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# STYLISTIC INFLUENCES OF ARCANGELO CORELLI'S MUSIC ON THE NEAPOLITAN VIOLIN SONATA REPERTORY<sup>1</sup>

by GUIDO OLIVIERI

On April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1702 the long-awaited fleet of the new King of Spain, Philip V, finally arrived in the bay of Naples. Philip was the first sovereign to visit the Neapolitan realm in about two centuries; the event thus called for magnificent festive celebrations: the King's official entrance in the city on May 20<sup>th</sup> was accompanied by fireworks, and lavish entertainments took place almost every night during the six weeks of his stay in Naples. The musical highlight of this celebration was the performance of the new opera written by court composer Alessandro Scarlatti, *Tiberio imperatore d'Oriente*, which took place at the Royal Palace on May 8<sup>th</sup>. It was for this special occasion that „the celebrated violin player“<sup>2</sup> Arcangelo Corelli was invited to perform in Naples.

Corelli's visit could be considered emblematically as a watershed in the history of Neapolitan instrumental music. Although the short trip to Naples did not allow a direct involvement of Corelli in the Neapolitan musical life, the encounter between the violinist „who is said to be the best in Europe“ and the local musical milieu certainly had repercussions on the development of instrumental music in Naples. While the anecdotal details and the political and diplomatic implications of that performance have already been discussed,<sup>3</sup> little attention has been paid overall to the impact that Corelli's music had on the development of the local instrumental production. Within a tendency of merging different styles and repertoires that remained typical of the Neapolitan musical tradition, Corelli's music was definitely destined to have a lasting influence on the local instrumental tradition. The standards and paradigms set by Corelli's sonatas became an inescapable reference, whether refused or only partially accepted in favor of more locally characterised flavor and traditional language, or fully embraced as an effective vehicle for the development of international careers.

The presence and circulation of Corelli's music in Naples is attested by the existence of important sources of his sonatas. Besides the numerous 18<sup>th</sup>-

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the Butler School of Music and the College of Fine Arts of the University of Texas at Austin for funding this research through a Butler Faculty Grant and a Creative Research Grant. Special thanks to my wife and my daughter, my first readers.

<sup>2</sup> „Giunse per sonare all'opera in musica, che si deve fare quando i musici sapranno le parti, il celebre sonator di violino Arcangelo Corelli, che dicono sia il migliore d'Europa“. *Giornale d'Antonio Bulifon*, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1702, manuscript in I-Nn, Sezione Napoletana, XXII.D. 1 („The celebrated violin player, Arcangelo Corelli, who is said to be the best in Europe, has arrived to play in the opera, which will take place when the singers will know their parts.“).

<sup>3</sup> See in particular the recent article by José Maria Domínguez, „Corelli, Politics and Music During the Visit of Philip V to Naples in 1702“, *Eighteenth-Century Music* 10/1 (2013), 93–108; and my „Si suona a Napoli! I rapporti fra Napoli e Parigi e i primordi della sonata in Francia“, *Studi Musicali* 25/1–2 (1996), 409–427.



century manuscript copies of Corelli's published works – still preserved in the library of the Conservatorio di San Pietro a Majella – several other sources transmit music credited, with more or less certainty, to Corelli. It is the case, for instance, with the manuscript of Neapolitan origin that includes the only sonata with wind instruments to have been ascribed to Corelli, the exceptional Sonata WoO 4 for trumpet and strings, and the *Sonata a quattro per 2 violini, violetta e basso* WoO 2. This Neapolitan source is not only relevant for the presence of these unedited works by Corelli, but also because it bears on its frontispiece the indication „Appendix of other sonatas by the same author never sent to press“, thus confirming the existence of a number of works written by the Bolognese violinist that never reached the final stage of publication and circulated exclusively through manuscript copies.<sup>4</sup>

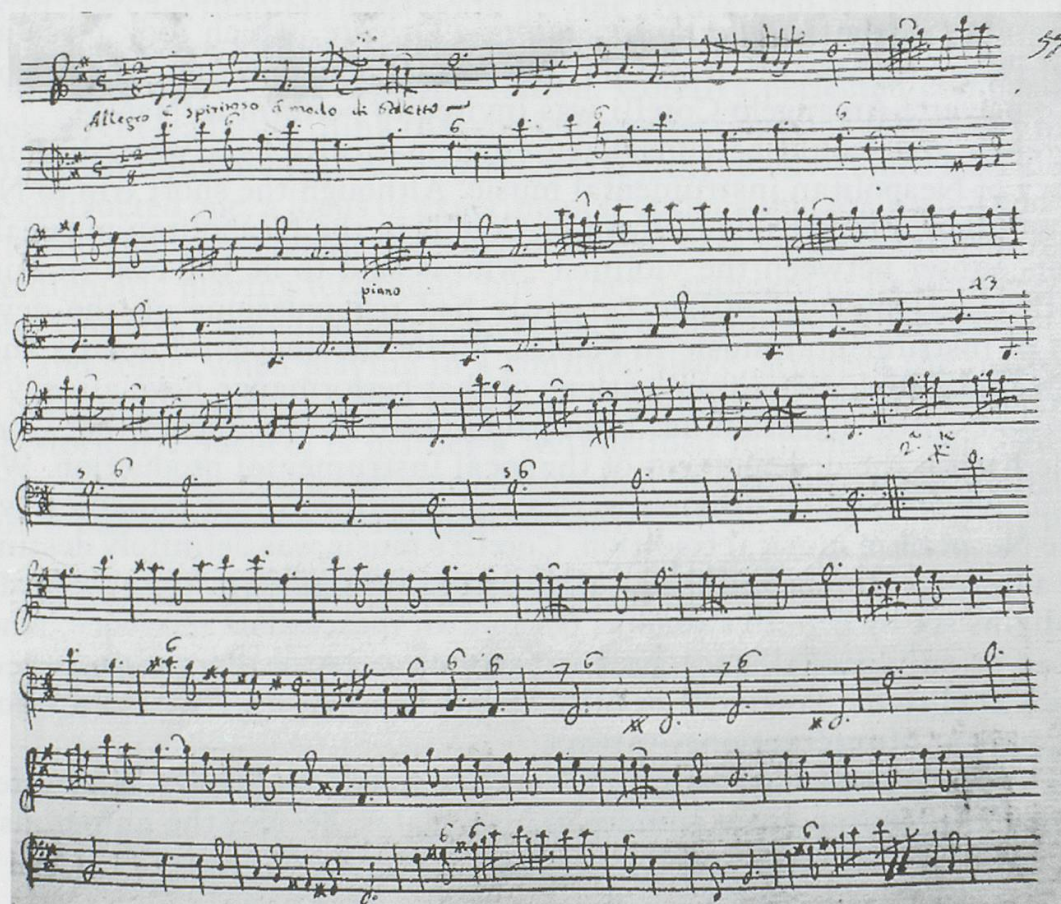


Fig. 1: I-Nc, Musiche Diverse 33-2-9, c. 117. Reproduced with the permission of the library of the Conservatorio di musica S. Pietro a Majella – Napoli.

<sup>4</sup> The manuscript is in I-Nc, Musica Strumentale 1282. Already in his *Historia almi Ferrariae Gymnasii* published in Ferrara in 1735, Ferrante Borsetti declared „Alia [opera] quoque multa reliquit maximus Corelli nostro, quae inedita remanserunt“. For a discussion of these sonatas and of their sources see Hans Joachim Marx, „Arcangelo Corelli. Werke ohne Opuszahl“, in: Arcangelo Corelli, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der musikalischen Werke*, vol. V, 1976; and Agnese Pavanello, „Corelli inedito. Composizioni dubbie o senza numero d'opera. Percorsi tra fonti, attribuzioni e fortuna della trasmissione“, *Studi corelliani VII*, 393–422.



Works attributed to Corelli appear also in other sources of Neapolitan origin. This is the case, for instance, of a less-known manuscript that includes partimenti by Gaetano Greco as well as an anthology of dances and pedagogical works. This manuscript, probably compiled in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, features, interspersed with other dances, a *Balletto* that corresponds exactly to the Giga of Corelli's Sonata Anh. 35, and an „Allegro è spiritoso à modo di balletto“, which is a slightly modified version of the Giga of Anh. 36.<sup>5</sup> The influence of Corelli's music on the sonata production in Naples can be more clearly examined by looking closely at some examples taken from the Neapolitan repertory. I will take into account mostly the production of sonatas *a tre*, not only because this is by far the largest surviving repertory in the local sonata tradition, but as it also offers the most opportunities for the closest comparison with Corelli's works.

The impetus behind the new developments of the Neapolitan sonata repertory was not merely musical. As we have seen, Corelli's Neapolitan performance coincided with the change of political control over the capital of the Kingdom of Naples after about two hundred years of Spanish dominion, and the presence in the city of this virtuoso was indeed part of a well-calculated cultural strategy.<sup>6</sup> Without doubts, with the arrival of the French ruler first and of the Austrian Hapsburgs a few years later, the Neapolitan artistic and cultural milieu opened up to a broader European influence, and consequently to extensive cultural exchange. It was from this interaction that instrumental music, and string sonatas in particular, found new vigor.

In the wake of these political changes, a few Neapolitan virtuosi left the Italian capital to seek fortune in France. While this must be seen as the obvious consequence of the cultural impact of French rule over the city, it was also the effect of a renewed impulse that the contact with the music of Corelli gave to the Neapolitan sonata. In the first decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century at least three eminent violin performers and composers moved from Naples to Paris. They made their fortune thanks to the popularity of Corelli's music, but they certainly also contributed to the spread and acceptance of Corelli's style in the French capital. Évrard Titon du Tillet (1677–1762) called attention to the presence of these Italian performers in Paris in his *Le Parnasse François* (1732), a celebration of the most significant artistic personalities from the time of Louis XIV:

<sup>5</sup> I-Nc, Musiche diverse 33-2-9; the two excerpts are on c. 31–32 and 117–118, respectively. This source is not included in Hans Joachim Marx, *Catalogue raisonné. Die Überlieferung der Werke Arcangelo Corellis*, Köln: Arno Volk, 1980 (Arcangelo Corelli, Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der musikalischen Werke; Supplementband). I am very grateful to Enrico Gatti for bringing these two concordances to my attention. In this source it is remarkable the recurrence of ‚balletto‘, a term rarely encountered in the Roman and the Neapolitan repertory, but more common in the North-Italian tradition.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. also Domínguez, „Corelli, Politics and Music“ (see n. 3) on this aspect.



I must admit that I have never heard of good Italian music before that of Corelli. [...] The pleasure that the French took in Italian music around the beginning of the eighteenth century encouraged many skilled musicians from Italy, who excelled in playing the violin, to move to Paris; among others Antonio [Guido], who was at the service of M. the Duc d'Orléans, Desplanes [Giovanni Antonio Piani] of M. le Comte de Toulouse, Michel [Mascitti], who M. de Crozat, great amateur of Italian music, received in his home. [...] *It was for them that the musicians of the two nations, very happy with each other, were pleased to establish a friendly relationship between themselves. It is from that time that Italian music has been so strongly appreciated and has become so familiar in France.*<sup>7</sup>

That all three of these renowned virtuosi had had their apprenticeship in Naples is certainly not coincidental, and it is clear from Du Tillet's comment that they all occupied a crucial role in the development of French instrumental music.<sup>8</sup>

Among the first musicians to take advantage of the new interest for the Italian repertory was certainly Michele Mascitti (1664–1760) who left Naples around December 1702, only a few months after Corelli's visit. Although his first official appearance in the French capital dates to 1704 with the publication of the collection of sonatas op. 1, he had already been in the city at the service of the Duke of Orleans since at least the previous year. This appears in both

<sup>7</sup> „J'avouerai même que je n'ai jamais entendu parler de bonne Musique Italienne avant celle de CORELLI, vers le commencement du dix-huitième siècle [...]. Le goût que les François prirent pour la Musique Italienne, vers le commencement du dixhuitième siècle, engagèrent [sic] plusieurs habiles Musiciens d'Italie, qui excellaient pour le Violon, de venir s'établir à Paris, entr'autres ANTONIO, qui fut attaché à M. le Duc d'Orléans, DESPLANE à M. le Comte de Toulouse, MICHEL, que M. de Crozat, grand amateur de la Musique Italienne, reçut dans sa maison & Batistin pour le violoncelle, le plus habile compositeur d'entr'eux. [...] Ce fut pour lors que les Musiciens des deux nations, très-contens les uns des autres, se firent un plaisir de faire une aimable liaison entr'eux. C'est depuis ce temps que la Musique Italienne a été si fort goûtée et est devenue si familière en France.“ Évrard Titon du Tillet, *Le Parnasse François suivi des remarques sur la poésie et la musique et sur l'excellence de ces deux beaux-arts avec des observations particulières sur la poésie et la musique françoise et sur nos spectacles*, Paris, 1743, suppl. 1, 756 (Emphasis and integrations are mine). *Le Parnasse François* is an invaluable source of information on French music and musicians. See: Julie Anne Sadie, „Parnasse Revisited. The Musical Vantage Point of Titon du Tillet“, in: John Hajdu Heyer (ed.), *Jean Baptiste Lully and the Music of the French Baroque*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 131–157.

<sup>8</sup> To these musicians one might add another performer also mentioned by du Tillet: the cellist Jean Baptiste Stück (1680–1755). Of Stück's early years we know very little, except that he was of German descent. Stück was probably born in Livorno, but in 1702 he was in Naples as a „virtuoso della Contessa di Lemos“ as it appears in the libretto of the opera *Rodrigo in Algeri* staged in Naples in the same year. See Sylvette Millot, „Jean Baptiste Stück“, *Recherches sur la musique française classique* 9 (1969), 91–98.



the Italian dedication that prefaced this work<sup>9</sup> as well as in the advertisement that appeared in the *Mercurie Galante* in November 1704 that announced this publication to the Parisian public:

The composer of this work has gained a considerable reputation since he has been in Paris. He has had the good fortune of pleasing the great prince whom I have just named [the Duc d'Orléans], and who is never deceived about worthy persons. M. Mascitti has had the honor of playing for the King, for Monsieur the Dauphin, and therefore for the whole court, who applauded him strongly. The strong sales of his book, of which hardly any copies are still available, show its good quality.<sup>10</sup>

The short time between the departure from Naples and the first activity in Paris casts doubts on Mascitti's alleged travels around Europe, and above all on his apprenticeship with Corelli, often accepted as a matter of fact by repertoires and biographers of the composer. Yet, Mascitti's best strategy to promote his work in the French capital was definitely to present himself as a pupil of Corelli and adopt Corelli's music as a model for his own. The emphasis on the wide sales of op. 1 noted by the *Mercurie Galante* was not merely a publicity stunt. The remarkable success of Mascitti's music is indeed confirmed by the existence of several copies of his works still preserved in libraries around the world and by the numerous reprints – often pirated – that Estienne Roger in Amsterdam and Walsh & Hare in London realised of his collections, at least

<sup>9</sup> „Altezza Reale, Sarebbe troppo temerità il presentar questo primo parto della mia musica ad un Principe d'intendimento così alto in ogni sorte di Scienze com'è Vostr'Altezza Reale, s'ella stessa non si fosse degnata di dimostrar qualche sodisfazione in ascoltarmi. Reso ardito perciò da si segnalato favore consagro al suo Augusto nome, più per esprimere un'humile riconoscenza, che per fargli offerta degna della Sua Real Altezza, queste mie Sonate che fortunatissime potran dirsi, se unitamente coll'autore otterranno un così autorevole patrocinio, e la sua ambita approvazione; mentre il più Sicuro contrassegno della bontà d'una composizione è la stima di V. A. Reale. Impiegherò tutti i momenti della mia vita per meritarsela, é per autenticar nel medesimo tempo, L'ossequio profondissimo, e la Servitù riverentissima con cui rispettosissimamente mi fò lecito di soscrivermi Di Vostra Altezza Reale humilissimo Devotissimo Obligatissimo Servitore. Michele Mascitti.“; translated in Robert H. Dean Jr., *The Music of Michele Mascitti (ca. 1664–1760). A Neapolitan Violinist in Paris*, Ph.D. Diss., two vols, University of Iowa, 1970, 99–100: „Your Royal Highness, It would be much too daring to present this first fruit of my music to a prince of such high understanding in all kinds of disciplines as Your Royal Highness certainly is, were it not that You Yourself deemed it worthwhile to show some satisfaction in listening to me. Having been encouraged by such a conspicuous favor, and in order to express a humble gratitude rather than to present an offering worthy of Your Royal Highness, I dedicate to Your August name these sonatas of mine, which can be said to be most fortunate if, together with their author, they obtain such an authoritative patronage and coveted approval.“

<sup>10</sup> „L'auteur de cet ouvrage s'est acquis beaucoup de réputation depuis qu'il est à Paris. Il a eu le bonheur de plaire au grand Prince que je viens de nommer, qui ne se trompe jamais en gens de mérite. M. Mascitti a eu l'honneur de jouer devant le Roy, devant M.gr le Dauphin, et par conséquent, devant toute la cour dont il a esté fort applaudi. Le grand débit de son livre, dont il ne reste presque plus, en fait voir la bonté.“ Quoted from Lionel de la Laurencie, *L'École française de violon*, vol. I, 132. Translation in Dean, *The Music of Michele Mascitti* (see n. 9), 98.



through his op. 7.<sup>11</sup> Indeed Mascitti's music was in such high demand that he probably made his financial fortune mostly through the proceeds of the sale of his works. This popularity was clearly achieved by Mascitti through the extensive adoption of Corelli's style, as it appears unmistakably at least in the first two published collections of sonatas. It is obvious that the Neapolitan composer was trying to capitalise on the French fashion for Corelli's music and on his own direct knowledge of that tradition. As Peter Walls has underlined, this association transpires even from the frontispiece of Mascitti's first collection, which clearly recalls the design of Corelli's op. 5.<sup>12</sup>

The comment featured on the *Mercure Galant* in 1713 openly equates Mascitti's achievements to those of Corelli and Albinoni: „Corelli, Albinoni, Michel and several others have produced in this fashion works that will be immortal and that few are able to attain.“<sup>13</sup> Mascitti's op. 1 was, in fact, presented as a true synthesis of Corelli's styles. The set is formed by the canonical twelve sonatas, divided into two sections, the first for solo violin and the second in the *a tre* combination (only the eleventh sonata has a second violin „se piace“); each half is further divided into two groups, the last three sonatas of each section bearing the indication „sonata da camera“. As in Corelli's op. 5, the division between the ‚sonata‘ and the ‚sonata da camera‘ sections is not so neatly defined, and we find in Mascitti's collection the use of Allemandas and Gigas in the first groups, as well as the presence of abstract, slow movements in the ‚da camera‘ sections.<sup>14</sup>

The influence of Corelli's style emerges both in aspects of Mascitti's style as well as in the overall structure of his sonatas. One needs to look no further

<sup>11</sup> See RISM, A/I, vol. V, 456–457.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Walls „Sonade, que me veux tu?‘ Reconstructing French Identity in the Wake of Corelli's Op. 5“, *EM* 32/1 (2004), 27–47, 28 makes a comparison between Mascitti's and Corelli's frontispieces and rightly underlines that this reproduction „looks less like influence, or even imitation in the normal sense, than an assertion on Mascitti's part of his credentials as an informed representative of the favoured style.“ I do not completely agree, however, with Walls's opinion that Mascitti put together a sonata collection that literally „mirrors [...] the content of Corelli's op. 5.“ (Ibidem, 27). See also Donald Fader, *Musical Thought and Patronage of the Italian Style at the Court of Philippe II, Duc D'Orléans (1674–1723)*, PhD Diss., Stanford University, 2000, 289.

<sup>13</sup> „Les Corelli, les Albinoni, les Miquel, et plusieurs autres ont produit dans ce caractère des pieces qui seront immortelles, et où peu de gens peuvent atteindre.“ See Barbara Nestola, „Ancora sui Goûts réunis. Michele Mascitti, Giovanni Antonio Guido e l'eredità di Corelli e Vivaldi in Francia nella prima metà del Settecento“, *De Musica Disserenda* 7/1 (2011), 69–84, 74.

<sup>14</sup> As it is well-known, the term „sonata da chiesa“ does not appear in Corelli's collections. On the complex question of terminology, see the opposite views by Peter Allsop, „Corelli Defended. A Response to Gregory Barnett“, *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 8/1 (2002): [www.sscm-jscm.org/v8/nol/allsop.html](http://www.sscm-jscm.org/v8/nol/allsop.html) (14 May 2015) and by Gregory Barnett, „An Answer to Peter Allsop“, *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 8/1 (2002), [www.sscm-jscm.org/jscm/v8/nol/barnett.html](http://www.sscm-jscm.org/jscm/v8/nol/barnett.html) (14 May 2015); and also: „Sonata (da chiesa). Terminology and its Implications“, in: Alberto Colzani et al. (eds), *Barocco padano IV. Atti del XII convegno internazionale sulla musica italiana nei secoli XVII–XVIII, Brescia, 14–16 luglio 2003*, Como: Antiquae Musicae Italicae Studiosi (AMIS), 2006 (Contributi musicologici del Centro Ricerche dell'AMIS 16), 117–144.



than the opening sonata of op. 1 and notice how the first three movements bear close resemblance to Corelli's sonatas op. 5: from the first and fourth slow movements, to the polyphonic second movement with double stops, arpeggio passages, and a 16<sup>th</sup>-note central section, or the third Allegro that even in the outline of the 16<sup>th</sup>-note moto-perpetuo movement has echoes of the opening sonata of op. 5:

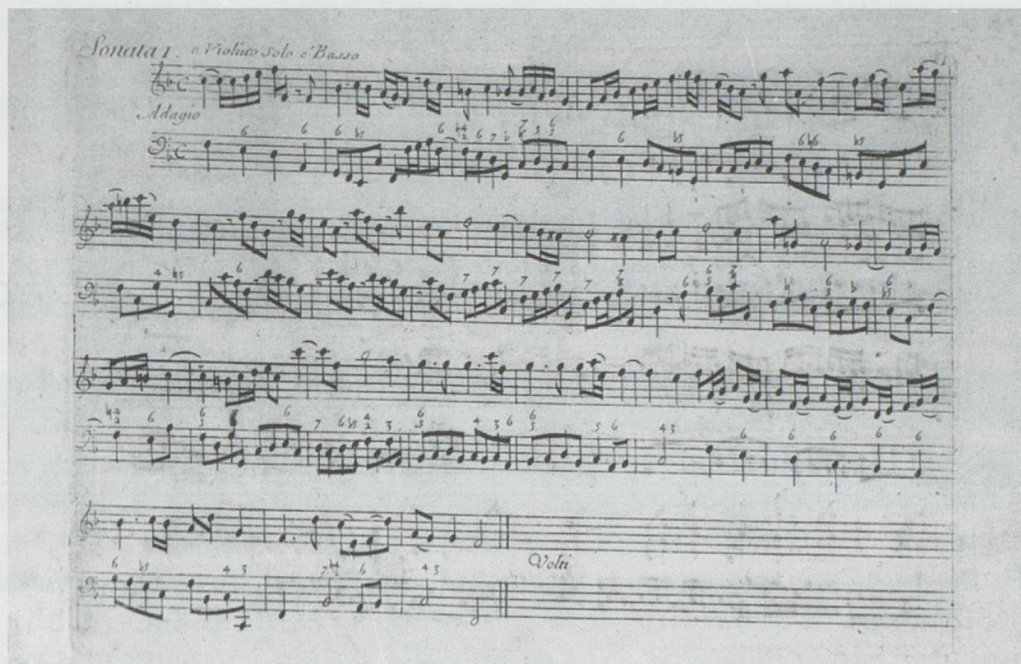


Fig. 2: M. Mascitti, Sonata op. 1, no. 1: first movement, Adagio. Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Fig. 3: M. Mascitti, Sonata op. 1, no. 1: second movement, Allegro. Bibliothèque nationale de France.



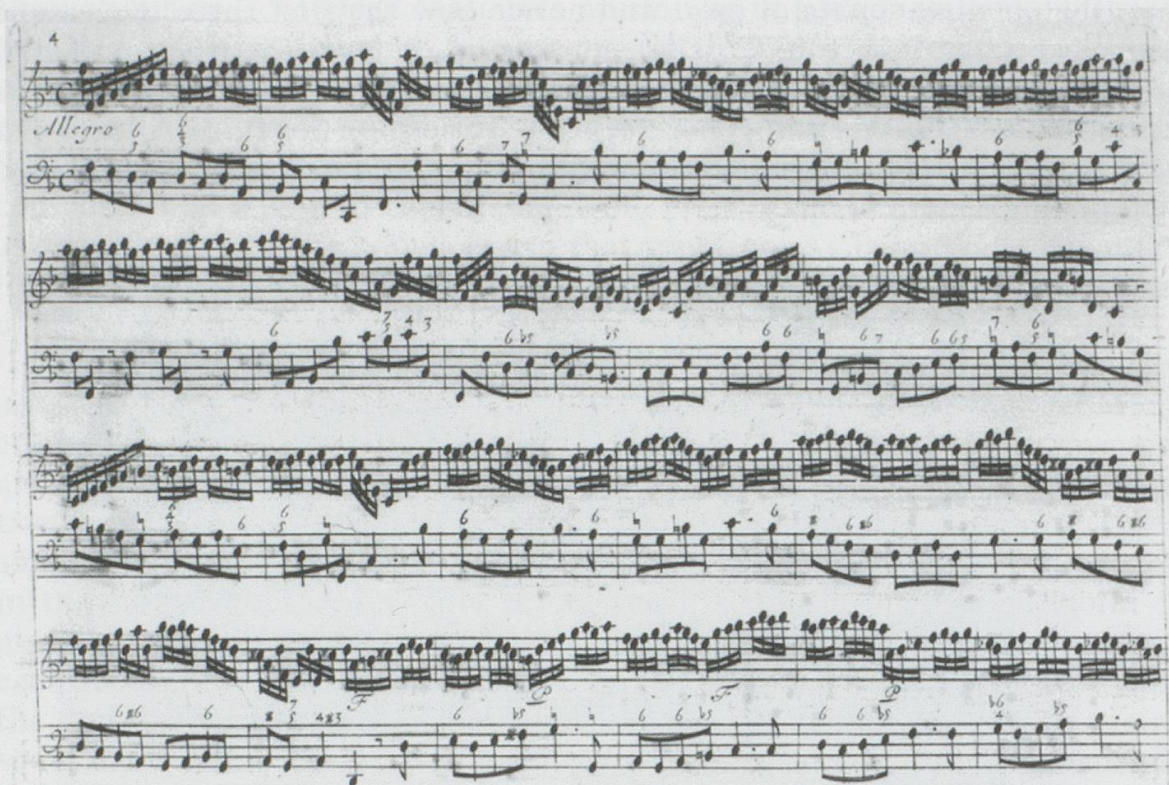


Fig. 4: M. Mascitti, Sonata op. 1, n. 1: third movement. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The first movement of the ninth sonata of the collection has all the typical aspects of Corelli's language: the initial gesture on a descending broken chord, chains of suspensions, successions of seventh harmonies, and an eight-note walking bass:

Ex. 1: M. Mascitti, Sonata op. 1, no. 9: first movement, Adagio.

Adagio

Violin I

Violin II

Violoncello and continuo

4 6 9 b5 9 6

6 5 # 6 7 7 7 5 6 5 9 6 5 #



Mascitti's imitation of Corelli's style lasted at least until the publication of his op. 4 (1707), which opens with exactly the same gesture and turn of phrase of Corelli's first sonata op. 5:

Ex. 2: A. Corelli, Sonata op. 5, no. 1: first movement; and M. Mascitti, Sonata op. 4, no. 1: first movement.



In 1714, in his poem *La Musique*, the poet Jean de Serré de Rieux compared Mascitti to Corelli and underlined the importance of the Neapolitan virtuoso in creating the new aesthetic of the *goûts réunis*: „Already in this way the proud Italy has showered on our senses its delightful madness. Corelli with his sounds has elevated all hearts, Michel has reunited the sweetness of two Muses.“<sup>15</sup> Yet, Mascitti's imitation of Corelli's style was no mere copy or plagiarism, done exclusively to take advantage of the popularity of Italian music in France. The complex dialectic between novelty and tradition and a still unsettled concept of originality made reference, appropriation, and assimilation among the crucial abilities of composers and performers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The overt reference or implicit allusion to a recognisable model was intended essentially to demonstrate the acquaintance with a respected tradition and the ability to be conversant with a familiar language.<sup>16</sup>

We cannot establish if this was indeed Mascitti's style even before he left Naples, nor compare the music he published in Paris with his previous output, since unfortunately no evidence of his activity in Naples – which ostensibly embraces the first thirty years of his life – seems to have survived. A better idea of the style and nature of the string sonata in Naples can be inferred from the works of local composers, musicians who spent their entire career in the Neapolitan institutions.

One of the most eminent figures in this regard is certainly that of Pietro Marchitelli (circa 1643–1729), uncle of Michele Mascitti, and probably responsible for the first year of Mascitti's training as a violinist. Marchitelli's name is often linked to Corelli's visit to Naples, as he was the violinist who,

<sup>15</sup> Jean de Serré de Rieux, *Les Dons des enfants de Latone*, Paris: P. Prault, 1734: „Déjà par ce chemin l'orgueilleuse Italie / a versé sur nos sens son aimable folie. / Corelli par ses sons eleva tous les cœurs, / Des deux Muses Michel allia les douceurs.“

<sup>16</sup> On the concept of repetition, assimilation and originality see Maria H. Loh, „New and Improved. Repetition as Originality in Italian Baroque Practice and Theory“, *The Art Bulletin* 86/3 (2004), 477–504. Walter Jackson Bate, *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1970; and Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.



according to Burney, was able to surpass Corelli in ability and perform with ease „that which had baffled his [Corelli's] skills“. Marchitelli – the ‚Petrillo‘ of the anecdote – was indeed one of the most eminent musicians in Naples, principal violinist of the Royal Chapel for more than fifty years and employed in several other prestigious institutions.<sup>17</sup>

Marchitelli's surviving output includes about thirty string sonatas. Two of them – together with two by another Neapolitan musician, Giovanni Antonio Guido – were included as an appendix to the reprint of John Ravenscroft's sonatas op. 2, published in Amsterdam by Estienne Roger in 1710.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the publisher chose these two sonatas exactly because of their likeness to Corelli's style. The print includes parts for first and second violins, organ, and cello. Both sonatas are divided into four movements and they both open with homophonic preludes – a Vivace and a Grave respectively – which closely resembles some introductory movements by Corelli. In the first sonata (in A minor) the Vivace is divided into two contrasting sections: a rhythmic sixteen-note figuration, which appears for the first time in the second violin at measure 12, becomes the propelling element for the second section, a Presto led by the two violins over a dominant pedal in the bass.

Ex. 3: P. Marchitelli, Sonata no. 9: beginning of the first movement (in J. Ravenscroft: Sonate op. 2).

Vivace

Violino 1

Violino 2

Organo e violoncello

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 7 6 7 6 65 # 76 # 76 #

<sup>17</sup> Burney's account of Corelli's visit is in *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period to which is Prefixed*, four vols, London: T. Becket, 1776–1789; reprint with critical notes by F. Mercer, New York: Dover, 1957, 439. For a detailed biography of this musician and a summary of the anecdotal account of Corelli's performance in Naples see my „Condizione sociale dei musicisti nella Napoli del 1700. Pietro Marchitelli“, *Napoli musicalissima. Studi in onore del 70. compleanno di Renato Di Benedetto*, Lucca, Italy: Libreria Musicale Italiana (LIM), 2005.

<sup>18</sup> The English dilettante John Ravenscroft was another imitator of Corelli. A selection of sonatas from his op. 1 was published by Le Cene in 1730 as Corelli's op. 7. The publication itself was a commercial product that was intended to take advantage of the popularity of Corelli's sonatas. On Ravenscroft see Patrizio Barbieri and Michael Talbot, „A Gentleman in Exile. Life and Background of the Composer John Ravenscroft“, *EMH* 31 (2012), 3–35. On Ravenscroft and Corelli see: Fabio Zanzotto, „Fortune e sfortune dell'epigonismo corelliano. Il caso Giovanni Rederi – Giovanni Ravenscroft inglese“, in: Giovanni Morelli (ed.), *L'invenzione del gusto*, Milan: Ricordi, 1982, 77–92.



6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 7 6 7 6 6 65 76 76

6 56 6 6 6 6 5 43 5 43 6 6 6 6 6

Ex. 4: P. Marchitelli, Sonata no. 9: beginning of the second movement (in J. Ravenscroft: Sonate op. 2).

Canzone

Violino 1

Violino 2

Organo e violoncello

# 6 5 43 4 7 5 4 # 6 98

5 6 5 4 3 5 4# 5 43 98 7 5 4 3 98 76 6

9 6 6 # 6 5 4 # 6 # 76 7 5 6 6 6 78 6 6 8 5



The second movement is a *Canzone* that is thematically related to the first by the presence of the same sixteen-note rhythmical impulse. This is the most extended movement of the sonata – it lasts for more than sixty measures – featuring contrapuntal writing that involves all the three parts. The first violin states the subject followed by the second with the bass accompanying. The third entrance in the bass (Ex. 4, m. 10) is preceded by a short interlude of five bars, a typical procedure found in several other Marchitelli sonatas.

A similar structure also characterises the Allegro of the second sonata in B minor. Only slightly shorter than the previous, this second movement is a contrapuntal fugato based on a typical canzona subject:

Ex. 5: P. Marchitelli, Sonata no. 10: beginning of the second movement (in J. Ravenscroft: Sonate op. 2).

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the movement, with the first violin playing a rapid sixteenth-note figure, the second violin entering with a similar figure, and the violoncello/organ providing a bass line. The second system, starting at measure 5, continues the contrapuntal development. The third system, starting at measure 10, shows further entries and developments of the themes. The notation includes many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, indicating a fast and intricate texture.

These stylistic features, a local penchant for *stile antico* contrapuntal language mixed with a more modern standardisation of the sonata structure that follows Corelli's lesson, also distinguish much of Marchitelli's music. A set of eleven sonatas survives in a manuscript copy, which is unfortunately incom-



plete, missing the part for the first violin.<sup>19</sup> Another manuscript, including an additional fourteen works, is preserved at the library of the Conservatory San Pietro a Majella in Naples. As it appears from the notes left by the two copyists, this manuscript was compiled a few years after Marchitelli's death, in the summer of 1743.<sup>20</sup> The source contains the parts of *violino principale*, second violin *obbligato*, second violin „di ripieno“, third violin *obbligato*, and bass without figures. Two sonatas (sonatas no. 5 and no. 14) are probably incomplete, and the second sonata is for three violins and basso continuo. Except for these three sonatas, however, the third violin part is an exact copy of the *violino principale*, making these works, in fact, sonatas for two violins and basso continuo. That most of them were indeed originally sonatas *a tre* is corroborated by the existence of another source for the ninth sonata; this manuscript – whose watermark confirms its Neapolitan origin – includes the parts of first and second violins, and figured bass.<sup>21</sup> The manuscript in Naples thus appears to be, most likely, a late transcription of an original set of *sonate a tre*, to which in 1743 was added a part for a third violin or a *violetta*, probably to suit an orchestral performance for the use of the Conservatory of S. Onofrio. Tempi and time signatures of the movements of these sonatas are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: I-Nc, M.S. 5328 – Pietro Marchitelli, *Sonate a quattro*.

	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Sonata I</i>	Andante, C	[fast], C;	Largo-Allegro – Largo – Allegro C	Andante 3/4	Allegro 3/2
<i>Sonata II</i> [ <i>a quattro</i> ]	Adagio-Alle- gro-Ad.-All.- Ad., C;	Presto, C	Adagio 3/2	[fast] 12/8	
<i>Sonata III</i>	Grave, C	[fast], C	Adagio-Allegro-Ad.- All.-Ad.-All.-Ad., C	fast, 3/4	
<i>Sonata IV</i>	Grave, C	Allegro, C	Andante, 3/4	[fast], 3/4	
<i>Sonata V</i> ( <i>incompl.?</i> <i>missing</i> <i>third vl.</i> )	Allegro, C	[fast], 12/8			
<i>Sonata VI</i>	Adagio, C	[fast], C	Adagio, C	Allegro, C	
<i>Sonata VII</i>	Adagio, C	[Fast], C	Adagio, C	[fast], 3/2	
<i>Sonata VIII</i>	Grave, C	[fast], C	Grave, C	[fast], 3/4	

<sup>19</sup> US-BEm, MS 489 A-B.

<sup>20</sup> I-Nc, M.S. 5328. The part of the third violin *obbligato* (f. 13) bears the indication: „Cuccaro scrisse per il Real Conservatorio di S. Onofrio addì 26 agosto 1743“; and in the second violin „di ripieno“ (f. 11) is written: „Domenico Cicalecci scrisse alli 13 di 7mbre 1743.“

<sup>21</sup> The source is today at the Library of the Conservatory of Milan, I-Mc, Fondo Nosedà, L. 23–16.



	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Sonata IX</i>	Allegro, 3/4	Presto, C	[slow], 3/2	[fast], 12/8	
<i>Sonata X</i>	Grave, C	Allegro, C	[slow], 3/2	Vivace, C	[fast], 3/4
<i>Sonata XI</i>	Andante, 3/4	Allegro, C	Grave, C	[fast], C	
<i>Sonata XII</i>	Grave, C	[fast], C	[slow], 3/2	[fast], 3/4	
<i>Sonata XIII</i>	[fast], C	[slow], 3/2	[fast], 3/4		
<i>Sonata XIV</i> [incompl.? missing third vl?]	Grave, C	Allegro, C	[fast], 3/4		

\* In gray are indicated the contrapuntal movements.

The sonatas display a preference for the standard Corellian articulation in four movements, with a regular succession of slow and fast movements. As in the two published sonatas, first movements present a prevalence of homophonic texture in common time, acting as relatively short introductions. The analogies with Corelli's style are notable especially when they open with a four- or five-measure phrase, immediately restated at the dominant or the relative major after a Phrygian cadence, as in sonata no. 8.

Ex. 6: P. Marchitelli, Sonata no. 8: beginning of the first movement, I-Nc MS 5328.

Grave Pietro Marchitelli

Violin I

Violin II

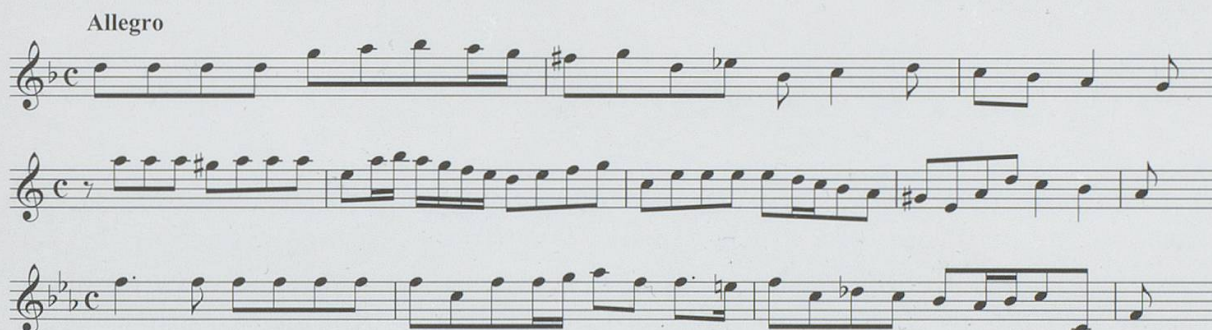
Basso Continuo

The second slow movements usually adopt a lyrical 3/2, with simple homophonic lines followed by chains of suspensions. There are, however, still instances of multi-sectional movements, as in the opening movement of sonata no. 2 (for three violins) and in the third movement of sonatas no. 1 and no. 3.



In this collection too the most specific characteristic is the presence of a marked contrapuntal style and frequent exchange of thematic material among the three parts, even in the final movements that are usually short, lively triple-meter dances. The core of Marchitelli's sonatas are again the lengthy second movements; these movements adopt as a recurring trait short rhythmic subjects, used for their contrapuntal potentials rather than for real thematic interest. These subjects are often formed by a first part with repeated eight-note patterns, reminiscent of the old canzona style – a characteristic of several composers of the Neapolitan tradition – and a second half, more articulated and in smaller note values:

Ex. 7: P. Marchitelli, Sonatas no. 6, no. 11 and no. 14: beginnings of the second movements, first violin; I-Nc MS 5328.

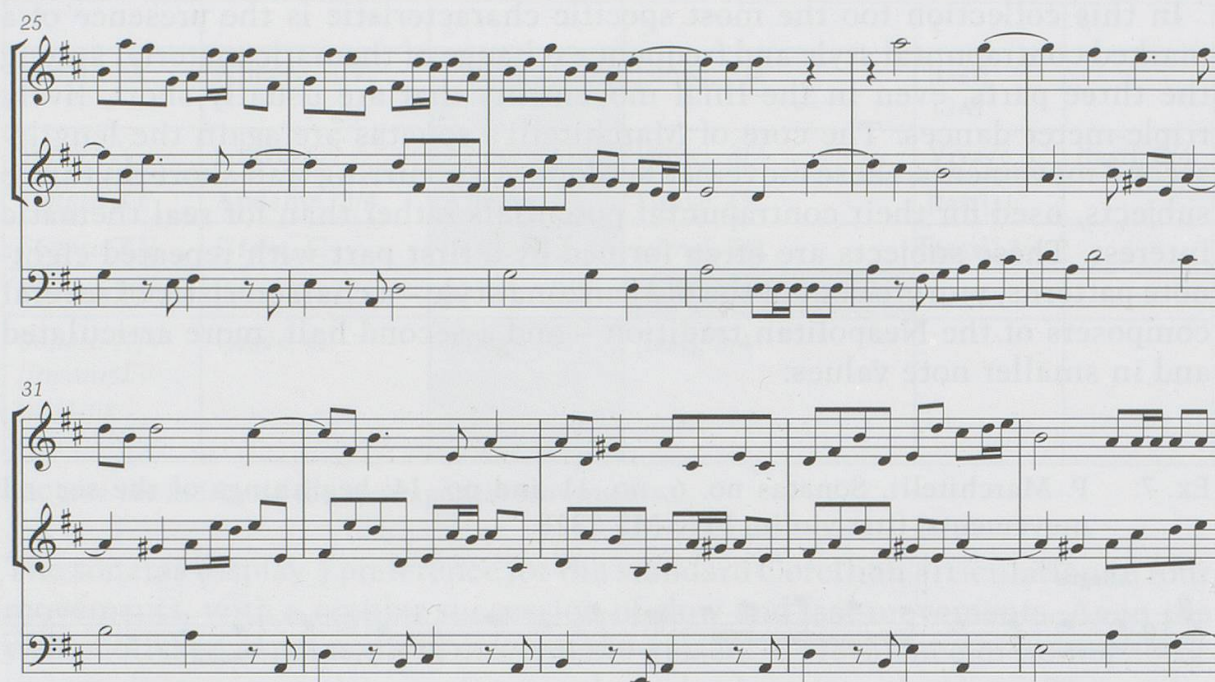


The similarity of themes from the B minor sonata of the Ravenscroft collection and the sixth sonata of the Neapolitan set with the second movement of Corelli's op. 3, no. 10, is self-evident. Also quite remarkable is the close resemblance of the subject of Marchitelli's sonata no. 10 with the second movement, Allegro, of the violin sonata attributed to Corelli as Anh. 36.

Ex. 8: P. Marchitelli, Sonata no. 10: excerpt; I-Nc MS 5328.

20 Allegro





Yet Marchitelli's themes are usually more extended and articulated, lacking the concise economy of Corelli's ideas. The string-crossing figure of the second half of the theme of the B minor sonata, for instance, is used to create an entire episode that, if not of particular interest thematically, allows the composer to stretch the movement to more than forty measures (see Ex. 5). There is no doubt that the balance and compact narrative of the Corellian model is missing or avoided, either intentionally or not, in these sonatas. Absent in Marchitelli's works is the articulation of clear-cut phrases and a defined sense of proportion and direction that at times does not compensate for the attractive musical ideas.

Some aspects of this style could be traced back to the influence and elaboration of the Roman sonata tradition. The stricter contrapuntal language appears in large part analogous to the style present in some of the sonatas of Roman composers, such as Lelio Colista or Ambrogio Lonati.<sup>22</sup> The similarities with the latter, in particular, both in terms of outline of the fugal subjects and of the structural design of the movement, emerge in several sonatas by Marchitelli. Perhaps the most obvious example is in the Presto of sonata no. 9 that presents resemblances with Lonati's Sonata A4.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See Antonella D'Ovidio, „Colista, Lonati, Stradella. Modelli compositivi della sonata a tre a Roma prima di Corelli“, in: *Studi corelliani* VI, vol. I, 271–303.

<sup>23</sup> For examples of Lonati's themes see D'Ovidio, „Colista, Lonati, Stradella“ (see n. 22), 289. I use the sigla A for Lonati's sonatas introduced in Peter Allsop, „Problems of Ascriptions in the Roman Sinfonia of the Late Seventeenth Century. Colista and Lonati“, *The Music Review* 50/1 (1989), 34–44. It should be reminded that Lonati started his career as violinist of the Royal Chapel in Naples, before moving to Rome in 1667. The influence of violin language between Naples and Rome could then be considered as reciprocal.



Ex. 9: P. Marchitelli, Sonata a tre: beginning of the second movement; I-Mc, Fondo Nosedà, L. 23-16.

The musical score is for the beginning of the second movement of P. Marchitelli's Sonata a tre. It is in 3/4 time, marked 'Presto'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is arranged for Violin I, Violin II, and Harpsichord. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, with the Harpsichord providing a walking bass line. The second system, starting at measure 5, shows more complex rhythmic patterns in the Violin I and Harpsichord parts.

In Naples the Roman influence was strengthened most likely by the arrival in 1684, together with Alessandro Scarlatti, of a prominent violinist and influential teacher of Roman origins, Giovanni Carlo Cailò (1659–1722). Cailò took his first professional steps as a member of Carlo Mannelli's circle in Rome: in 1682 he was one of the extra-ordinary musicians in the chapels of San Giacomo degli Spagnoli and San Girolamo della Carità; his name appears in a list of members of the *Congregazione dei musici sotto l'invocazione di S Cecilia* in November 1683. It was perhaps the increasing difficulties of musical patronage in Rome and the overpowering influence and monopoly exerted by Corelli and his entourage that convinced Cailò to follow Alessandro Scarlatti to Naples in 1684. The central role this virtuoso had in Naples significantly contrasts with the very small output that still survives. Only three sonatas are preserved with attributions to him: a *sonata a quattro*, three violins and continuo, one *a tre*, two violins and continuo, and another for solo violin and continuo.

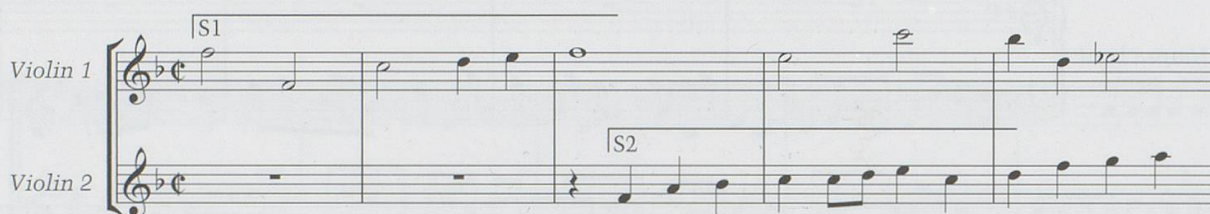
Cailò's *Sonata a due violini e cembalo* is divided into four movements in a regular slow-fast sequence.<sup>24</sup> In the introductory Adagio the presence of dotted rhythms, accompanied at first by an eighth-note walking bass, and

<sup>24</sup> S-L, Saml. Wenster E:23. I thank the staff of the manuscript section of the Lunds Universitetsbibliotek for providing me a this copy of the sonata together with information about this source.



the recurrence of descending sequences with 9-8 suspensions recall Corelli's style and suggest his op. 3 as a possible model. The second movement, however, is a fugal Allegro that extends for more than a hundred measures and has few contacts with Corelli's stylistic features. The movement is in strict contrapuntal style, dominated by the presence of two subjects (S 1 and S 2) in invertible counterpoint.

Ex. 10: G. C. Cailò, Sonata a tre: second movement, excerpt; S-L, Saml. Wenster E:23.



The two subjects are thematically related, S 2 almost 'filling in' the two ascending intervals of a fifth and fourth that characterise S 1 with quarter notes. These themes are not remarkable for their melodic contour; rather they are used as developmental units with a clear tonal direction. The movement opens with the two violins stating the subjects and then briefly pairing before the entrance of the answer with continuo and first violin. The entire movement presents seven statements of the two subjects, alternated with two episodes. Only the second episode is of some length (mm. 47–80), developing a variant of the eighth-note figuration of S 2. The return to the key of the dominant launches the last three statements of the subjects (mm. 80–105) in a stretto after which a short coda concludes the movement.

Despite the fact that this sonata was probably composed after Cailò's arrival in Naples – perhaps after the publication of Corelli's first three collections of trio-sonatas – the style of this piece does not appear to be markedly influenced by the works of the 'Bolognese'. Although the division into four movements and the presence of a slow internal movement – a hymn-like Adagio in which a homophonic opening gives way to a section more imitative in character and with frequent voice crossing – suggest some Corellian influence, the preference for a substantial central fugal movement based on a conservative language with concise and non-melodic subjects points more openly to an affiliation with the Roman school. Characteristic of the Roman tradition, established by Lelio Colista and carried on by Carlo Mannelli and Carlo Ambrogio Lonati, was the emphasis on the fugal movement considered as „the ultimate test of contrapuntal skill and craftsmanship to which Roman composers attached considerable importance“.<sup>25</sup> Even the dotted-rhythm introductory Adagio of this sonata – which shows the most prominent resemblance to Corelli's style

<sup>25</sup> Peter Allsop, *The Italian 'Trio Sonata' from its Origins until Corelli*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 199.



– and the hymnic inflection of the third movement can be traced back to some of Colista's works.

Although partially circulating in other European centers, the bulk of the Neapolitan sonata repertory was essentially directed to local production and fruition and, for this reason, mostly transmitted in anonymous manuscript copies.<sup>26</sup> A single remarkable exception to this general trend is constituted by the three sonata collections published by the rather obscure violinist Giuseppe Antonio Avitrano (ca. 1670–1756). Born around 1670, Avitrano was hired in his twenties as supernumerary violinist at the Royal Chapel where he remained employed for the rest of his life. Despite this apparently uneventful biography, Avitrano stands out as the first and only Neapolitan musician of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to be capable of publishing three collections of string sonatas in Naples. Avitrano's publications – still using moveable type – were probably realised thanks to substantial financial support. The dedications of the two collections of trio sonatas – published in 1697 and 1703 by Michele Luigi Muzio, one of the most renowned printers of the city – make unequivocal references to the patronage of Cesare Michelangelo D'Avalos, Marquis of Pescara, and of donna Caterina de Moscosa Ossorio, daughter-in-law of the Viceroy Marquis of Vigliena.<sup>27</sup> Since studies on patronage and on the connection between patronage and music printing production in Naples are still sparse, it is difficult to place Avitrano's production in the Neapolitan context. It is clear, however, that these publications were possible thanks to some degree of support from the local nobility.

The two collections consist of ten *Sonate a trè, due violini e violone col Basso per l'Organo*. A short note inserted at the end of the first violin's part suggests that these sonatas, at least in the composer's mind, were destined for performance. The printer addresses the „virtuosi“, stating that „it is not his own fault if there are pages with nine staves, thus differing from the others; this was done on purpose at the author's request, so that the performer would not have to turn the page while playing“.<sup>28</sup> The ten sonatas in both collections are somewhat more conventional and have a very rigid structure, all being divided into four movements and, with a few exceptions, rigidly following the sequence S-F-S-F.

<sup>26</sup> The catalog in Rudolph Rasch, „I manoscritti musicali nel lascito di Michel-Charles le Cène (1743)“, in: Albert Dunning (ed.), *Intorno a Locatelli. Studi in onore del tricentenario della nascita di Pietro Antonio Locatelli (1695–1764)*, vol. II. Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1995, 1039–1070, lists some manuscripts of instrumental music by Marchitelli and other Neapolitan composers.

<sup>27</sup> RISM A/I/1, A 2937 and A 2938 respectively.

<sup>28</sup> „Michele Luigi Mutio Stampatore dice a' Signori Virtuosi; che le pagine, che sono di nove righe, e non uguali all'altre, non è suo difetto, mà è stato di soddisfazione dell'Autore, che non hà voluto far voltare sonando.“



Table 2: Giuseppe Antonio Avitrano, *Sonate a tre* op. 1 (1697), I-Mc, M.S. 915.2.

	1	2	3	4
<i>Sonata I</i>	Largo, C	Canzone (allegro), C	Adagio, C3/2	Allegro, C12/8
<i>Sonata II</i>	Grave, C	Canzone (allegro), C	Adagio, C3/2	Allegro, C12/8
<i>Sonata III</i>	Adagio, C3/4	Allegro, C	Adagio, C3/4	Presto, C12/8
<i>Sonata IV</i>	Grave, C	Allegro, C	Canzone (allegro), C	Vivace, C3/4
<i>Sonata V</i>	Grave, C	Canzone (allegro), C	Adagio, C3/2	Allegro C12/8
<i>Sonata VI</i>	Grave, Presto, Largo, C	Canzone (allegro), C	Adagio, C3/4	Allegro C3/4
<i>Sonata VII</i>	Largo, C	Canzone (allegro), C	Adagio, C3/4	Allegro, C12/8
<i>Sonata VIII</i>	Grave, C	Canzone (allegro), C	Vivace, C3/2	Allegro, C3/4
<i>Sonata IX</i>	Grave, C	Canzone (allegro), C	Adagio, C3/2	Allegro, C12/8
<i>Sonata X</i>	Grave, C	Canzone (affettuoso), C	Vivace, C3/4	Allegro, C12/8

\* In gray are indicated the contrapuntal movements.

Table 3: Giuseppe Antonio Avitrano, *Sonate a tre* op. 2 (1703), I-Mc, M.S. 916.3.

	1	2	3	4
<i>Sonata I</i>	Vivace, C	Allegro, C	Vivace, C3/2	Allegro, C12/8
<i>Sonata II</i>	Presto (allegro), C	Allegro, C	Adagio, C3/2	Allegro, C12/8
<i>Sonata III</i>	Allegro, C	Allegro, C	Largo, C	Allegro, C12/8
<i>Sonata IV</i>	Andante, C	Allegro, C	Adagio, C3/2	Allegro, C6/8
<i>Sonata V</i>	Spiritoso, C	Allegro, C	Adagio, C3/2	Allegro C12/8
<i>Sonata VI</i>	Grave, C	Allegro, C	Adagio, C3/2	Allegro C12/8
<i>Sonata VII</i>	Grave, C	Allegro, C	Adagio, C3/4	Allegro, C
<i>Sonata VIII</i>	Grave, C	Allegro, C	Grave, C	Allegro, C3/4
<i>Sonata IX</i>	Adagio, C3/2	Allegro, C6/8	Adagio, C3/2	Allegro, C
<i>Sonata X</i>	Grave, C	Allegro, C	Adagio, C3/2	Allegro, C3/4

\* In gray are indicated the contrapuntal movements.



The slow movements, usually shorter, can be divided into two categories: those marked by an extensive use of imitative style and frequent exchanges among the three voices, and the 'Corellian' type, characterised by a predominant chordal texture, chains of suspensions in the upper parts accompanied by walking bass. These two typologies are exemplified by the opening movements of the first and second sonatas of op. 1.

Ex. 11: G. A. Avitrano, Sonata a tre, op. 1, no. 1: first movement.

**Largo**

Violin

Violone

Organo

4

7



Ex. 12: G. A. Avitrano, Sonata a tre, op. 1, no. 2: beginning of the first movement.

**Grave**

Violin 1

Violin 2

Violone & organo

6 6 5 6 7 6 7 6 p b # 7 6 #

5

f p f p f

6 6 5 6 7 6 7 6 7 4 3 p 4 #3 5 6 4 3 6

11

**Largo**

4 #3 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 6 6 # 6 6 4 5 6 7 6 #

The only movement that does not fall into any of these categories is the pre-ludio-style opening of the sixth sonata, in which the first and second violins play soli over a pedal of the continuo. This too, however, has a clear model in Corelli: it recalls closely, for instance, the movement opening op. 3, no. 12.

Ex. 13: G. A. Avitrano, Sonata a tre, op. 1, no. 6: beginning of the first movement.

**Grave** **Presto**

Violin 1

Violin 2

Violone and organo

5





Imitation pervades the fast movements, mainly, as it might be expected, in the *Canzone* that are generally placed as second movements. Here the principle of a *tre* texture is fully revealed as the violone participates in the imitative interplay, leaving the organ to take care of the accompanying harmonic functions. In fact, a difference in the treatment of the continuo appears when, as in sonatas 4 and 6, the movement is based on short subjects with repeated notes – of the type already noted in Cailò's and Marchitelli's sonatas. These movements usually open with simple statements of the three instruments, whereas in movements using longer, more articulated and idiomatic subjects, as in the second sonata, the organ functions as basso continuo, accompanying the entrances of the voices from the very beginning:

Ex. 14: G. A. Avitrano, Sonata a tre, op. 1, no. 6: beginning of the second movement.

**Canzone  
allegro**

Violino 1

Violino 2

Violone

Organo

#   7 6 7 #   4 2 6   6 9 8



Ex. 15: G. A. Avitrano, Sonata a tre, op. 1, no. 2: beginning of the second movement.

Canzone  
allegro

Violino 1

Violino 2

Violone

Organo

Avitrano's second collection does not depart from the general principles established in the first set, both in the overall structure and in the characteristic traits of the single movements. The only notable differences are the decreased frequency of compound meter in the final movements and the disappearance of the term „canzone“. The latter, however, is only an exterior change, since the second movements, usually labeled as *Allegro*, still remain the longest and most imitative.

This overview of the string sonata repertory written in Naples between the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century shows that the Neapolitan sonata had a dialectic relationship with the influential model of Corelli's production. On the one hand, the style and features imposed by the success and popularity of Corelli's music were more openly followed by those composers who wanted to send their works to press and tried to establish their name outside Naples. As we have seen in the case of Michele Mascitti, Corelli's music was considered as the most successful paradigm and probably offered the easiest opportunity for an emerging talent to be associated with an identifiable lineage and prestigious tradition. Imitating Corelli's stylistic features meant in that case to demonstrate proficiency in a widely accepted language and, at the same time, the ability to rework the original model and adapt it to new functions.



On the other hand, the formal and stylistic standards established by Corelli's sonatas often overlapped and intertwined with local traditions and were reinterpreted through indigenous inflections. The adoption of a strict contrapuntal style, for instance, which remained a distinctive characteristic of the Neapolitan string sonata, can only partially be associated with Corelli's example. That style, strongly reminiscent of the *stile antico*, was possibly influenced by the 17<sup>th</sup>-century keyboard *recercar* repertory, and by the superb tradition of Neapolitan composers who cultivated it, such as Jean de Macque, Giovanni Maria Trabaci, and Ascanio Mayone. Other traits, such as the occurrence of thematic and formal elements of the imitative *Canzona* – also present terminologically in some Neapolitan sonatas – show instead the influence of the nearby Roman tradition. In these instances, the significance of Corelli's influence should be in part reconsidered; the Neapolitan sonata repertory shows the assimilation and transformation of a common vocabulary – possibly of Roman roots – with which both the local composers and Corelli were acquainted, and that they developed through separate paths. It is, however, in this constant tension between old and new, between local traditions and external influences that emerges the unavoidable importance of Corelli's lesson for the development of the string sonata in Naples at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



