Brossard's collection, as is evident from Brossard's manuscript Catalogue des livres de musique (F-Pn, Rés. Vm'20, p. 361; available at http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b550059643/f384.item, accessed July 2013). I am grateful to Catherine Cessac for alerting me to this fact.

⁸ 'This is visible in the facsimile reproduced in Charpentier, Amor vince ogni cosa, p. 4.'
be dismissed: elsewhere, his hand is evident in supplying finishing touches to other non-autograph sources of his music.9

The appearance of French instructions and annotations in the manuscript clearly supports the attribution of these works to a French (rather than an Italian) composer. More important, certain annotations point specifically in Charpentier’s direction. Chief among these are the ones in Amor vince which indicate the required gaps between sections: ‘petite pause’ (following b. 212) and ‘faites icy une petite pause’ (following b. 275). Such indications are used by Charpentier throughout his output. Another use of French in H492 which is reminiscent of Charpentier’s regular practice is the use of the term ‘entièr’ to indicate that the written note value should be replaced by a semibreve (see Textual Notes for Amor vince, bb. 350–74).10 And the word ‘de mie’, used in Cupido perfido to refer to a half-bar (see Textual Notes for bb. 90–91), also occurs in the Mélanges autographes in a similar context.11

Elsewhere in H492 and H493 we find Italian labelling and annotations. Yet this too supports rather than detracts from the Charpentier attribution. Both works open with a Preludio, which is precisely the word he writes at the opening of his Italian-texted Serenata (H472).12 ‘Echo’ is also used in this latter work; in fact, it features throughout the autographs as a dynamic marking, and often in the same context as in the pastoralette to specifically indicate a quieter repetition.13 In other autograph scores containing Italian annotations, there is a sense that Charpentier is using a direct translation of what he would normally have written in French (or even, on occasion, Latin). There are instances of this in the pastoralette too: thus ‘come di sopra’ in the context of indicating a repeat (see Textual Notes, H492, bb. 350–74; H493, bb. 414–59) is the equivalent of his more usual ‘cy devant’, ‘cy dessus’ or ‘ut supra’; and the description ‘l’quattro amanti’ (H493, following b. 386) is a translation of ‘les quatre amants’ found in H495.11

The actual mixture of Italian and French annotations and labelling in these pieces is also in keeping with the surviving autograph Italian settings by Charpentier: in his Épithalamo (H473), for instance, he uses Italian terms for the voices and instruments, as well as such directions as ‘tutti’, ‘allegro’, ‘da capo’, ‘fine’ and ‘seguitate’, yet retains French for instructions to the (presumably French) copyist: ‘comme l’autre dessus’, ‘suivez au grand choeur’.15

Where the musical notation is concerned, the pastoralette likewise contain a number of features in keeping with Charpentier’s regular habits. While he was not the only French composer to use void notation, this is a particular characteristic of his autographs, especially in the context of the metre sign $\frac{3}{2}$.15 Also typical of Charpentier’s standard practice is the appearance of the final note of H492, notated as a longa with a pause, followed by a decorative bar-line; so too, is his habit of changing the metre sign to $\frac{3}{4}$ for a single bar at the end of a section (see H492, b. 212; H493, b. 220). The manuscript of Cupido perfido contains two instances where the arrangement of the continuo figuring appears to have been deliberately inverted to match the obbligato part-movement (H493, bb. 179, 205); again, there are parallels in the Mélanges autographes.17 In addition, the pastoralette scores contain other features which confirm their French authorship: the use of the French violin clef for the obbligato instrumental lines, the haute-contre voice, the time signature 3 (rather than $\frac{3}{4}$), and the ornament sign +.

Visually, the presentation of the character list at the top of each of the pastoralette recalls the format of those preceding other dramatic works in Charpentier’s autographs. A particularly clear link can be seen with those lists preceding Charpentier’s oratorio Judith (H391) and three of those on the subject of Saint Cecilia (H397, H413, H415), where he does not simply provide character names but also includes a description

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9 It is found in the four non-autograph parts in the set for the Mass Assumpta est Maria, and in all 33 non-autograph parts for the oratorio Judicium Salomonis. See Shirley Thompson, The Autograph Manuscripts of Marc-Antoine Charpentier: Clues to Performance (unpublished doctoral dissertation University of Hull, 1997), vol. 1, pp. xvi–xvii.

10 For examples of ‘entièr’ in the composer’s autographs indicating semibreves in the place of the notated rhythms, see Mélanges autographes, vol. 3, fol. 56 (facsimile, p. 106); vol. 10, fols 31–32, 76 (facsimile, pp. 59–62, 148).

11 See, for instance, Mélanges autographes, vol. 2, fol. 51 (facsimile, p. 102); vol. 24, fol. 28 (facsimile, p. 52).

12 Mélanges autographes, vol. 7, fol. 18 (facsimile, p. 33). The use of this term for the French overture-style movement that opens H493 may seem anomalous, though there are a significant number of instances in the autographs where Charpentier refers to such a movement as a prelude (rather than overture).


of how the characters relate to each other, just as we find at the head of H492 and H493. Another presentational feature worthy of comment is the use of apostrophes in the Italian underlay at many points where an elision is required; for example, ‘dice’amore’, ‘disper’i’un’, ‘cibo’alla’, ‘vinc’ogni’, ‘pene’ martiri’, ‘pene’amati’. There is a direct parallel here with Charpentier’s autograph of the aria ‘Notti’ di’, part of his revised music for Le malade imaginaire (H495a).\(^{18}\)

Where fingerprints of musical style are concerned, both pastoralette contain melodic and harmonic ingredients which are recognizably Charpentier’s. These include the use of the augmented mediant chord 9/5/3 (see H492, b. 290), a dissonance primarily associated with France and one cultivated by Charpentier more than by any of his contemporaries.\(^{19}\) Most persuasive, however, is a self-borrowing: the opening two bars of Cupido perfido are almost identical to the opening of the overture of the pastorale Il faut rire et chanter: dispute de bergers, H484.\(^{20}\) This work was written for the musicians in the service of Mlle de Guise, one of Charpentier’s principal patrons, and probably dates from 1684–5. While the exact borrowing is admittedly brief, there are nevertheless similarities in gesture and direction as the music continues, including the change of metre to 6/4.

Between them, such notational and stylistic features are enough to dispel any doubts as to the authenticity of Brossard’s attributions of these pastoralette to Charpentier.

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\(^{18}\) Discussed in Thompson, ‘Charpentier and the Language of Italy’, p. 427.
