

Adaptations of Stage Directions and Stage Designs in Pietro Metastasio's *drammi per musica*

DIANA BLICHMANN

The stage settings of the *drammi per musica* written by Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782) reflect the different surroundings and lifestyles of an elite society. In the dramatic visualization there is almost no visual set that the members of this privileged aristocracy could not have frequented in the course of their daily life. These ambiances were the product of contemporary realism. The presence of these surroundings was an indispensable tool for allowing culturally homogeneous spectators to identify in particular with the heroes present in the dramas. As a result, the *décors* and spaces strengthened the exemplary nature of the moral and political message of the performances.¹ The correspondence between the Metastasian dramas and the political situations of the time were highlighted by the poet's constant reflection on the legitimacy and the burdens of supreme power. The stage is therefore an 'imitation', because the visual example elevated people and institutions. Every sovereign could see the ideal image of his court with its temples, squares and gardens reflected on the Metastasian stage.²

The Metastasian *drammi per musica* seem to offer a large spectrum of stage directions and *décors*. Scrolling through the expressions used to define the scenic spaces, the general impression is that of an extraordinary richness of subjects, but on closer investigation it consists of many variations on relatively few recurring themes. All of the dramatic texts written between 1724 and 1771 contain the following scenographic spaces:³ non-specific settings like aqueducts, amphitheaters, apartments, armories, atriums, woods, rooms, countryside, battlefields, huts, prisons (fortresses, narrow places, towers etc.), walled cities, courtyards, delightful places, cabinets, galleries, gardens,

1 VIALE FERRERO, 2001, pp. 615f.

2 SALA DI FELICE, 1986, p. 270; JOLY, 1990, pp. 84-94.

3 VIALE FERRERO, 2001, p. 617. For Metastasian stage directions see also SALA DI FELICE, 1986.

caves, lodges, magnificent places, marine and mountainous areas, hanging gardens, pavilions, parks, squares, harbors, arcades, palaces, ruins, halls, fairs, temples and valleys.⁴ Specific Roman surroundings are the Capitol, the Forum Romanum, the Palatine gardens and the Ponte Sublicio. In some cases, the scene is divided into two distinct spaces with different meanings such as, for example, the magnificent place and the amphitheater (“Luogo magnifico che introduce a vasto anfiteatro”) in *La clemenza di Tito* or the arcades and the shores of the sea (“Portici della reggia corrispondenti al mare. Navi poco lontane dalla riva”) in *Achille in Sciro*. These were different settings and have to be distinguished.

Different kinds and methods of adaptation in the *drammi per musica* by Metastasio can be discriminated and will be examined in this paper.⁵ On the basis of different levels of investigation, an almost all-inclusive view becomes possible. The investigation can be divided into two levels: on the one hand the ‘text level’, which deals with stage directions exclusively based on those printed in the librettos, will be analyzed. This level can be further divided in two sub-levels: 1) stage directions and stage designs in Metastasian opera were not only used for one single drama, but adapted in many others. 2) A special feature regarding the practice of transformation is the use of *décors* in the same drama over many years and within different productions. Normally the stage directions of the original version of a specific drama were not changed in subsequent versions of the libretto – in contrast to recitatives and arias whose texts were frequently altered. On the other hand, the ‘material level’ will treat the stage directions based on those printed in the libretto and on the basis of the physical nature of the *décors* on stage. This level also has two sub-levels: 3) its methods are the adaptation of the same stage design in different dramas staged in the same theatrical season and in the same theater and 4) the adaptations within different dramas performed in the same theater during successive years.

Therefore, the sources used in this article which show the multiple use of stage directions in the *drammi per musica* by Metastasio are primarily the librettos printed for each performance. Secondly, the recurring use of *décors* can be deduced from archival sources that indicate objects used on stage and materials used for the construction of the stage design in a specific season and opera house. Engravings included in some librettos, which usually depict the stage design, or drawings made by the stage architects are not discussed here, because they do not efficiently contribute to the pasticcio topic.

4 The Metastasian vocabulary describes these surroundings as *acquedotti, anfiteatri, appartamenti, armerie* and *sale d'armi, atrii, boschi, camere, campagne, campi di battaglia* (militaria), *capanne, carceri* (prigioni, *fortezza, luoghi angusti, torri* etc.), *città murate, cortili, deliziose, gabinetti, gallerie, giardini* (orti, *edifici di verdure* etc.), *grotte, logge, luoghi magnifici, luoghi vari, marine, montuose, orti pensili, padiglioni, pagoda, parchi, piazze, porti, portici, regge, rovine, sala, serragli di fiere, templi* and *valli*. For a more precise analysis of the stage directions conceived by the poet see the database METASTASIO, *Drammi per musica*, <http://www.progettometastasio.it>, 23.04.2019.

5 Concerning stage designs in the *drammi per musica* by Apostolo Zeno and Pietro Metastasio see SUTHERLAND 1999, pp. 113-131.

Despite the consistent use of the same Metastasian stage directions in different versions of the drama, the way in which stage directions were re-designed and constructed on stage could be quite individual, depending on the stage designer's ideas. These ideas could add several different meanings to the stage design and are therefore not to be understood as pasticcio.

1. Adaptation of private and public *décor* in different dramas

The scenographic spaces in the *dramma per musica* by Metastasio are divided into private and public settings that have their own dramaturgical significance. In different Metastasian surroundings different actions are carried out and different languages are spoken with different vocabulary. The number of the *dramatis personae* and the kind of arias sung in private and public settings are different.

The cabinet (*gabinetto*), which in Metastasian drama is a small room furnished for private and personal use in an elegant building or apartment, can be taken as an example of a private space. It is present in *Didone abbandonata* (1724), *Semiramide riconosciuta* (1729), *Alessandro nell'Indie* (1730), *Artaserse* (1730), *Demetrio* (1731), *Demofonte* (1733), *Zenobia* (1737), *Ipermestra* (1744), *Antigono* (1744), *Il trionfo di Clelia* (1762) and *Ruggiero* (1771). In the cabinet, feelings of love, grief, jealousy and hatred are expressed, secrets are entrusted or intrigues are prepared. For instance, in *Didone abbandonata* the sequence that plays in the "Gabinetto con sedie" (II,14-II,17) has Didone, Enea and Iarba on stage. It is a typical *liaison des scènes*⁶ with an increase and a decrease of the number of persons on stage. This sequence prepares the tragic ending of the opera: in the cabinet Didone entrusts to the audience that, uncertain of her fate, she no longer wants to live. Though she decides to get help from Enea, being herself unable to opt between suicide or marriage with Iarba.⁷ Enea wants to avoid the suicide of his lover, but his jealousy is inevitable when Didone asks for Iarba's hand. Accused of being a barbarian, Iarba, in the musical setting of Domenico Sarro, expresses his personal feelings in a march-like aria ("Chiamami pur così") and Didone remains with mixed feelings of

6 It is a procedure, theorized in French classical dramaturgy in 1657 but also commonly practiced in other theatrical traditions and in other eras, to ensure that the scene never remains empty, and therefore to avoid gaps in the performance of the action (unity of action, time and place) and in the concatenation of the scenes: the action must be designed in such a way that at least one character remains in the scene as another comes and goes. Within a sequence, the three Aristotelian units are only guaranteed by the fact that at least one figure always remains on the stage. The *liaison des scènes* can be interrupted only at the conclusion of a sequence or an act.

7 "Deggio incontrar la morte / o al superbo african porger la mano. / L'un e l'altro mi spiace e son confusa. [...] Dimmi, che far degg'io? / Con alma forte / come vuoi, scieglierò Iarba o la morte." METASTASIO, 1724, I,6.

anger and peace at the end of the sequence (“Va lusingando amore”). While in *Didone* two lovers and one adversary are present on stage, in *Semiramide riconosciuta* four lovers are involved in the sequence of the “Gabinetti reali” (III,6-III,11). Semiramide, Scitalce, Tamiri and Mirteo all sing an aria stating their individual humors: In “Fuggi dagli occhi miei” (III,7) irritation and anger are Semiramide’s answer to the second rejection by Scitalce.⁸ In “Odi quel fasto” (III,9) Scitalce reacts with anger to Mirteo’s accusations and challenges him to fight. In “D’un genio che m’accende” (III,10) Tamiri assures Mirteo of her love and in “Sentirsi dire” (III,11) Mirteo sings of agony, suffering and pain.⁹ All these feelings are related to love and are similar, for example, to the second sequence of the third act (III,5-III,7) in *Artaserse*. In contrast, in *Alessandro nell’Indie* the “Gabinetti reali” (II,1-II,4) are private spaces where the adversaries Poro, Gandarte and Erissena conceive an intrigue against the hero and protagonist Alessandro. Poro and Gandarte secretly discuss a way of finding him alone, without his army and without defense. Erissena, who would like to be part of this plan but is rejected by her brother Poro, is offended (“Non sarei sì sventurata” II,3) and Poro’s unconventional soul is manifested in his aria of comparison (“Senza procelle ancora” II,4). It is evident that although the plot in the sequences of these three dramas is different, the private atmosphere of the setting in the cabinet remains the same.

The actions and notions of a great number of persons involved in public spaces are conceived in a different and more political manner. Kings and queens in their official capacity participate in such public plots with political implications, as well as ministers and lictors. Compared to the private settings, a public space must be imagined as a large-scale setting. Although in many dramas a hall, magnificent place or palace are scenes that typically were adopted (see for example Table 4b), every drama had its specific scenographic requirements: various types of extras and embellishments could be seen, such as guards, dancers, pages and riders. Depending on whether it is an internal or external space, the public space can present, respectively, banquets and furnishings, triumphal chariots and animals, among others. In some cases, the performance of military or festive symphonies and the presence of choirs and dances contribute to the creation of the official and public sphere of the action.

For example, in *Semiramide riconosciuta* (II,1-II,6) all *dramatis personae* gather in the royal hall illuminated at night (“Salone regio illuminato in tempo di notte.”). It is decorated with various sideboards and with transparent vases, and a great table is prepared in the middle of the hall with four seats and a chair for Semiramide. Sibari’s announcement to the ministers initiates the official festive dinner in occasion of Tamiri’s selection of her groom.¹⁰ This hall is not only the celebratory space where in honor of Tamiri’s upcoming wedding a joyful symphony is played, a choir is sung and dances are

8 For an analysis of the musical setting by Leonardo Vinci (Rome 1729) and Nicola Porpora (Venice 1729) see Blichmann, 2012, pp. 231-233.

9 Cf. *IBID.*, pp. 370f.

10 SIBARI “Ministri, al re sia noto che già pronta è la mensa.” [...] SEMIRAMIDE “Ecco il luogo o Tamiri / ove gli altrui sospiri / attendono da te premio e mercede.”

performed, but also the dangerous space where the unsuccessful attack on Scitalce takes place. The prince accuses his adversaries and the queen in a typical public or dialogical aria – arias that are sung in the presence of other persons and/or are addressed to them – (“Voi che le mie vicende” II,3). In *Artaserse* (II,8-II,15)¹¹ the great hall of the royal council (“Gran sala del real consiglio”) has a throne on one side, seats on the other side for the representatives of the Persian kingdom and a small table as well as a chair to the right of the throne. Artaserse is preceded by a part of the guards and representatives of his kingdom and followed by the remaining guards and Megabise. All the persons of the plot will gather in this crucial sequence for Arbace because it will decide his fate. Uncertain in his verdict, the king transfers his decision-making power to his general and the father of the victim, Artabano, who condemns his son to death (“Io condanno il mio figlio. Arbace mora.”). Arbace’s farewell recitative and the aria “Per quel paterno amplesso” form an emotional highlight of the sequence that is followed by three arias in which Mandane condemns Artabano’s inhumanity (“Và tra le selve ircane” II,12), Semira judges Artaserse’s weakness and his bad government (“Per quell’affetto” II,13), Artaserse is judged to have acted graciously and rationally (“Non conosco in tal momento” II,14) and Artabano announces his stratagem. His aria “Così stupisce e cade” (II,15) which concludes the most important sequence of the opera is all about his political intrigue and his own career.¹²

Among the other public halls in the Metastasian drama are the “Hall on the ground with chairs” (“Sala terrena con sedie” *Adriano in Siria*, III,1-III,8), the “Hall on the ground with gardens” (“Sala terrena corrispondente a’ giardini” *Attilio Regolo* III,1-III,8) and the “Great hall illuminated at night with several apartments also illuminated” (“Gran sala illuminata in tempo di notte corrispondente a diversi appartamenti parimente illuminati” *Achille in Sciro*, II,7-II,12) with a table in the center, sideboards around and loggias filled with musicians and spectators. All these halls, used by Metastasio more than once, are characterized by action with great scenic purpose, a large number of people and a dramaturgy that privileges dialogical arias.

2. Adaptation of *décor* in specific dramas and consecutive productions

In Metastasio’s first *dramma per musica* written in 1724 for the Neapolitan Teatro San Bartolomeo and performed with music by Domenico Sarro and scenography by Giovanni Battista Oliverio, one of the most significant sequences is the first one (I,1-I,8). In this sequence, the action is set in a magnificent place designed for a public audience with a throne on one side and a view of the city of Carthage which is under construction (“Luogo magnifico destinato per le pubbliche udienze con trono da un lato; veduta in prospettiva della città di Cartagine che sta in atto edificandosi”). In other versions of

11 For a more detailed analysis of the sequence see BLICHMANN, 2012, pp. 146-149.

12 Cf. ARMELLINI, 2005; ID., 2004, and BLICHMANN, 2012, pp. 272-279.

the drama that were produced in subsequent years, as well as throughout the whole 18th century, the Metastasian description of the magnificent place is usually taken over literally from the Neapolitan version (1724). In Table 1 are listed only the most significant examples of how the stage direction of the first sequence in *Didone* was slightly or considerably enlarged or reduced: in Rome (1726) an abbreviated version of the stage direction is given: “The city of Carthage, which is in the process of construction with a magnificent place” (“La città di Cartagine, che sta edificandosi con luogo magnifico”). Although the throne is not mentioned in the stage direction it was present on scene as we see from the stage direction in scene I,5: “While Didone, served by Osmida, goes to the throne [...]” (“Mentre Didone servita da Osmida va sul trono [...]").¹³ In the 1732 Roman performance – and afterwards in Florence in 1753 and 1759 – the scenography of the first sequence appears not to show the city of Carthage. The throne is not specified on one side of the stage and could therefore be seen from a central perspective.¹⁴ The performances in Parma (1745) and Munich (1760) seem to omit the fact that the city of Carthage is under construction. Alterations of stage direction and design can be found in the performances in Reggio Emilia (1725) which were taken over in Milan (1729), Bologna (1735) and Cesena (1743). The “magnificent place” was changed to a “large atrium” probably due to some existing stage decoration in the theaters of these cities.¹⁵

The most significant modifications known to us for the first stage direction of Metastasio’s *Didone abbandonata* are those made at the Teatro della Fortuna in Fano (1745), which were then adopted in a Venetian performance in 1770. The only detail left over from previous versions is the view of the city of Carthage, but in the Fano version it is located near a harbor with ships. The rest of the stage direction is completely different: a field at night with Trojan tents and Aeneas sleeping in a great pavilion was created on stage. Interestingly, light effects are described. The sun could be seen rising and little by little the whole scene became illuminated. Afterwards, the bridge of the city descended and Selene and Osmida came out of Carthage. Therefore, the action of the first sequence was performed not in a magnificent place with a throne, but in the field with Trojan tents. These alterations, to quote the note to the reader in the libretto, “were necessary to accommodate them to the circumstances of the time, the theater and the singers”.¹⁶

13 METASTASIO, 1726, p. 14.

14 “Magnificent place intended for public audiences with throne, view of the city of Carthage.” (“Luogo magnifico destinato per le pubbliche udienze con trono, veduta della città di Cartagine.”) ID., 1732.

15 In the Milan version ten years later in 1739 in the same theater the original stage direction was restored.

16 “Note to the reader. The mutations and shortenings that were made to the present drama of Signor Abbate Pietro Metastasio were necessary to accommodate them to the circumstances of the time, the theater and the singers [...]” (“Avviso al lettore. Le mutazioni e gli accorciamenti che fatti si sono al presente dramma del Sig. Abbate Pietro Metastasio furono necessari per accomodarsi alle circostanze del tempo, del teatro e de’ cantanti medesimi [...]”) METASTASIO, 1745c, p. V.

This was a common general formulation used in the cautions to the spectator in order to avoid further and more detailed explanations of the alterations to text and stage. It is also quite possible that these served as pretexts and that such changes were motivated by other more enigmatic reasons. In this case the alterations probably have to do with the dedicatee, Giacomo Oddi who, three months before the performance of *Didone* at Fano in July 1745, was appointed cardinal of St. Jerome of the Croats by Benedict XIV. In the dedication text his glorious delegations as apostolic legate and nuncio are compared with the expeditions of the Trojan Enea, and it is probably for this reason that the opera begins with the scene of a nighttime Trojan camp and the great pavilion of Enea.

Usually the main statement of this first sequence in *Didone abbandonata* remains unchanged: the arrival of the king of the Moors, Iarba, in Carthage is designed as a large reception scene. In scene I,3 Osmida announces Iarba who is disguised as ambassador Arbace. From Osmida's proclamation it emerges that the haughty king will ask for Didone's hand. Even before Iarba's arrival, the female protagonist, whose heart belongs to Enea, realizes that she will not marry him. Iarba and his Moorish entourage arrive in scene I,5 together with tigers, lions and other gifts offered to the queen of Carthage who proceeds to the throne served by Osmida. The sequence contains six arias sung by all the persons involved in the plot (Enea, Selene, Didone, Osmida, Iarba and Araspe). But considering the productions over a long period of time, the aria texts of the female and male protagonists Didone ("Son regina e son amante", I,2) and Enea ("Dovrei... ma no...", I,1) in general remain constant. Only in the Fano version (1745) is Enea's aria adapted from *Achille in Sciro*:

Achille I,14 (*Achille in Sciro*, Vienna 1736)

Risponderti vorrei
ma gela il labbro e tace;
lo rese amor loquace,
muto lo rende amor.

*Amor che a suo talento
rende un imbelli audace
e batte in un momento
quando gli piace un cor.*

Enea I,3 (*Didone abbandonata*, Fano 1745)

Risponderti vorrei
ma gela il labbro e tace;
lo rese amor loquace,
muto lo rende amor.

*Amor... oh Dio, direi...
ah che parlar non oso!
quel che ho nel cor nascoso,
tu non comprendi ancor?*

The arias of the other *dramatis personae* are deleted, replaced by other arias or not set to music, following the normal practices of Italian *opera seria* production in the early 18th century (Table 2).¹⁷

Several arias were cancelled. Considering some performances of *Didone abbandonata* between 1724 and 1773 indicated in Table 2 it is evident that in addition to the removal of Selene's aria "Dirò che fida sei" in Venice 1725 and 1747 (VE25/VE47), in

17 Blichmann, 2012, pp. 158-166.

Ferrara 1733 (FE33) and Lisbon 1741 (LI41) the aria sung by Osmida “Tu mi scorgi al gran disegno” was revoked in Venice 1747 (VE47), and that by Iarba “Fra lo splendor del trono” was removed in Venice 1741 and 1757 (VE41/VE57) and Madrid 1752 (MAD52) and not set to music in Milan 1755 (MI55). Araspe’s aria was cancelled for the performances in Lisbon 1741 (LI41), Fano 1745 (FA45), Lisbon 1753 (LI53),¹⁸ Venice 1757 (VE57), Reggio Emilia (1752) and Turin 1773 (TO73). The eliminations in Reggio Emilia, Fano, Lisbon and Turin are due to the removal of the whole scene I,8, Araspe’s monologue.

Arias were altered for Osmida and Araspe. Osmida’s aria “Tu mi scorgi al gran disegno” was transformed into “Farò, che a te costante” in Parma (1745), into “Basta così, t’intendo” – an adaptation of Arpalice’s aria from Metastasio’s *Ciro riconosciuto* (Vienna 1736) in scene I,2 –¹⁹ in Cremona (1756) and into “Allo splendor del trono” in Venice (1757). This last mentioned aria was originally planned by Metastasio for the character of Iarba, who, in this 1757 Venetian performance sang no aria in scene I,7.²⁰ For the Roman performance in 1726 Osmida’s aria was in part retained and was in part altered by the poet. Metastasio’s first contract with the Teatro delle Dame in this Carnival season was for the adaptation of *Didone abbandonata*.²¹ His alteration replaced the first stanza (RM26) with the second stanza (NA24) and adapted some vocabulary from the incipit of the aria. Nevertheless, the renewed aria “Grato rende il fiumicello” was not intended to be set to music by Leonardo Vinci:

18 For the Lisbon performance in 1753 cf. VERARDO TIERI, 2004, pp. 637-639.

19 In fact, only the first two verses of Osmida’s aria are taken over from Arpalice’s aria: “OSMIDA Basta così, t’intendo, / già ti spiegasti appieno. / Per te vedrò sereno / Il giorno a folgorar. // Eccomi qual mi vuoi / son pronto a cenni tuoi, / Purché debba regnar.”

20 For aria migrations in several *Didone*-librettos between 1724-1758 cf. GIALDRONI, 2004.

21 “Expenses for poets and librettos. To give on 31 January [1726]. 65 Scudi payed to Signor Marchese Paolo Maccarani for the value of a watch with a box and a golden chain given to the poet Signor Metastasio for having adjusted the libretto of *Didone*” (“Spese di poeti e libretti Dare adi 31 gennaro [1726] scudi di moneta 65 pagati al signor marchese Paolo Maccarani per prezzo di un orologio con cassa e controcassa e catena d’oro donato al signor Metastasio poeta per aver accomodato il libretto della *Didone*”), I-Rasmom, CT424, c. 58 ls (left side). For a more detailed analysis concerning the theater and the operas represented there see for example Blichmann, 2012, 2018 and 2019; Erkens, 2018; Markuszevska 2013, 2016a-b, 2018 etc.

Osmida (Naples 1724)

Tu mi scorgi *al gran disegno*
e al tuo sdegno, al tuo desio
l'ardir mio ti scorgerà.

Così *rende il fiumicello,*
mentre lento il prato ingombra,
alimento all'arboscello
e per l'ombra umor gli dà.

Osmida (Rome 1726)

Grato *rende il fiumicello,*
mentre lento il prato ingombra,
alimento all'arboscello
e per l'ombra umor gli dà.

Così tu mi guidi al regno,
ed io servo *al gran disegno,*
che al tuo Re caro ti fà.

Araspe's aria "Se dalle stelle tu non sei guida" was transformed into "Se agli affanni ci condanna" (Parma 1745). In Venice (1730) and in Cremona (1756) the same aria was replaced by "Infelice e sventurato" (I,8) but indeed in the original version and other versions of the opera this aria was sung by Araspe in scene I,14, showing the similar effect of misfortune.²² Even though in the libretto this text was not attributed to the author, "Infelice e sventurato" was written by Metastasio for the Neapolitan performance in 1724 and then adapted to the 1730 Venetian version:

Naples 1724 (I,14) = Venice 1730/Cremona 1756 (I,8)

Araspe

Infelice e sventurato
potrà farmi ingiusto fato
ma infedele io non sarò.
La mia fede e l'onor mio
pur fra l'onde dell'oblio
agli Elisi io porterò.

The action that takes place in the "Luogo magnifico" is relatively unaltered in almost all the versions of this drama. Only in the Lisbon, Fano, Reggio Emilia and Turin performances were the last monologues cancelled. In the first sequence of *Didone abbandonata*, however, there is a detail that is evident only in the Roman version of 1726, in the score by Leonardo Vinci.²³ Vinci introduced a march-like symphony ("marchia") that was played concurrently with the arrival of Iarba and his Moorish entourage.²⁴ This is evident in the score at the end of scene I,4 (Example 1):

22 "All those arias that are not by the author are marked with a *" ("Tutte quelle arie, che non sono dell'autore sono contrassegnate con una *") METASTASIO, 1730, p. 7.

23 D-MÜs, Sant.Hs.4242. This detail is not present in the Neapolitan score by Domenico Sarro. Cf. SARRO, 1724, vol. I, p. 31.

24 BLICHMANN, 2006, pp. 247f.

Example 1: Leonardo Vinci, Didone abbandonata, Rome 1726, arrival of Iarba and his Moorish entourage.

Scene I,4

Didone e Ormisda

Didone Venga Arbace qual vuole,
supplice o minaccioso ei viene invano.
In faccia a lui pria che tramonti il sole
ad Enea mi vedrà porger la mano.
Solo quel cor mi piace,
sappialo Iarba.

Osmida Ecco s'appressa Arbace.



Scene I,5

Stage direction in the libretto:

“Iarba under name of Arbace and
Araspe with retinue of Moors, extras
bringing gifts to present to the queen
and the above-mentioned.”²⁵

Stage direction in the score

“Iarba under the name of Arbace with
retinue of Moors, extras leading tigers,
lions and bringing other gifts to present to
the queen and the above-mentioned.”²⁶

The idea of the military symphony was taken over and set to music in other versions, for example in Fano (1745). As already observed, it is certainly the most anomalous version as it concerns not only the stage direction of the first sequence.²⁷ Apart from the clarifications given in the notice to the reader²⁸ we do not know what the real reasons were for this caption being completely different from the other versions of *Didone*. However, due to these changes of scene the opera also begins differently from other versions with

25 “Iarba sotto nome d’Arbace ed Araspe con seguito di mori, comparse che portano doni per presentare alla regina e detti.” METASTASIO, *Didone abbandonata*, 1726, p. 14.

26 “Iarba sotto nome d’Arbace con seguito di mori, comparse che conducono tigre, leoni e portano altri doni per presentare alla regina e detti.” *IBID.*, p. XX.

27 The Fano version has in Act I one sequence more than the original and several other versions – at its end a stage set representing a wood (“boschetto”) was introduced. The harbor in Act III beyond the boats was embellished with a huge “sumptuous ship”. METASTASIO, 1745c.

28 “Avviso al lettore”, cf. n. 16.

a monologue sung by a dreaming Enea. It is at least imaginable that this new recitative, introduced as scene I,1 may have been requested by the performer of the male protagonist Gioachino Conti (Gizziello), the most famous singer of the Fano cast. However, in Fano Iarba and Araspe arrive on horses while a military symphony is played. Due to its setting in a field, Didone goes to sit not on the throne like in the other previous versions, but under a tent: “Iarba under the name of Arbace and Araspe on horseback, followed by Moors, extras who bring gifts to present to the Queen [...]. During the entrance there is a military symphony. Didone, served by Osmida, goes to sit under the great pavilion. Iarba and Araspe dismount [...]”.²⁹ In the version of *Didone abbandonata* by Baldassare Galuppi for the performance at the Teatro del Buen Retiro in Madrid (1752) Iarba and Araspe also arrived on horse and a symphony was performed on stage. In the libretto adapted for this occasion by Metastasio – doing a favor to his friend and impresario of the Royal Theater in Madrid, Carlo Broschi (Farinelli) – the stage direction, now much more detailed than before, indicates the march with barbarian instruments:

“While at the sound of barbarous instruments, Iarba and Araspe on horseback are seen coming from afar with followers of Moors and other nations, extras who lead tigers, lions and bring other gifts to present to the queen, Dido served by Osmida goes to the throne, to the right of which remains Osmida. Two Carthaginians take the pillows for the ambassador and place them in the distance but facing the throne. Iarba and Araspe dismounting from the horse stop at the entrance and not heard by others talk to each other.”³⁰

While most versions of the *Didone abbandonata* respected Metastasio’s indications for the first sequence of the “luogo magnifico” – the placement of the throne on one side of the stage and the view of the city of Carthage under construction – some versions offer slight deviations, others an alteration of place – the magnificent place becomes a great atrium – and others a completely different caption (Table 1). Despite these more or less substantial differences regarding the captions, the aria texts in this sequence remain identical in most of the examined librettos (Table 2).

29 “Iarba sotto nome d’Arbace ed Araspe a cavallo, con seguito de’ mori, comparse che portano doni per presentare alla regina [...]. In tempo della marcia s’ode sinfonia militare. Didone servita da Osmida va a sedere sotto il gran padiglione. Iarba ed Araspe smontano da cavallo [...]” METASTASIO, 1745c, p. 7.

30 “Mentre al suono di barbari stromenti si vedono venire da lontano Iarba ed Araspe a cavallo con seguito di mori ed altre nazioni, comparse che conducono tigri, leoni e portano altri doni per presentare alla regina, Didone servita da Osmida va sul trono, alla destra del quale rimane Osmida. Due cartaginesi portano fuori i cussini per l’ambasciatore affricano e li situano lontano ma in faccia al trono. Iarba ed Araspe smontando da cavallo si fermano sull’ingresso e non intesi dicono fra loro [...].” METASTASIO, 1752b, scene I,5.

3. Adaptation of *décor* in different dramas in a specific theater throughout a single season

In Italy, there were very few theaters that renewed their stage designs every season and for each opera production. The Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, the Teatro Regio Ducale in Milan, the Teatro Regio in Turin and the theater in Parma did so exclusively for *opera seria*. In most theaters, however, endowment scenes (“scene di dotazione”) were in use. These scenes served for several seasons and every season they were completely or partially renewed or enriched for the new productions. The standard equipment of the endowment scenes was actually sufficient to stage most of Metastasio’s dramas,³¹ while for the others a few additions and some adaptations were sufficient. The common subjects of endowment scenes coincided with the subjects of Metastasio’s stage designs, as will be shown by the example of the Teatro delle Dame.

Ezio (music by Pietro Auletta) and *Semiramide riconosciuta* (music by Nicola Porpora) were both staged at the Roman Teatro delle Dame in 1729. Although *Ezio* had its first performance in the Venetian Teatro di San Giovanni Grisostomo in November 1728, the drama was written by Metastasio in Rome for the Roman stage, but sent to Venice for its premiere: “Poets Expenses. On the first of December 300 coins paid October 18 by contract to Pietro Metastasio, for the libretto entitled *Ezio*, which he handed over to us and which we communicated to the Signori Grimani of Venice, who will have to give us their second libretto version made by Metastasio [...]”³² *Ezio* then was performed as the first opera of the Roman season between 2 and 30 January 1729, while *Semiramide riconosciuta* was the second opera and staged between 6 and 28 February.³³

Both dramas are quite different: *Ezio* is a historically inspired drama about the Roman general Ezio. The illustrious captain of the imperial armies under Emperor Valentinian III, returning victorious from the famous battle of the Catalaunian plains, was unjustly accused by the emperor and condemned to death. The drama recounts the impostures of the Roman patrician Maximus, who unsuccessfully sought Ezio’s help in killing the hated emperor, constantly concealing his vengeful intention. In contrast, *Semiramide riconosciuta* is a mythologically inspired drama that tells the legend of Semiramide *ascalonita*, whose mother was believed to be a nymph. Semiramide came to be consort of Nino, king of the Assyrians. After his death Semiramide reigned in virile dresses, impersonating Nino, her little son. Finally recognized as a woman, her subjects worshipped her prudence and value in the kingdom. The main action of the drama is concerned with the pursuit of Semiramide’s identity.

31 VIALE FERRERO, 2001, pp. 620f.

32 “Spese di Poeti, Dare. adi primo dicembre scudi di moneta 300 pagati li 18 ottobre per contratto a Pietro Metastasio, per il libretto intitolato Ezio, da esso consegnatoci e da noi comunicato ai Signori Grimani di Venezia, che ce ne dovranno dare il loro fatto da esso Metastasio per secondo [...]”, I-Rasmom, CT424, c. 24 ls. For the circumstances cf. BLICHMANN, 2012, pp. 104-108.

33 I-Rasmom, CT424, c. 64 and 70.

There are important differences between the historical, military and political plot in *Ezio* and the mythological plot in *Semiramide* which centers above all on interpersonal relationships and love. The stage directions for the two operas also differ, but even so parallels conceived by Metastasio are evident and were realized in the stage designs by Pompeo Aldobrandini, who was active in this theater in the Carnival season of 1729 (Table 3).³⁴

Even though the dramatic action of both operas takes place in different surroundings, *Ezio* in Rome and *Semiramide riconosciuta* in Babylonia, the stage directions of the first opera were adapted for the second with some alterations in the description of the specific Roman and Babylonian settings as well as wording and phrasing alterations: although the scenery of the first sequence of *Ezio* shows a part of the Forum Romanum and the view of Rome illuminated at night, for Aldobrandini it must have been easy to adapt the triumphal arches (“archi trionfali”) of the first to an architecturally similar great portico (“gran portico”) in the second opera. Furthermore, an analogous item in both sequences is the throne on one side (“trono [imperiale] da un lato”) of the stage. Thereafter, the second sequence in *Ezio* shows the rooms of Valentinian (“camere”) that were adapted for the apartments (“appartamenti”) and the cabinets (“gabinetti”) in the fourth and sixth sequences in *Semiramide*. The palatine gardens (“orti palatini”) showing espaliers of flowers, fountains and waterfalls (*Ezio*, sequence III) were adapted to the hanging gardens (“orti pensili”) and to the “countryside with garden” (“campagna [...] mura de’ giardini”) of sequences II and V of *Semiramide*. Typically, the ledger books of the Teatro delle Dame specify for which opera of the season the material for the scenography was used,³⁵ but did not specify the silver consumed for the garden scenographies in the carnival season of 1729. It can therefore be presumed that the material for the garden scenes was also used for *Ezio*’s palatine gardens and for *Semiramide*’s hanging and countryside gardens:

“Expenses for stage renovations and scenes. Expenses [...] [7 January 1729] 3,20 coin shields paid to said [Giovanni Battista Porciani] for reimbursement of a silver consignment to silver the garden canvases, [...]; [7 January 1729] and on 24 December 8,50 coin shields were paid to Mario Labanti Batticoro for a lot of silver beaten and delivered to Giovanni Battista Porciani, [...]; [7 January 1729] and on 24 December 4 coin shields were paid to the aforesaid for 1600 pieces of silver for the scenes [...]”³⁶

34 For his effort as scenographic painter he received 1200 scudi di moneta. *IBID.*, c. 23 ls.

35 For example, under the heading “Spese diverse” the chandeliers used as props were expressly for the first opera, *Ezio*: “[1 April 1729] 15 coin shields are given to Giovanni Domenico Barile for the chandeliers given on stage during the first work” (“[1 aprile 1729] si fanno buoni a Giovanni Domenico Barile 15 scudi di moneta per li lampadari dati in servizio nel palco nella prima opera”), *IBID.*, c. 60 rs.

36 “Spese per riattationi di palco e scene. Dare [...] [7 gennaio 1729] 3,20 scudi di moneta pagati a detto [Giovanni Battista Porciani] per rimborso di una partita d’argento per inargentare li teloni del giardino, [...]; [7 gennaio 1729] e fu li 24 dicembre 8,50 scudi di mo-

The gallery (“galeria”) in *Ezio* (sequence III), seen from an architectural point of view, was probably different in comparison to the hall (“sala”) in *Semiramide* (sequence IV). Nonetheless the scenography for this second opera could have been adapted from the first with some prospective alterations. Both stage directions allow us to imagine a similar atmosphere, on the one hand with statues, mirrors and seats (*Ezio*), and on the other hand with sideboards, transparent vases, a large table set in the center of the hall with four seats and a chair (*Semiramide*). The difference from a scenographic point of view is that the hall in *Semiramide* is intended to be a closed space arranged for a dinner. The gallery in *Ezio*, in contrast, was created as an open space equipped with a large balcony. The prospectus showed the view of Rome. And finally, we can presume that the amphitheater (“anfiteatro”, *Semiramide*, sequence VII) was adapted from *Ezio*’s magnificent atrium (“atrio magnifico”, sequence V) due to the iron gates present in both stage directions, closed in *Semiramide*, open and leading to several prisons in *Ezio*. The Capitol (“campidoglio”) in sequence VI of *Ezio* probably could not be adapted to any of the stage designs in *Semiramide* because of its specific and exclusively Roman architecture.

Furthermore, in sequence I of both operas a particularly interesting item for pasticcio practice and transformative use deserves attention: in scene I,2 each of the operas requires war instruments (“istromenti bellici”/“istromenti barbari”) followed by the Roman general, Ezio, with slaves, victorious soldiers and other people in *Ezio* and by the princes of three different nations, Mirteo, Ircano and Scitalce, with their retinue in *Semiramide*.³⁷ Even though the music for these two marches could not have been the same as their respective composers, Pietro Auletta and Nicola Porpora, were different, the musicians on stage – who received 97 scudi in total for their participation – for the

neta pagati a Mario Labanti Batticoro per tanto argento battuto e consegnato a Giovanni Battista Porciani, in filza numero 18; [7 gennaio 1729] e fu li 24 dicembre 4 scudi di moneta pagati al sudetto per numero 1600 pezzi di argento per le scen[...].” *IBID.*, c. 24 ls and rs. Other material used for both operas were wooden tablets: “April 4 [1729] 90 coin shields paid to Giovanni Battista Porciani for balance of the account of the thin boards given for the scenes [...]” (“4 aprile [1729] 90 scudi di moneta pagati a Giovanni Battista Porciani per saldo del conto delle tavole sottili per servitio delle scene [...]”) *IBID.*, c. 24 rs.

- 37 “Ezio preceded by war instruments, slaves and insignia of the defeated, followed by the victorious soldiers, people and aforesaid.” (“Ezio preceduto da istromenti bellici, schiavi ed insegne de’ vinti, seguito de’ soldati vincitori, popolo e detti.”), *METASTASIO, Ezio*, 1729, scene I,2; “Semiramide goes to the throne. Tamiri is left in the seat. Sibari is standing to the right and in the meantime preceded by the sound of barbarous instruments, Mirteo, Ircano and Scitalce cross the bridge with their followers, who stop outside the arcades and then enter one after the other when it is their turn to speak.” (“Semiramide va sul trono. Tamiri a sinistra nel sedile. Sibari in piedi a destra e intanto preceduti dal suono d’istromenti barbari, passano il ponte Mirteo, Ircano e Scitalce col loro seguito, quali si fermano fuori del portico e poi entrano l’un dopo l’altro quando tocca loro a parlare.”), *ID.*, *Semiramide*, 1729, scene I,2).

triumphant arrival in the first opera were also engaged for the celebratory entrance of the princes in the second:

“Expenses of players on the stage for the two operas, Expenses on March 5 [1729] 15 coin shields paid to Carlo Volmini oboe for honorary promised to him in policy withdrawn, [...]; on the aforesaid day 15 coin shields paid to Giuseppe Braconier hunting trumpet for honorary promised to him in policy withdrawn, [...]; on the aforementioned day 15 currency shields paid to Giovanni Belmonte oboe for a fee promised to him in a policy withdrawn, [...]; on the aforementioned day 15 coin shields paid to Pier Francesco Adriani bassoon for honorary promised to him in policy withdrawn, [...]; on the aforementioned day, 15 coin shields paid to Baldassare Bombelli, the oboe player for the honorary promised to him in policy withdrawn, [...]; on the 14th of the aforementioned month 12 coin shields paid to Andrea Mancini tympanum who played in both operas [...]”³⁸

The musicians who participated in both operas were Carlo Volmini, Giovanni Belmonte and Baldassare Bombelli on the oboes, Giuseppe Braconier on the hunting trumpet, Pier Francesco Adriani on the bassoon and Andrea Bombelli on the drum. Even though we are not in possession of the musical score by Auletta to ascertain the triumphal march in *Ezio*, the score of Porpora for *Semiramide* gives us an idea of how the festive arrival of the princes, set to music in D major and a *Grave* tempo, was performed musically (Figure 1). From the music manuscript it appears that not all the instruments that participated in the “Marchia” in scene I,2 were seen on stage. The hunting horns, the violettas, violoncello and harpsichord accompanied the stage musicians from the orchestra. On a larger scale the adaptation of such endowment scenes was not only used in a specific theater in an identical season but could be expanded over several years, as explained in the next paragraph.

38 “Spese di sonatori nel palco per le due opere, Dare adi 5 marzo [1729] 15 scudi di moneta pagati a Carlo Volmini oboe per onorario promessole in polizza ritirata, [...]; adi detto 15 scudi di moneta pagati a Giuseppe Braconier tromba da caccia per onorario promessole in polizza ritirata, [...]; adi detto 15 scudi di moneta pagati a Giovanni Belmonte oboe per onorario promessole in polizza ritirata, [...]; adi detto 15 scudi di moneta pagati a Pier Francesco Adriani fagotto per onorario promessole in polizza ritirata, [...]; adi detto 15 scudi di moneta pagati a Baldassare Bombelli sonatore di oboe per onorario promessole in polizza ritirata, [...]; adi 14 detto 12 scudi di moneta pagati ad Andrea Mancini timpano che ha sonato tutte due le opere [...],” I-Rasmom, CT424, c. 73 ls.

Figure 1: Nicola Porpora, *Semiramide riconosciuta*, Rome 1729, Act I, Scene 2 (I-Nc, Rari 7.2.19, fols. 15v-16v).



4. Adaptation of *décors* of different dramas in a single theater in different seasons

Starting with the carnival season of 1726 and continuing in subsequent years, the impresario of the Teatro delle Dame engaged several architects – Alessandro Mauri (1726 and 1728), Pietro Baistrocchi (1727), Pompeo Aldobrandini (1729) as well as Giovanni Battista Oliverio and Pietro Orte (1730). They constructed the stage designs for *Didone abbandonata*, *Valdemaro* (1726), *Siroe re di Persia*, *Gismondo re di Polonia* (1727), *Catone in Utica*, *Ipermestra* (1728), *Ezio*, *Semiramide riconosciuta* (1729), *Alessandro nell'Indie* and *Artaserse* (1730).³⁹ All ten operas were based on nine scene types and almost all of them – if not taken over from the operas performed earlier in the 1720s –⁴⁰ were created by the first set designer Alessandro Mauri for the first carnival season after the Holy Year.⁴¹ After the reopening of the renovated theater in 1725 all these types of scene were probably also in use during consecutive seasons when they could be slightly or substantially changed by the other set designers. These types are the “magnificent place”/“palace”, the “courtyard”/“atrium”, the “temple”/“pavilion”, the “apartment”/“cabinet”, the “harbor”, the “woods” (*arborata*)/“countryside”, the “garden” and the “prison” (Table 4, season 1726). These *décors* were also sufficient for the carnival season in 1727. Only in 1728 did Metastasio require a completely new design never used before for the representation of *Catone in Utica*, the “ruins” in the third sequence in Act I (“Fabriche in parte rovinate vicino al soggiorno di Catone”).⁴² We can suggest that the architect Alessandro Mauri created all nine scene types for the Metastasio dramas performed in the Teatro delle Dame, since Mauri was engaged not only in 1726 but also in 1728. The other architects and scenographers had the task of renewing and adapting these scenes for the new dramas, specifying the venues and organizing some details in the stage design. In fact, all the nine sets could be transformed into alternative scenery (Table 4 a-i). Besides the special Roman places like the Capitol and the Forum Romanum in *Ezio*, maybe conceived exclusively for the 1729 season by Aldobrandini, only one other specific place can be distinguished in Table 4. The “luogo di tribunali” (*Valdemaro*) could be adapted from atriums, if they had a circular form, otherwise from apartments or the cabinet, if they had a rectangular form.

The scene type most often in use in all the operas performed in the Teatro delle Dame over these five years was the apartment (20 times), which was easily transformable into a cabinet, a room, a chamber, a gallery or, with some adaptations like helmets and armor

39 Three of these dramas were not written by Metastasio but by Apostolo Zeno (*Valdemaro*), Francesco Briani (*Gismondo*) and Antonio Salvi (*Ipermestra*).

40 The operas performed between 1720 and 1724 are *Amore e Maestà* and *Faramondo* (1720), *Eumene* and *Artaserse* (1721), *Sofonisba* and *Flavio Anicio Olibrio* (1722), *Cosroe* and *Adelaide* (1723), *Farnace* and *Scipione* (1724). For these representations see BLICHMANN, 2019 and 2018; MARKUSZEWSKA, 2018, 2016a, 2016b and 2013.

41 I-Rasmom, CT421, c. 12 ls

42 METASTASIO, *Catone in Utica*, 1728, p. 14.

into an armory (Table 4 a). Most of them are royal settings, while in *Ezio* the chambers are specified as imperial spaces due to the historical plot. Only two of them were not described in more detail (*Valdemaro*). All the other stage sets of this type are specified in some way: three of them were ground floor apartments – in *Siroe* corresponding to the gardens – five had seats, three had statues, two had tables and one set was furnished with a bed, a fountain, mirrors and paintings. In *Ezio* the prospect of the gallery showed a large balcony with a view of Rome.

The magnificent place or the royal palace used in Acts I and III in *Didone* was probably not only renewed for *Siroe*, *Catone* and *Artaserse*, but with high probability it was also adapted for the halls necessary in *Valdemaro*, *Gismondo*, *Ipermestra* and *Artaserse* and salons required in *Valdemaro*, *Ipermestra* and *Semiramide* (Table 4b). All in all, this type of scene was used 13 times in five years. It was a typical public setting and was often equipped with a throne, seats and a table serving great gatherings of all *dramatis personae*. In *Siroe* and *Artaserse* this equipment provided the framework for the coronation of the protagonists. In *Semiramide* the hall was illuminated, and the board and the seats were used for the wedding banquet. In some scenographies the view of a city or a field was depicted (*Didone*, *Ipermestra*), while others were decorated as a “spring palace” (*Valdemaro*). The great golden horse machine erected to Mars and the altar in the middle of the stage with the *simulacrum* of the Sun were additional *décors* in *Valdemaro* and *Artaserse*.

The atrium, courtyard and arcades used about ten times (Table 4c) were apparently reused without major changes. In *Ezio* the atrium was equipped with a prospect showing iron gates that led to several prisons. The most elaborate scenography shows the great arcades of the royal palace in *Semiramide* situated on the banks of the river Euphrates. On one side a throne was positioned, to the left of which four seats were placed. In the middle of the stage was placed an altar with the *simulacrum* of Belo, the Deity of the Chaldeans. A large bridge with statues, ships on the river and a view of tents and soldiers on the other side of the river were other decorations which Pompeo Aldobrandini created for this performance.

The royal gardens created for *Valdemaro* were reused nine times as delightful places, parks, vegetable gardens or fences (Table 4d) and were adorned with fountains, sepulchers, palms and cypresses. The trees were also used in *Ipermestra* and recycled in *Alessandro*, which also had a temple dedicated to Bacchus. The vegetable gardens in *Semiramide* and *Ezio* were specific ones and had to create a connection to the hanging gardens of Babylon and the Palatine gardens in Rome, which were ornamented with *boulevards*, *espaliers* of flowers, fountains, water falls, grotesques and statues. In *Artaserse* the nighttime garden was situated inside the palace of the kings of Persia with several apartments and a view of the palace.

For the typology of the temple or pavilion – both small buildings of circular and round base, often with a single ambience and located outside of a main building – which was used nine times in all between 1726 and 1730, a distinction must be made between external and internal architecture (Table 4e). In *Didone*, *Gismondo* (Act II), *Siroe* and *Alessandro* (Act III) the point of view of the temple or pavilion is an internal one and

exposed in its interior architecture as *simulacrum* of a Deity, a throne, other furniture and a stake that lights up. In *Gismondo* the pavilion was decorated with flags inside, but a space for the army was left around it. In contrast, the pavilions and temples in *Valdemaro*, *Gismondo* (Act I), *Ipermestra* and *Alessandro* (Act I) were architectural structures seen from the outside, with the possibility of also seeing the interior space. Usually these sets were closely connected with war scenes, battlefields and soldiers. The temple in *Alessandro*, which is situated within a fence of palms and cypresses in Cleofide's palace, is an exception. Furthermore, the temples had to be different by virtue of the deities (Neptune, Bacchus etc.) to whom they were dedicated. Thanks to the altered decoration the symbolism and meaning of the sequence became different.⁴³

The woods ("arborata") created for *Didone* were adapted into large countryside places or forests, or showed the inner part of a city wall in the other operas. Typically, it was a location between cities and harbors, settings on a river with ships and settings where battles took place (Table 4f). The most developed setting is the one in *Alessandro*, where ancient factories with tents and military housing, a bridge over the Idaspe river, a military camp, elephants, towers, covered wagons and war machines were shown in the countryside. In fact, this typology of scenes as well as the typology of the pavilion, the countryside places, the arcades and the ruins correlate with battle or war scenes near a harbor or a shore. They belong to the scenes divided into two distinct spaces as can be deduced from the Table 4c, e, f, g, i, where 'mixed' stage decorations are marked with a star (*). In *Catone in Utica* further scenographic details are various islands on a river that communicate with each other through different bridges.

Last but not least, the dark ambience of the prison used in *Valdemaro* was adapted in the other performances as a jail,⁴⁴ a narrow place enclosed in a castle and aqueducts. In *Catone in Utica*, for example, the set was reduced for the use of an underground road leading from the city to the harbor.

43 The addition of a more specific description of the temples can give a different meaning to the ambience. In Metastasian drama can be found numerous types of temples that all have a different symbolism: The "Tempio di Nettuno" (*Didone abbandonata*, I,15) is related to the sea and the water, the "Tempio dedicato al Sole" (*Siroe re di Persia*, I,1; *Il Demetrio*, III,12) and the "Tempio di Apollo" (*Demofonte*, II,9) can be associated with the sun, the "Tempio di Giove Statore" (*La clemenza di Tito*, I,5) is connected with the very origins of ancient Rome (cf. BLICHMANN, 2015, p. 139) and in contrast the "Tempio di Giove Olimpico" (*L'Olimpiade*, III,6) is related to the largest Doric temple ever constructed. The "Tempio di Bacco" (*Alessandro nell'Indie*, I,6; *L'Issipile*, I,1; *Achille in Sciro*, I,1), is correlated with the god of grape-harvest and fertility while the "Tempio di Venere" (*L'Issipile*, III,8) and the "Tempio di Diana" (*Ciro riconosciuto*, III,14) are to be associated with the Roman goddess of love and hunting, the "Tempio di Ercole Tirio" (*Il re pastore*, III,7) with the God Melqart and the Phoenician legend of the columns of Hercules. All these different temples on stage were characterized with their own specific symbols. Cf. no. 45.

44 Cf. ROMAGNOLI, 1995.

In summary, from the previous considerations it should have become clear that the stage directions in the *drammi per musica* by Metastasio were almost always identical or adapted, as discussed for the different versions of Metastasian dramas. The adaptation of the stage directions in these non-pasticcio versions was a really handled practice. This ultimately facilitated the handling and realization of pasticcios because stage directions and stage designs could be adapted easily. However, when adopting a specific sequence of scenes from the initial version into the pasticcio version, attention had to be paid to the fact that the corresponding stage direction and set design were also adapted. It can also be emphasized that the stage directions in Pietro Metastasio's *drammi per musica* are almost always retained literally. But in terms of stage design and decoration two different forms of adaptations can be distinguished. Endowment scenes were the basis of stage sets in a specific theater created by an architect, reused during other seasons, adapted to specific needs of the performances and re-decorated by other scenographers.⁴⁵ In contrast, a specific Metastasian *dramma per musica* performed in different theaters at different times, despite identical stage directions, could offer a different set design due to the particular endowment scenes present in every individual theater.⁴⁶ This means that, although Metastasio's stage directions were not usually modified over time and in different metropolises, every single opera house had to adapt these stage directions bearing in mind its particular material, aesthetic or political needs,⁴⁷ especially if it was viewed by sovereigns to whom was dedicated the *dramma per musica*.⁴⁸ In such cases opera performances were a medium of political communication, which, in a striking way, enabled the consolidation and proclamation of power. European monarchs as organizers, with the help of their impresarios and architects, steered the impact of opera performances as *instrumentum regni* by also emphasizing explosive messages visually, by means of performative symbols on stage.⁴⁹

45 Cf. chapter 3 and 4.

46 Cf. chapter 1 and 2.

47 Without offering a precise discussion in this context, such scenographical divergences can be observed for the first stage set in *Didone abbandonata* for Dresden-Hubertusburg 1742, Lisbon 1753 and Turin 1773. For a comparison see Tables V, VII and XVII in VERARDO TIERI, 2004, pp. 638, 640, 652.

48 For example, the performance of *La clemenza di Tito* in Lisbon 1755 and Turin 1760 had different needs, depending on the dedicatees – Joseph I, King of Portugal, and Charles Emmanuel III, Duke of Savoy – and relating to the architectonical conception of the stage design for the second sequence, the “Atrium of the Temple of Jupiter Stator” (“Atrio del Tempio di Giove Statore”). BLICHMANN, 2015. For the stage design cf. in particular *IBID.*, p. 142 (Image 4) and p. 152 (Image 10).

49 A particular case study on decorative details in the last stage set (“Magnificent place that introduces in a vast amphitheater”/“Luogo magnifico, che introduce a vastissimo anfiteatro”) of *La clemenza di Tito* (Lisbon 1755) is considered in BLICHMANN, 2017.

Appendix

Table 1: *Pasticcio practice and differences in stage directions*

<i>Didone abbandonata</i> , sequence I (scenes I, I-I, 8)	
City and year of performance	Stage direction (content differences in italic)
Naples 1724 [NA24]	Luogo magnifico destinato per le pubbliche udienze con trono da un lato; veduta con prospetto della città di Cartagine che sta in atto edificandosi.
Reggio Emilia 1725 [RE25]	<i>Grand'atrio</i> con trono per le pubbliche udienze, ed in lontano la città di Cartagine che sta edificandosi.
Rome 1726 [RM26]	La città di Cartagine che sta in atto edificandosi.
Milan 1729 [MI29]	= RE25
Rome 1732 [RM32]	Luogo magnifico destinato per le pubbliche udienze con trono, veduta della città di Cartagine.
Bologna 1735 [BO35]	= RE25
Cesena 1743 [CE43]	= RE25
Fano 1745 [FA45]	<i>Campo attendato de' Troiani in tempo di notte. Gran Padiglione d'Enea, che dorme. Vista della Città di Cartagine, con Porto di Mare e navi. In lontananza il sole che sorge. A poco a poco s'illumina tutta la scena. Cala il Ponte della città da cui escono Selene ed Osmida.</i>
Parma 1745 [PA45]	Luogo magnifico destinato per le pubbliche udienze con trono da un lato.
Florence 1753 [FI53]	= RM32
Florence 1759 [FI59]	= FI53
Munich 1760 [MU60]	= PA45
Venice 1770 [VE70]	= FA45

Table 2: Examples of aria sequences in *Didone abbandonata* (“*Luogo magnifico*”, I,1-1,8) (for abbreviations see Literature)

Aria	VE25	RM26	MI29	VE30	FE33	ME33	MI39	LI41	VE41	DR42	FA45
Enea <i>Dovrei.... Ma no</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	o
Selene <i>Dirò che fida sei</i>	-	x	x	x	-	x	x	-	-	x	x
Didone <i>Son regina e son amante</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Osmida <i>Tu mi scorgi al gran disegno</i>	x	„	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Iarba <i>Fra lo splendor del trono</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	x
Araspe <i>Se dalle stelle tu non sei guida</i>	x	x	x	o/x	x	x	x	=	x	x	=

Aria	BR45	PA45	VE47	VE48	RE52	MA52	LI53	MI55	CR56	VE57	TO73
Enea <i>Dovrei.... Ma no</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Selene <i>Dirò che fida sei</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Didone <i>Son regina e son amante</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Osmida <i>Tu mi scorgi al gran disegno</i>	x	o	-	x	x	x	x	x	o	o	x
Iarba <i>Fra lo splendor del trono</i>	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	„	x	o	x
Araspe <i>Se dalle stelle tu non sei guida</i>	x	o	x	x	=	x	=	x	o	-	=

x same aria; - cancelled aria; = cancelled scene; o altered aria; „, aria altered/not set to music

Table 3: Stage directions in *Ezio* and *Semiramide riconosciuta*, Rome, Teatro delle Dame, 1729 (adaptations in italics)

Sequence	<i>Ezio</i> Music: Pietro Auletta	<i>Semiramide riconosciuta</i> Music: Nicola Porpora
Scenography by Pompeo Aldobrandini.		
I	Parte del Foro romano con <i>trono</i> imperiale da un lato, vista di Roma illuminata in tempo di notte con <i>archi trionfali</i> ed altri apparati festivi, preparati per celebrare le feste deccennali e per onorare il ritorno d'Ezio vincitore d'Attila	<i>Gran portico</i> del palazzo reale corrispondente alle sponde de l'Eufrate; <i>trono</i> da un lato, alla sinistra del quale un sedile più basso, in faccia tre altri sedili; ara nel mezzo col simulacro di Belo deità de' Caldei, gran ponte praticabile con statue, navi sul fiume, vista di tende e soldati su l'altra sponda.
II	<i>Camere</i> imperiali istoriate di pittura.	<i>Orti</i> pensili.
III	<i>Orti</i> palatini corrispondenti agli appartamenti imperiali con viali, spalliere di fiori e fontane continuate, in fondocadute d'acque, innanzi grotteschi e statue.	<i>Sala</i> regia illuminata in tempo di notte; varie credenze d'intorno con vasi trasparenti, gran mensa imbandita nel mezzo con <i>quattro sedili</i> d'intorno ed una sedia in faccia.
IV	<i>Galleria</i> di Statue e specchi con <i>sedili intorno</i> , fra' quali uno innanzi dalla mano destra capace di due persone, gran balcone aperto in prospecto, dal quale vista di Roma.	<i>Appartamenti</i> terreni.
V	<i>Atrio magnifico</i> con <i>cancelli</i> di ferro in prospecto che conducono a diversi prigioni.	<i>Campagna</i> su la riva dell'Eufrate con navi che poi sono incendiate; mura de' <i>giardini</i> reali da un lato con cancelli di ferro aperti.
VI	Campidoglio antico.	<i>Gabinetti</i> reali.
VII	-	<i>Anfiteatro</i> con <i>cancelli</i> chiusi dai lati, trono da una parte.

Table 4: Endowment scenes in the Teatro delle Dame 1726-1730 (* mixed stage sets)

<i>Didone</i> 1726	<i>Valdemaro</i> 1726	<i>Siree</i> 1727	<i>Gismondo</i> 1727	<i>Catone</i> 1728	<i>Ipermestra</i> 1728	<i>Ezio</i> 1729	<i>Semiramide</i> 1729	<i>Alessandro</i> 1730	<i>Artaserse</i> 1730
Act I									
Luo	Padiglioni	Tempio	Riva	Sala d'Armi	Camera	Foro romano	*Portico/Riva	Rive	Giardino
Cortile	Atrio	Camera	Appartamenti	Città murata	Campagna	Camere	Orti pensili	Recinto	Reggia
Tempio	Salone		Portici	Fabriche	Prigione			Padiglione	
Act II									
Appartamenti	Campagna	Deliziosa reale	*Padiglione/Riva	Riva	Parco	Orti palatini	Sala regia	Gabinetti	Appartamenti
Atrio	Appartamenti	Appartamenti	Stanze	Camera	Sala reggia	Galleria	Appartamenti	*Campagna/fabrice/[riva]	Sala
Gabinetto	Luo		Armeria		Atrio			Appartamenti	
	Gabinetti				Suborghi rovinati				
Act III									
Porto	Giardini	Giardino	Campagna	Cortile	Giardino	Atrio	*Campagna/Riva	*Portici/Giardini	Prigione
Arborata	Carcere	Luo	Atrio	Acquedotti	Padiglione	Campidoglio	Gabinetti	*Recinto/Tempio	Gabinetto
Regia	Sala	Luo	Sala	Luo	Salone reggio		Anfiteatro		Luo

Table 4a: *Appartamento – Gabinetto – Stanza – Camera – Galleria*

Season	Opera	Setting in Act I	Setting in Act II	Setting in Act III
1726	<i>Didone abbandonata</i>	<i>Appartamenti</i> reali con tavolino.	<i>Gabinetto</i> con sedie.	
	<i>Valdemaro</i>		<i>Appartamenti</i> .	<i>Gabinetto</i> .
1727	<i>Gismondo re di Polonia</i>	Regi <i>appartamenti</i> di Primislao – <i>Armeria</i> corrispondente alle stanze di Cunegonda, dove sono le statue dei re e principi della Polonia.	<i>Stanze</i> terrene con fontane e statue.	
	<i>Siroe re di Persia</i>	<i>Camera</i> interna di Cosroe negli appartamenti reali con tavolino e sedia.	<i>Appartamenti</i> terreni corrispondenti a' giardini con sedie.	
1728	<i>Catone in Utica</i>	<i>Sala d'armi</i> .	<i>Camera</i> con sedie.	
	<i>Ipermestra</i>	<i>Camera</i> con letto chiuso.		
1729	<i>Ezio</i>	<i>Camere</i> imperiali istoriate di pitture.	<i>Galleria</i> di statue e specchi con sedili intorno, fra' quali uno innanzi dalla mano destra capace di due persone, gran balcone aperto in prospetto, dal quale vista di Roma.	
	<i>Semiramide riconosciuta</i>		<i>Appartamenti</i> terreni.	<i>Gabinetti</i> reali.
1730	<i>Alessandro nell'Indie</i>		<i>Gabinetti</i> reali. – <i>Appartamenti</i> nella reggia di Cleofide.	
	<i>Artaserse</i>		<i>Appartamenti</i> reali.	<i>Gabinetti</i> negli appartamenti di Mandane.

Table 4b: *Luogo magnifico – Reggia – Sala*

Season	Opera	Setting in Act I	Setting in Act II	Setting in Act III
1726	<i>Didone abbandonata</i>	<i>Luogo Magnifico</i> destinato per le pubbliche udienze con trono da un lato, veduta in prospetto della città di Cartagine che sta in atto edificandosi.		<i>Regia</i> con veduta della città di Cartagine in prospetto che poi s'incendia.
	<i>Valdemaro</i>	<i>Salone imperiale</i> con trono e sedili minori all'intorno.		<i>Gran Sala</i> che rappresenta la reggia della primavera tutta di fiori adornata. Machina in lontano di gran Cavallo d'oro eretto a Marte.
1727	<i>Gismondo re di Polonia</i>			<i>Sala regia</i> con trono.
	<i>Siroe re di Persia</i>			<i>Luogo magnifico</i> nella regia destinato per la coronazione di Medarse, ove siegue poi quella di Siroe.
1728	<i>Catone in Utica</i>			<i>Luogo magnifico</i> nel soggiorno di Catone.
	<i>Ipermestra</i>		<i>Sala regia</i> con sedie e trono.	<i>Salone regio</i> e veduta di gallerie da cui in lontananza si scorgono da una parte le mura della città diroccata e dall'altra il campo di Linceo.
1729	<i>Semiramide riconosciuta</i>		<i>Salone regio</i> illuminato in tempo di notte.	
1730	<i>Artaserse</i>	<i>Reggia.</i>	<i>Gran sala</i> del real consiglio con trono da un lato, sedili dall'altro per i grandi del regno, tavolino e sedia alla destra del suddetto trono.	<i>Luogo magnifico</i> destinato per la coronazione d'Artaserse, trono da un lato con sopra scettro e corona, ara nel mezzo con simulacro del Sole.

Table 4c: Atrio – Cortile – Portico

Season	Opera	Setting in Act I	Setting in Act II	Setting in Act III
1726	<i>Didone abbandonata</i>	<i>Cortile.</i>	<i>Atrio.</i>	
	<i>Valdemaro</i>	<i>Atrio.</i>		
1727	<i>Gismondo re di Polonia</i>	<i>Portici reali.</i>		<i>Atrio.</i>
1728	<i>Catone in Utica</i>			<i>Cortile.</i>
	<i>Ipermestra</i>		<i>Atrio.</i>	
1729	<i>Ezio</i>			<i>Atrio</i> magnifico con cancelli di ferro in prospetto che conducono a diversi prigionieri.
	<i>Semiramide riconosciuta</i>	* <i>Gran Portico</i> del palazzo reale corrispondente alle sponde de l'Eufrate. Trono da un lato, alla sinistra del quale un sedile più basso, in faccia tre altri sedili. Ara nel mezzo col simulacro di Belo deità de' Caldei, gran ponte praticabile con statue, navi sul fiume, vista di tende e soldati su l'altra sponda. (cf. table 4g)		
1730	<i>Alessandro nell'Indie</i>			* <i>Portici</i> de' giardini reali. (cf. table 4d)

Table 4d: *Deliziosa – Giardino – Parco – Orto – Recinto*

Season	Opera	Setting in Act I	Setting in Act II	Setting in Act III
1726	<i>Valdemaro</i>			<i>Giardini reali.</i>
1727	<i>Siroe re di Persia</i>		<i>Deliziosa reale con acque.</i>	<i>Giardino.</i>
1728	<i>Catone in Utica</i>			
	<i>Ipermestra</i>	Viale di palme e di cipressi nel <i>parco</i> reale co' sepolcri de' re d'Argo, quello d'Ipermestra e sua iscrizione.		Parte remota del reale <i>giardino</i> .
1729	<i>Ezio</i>		<i>Orti palatini</i> corrispondenti agli appartamenti imperiali con viali, spalliere di fiori e fontane continue, in fondo cadute d'acqua, innanzi grottesche e statue.	
	<i>Semiramide riconosciuta</i>	<i>Orti pensili.</i>		
1730	<i>Alessandro nell'Indie</i>	* <i>Recinto</i> di palme e cipressi con piccolo tempio nel mezzo dedicato a Bacco nella reggia di Cleofide. (cf. table 4e)		*Portici de' <i>giardini</i> reali. (cfr. table 4c)
	<i>Artaserse</i>	<i>Giardino</i> interno nel palazzo de' re di Persia corrispondente a diversi appartamenti, vista della reggia, notte con luna.		

Table 4e: *Padiglione – Tempio*

Season	Opera	Setting in Act I	Setting in Act II	Setting in Act III
1726	<i>Didone abbandonata</i>	<i>Tempio</i> di Nettuno con simulacro del medesimo		
	<i>Valdemaro</i>	Campi di battaglia trincerati con <i>Padiglioni</i> ed illuminati di notte.		
1727	<i>Gismondo re di Polonia</i>	*Veduta della città di Varsavia posta su la riva della Vistula, sopra di cui un gran ponte. In distanza si veggono <i>padiglioni</i> di Gismondo e lungo il fiume varii navigli, da un de' quali sbarca il suddetto Gismondo con Otone suo figlio, ricevuto da Ernesto, che esce dalla città con seguito de' cittadini e da Ermano, che viene dai <i>padiglioni</i> con molti soldati. (cf. table 4g)	<i>Padiglione</i> reale con trono alla parte e tavolino, sopra cui stanno le bandiere delle provincie per le quali deve Primislao prestar l'omaggio a Gismondo, al di fuori stanno schierati gli eserciti polacco e lituano.	
	<i>Siroe re di Persia</i>		Gran <i>Tempio</i> dedicato al Sole con ara e simulacro del medesimo.	
	<i>Ipermestra</i>			Campo di Linceo con <i>Padiglione</i> reale.
1730	<i>Alessandro nell'Indie</i>	*Recinto di palme e cipressi con piccolo <i>tempio</i> nel mezzo dedicato a Bacco nella reggia di Cleofide. (cf. table 4d) Gran <i>padiglione</i> d'Alessandro vicino all'Idaspe con vista della reggia di Cleofide su l'altra sponda del fiume.		<i>Tempio</i> magnifico dedicato a Bacco con rogo nel mezzo che poi s'accende.

Table 4f: Arborata – Campagna – Bosco

Season	Opera	Setting in Act I	Setting in Act II	Setting in Act III
1726	<i>Didone abbandonata</i>			<i>Arborata</i> tra la città e il porto.
	<i>Valdemaro</i>		<i>Vasta campagna.</i>	
1727	<i>Gismondo re di Polonia</i>			<i>Vasta campagna</i> per la battaglia.
1728	<i>Catone in Utica</i>	<i>Parte interna delle mura</i> di Utica con porta della città in prospetto chiusa da un ponte che poi si abbassa.		
	<i>Ipermestra</i>	<i>Campagna</i> tendata nelle vicinanze d’Argo con la veduta della città e levata del Sole.		
1729	<i>Semiramide riconosciuta</i>			<i>*Campagna</i> su la riva dell’Eufrate con navi che poi sono incendiate. (cf. table 4g)
1730	<i>Alessandro nell’Indie</i>		<i>*Campagna</i> sparsa di fabbriche antiche con tende ed alloggiamenti militari preparati da Cleofide per l’esercito greco, ponte su l’Idaspe, campo numeroso d’Alessandro disposta in ordinanza di là dal fiume, con elefanti, torri, carri coperti e machine da guerra. (cf. table 4e and 4i)	

Table 4g: Porto – Riva

Season	Opera	Setting in Act I	Setting in Act II	Setting in Act III
1726	<i>Didone abbandonata</i>			<i>Porto</i> di mare con navi.
1727	<i>Gismondo re di Polonia</i>	*Veduta della città di Varsavia posta su la <i>riva</i> della Vistula, sopra di cui un gran ponte. In distanza si veggono padiglioni di Gismondo e lungo il fiume varii navigli, da un de' quali sbarca il suddetto Gismondo con Otone suo figlio, ricevuto da Ernesto, che esce dalla città con seguito de' cittadini e da Ermano, che viene dai padiglioni con molti soldati. (cf. table 4e)		
1728	<i>Catone in Utica</i>		Alloggiamenti militari su le <i>rive</i> del fiume Bagrada con varie isole che comunicano fra loro per diversi ponti.	
1729	<i>Semiramide riconosciuta</i>	*Gran Portico del palazzo reale corrispondente alle <i>sponde</i> de l'Eufrate. Trono da un lato, alla sinistra del quale un sedile più basso, in faccia tre altri sedili. Ara nel mezzo col simulacro di Belo deità de' Caldei, gran ponte praticabile con statue, navi sul fiume, vista di tende e soldati su l'altra sponda. (cf. table 4c)		*Campagna su la <i>riva</i> dell'Eufrate con navi che poi sono incendiate. (cf. table 4f)

Season	Opera	Setting in Act I	Setting in Act II	Setting in Act III
1730	<i>Alessandro nell'Indie</i>		*Campagna sparsa di fabbriche antiche con tende ed alloggiamenti militari preparati da Cleofide per l'esercito greco, <i>ponte su l'Idaspe</i> , campo numero-so d'Alessandro disposta in ordinanza di là dal fiume, con elefanti, torri, carri coperti e machine da guerra. (cf. table 4f and 4i)	Campo di battaglia su le <i>rive</i> dell' <i>Idaspe</i> , tende e carri rovesciati, soldati dispersi, armi, insegne ed altri avanzi dell'esercito di Poro, disfatto da Alessandro.

Table 4h: *Carcere – Prigione – Luogo angusto – Acquedotto*

Season	Opera	Setting in Act I	Setting in Act II	Setting in Act III
1726	<i>Valdemaro</i>	<i>Carcere.</i>		
1727	<i>Siroe re di Persia</i>			<i>Luogo angusto</i> e racchiuso nel castello destinato per <i>carcere</i> a Siroe.
1728	<i>Catone in Utica</i>			<i>Acquedotti</i> antichi ridotti ad uso di strada sotterranea che conducono dalla città alla marina con porta chiusa da un lato del prospetto.
	<i>Ipermestra</i>	<i>Prigione.</i>		
1730	<i>Artaserse</i>			Parte interna della fortezza, nella quale è ritenuto <i>prigione</i> Arbace, cancelli in prospetto, picciola porta a mano destra, per la quale si ascende alla reggia.

Table 4i: *Rovina – Fabbrica – Sobborgo*

Season	Opera	Setting in Act I	Setting in Act II	Setting in Act III
1728	<i>Catone in Utica</i>	<i>Fabbriche</i> in parte rovinate vicino al soggiorno di Catone.		
	<i>Ipermestra</i>	<i>Sobborghi</i> della città rovinati e acquedotti demoliti.		
1730	<i>Alessandro nell'Indie</i>		*Campagna sparsa di <i>fabbriche antiche</i> con tende ed alloggiamenti militari preparati da Cleofide per l'esercito greco, ponte su l'Idaspe, campo numeroso d'Alessandro disposta in ordinanza di là dal fiume, con elefanti, torri, carri coperti e machine da guerra. (cf. table 4f and 4g)	

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