ABSTRACT

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Forgeries of musical manuscripts are little discussed in the musicological literature, but their serious study can be valuable. This thesis outlines a method for the comprehensive study of music forgeries and shows how that method might be used by examining three autograph forgeries in depth. These forgeries are of Pergolesi's "Non mi negar signora" and Mozart's "Baci amorosi e cari," both at The Library of Congress, and Handel's "Rejoice greatly" from *Messiah*, in the University of Maryland's Special Collections in the Performing Arts. Tobia Nicotra, a prolific forger from the 1920s and 1930s created the two Library of Congress manuscripts and elements of his forging style are identified. Finally, though J. M. Coopersmith claimed the "Rejoice greatly" forgery was Nicotra's, this study shows that it is not Nicotra's due to differences in the forging methods used.

MOZART, PERGOLESI, HANDEL?: A STUDY OF THREE FORGERIES

By

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Tobia Nicotra, "perhaps the cleverest forger of documents on record," was sentenced to two years in jail and was fined 2,400 *lire* in Milan on November 9, 1934 for his nefarious activities.[1] A few newspaper articles published in the next few months tell a fascinating story about this man, but outside that small window of time there is very little mention of him. Nicotra supposedly got into the forgery business in the 1920s as a way to support his seven mistresses in their own apartments around Milan. The *American Weekly* continues: "Incidentally he had a wife."[2]

Nicotra's forgeries, said to number between 500 and 600, were of letters, music manuscripts, and other documents "by" a wide variety of historical figures, and they were so good that experts sometimes authenticated them. According to one report, Nicotra crafted manuscripts in the hands of George Washington, Christopher Columbus, the Marquis de Lafayette, Martin Luther, Leonardo da Vinci, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Christoph Willibald Gluck, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, and George Frideric Handel, among many others. Once, Nicotra himself took his "poem by Tasso" to experts, saying that he found the manuscript and thought it might be a forgery. The "experts" assured him that it was definitely authentic. Walter Toscanini, son of the conductor Arturo Toscanini, bought a Mozart "autograph" from Nicotra, but became suspicious of the manuscript and sent it off to the Mozarteum, where it too was promptly authenticated.[3]

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[1] "The World's Champion Antique Faker: The Artistic Rascal, Maestro Nicotra, of Such Extraordinary Ability that He Writes A 'Song by Mozart,' a 'Poem by Tasso' and a 'Letter by Christopher Columbus," *San Antonio Light*, 20 January 1935: 8, and *American Weekly*, 1935.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

Nicotra's story becomes even more bizarre in 1932, when he toured the United States as Richard Drigo, a famous Russian conductor. During this tour, he was "feasted extensively" as Drigo and even spoke on the radio as the conductor. Somehow, no one noticed that Drigo had been dead for two years.[4]

In the meantime, Walter Toscanini had figured out that his Mozart "autograph" was really a forgery after all. He determined that Nicotra was probably responsible and teamed with Giorgio Florita, a Milanese detective, to try and catch Nicotra. This task was easier said than done; they caught Nicotra trying to sell some forgeries to Hopeli, a publishing firm in Milan, but he had such a reasonable explanation for how he had come to possess the forgeries that they were nearly unable to arrest him. Italians were supposed to have identity papers with them in the 1930s, but Nicotra claimed to have none, which allowed Florita to place him under arrest and search his person. Florita found identity papers on Nicotra, bearing the forger's picture but Drigo's name, and when police subsequently searched Nicotra's apartment, they found his workshop with many forgeries in progress.[5]

While Nicotra's story seems to end there—I could find no record of him after 1934,— we are likely still affected by his work today. Though he created many forgeries, it is all but impossible to locate most of them. We have no record of where most of them went, and I have only been able to find eight manuscripts that have plausible connections to Nicotra.[6] Are the rest of the forgeries still out there, being taken for authentic?

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[4] "The World's Champion Antique Faker. "

[5] Ibid.

[6] Four "Pergolesi" manuscripts: "Agnus Dei" (New York: Metropolitan Opera), "Miserere nobis" (Jesi: Biblioteca Comunale), "Non mi negar signora" (Washington: Library of Congress), "O salutaris hostia" (London: British Library), as cited in Barry S. Brook and Marvin E. Paymer, "The Pergolesi Hand: A

Objectives of this Thesis

This thesis has two aims. First, it will put forth a more rigorous and multi-faceted method than is currently used for examining music forgeries and for reporting the findings of those examinations. The second goal of the thesis is to begin to trace Nicotra's work, showing how we might begin to use the little we know about it to locate more of his forgeries and build a body of knowledge about this man and his work. To accomplish these goals I will first illustrate the discrepancy between how music scholars often report their findings concerning forged manuscripts and the approaches taken by certified document examiners in my brief literature review. Then I will highlight what one should look for when attempting to authenticate a musical manuscript. To show how I propose this authentication process be applied to musical manuscripts, I will examine three known forgeries, and show why they are forgeries. The first two are Mozart and Pergolesi autographs fabricated by Tobia Nicotra. The third forgery is of "Rejoice greatly" from Handel's *Messiah* and its perpetrator is unknown. After an in-depth examination of these three manuscripts, I will show how the results of such an examination can be used to identify and trace the work of a particular forger by distilling elements of Nicotra's forging style from my analysis of the first two manuscripts and applying it to the third.

Calligraphic Study," *MLA Notes, Second Series* 38, no. 3 (March, 1982): 550–578; One "Mozart" manuscript: "Baci amorosi e cari, " [1923?], forged autograph, The Library of Congress, M1621.P (Case); Three "Handel" manuscripts: "But Who May Abide the Day of His Coming," from *Messiah*, forged autograph, Stanford University, Green Library, Department of Special Collections, MLM 475; "Aria per cembalo e canto," forged autograph, reproduced in Henry Prunières, "Un Manuscrit inédit et Autographe de Haendel?," *La Revue Musicale* 6 (1924): 191–196; "Rejoice greatly," from *Messiah*, [ca. 1890–1930,] forged autograph, University of Maryland, Special Collections in the Performing Arts, Jacob M. Coopersmith Collection, series 2.4, box 8, folder 51.

The Value of Studying Forgeries

Appropriating the music of someone else for profit is an age old tradition among composers in the Western tradition, as is ascribing the wrong composer's name to a composition in hope of financial gain. In the Renaissance, for example, masses were many times composed on preexisting tunes. And after composers died, new pieces "by" these composers sometimes surfaced, thanks to the efforts of people trying to capitalize on the posthumous fame of the deceased. Even today the tradition of using another's music for one's own purposes abounds in the music industry, such as with the use of sampling in hip hop.

In our current society, with its concern for the individual and its laws about intellectual property, these instances of "borrowing" are sometimes looked down upon. Artists are sued for using too much copyrighted material. Modern composers who specialize in the Classical or Romantic styles are often marginalized for not having an individual style. Perhaps the most illicit, yet least studied manner of musical "borrowing" today is forgery.

The study of musical forgeries is currently a very minor subfield of musicology, perhaps in part because of our tendency in the Western classical tradition to blend the value of a work with the value of its creator. A significant part of our value for music seems to lie more in the renown of the composer than in the music's intrinsic merit. Works of music that are celebrated at first, like the Mozart forgery the Library of Congress bought from Nicotra (to be discussed later), which was published by G. Schirmer soon after it was purchased, become nothing more than novelties once it is

discovered that they are forgeries. While not necessarily a bad thing,[7] this manner of thinking about and assigning value to music can actually cause us to miss the chance to become more knowledgeable about a certain composer's style and to better recognize forgeries and forgers.

One of Nicotra's Mozart forgeries was able to fool the supposed Mozart experts at the Mozarteum. It is likely that today, with our technological advancements, his forgery would not have been passed off as genuine so easily. But the moment the manuscript was discovered to be a forgery, it lost its significance and interest.

Imagine for a moment though, that instead of dismissing the manuscript as a worthless fake, we simply changed our opinion about what the document tells us and the value it holds. While the piece could certainly no longer be valued as representative of Mozart's earlier compositions (it bears the date 1770), it can be valued for its ability to inform us about two things. First, studying this manuscript can help us fine tune our understanding of Mozart's handwriting and musical style, and second, from it we should be able to begin to build our knowledge of Nicotra and from that knowledge, trace more of the forger's work.

By examining in detail a document that appeared at first to be a genuine Mozart autograph, we are very likely to be able to more acutely define what Mozart's hand and style are and what they are not. Since a good forgery is close to an authentic autograph, noticing that it is a forgery and marking why it is false necessarily draw our attention to finer details of the supposed creator's handwriting and style. With this more detailed and focused understanding, we should be able to identify authentic and inauthentic documents

[7] In my opinion, we should not place a lot value in the work of swindlers because to do so would positively reinforce a behavior that is detrimental to our shared knowledge about our world.

of a particular composer more easily. Brook and Paymer have clearly shown that such an examination has immense value to the musical world in their study distinguishing Pergolesi's autographs from the cornucopia of forgeries and false attributions that have accumulated over the years.[8]

As already mentioned, I have come across an unnerving fact in my pursuit of information about Nicotra: it is very difficult to locate his forgeries. Perhaps he did not create as many as he was said to have, though for his rumored output to have been around 500 or 600 forgeries, he must still have created a significant number of them. Depending on where Nicotra sold the forgeries and if they were discovered, a large number of them might have been destroyed. It was the policy of at least Germany in the 1980s to destroy known forgeries.[9] Furthermore, many manuscripts were destroyed in the bombings of World War II. Who is to say a number of Nicotra's forgeries were not among the casualties? Even in the event that Nicotra did not produce as many forgeries as was reported and even if many of them have been destroyed, there are likely still some known forgeries out there that have not been identified as Nicotra's or Nicotra forgeries out there that are still taken as genuine, their initial authentications being trusted.

Luckily, there are certain elements of writing that can allow us to identify the true identity of a writer, even in forged writing. As Katherine Koppenhaver notes, most forgers are concerned with matching the appearance of their creations with the appearance of genuine documents. They will tend to mimic the shape of another's writing without necessarily mimicking the patterns of the writing's creation. Furthermore, though the shapes of the writing are not true to the forger's own, the pressure patterns used in the

[8] Brook and Paymer, "The Pergolesi Hand," 550–578.

[9] Alan Walker, "In Praise of Hoaxes," *Composer* 72 (1981): 22, n1.

writing's creation are very likely to match those of the forger. Additionally, because writing is distinctive from person to person and is also a habit, it takes a lot of concentration to accurately create the writing of another, an amount of concentration anyone would have a hard time holding in the creation of even a page of forged writing. Koppenhaver insists that many forgers will have at least tiny slips of concentration in which they revert to their own writing. Identifying elements like these in forgeries can allow us to positively identify a forger. [10] With this kind of examination and analysis, we would be able to better track and verify the work of Nicotra.

Significance of Chapters Three Through Five

The Library of Congress holds two forgeries with substantial links to Nicotra, "Baci amorosi e cari" "by" Mozart and "Non mi negar signora" "by" Pergolesi, and the University of Maryland's Special Collections in the Performing Arts has a forgery of Handel's "Rejoice greatly" from the *Messiah* that J. M. Coopersmith claimed was created by Nicotra.[11] Because these manuscripts are already known to be forgeries, it might strike some as odd that I spend a significant amount of space describing some of the ways they can be identified as forgeries. While I am doing nothing new in identifying these manuscripts as forgeries, I am doing something new and important in writing down justifications for claiming they are forgeries.

It seems to me that this task is important so that anyone who works with these manuscripts in the future can see my line of reasoning. A good scholar does not simply

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[10] Katherine M. Koppenhaver, *Forensic Document Examination: Principles and Practice* (Totowa, NJ: Humana Press, 2007), 94, 98–110, 127, 129.

[11] Letter, Jacob M. Coopersmith to Nathan van Patten, 11 June 1953, University of Maryland, Special Collections in the Performing Arts, Jacob M. Coopersmith Collection, series 2.4, box 9, folder 8.

rely upon the conclusions drawn by others, but will check the facts to see if he or she agrees with the conclusion. Without my thesis, each time someone new wishes to work with these forgeries, he or she has to redo all the work that has already been done just to verify that the manuscripts are indeed forgeries and has no way of knowing whether he or she is looking at the same factors previous scholars have. And what if this new person wishes to assert that the manuscript is not a forgery after all? How is he or she to effectively counter the conclusions of others with no record of how these conclusions were reached? Now, with my account of why we know that each of these manuscripts is a forgery, each new person to look at the manuscripts can see precisely why they were identified as forgeries and has a concrete way to dispute my conclusions. My documentation of the logic behind the identification of these manuscripts as forgeries is precisely what is needed to make these forgeries more suitable for scholarly work.

Literature Review

Document Examination

There are a number of aids that one might reference when examining documents for authenticity. Though there is a long history of manuals created for just this purpose, I am primarily concerned with four because of their relative newness and varied approaches to the subject. Important information from the older books is still contained in these newer books, but the newer books contain further material, particularly with regard to what are currently considered best practices in the field and to today's more advanced technologies. Though each of these four books contains similar information, each has its

particular advantages and unique information important to the authentication of documents.

The oldest of these books is Kenneth Rendell's *Forging History*, which focuses solely on manuscripts.[12] His book is divided into three segments. The first part explains what aspects of a document to consider in authentication and outlines the common signs of forgery in each of these documents. The second segment provides examples of the application of these principles and observations to real manuscripts. Finally, the third part focuses on tools that are useful in document examination and what they can be used to determine. Rendell focuses on documents forged for profit because he claims those forgeries tend to be better executed than their not-for-profit counterparts. Despite this study's age, it does contain a wealth of valuable high-quality, magnified pictures and a clear explanation of the subject.

Joe Nickell is the author of two useful books for the purposes of this thesis. His *Real or Fake: Studies in Authentication* takes a similar approach to Rendell's book, but deals with items other than the written word.[13] Like Rendell, he begins with an overview of what one should look for when attempting to authenticate a document and what betrays a falsification. Here, though, the information is not so detailed and the points are not illustrated with images. The particular usefulness of this book is instead in its application of these authentication principles to photographs and other artifacts. For example, when examining a manuscript, an anachronism in the materials used to create the document, like paper made after the date the document was written, immediately

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[12] Kenneth W. Rendell, *Forging History: The Detection of Fake Letters and Documents* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

[13] Joe Nickell, *Real or Fake: Studies in Authentication* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009).

shows that it is inauthentic. Similarly anachronisms in the way other items, such as photographs, were created shows their inauthenticity. Even if one is only concerned with authenticating documents, understanding how the same principles apply in modified ways to different situations can help the authenticator be more creative with his or her approach when dealing with a document that is difficult to authenticate.

Nickell's other useful book, *Pen, Ink, and Evidence,* approaches the topic of authentication from a more positive viewpoint.[14] Whereas the other books here focus on detecting falsifications, with authentication simply the absence of signs of forgery, *Pen, Ink, and Evidence* dedicates only a small section of one chapter to the discussion of forgery. The majority of the book is instead concerned with the historical timeline of how documents were created. It dedicates space to the major components of documents—paper, pen, ink, and handwriting—and encourages an understanding of what authentic documents *should* look like with regard to each of these areas in different historical periods.

The last of the document examination books used here is Katherine Koppenhaver's *Forensic Document Examination: Principles and Practice*.[15] This book is valuable because its focus is on the process of reliable document analysis. While it contains the usual segments on what to look for to authenticate documents with regard to anachronisms, incorrect handwriting, and the like, it also regularly stresses which kinds of observations are more and less reliable when it comes to verifying authenticity. In

[14] Joe Nickell, *Pen, Ink, and Evidence: A Study of Writing and Writing Materials for the Penman, Collector, and Document Detective* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990).

[15] Koppenhaver, *Forensic Document Examination*.

addition, the book discusses identifying writers through both regular and forged writing and it deals with how to report findings.

Another source worth mentioning here is Emmanuel Winternitz's *Musical Autographs: From Monteverdi to Hindemith*.[16] Though this book is the oldest of those discussed here and is concerned only with the writing on the page rather than the document as a whole, it deals with the creation of musical manuscripts in particular. I think this perspective is valuable because most of the writing on a musical manuscript is quite unlike the writing discussed in the resources above. Similar to how a resource on document examination typically includes some sort of historical outline of what kinds of tools and writing were used when and where, this book outlines what musical symbols were used when and what shapes they have taken throughout history. The book furthermore gives numerous examples; the first half of volume one deals with what authentic musical manuscripts should look like, while the second half of volume one and all of volume two are dedicated to showing and discussing examples of the principles brought up in the first half of volume one.

Music forgeries

The body of literature on music forgeries is unfortunately small and limited. With the existence of methodological resources like those discussed above, it is surprising that scholars who do write about music forgeries rarely write about more than the handwriting or music. There are, of course, more writings on the subject than are reviewed here. I

[16] Emanuel Winternitz, *Musical Autographs from Monetverdi to Hindemith*, volumes 1 and 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955).

have selected to discuss the literature that follows because I feel that it effectively shows the gap in the literature my thesis addresses and is most relevant to my topic.

Richard Macnutt focuses on the Berlioz forgeries created in the 1960s by a single, unnamed forger in his "Berlioz Forgeries."[17] He provides much background information about these forgeries and other Berlioz forgeries to set the stage. The ensuing discussion of characteristics that mark these forgeries is quite brief in comparison to this first narrative part, and though the forger created letters and music, Macnutt does not analyze them in the same way. When examining the musical scores, he uses anachronistic aspects of the contents to prove them false. With the letters, however, his approach is based on handwriting analysis. He seems to begin to discuss the musical handwriting at one point, but stops short of specific detail, saying simply that "the forger produces a general impression of weakness and quite fails to capture the fluency and conviction that are typical of Berlioz's own work."[18] Though it is clear from this statement that Macnutt sees significant differences between Berlioz's true musical hand and the forger's imitation of it, we are left wondering what exactly his thoughts on the matter are. The explanation he does provide is very straightforward and succinct, but because he uses separate methods when dealing with different kinds of manuscripts, we are left with a kind of disjointed and seemingly incomplete picture of this particular forger's work.

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[17] Richard Macnutt, "Berlioz Forgeries," in *Berlioz: Past, Present, Future—Bicentenary Essays*, ed. Peter Anthony Bloom (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 173–192.

[18] Ibid., 182.

J. M. Coopersmith addresses two forgeries in his "Some Adventures in Handel Research."[19] His discussion of these forgeries occurs within the context of his observations on a number of other, legitimate Handel manuscripts. Coopersmith denounces these forgeries by contrasting things that appear in these manuscripts with the way those things are presented, or not, in Handel's true writing. For example, in one of them, the terms "*cresc*" and "*rall*" appear even though Handel does not use such labels. He also briefly discusses the wrong shapes of sixteenth notes and tails.

Though it was once thought that a great many of Pergolesi's autographs had survived, scholars have since proven that the majority of these are in fact not authentic. Barry S. Brook and Marvin E. Paymer approach this issue of Pergolesian authenticity in their "The Pergolesi Hand: A Calligraphic Study."[20] In their article on identifying Pergolesi's true hand, Brook and Paymer weed out the many forgeries through a handwriting analysis alone. They compare a large number of manuscripts thought to be autographs of Pergolesi, and in the end conclude that the largest group of manuscripts with matching handwriting must really be Pergolesi's. This handwriting-focused approach makes sense when one considers that their aim is to define Pergolesi's handwriting. Yet, part of what they assert in their article is that a group of four forgeries—"Agnus Dei," "Miserere nobis," "Non mi negar signora," and "O salutaris hostia"—were all created by Tobia Nicotra in the twentieth century. Their argument here could have been strengthened if they had found patterns in other aspects of the manuscripts' creation, such as paper-type, method of ruling, etc.

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[19] J.M. Coopersmith, "Some Adventures in Handel Research," reprint of paper read before the American Musicological Society at Pittsburgh, Pa., December 29–30, 1937. University of Maryland, Special Collections in the Performing Arts, Jacob M. Coopersmith Collection, series 2.4, box 9, folder 6.
[20] Brook and Paymer, "The Pergolesi Hand," 550–578.

Francesco Degrada also writes about this Pergolesi problem. In his "Alcuni falsi autographi pergolesiani," he identifies the same group of four manuscripts presumed to be Pergolesi autographs as modern forgeries by Tobia Nicotra.[21] Whereas Brook and Paymer group these pieces based on handwriting characteristics, Degrada looks into the musical style of the pieces, identifying elements of the music that make these manuscripts less likely to be Pergolesi's. In his quest to connect these four manuscripts with their creator, Degrada traces some provenance information and points to logical flaws in Nicotra's explanation of the backstory of two of the manuscripts as evidence that he was their creator.

Conclusion

There are thus clear benefits in applying further methods of document examination to our accounts of forgeries of music. While handwriting and content analysis are definitely integral parts of authenticating documents, they can never tell the whole story of a manuscript. Before proceeding to discuss the particulars of each of the selected forged manuscripts, it is important to know more about the methods of critical document examination I will use in my study of these manuscripts.

[21] Francesco Degrada, "Alcuni falsi autografi pergolesiani," *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 1 (1966): 32–48 (translated and summarized for me by Dr. Richard King).

Chapter 2: Methodology

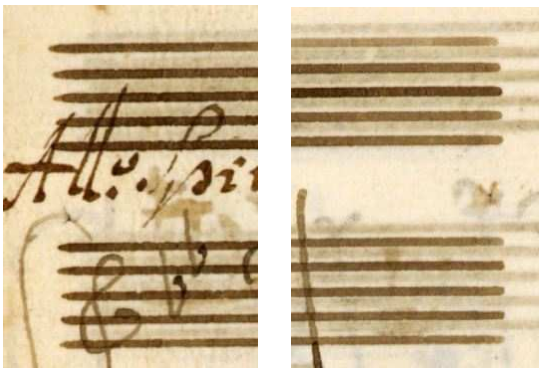
There are so many things a forger must do correctly to ensure his or her forgery passes scrutiny that the likelihood of forgeries being taken as authentic when thoroughly examined is very low. The forger must suspend his or her habitual manner of writing and precisely imitate that of another, a feat requiring unshakable concentration. But it is not just matching the subject's handwriting that makes a good forged document; everything about its creation must be historically accurate. The paper must be from the right time period, the right tool must have been used in creating the writing on the page, etc. In the case of a forgery that is newly created material written in another's hand, that new material must match the style of its supposed creator as well. In all situations, deviations from the usual and expected can be indications of forgery and more deviations increase the reliability of this indication. In some cases, these deviations are the result of inappropriate or anachronistic methods of document creation. Yet, even in cases that seem straightforward, it is best to examine all aspects of a document, lest one's conclusions be challenged.[22] This chapter considers aspects of musical manuscripts to examine when ascertaining authenticity, providing a reference point for understanding the analyses in the following chapters.

Stave Ruling

Staves used to be placed on paper with a special tool called a rastrum, basically a five- (or ten- or twenty-five-) nibbed pen, a tool that also left behind a distinctive pattern. This tool was commonly used to rule paper from the fourteenth through nineteenth

[22] Nickell, *Real or Fake*, 8–9.

centuries and occasionally in the twentieth,[23] and so we expect music manuscripts of Pergolesi, Handel, and Mozart all to have been ruled with this device. As a rule, each set of staff lines drawn with a rastrum will be parallel. Sometimes multi-stave rastra were used, but at the very least, all five lines within one staff were created at once and should be parallel. In addition, since the lines were drawn as sets, the beginnings and endings of at least each stave should generally align vertically. Sometimes one of the nibs will begin or end writing in a slightly different place than the others, but much of the time they will all be in line. The beginnings and endings of these lines have a particular shape as well. Usually, the lines will begin with a quick expansion to the width of the middle of the line. The lines can end with a similar shape, or they can end in a more rounded fashion showing just the slightest bit of tapering. When these factors are not consistently present in the staff lines of a manuscript, they were likely not drawn with a rastrum.



Beginning and ending of first two staves in GB Lbl Add MS 31749, Mozart, *String Quartet in B flat*, K. 172. Note the shape of the beginnings and endings, their vertical alignment, and the parallel-ness of the lines.

Writing Tool

The way the ink lies on the paper and any marks in the paper accompanying the inked forms can indicate the tool that was used to create the writing. The quill pen was

[23] Stanley Boorman, "Rastrology," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42532 (accessed 29 March 2014).

likely used in Europe beginning around 190 B.C.E., but was definitely in use by the early 600s. It remained the main writing tool until the nineteenth century,[24] so we expect to find that autographs of Pergolesi, Handel, and Mozart were all written with a quill pen. This writing instrument leaves behind a smooth and evenly inked line of variable width and does not damage the paper on which it is written.[25] More modern tools, on the other hand, are often not so graceful. For example, a steel-nibbed pen will often leave furrows in the paper near the edges of the ink, its harder tip having carved slightly into the paper. Sometimes the ink will fill in these grooves.[26] As another example, ballpoint pens have a tendency to skip over lower spots on the paper's uneven surface as they pull across, creating writing with tiny gaps in the ink.[27] If the document in question was supposedly created before steel-nib pens or ballpoint pens were invented, yet shows evidence of these more modern tools, then the document is not authentic.

Ink

Similarly, the type of ink used in the creation of a document can help date it. Iron gall ink was the most common type of ink from the Middle Ages to the 1800s,[28] so we expect Pergolesi, Handel, and Mozart all to have written with it. There are two qualities of this ink on paper that are quite easily noted. First, iron-gall ink is acidic because it includes tannic and gallotannic acids. The ink actually became popular because of this

[24] Nickell, *Pen, Ink, and Evidence*, 3, 8–10.

[25] Rendell, *Forging History*, 32; Winternitz, *Musical Autographs*, 24.

[26] Rendell, *Forging History*, 32–33; Winternitz, *Musical Autographs*, 24–25.

[27] Rendell, *Forging History*, 33.

[28] Nickell, *Pen, Ink, and Evidence*, 198; Rendell, *Forging History*, 27.

acidity, which allowed the ink to burn into the paper, making it much less susceptible to erasure than carbon ink. This “burned in” effect can be seen very easily because it makes the ink observable from the wrong side of the paper, often without the paper being illuminated from the underside.[29] Another ingredient of iron-gall ink, iron sulfate, causes the ink to oxidize over time. As one would thus expect, over time the ink will turn from black to a sort of reddish-brown.[30] Any document that should have been created with iron-gall ink but that does not exhibit these characteristics is much less likely to be authentic.

Handwriting

Consideration of the handwriting is an integral part of document authentication. Handwriting exhibits characteristics, some more obvious, some more subtle, unique to each writer. These characteristics are wide-ranging, from letter shapes to space usage to line quality. The important qualities are different from writer to writer. Necessarily then, exemplars of a writer’s hand are needed to verify a manuscript's authenticity. In all areas of handwriting examination, features that are consistent in their appearance and construction are most reliable. Additionally, more intricate or idiosyncratic shapes are often more reliable for verification purposes. Finally, when selecting exemplars, it is important to choose samples written around the same time and for similar purposes as the

[29] Nickell, *Pen, Ink, and Evidence*, 35–36; Rendell, *Forging History*, 27.

[30] Rendell, *Forging History*, 27.

document in question since people's writing can change greatly over time and with different kinds of documents.[31]

There are some aspects of forged handwriting that are fairly common. One common clue that a manuscript might be forged is blunt beginnings and endings on strokes. When someone writes naturally, he or she typically does not set the pen or pencil to the paper, move the writing instrument across the page, and lift it up as three distinct tasks, but writes as if these steps are a single motion. The result is that the beginnings and ends of strokes will generally have a tapered appearance in authentic documents. In contrast, the forger, who has to be more deliberate about the writing, will often execute putting the writing instrument to the paper, writing, and lifting the instrument up as three separate tasks. The end result of this process will be strokes of writing with more blunt beginnings and ends or strokes that begin and end with thicker points of ink.[32]

The size of the writing should also be taken into account. Since writers will often adapt the size of their writing to the size of the space they are writing on, it is important to take proportion into consideration when observing size. Forgers will often shrink the writing of their model, either unconsciously or in an attempt to conceal imperfections. On the other hand, some forgers may write larger than their model did as a result of copying from enlarged facsimiles.[33] Proportional size of the writing can be easily observed in music manuscripts because the staff lines provide a guide of reference.

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[31] Rendell, *Forging History*, 44, 47; Koppenhaver, *Forensic Document Examination*, 83, 88, 91–94; Nickell, *Real or Fake*, 25.

[32] Koppenhaver, *Forensic Document Examination*, 18; Nickell, *Real or Fake*, 31; Rendell, *Forging History*, 10.

[33] Nickell, *Real or Fake*, 31; Koppenhaver, *Forensic Document Examination*, 19–20, 23, 107, 158.

Paper

The paper of a manuscript is another area for examination. Laid paper was in use in Europe by about 1400, in some areas much earlier, and is sometimes still used today. Wove paper began to be used in Europe around the mid-1700s. Both of these kinds of paper were created by hand in molds and exhibit lines when held up to the light that show which type of mold was used. Laid paper will have very close lines in one direction (chain lines) and more widely-spaced lines in the other direction (laid lines). Wove paper shows a pattern of uniformly-spaced lines in both directions and has a pattern kind of like modern window screening.[34] Pergolesi and Handel would have used laid paper, while Mozart likely wrote on laid paper, but could have also used wove paper.

Along with the lines from the paper mold, much of this handmade paper will often exhibit a watermark when held up to the light. Watermarks can show two things. First, they can sometimes give information about the origin of the paper, both date and location.[35] More common forms of watermark, such as a set of three crescent moons, will obviously provide less precise information. Secondly, watermarks can show how a document was constructed. For example, the presence of different watermarks throughout a multi-page document can indicate that its paper came from multiple sources. Their placement on the pages in the document can also indicate how it was constructed. Paper was created in large sheets, typically with one central watermark or one in the middle of each half of the sheet, and was later cut into smaller pieces for use. As a result, watermarks are most often incomplete in manuscripts. One can use clues from the placement of these watermarks in the document to help determine its gathering structure.

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[34] Nickell, *Pen, Ink, and Evidence,* 72–75; Rendell, *Forging History*, 22.

[35] Rendell, *Forging History*, 23.

As paper ages, it becomes more absorbent, presenting a challenge for the forger who wishes to use appropriate paper for his or her work. When ink is applied to old paper, the ink will bleed or "feather" out from the pen stroke, though it would not have if the paper had been recently made. Treatment with hydrogen peroxide can keep the ink from feathering, but evidence of such treatment lingers. Under ultraviolet light, such a manuscript will glow blue and under magnification, the ink will show very tiny cracks.[36] Pergolesi, Handel, and Mozart would all have used paper new enough that there would be no feathering of the ink and had no reason to treat their paper with hydrogen peroxide, had it been recognized as a chemical compound before the nineteenth century.[37]

Anachronisms/Style

Anachronisms and stylistic deviations in any aspect of a document can immediately indicate inauthenticity in some cases and suggest it in others. For example, a document on paper that was manufactured after the document's date is almost never authentic, the exception being for a writer who has mistakenly written the wrong date. A document supposedly created before steel-nib pens were used, but that shows evidence of having been written with a steel-nib pen is likewise inauthentic. Similarly, the appearance of words or symbols in a document before they were commonly used is suspicious.[38]

Deviations from what is expected of a writer can cast suspicion on a document with regard to stylistic patterns as well. If a writer typically ends a letter with "cordially,"

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[36] Rendell, *Forging History*, 28–31.

[37] "Hydrogen Peroxide," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online Academic Edition*, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/278760/hydrogen-peroxide (accessed 24 March 2014).

[38] Rendell, *Forging History*, 20–23, 33; Nickell, *Real or Fake*, 10, 30–31; Nickell, *Pen, Ink, and Evidence*, 188, 190.

for example, and the document in question ends with "sincerely," it might not be authentic.[39] This principle can apply to musical style too, as shown by Francesco Degrada.[40] Unfortunately, comparing musical style requires an expertise beyond the scope of this thesis and will have to be left to others.

Conclusion

Now that we know more about precisely what we are looking for and have established important points of examination when authenticating musical manuscripts, we can take a closer look at our manuscripts. First, I will examine "Mozart's" "Baci amorosi e cari," then "Pergolesi's" "Non mi negar signora," and finally, "Handel's" "Rejoice greatly." For each manuscript I will follow the above structure: stave ruling, writing tool, ink, handwriting, paper, and chemical treatment. Anachronisms and stylistic differences will be pointed out along the way in the appropriate section.

[39] Nickell, *Real or Fake*, 10, 31.

[40] Degrada, "Alcuni falsi autografi pergolesiani."

Chapter 3: "Baci amorosi e cari"

In 1928 the Library of Congress bought an autograph of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, "Baci amorosi e cari," from Tobia Nicotra.[41] This two-folio manuscript is a song for soprano voice with cembalo accompaniment in 2/4 in the key of G major. The folios are upright quarto format and were formed by folding a larger sheet of paper in half. Each page is ruled with fourteen staves. There is a signature of the composer on the top right corner of the first page, and at the end of the music "Villa Pallaricini li 7 Settembre 1770" has been written, indicating that the music was written by fourteen-year old Mozart on his first tour through Italy. Though it had been examined and authenticated by Mozart experts, the manuscript was later discovered to be a forgery.[42] In this case, the forger did not copy an existing manuscript, but created a new piece of music and wrote it in an approximation of Mozart's hand. A number of elements in this manuscript attest to its inauthenticity.

Stave Ruling

As discussed in Chapter 2, Mozart's music should have been ruled with a rastrum, but the stave lines in this manuscript show evidence of having been individually drawn by hand. The first clue that a rastrum was not used is in the varied placement of the

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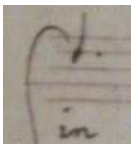
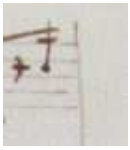
[41] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, "Baci amorosi e cari," The Library of Congress, M1621.N (Case); Acquisition record 371972, "Baci amorosi e cari," Library of Congress, Order Division, Control File 368940–372956, reel 62.

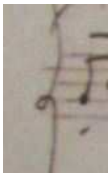
[42] "Mozart Forger Sentenced; Library Here Paid Him $60," *Washington News*, 9 November 1924; "Music Forger Who Defrauded Experts Jailed," *New York Tribune*, 10 November 1934; "Autograph Faker Gets Prison Term," *New York Times*, 10 November 1934; "Toscanini's Son Trips up Forger," *The Lock Haven Express*, 12 November 1934, 3; "The World's Champion Antique Faker," *San Antonio Light*, 20 January 1935, 8, and *American Weekly*, 1935; Thomas M. Johnson, "Matching Wits with the World's Cleverest Forgers," *The Laredo Times*, 10 January 1937.

beginnings and endings of each line in relation to the others in the same set. With a rastrum, the lines will not necessarily always start and end in perfect vertical alignment, but often they will be quite close to vertical alignment. In this manuscript, however, there are numerous places where these lines begin and end suspiciously far from alignment. In addition, rather than the tapered line beginnings and endings common with a rastrum, these lines consistently feature blunt beginnings and endings.


"Baci,"
f.1v, staff 7


"Baci,"
f.1r, staff 4


"Baci,"
f.1r, staff 14


"Baci,"
f.1v, staff 5


"Baci,"
f.1v, staff 6

Another sign that the staff lines were not drawn with a rastrum is that the lines are neither parallel nor evenly spaced. Though easily perceptible with the naked eye, measurements verify this unevenness. For example, the height of a single staff ranges from seven to eight millimeters and that distance is not often consistent across the page.

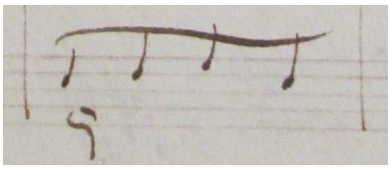
Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that this manuscript was most likely ruled line-by line with a straight edge rather than a rastrum. The evidence can be seen best on f.1v, where it appears the forger forgot to erase his or her guiding pencil marks (an effect that unfortunately does not show up well in photographs). Sets of five hash marks that line up with the stave lines can clearly be seen near the beginning of staves one through eight and twelve through fourteen and very faintly seen near the beginning of staves nine and eleven. The same kind of marks can be seen at the ends of staves twelve, thirteen, and fourteen on the same page. Similar evidence of this marking process can be seen near staves four and five on f.2v, but here the inked lines were placed ever so slightly off from the penciled hash marks. When these penciled hash marks are

considered in conjunction with the frequent misaligned and blunt stave starts and endings and the fact that the lines are not evenly spaced nor parallel, it is clear that the lines were not created in the expected manner and were instead drawn individually.

There is an additional oddity with regard to the ruling of "Baci amorosi e cari." Mozart preferred to use oblong paper ruled with ten staves during his Salzburg years and twelve-stave paper in Vienna.[43] This manuscript, however, is in an upright format and ruled with fourteen staves per page. This deviation from Mozart's usual pattern casts further suspicion on the manuscript.

Writing Tool

Where the improper tools used in creating the staff lines suggest this manuscript is a forgery, the rest of the writing seems to have been created with the right tool for the supposed time period. As previously noted, Mozart would have been writing with a quill, a tool that smoothly applies ink to the page and allows for lines of varying width. The writing in this manuscript shows a smooth application of ink to the page without carving into the paper. There is also flexibility in the width of the strokes, which is particularly evident in the beams on the first page.



"Baci amorosi e cari," f.1r, system 3, m. 4, left hand

[43] Alan Tyson, *Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 222–233.

Ink

The ink in the manuscript is ambiguous: in some respects it suggests authenticity, but in others it suggests a fake. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Mozart would have written in iron-gall ink, an ink that burns into the paper and turns reddish brown over time. The ink for the notes and words on this document have exactly the appearance expected, a slight reddish-brown hue that can be seen easily through the paper when held up to light. Many times iron-gall ink is so acidic that one does not need underside illumination to see the ink through the paper, but different ink recipes and different qualities of paper can make this effect more or less extreme and the fact that illumination is needed to see the ink from the wrong side does not mean it is not iron-gall ink.

On the other hand, the ink of the staff lines appears quite different. It is a lighter, pinkish-brown color and cannot be seen from the reverse side of the paper, even when held up to the light. These two qualities suggest that the staff lines were not written with iron-gall-type ink, but rather with a substance, ink or pencil, that does not bite into the surface of the paper. Though the ink of the notes and words would suggest authenticity, the ink of the staff lines suggests that the manuscript might be inauthentic.

Handwriting

Many of the shapes of the notes and letters in this manuscript mirror those of Mozart. Yet, even at first glance, the manuscript of “Baci amorosi e cari” seems a little too neat to have been the work of Mozart. A closer examination reveals distinct differences in the handwriting that make it very unlikely for Mozart to have written this document.

For the purposes of handwriting comparison, a number of Mozart autographs were used. Most of the examples were selected because of their accessibility and chronological closeness to the supposed date of this manuscript (7 September 1770). These autographs are *6 Menuette*, K. 164, nos. 1 and 3 (1772),[44] *Sonata in D major*, K. 381 (fragment) (1772),[45] *Symphony No. 13 in F major*, K. 112 (2 November 1771),[46] *String Quartet in B flat*, K. 172 (1773),[47] and *String Quartet in D Minor*, IV, K. 173 ([1773]).[48] However, while these manuscripts show Mozart's handwriting around the time of the suspect manuscript, none of them is a song. While these contemporary manuscripts have been favored in the following handwriting analysis, "Misero! O sogno!" and "Aura, che intorno spiri," K. 425b/431 ([1783?]),[49] have also been considered because they are vocal pieces.

First Impressions

From these manuscripts we can find some common characteristics of Mozart's music writing. Perhaps one of the easiest things to notice is that Mozart most often places

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[44] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *6 Menuette*, K. 164, nos. 1 and 2, 1772, autograph, The Library of Congess, Moldenhauer Archives—The Rosaleen Moldenhauer Memorial, Molden 3120, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/molden:@field(DOCID+@lit(molden000120)).

[45] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Sonatas for piano, 4 hands, in D Major*, K. 123a/381, fragment, 1772, autograph, The Morgan Library & Museum, Cary 336, http://www.themorgan.org/music/manuscript/115414.

[46] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Symphony No. 13 in F Major*, K. 112, 2 November 1771, autograph, The Morgan Library & Museum, Heineman MS 153, http://www.themorgan.org/music/manuscript/115416.

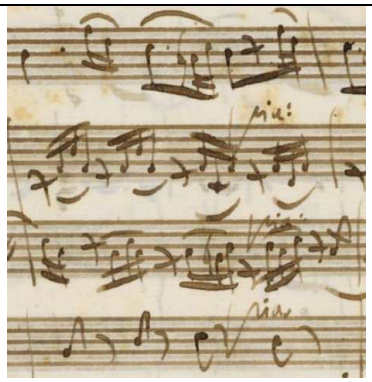
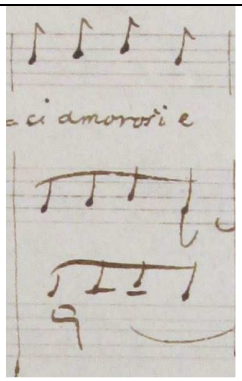
[47] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *String Quartet in B Flat*, K. 172, 1773, autograph, British Library, Add MS21749, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_31749.

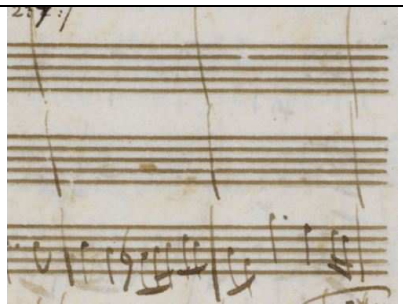
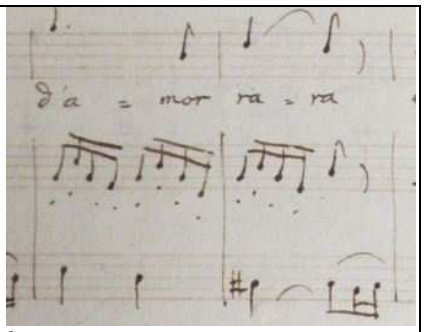
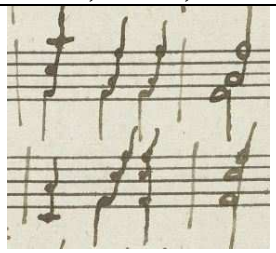
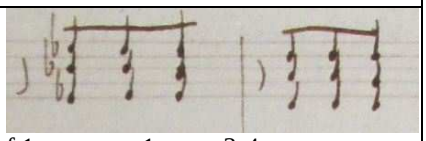
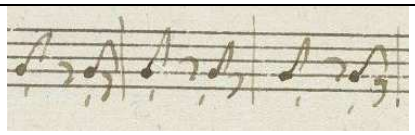
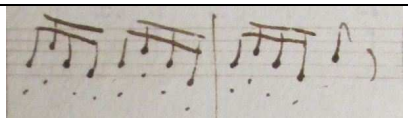
[48] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *String Quartet in D Minor*, K. 173, movement IV, [1773], autograph, British Library, Zweig MS 52, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Zweig_MS_52.

[49] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Misero! o sogno - Aura, che intorno spiri*, K. 425b/431, [1783?], autograph, The Morgan Library & Museum, Cary 412, http://www.themorgan.org/music/manuscript/115403.

his upward stems on the right of all notes, the downward stems on the left of filled in notes, and the downward stems on the right of open notes. Most of his barlines are drawn for each staff individually, rather than for each system, and most often extend significantly beyond the staff lines. When Mozart uses stacked notes, each segment of the stem between notes is a separate line segment, but it is rare for the pen to lift from the page between these strokes. Staccato marks are indicated with tiny vertical lines.

In "Baci amorosi e cari," these qualities are approximated, but not quite right. All of the notes in this piece have their stems on the correct side to have been Mozart, but where they attach to the filled in notes is not the same. Here the stems often extend up or down from the middle of the note, angling themselves ever so slightly so that by the end of the stem, they appear as if they are on the correct side of the note. Mozart's stems clearly attach to the note heads on either the right or the left. The barlines extend beyond the staves, as Mozart's do, but not nearly so far as is typical for Mozart. They are furthermore very consistently drawn across the entire cembalo part, rather than having separate barlines for each staff. Stems connecting stacks of notes are all drawn with individual strokes, but here the pen often lifts from the page between stem segments. Staccato marks are drawn as little dots, rather than dashes.

	Mozart	"Baci amorosi e cari"
Note heads join to stems	 Add MS 31749, f.5v, system 1, m. 2	 f.1r, system 2, m. 4

Bar lines	 Zweig MS 52, f.1r, system 1, mm. 6-7, violin 1, violin 2, viola	 f.1v, system 2, mm. 3-4
Stacked notes	 Heineman MS 153, f.8v, mm. 5-6, staves 6-7	 f.1v, system 1, mm. 3-4
Staccato	 Heineman MS 153, f.9r, system 1, mm. 5-7, bassi	 f.1v, system 2, mm. 3-4, right hand

Systems

To denote systems, Mozart most often uses a two stroke brace, one stroke extending straight down the left side of the system and curling up and to the right at the bottom and the other stroke forming the same type of curve at the top of the system, this time curving down and to the right. At the bottom of the system there will also be two small, more-or-less parallel lines, often slightly further apart than two stave lines, extending diagonally with the bottom towards the left and the top towards the right, crossing the brace and meeting the staff. In the manuscript closest in date to the supposed date of “Baci amorosi e cari” (7 September 1770), Heineman MS 153 (2 November

1771), this brace figure is adorned with a small loop extending towards the left in the middle of the vertical line.

The braces in “Baci amorosi e cari” have a similar appearance, but were not constructed in the same manner. The braces here have the same curve at the top and bottom, but were formed with a single stroke, rather than two. The two diagonal lines marking the bottom of the system occur with a variety in placement, distance apart, and parallel-ness expected from Mozart, yet they are often a little shorter than expected. There is a small loop to the left in the middle of each brace, as in Heineman MS 153, but whereas in the Heineman this loop does not really interrupt the straightness of the vertical part of the brace, in “Baci amorosi e cari” the loop’s presence often makes the brace bend a little towards the right on either side of it. As a result, there is a more pronounced sideways V shape in the middle of the braces of “Baci amorosi e cari” than in the middle of Mozart’s braces in Heineman MS 153.

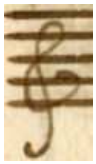
Add MS 31749, f.5v, system 1

Heineman MS 153, f.2v

“Baci,” f.2r, system 3

Clefs

Clefs can be distinct from composer to composer. Mozart's treble clefs are written with a single stroke that begins with a hook at the bottom and a vertical line extending up on its right. The vertical line curves slightly around the B4 line, angling to the right before looping back around tightly near the F5 line. Here the line goes down and left, at an angle of about 45 degrees from the stave lines. It crosses the vertical stroke at the B4 line and loops back around counterclockwise, going down to the E4 line and stopping at the G4 line.

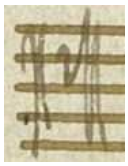


Add MS 31749, f.1r, system 1, m.1, 1st violin

Heineman MS 153, f.9r, system 1, m.1, 1st violin

The C-clefs Mozart writes involve two sets of two vertical lines with a sort of sideways and backwards S in the middle. Each set of vertical lines often extends just beyond the top and bottom of the stave, no matter where C4 is. The ends of the S sort of shape extend near the G4 line on the left and near the A3 line on the right. Both the upper and lower arcs of the S shape remain close to the C4 line. Frequently, Mozart does not pick his pen up through this whole clef, which has the effect of leaving small lines angled up and to the right between each of the five would-be strokes of his C-clefs.

Heineman MS 153, f.1r, m.1, viola



Cary 412, p.1, m.1, voice

Add MS 31749, f.1r, m.1, viola

Finally, Mozart's bass clefs look like a C. They begin with a very blunt start on or near the F3 line. The stroke then extends up and slightly to the left, arcing back down most often just before the A3 line. This subsequent down stroke bows slightly out to the left and arcs back up sometimes around the G2 line and sometimes around the B2 line. The stroke then ends on or near either the B2 line or the D3 line. Mozart ends his bass clef with a second stroke, a figure similar to the sideways and backwards S of his C-clef, but here it stands unconnected to other strokes and centered on the F3 line.

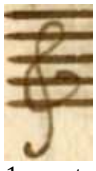

Add MS 31749, f.1r, system 1, m.1, bottom part


Cary 336, verso, m. 5, top staff


Heineman MS 153, f.1r, m. 1, basso

There is only one each of treble, C, and bass clefs in "Baci amorosi e cari," but all of them are formed unlike Mozart's. The treble clef here has a tail to the left on the bottom. Mozart sometimes had a little curl at the bottom of his treble clefs, but not such a line. Then the upstroke here extends way too far past the top of the staff; Mozart's usually end close to the F5 line. Because of this extra-tall upstroke, the loop at the top of the treble clef is also larger than expected from Mozart. The top loop closes with the line at an expected angle, and in the right place. At the bottom, the semi-circle crosses the upstroke near the E4 line and stops at the G4 line, as expected, but the end of the stroke is unusually close to the upstroke.


"Baci," f.1r, system 1, m.1, right hand

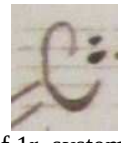

Add MS 31749, f.1r, system 1, m. 1, 1st violin

In “Baci amorosi e cari” it is clear that the C-clef, soprano clef, was not the work of Mozart. In the example manuscripts, the two sets of vertical lines extend from the top to the bottom of the stave, regardless of where C4 is located, yet here, the vertical lines have been shifted down to center around C4. All parts of the clef are drawn with separate strokes, rather than with the frequent connectedness seen in Mozart’s. Perhaps the most obvious difference here is that the symbol in the middle is two separate strokes, while Mozart uses a backwards and sideways S shape.

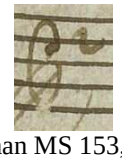
“Baci,” f.1r, system 1, m.1, voice

Heineman MS 153, f.1r, m.1, viola

The bass clef in “Baci amorosi e cari” is not Mozart’s either. First of all, though it begins in the proper place, the F3 line, the beginning of the stroke is not blunt enough to be Mozart’s. The line at the top of the figure arcs back down just above the A3 line rather than just below, but extends down and arcs back up around the G2 line as expected. The stroke then ends as it should, between the B3 and D3 lines. The upper and lower arcs of Mozart’s bass clefs consistently align vertically, but here the top is more to the right than the bottom. Finally, there are two dots around the F3 line, rather than the sideways and backwards S shape Mozart consistently drew.



“Baci,” f.1r, system 1, m. 1, left hand



Heineman MS 153, f.1r, m. 1, basso

Accidentals

Examining accidentals can also be useful when analyzing handwriting. Mozart's flats are remarkably regular in shape. They usually begin with a blunt start, form a shallow curve down that often extends a little further left than where the stroke began. From this bottom-most point the stroke turns up with a sharp curve. This upward stroke is usually very straight.


Add MS 31749, f.1r, system 1, m. 8, staff 1


Zweig MS 52, f.2r, system 1, m. 2, staff 2


Heineman MS 153, f.4v, m. 8, staff 5

Mozart's naturals have two forms. The most common (here called "type 1") one is created with a long downstroke angled slightly to the left with a soft turn to the right and back down, forming a subtle S curve. Its second stroke forms a half-circle on the left that meets the first stroke at each of the slight bends. Another natural shape (here called "type 2") is formed by two intersecting strokes of equal length and similar shape that have rotational symmetry. Both strokes are curved more sharply at one end so that when the strokes are placed together, the curves make the middle of the natural.


Natural type 1, Zweig MS 52, f.1r, system 1, m. 1, basso


Natural type 2, Add MS 31749, f.1r, system 2, m. 8, bottom staff

Though both Mozart's flats and naturals have distinctive shapes, his sharps are less notable. He formed his sharps with two small down strokes angled a little to the left, followed by two horizontal strokes to the right and a little bit down. Sometimes each of the four strokes remains distinct and sometimes Mozart did not lift the pen between strokes in the same direction.


Add MS 31749, f.9r, system 2, m. 6, staff 2


Cary 336, recto, system 3, m. 5, left hand


Molden 3120, recto, system 1, m. 10, bassi

The accidentals in "Baci amorosi e cari" are not quite the same as Mozart's. The flats are the most conspicuously different of the three. Though a couple are more accurate, the majority feature a more evenly rounded bottom than the soft corner of Mozart's flats. In addition, the bottom loop is usually closed, where in Mozart's true hand, it most often is not. And while Mozart's flats feature a vertical part that is very straight, most of these flats have vertical lines that curve slightly to the right.


"Baci," f.1v, system 1, m. 2, voice


"Baci," f.2r, system 2, m. 4, voice


Add MS 31749, f.1r, system 1, m. 8, staff 1

The naturals in this manuscript are exclusively like type 2 constructions, described above. This fact suggests that Mozart was not the author; though Mozart occasionally used this form, he only used it every now and again. The end result of both types of natural construction can look very similar so it would seem that this manuscript's author was concerned with mimicking the visual effect of Mozart's naturals but did not

think to also match their manner of construction. In addition, though Mozart's naturals did not feature corners, a few of the naturals later on in "Baci amorosi e cari" are more angular, as if the writer had a lapse of concentration and reverted back to his or her usual natural form.


"Baci," f.1v, system 1, m. 3, voice


"Baci," f.2r, system 3, m. 1, left hand


"Baci," f.2r, system 4, m.3, voice


Natural type 1, Zweig MS 52, f.1r, system 1, m. 1, basso


Natural type 2, Add MS 31749, f.1r, system 2, m. 8, bottom staff

Though Mozart's sharps are not all that distinctive, the ones in this forged manuscript are consistently just a little bit different. Their construction is the same; however, the angle at which they are drawn differs. Mozart's are usually rotated to the right, while those here are consistently oriented vertically, sometimes with the horizontal lines tilted to the left.


"Baci," f.1r, key signature, right hand


"Baci," f.1r, system 3, m. 4 right hand


Add MS 31749, f.9r, system 2, m. 6, staff 2

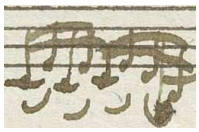
Beams

The beams in Mozart's music look hastily drawn. They are always drawn from left to right, but rarely connect to stems cleanly. Most often, the stems of the notes extend beyond the beams, but sometimes the stems end where they meet the beam. The beams almost always extend beyond the outermost stems and sometimes they are very straight.

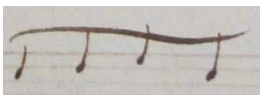
Often, though, they have a slight curve to them. The convex curvature often points away from the note heads, but sometimes, particularly with down-stem notes, this curve will bend towards the note heads. In situations where there are multiple-beams, Mozart usually picked up the pen between strokes.

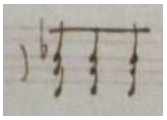

Add MS 31749, f.1v, system 1, m. 1, bottom staff

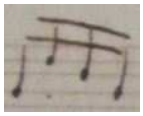

Add MS 31749, f.7v, system 2, m. 4, top staff


Heineman MS 153, f.10v, m. 2, staff 2

In "Baci amorosi e cari," some of the beams look like Mozart's, but an approximately equal amount of them do not. The believable beams are straight, have ends that extend beyond the outermost stems in the group, and have a few stems that extend beyond the beam. Not all of Mozart's beams were straight, and not all the beams here are straight, but whereas Mozart's curved beams have a single, slight bend in the middle, the curved ones here bend both up and down. Furthermore, many of the double beams here have stems that do not reach to the outer beam, which is not usual for Mozart.


"Baci," f.1r, system 3, m. 4, left hand


"Baci," f.1r, system 4, m. 4, right hand


"Baci," f.1v, system 2, m. 2, right hand

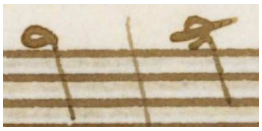
Open Note Heads

Though Mozart formed his open note heads in a few ways, there is a consistency to when he used each construction. Usually, when forming half notes with stems up, Mozart used one of two constructions. Sometimes he would form his stem-up half notes

with two strokes, with the stem and the bottom of the note head as one stroke and the top of the note head as a separate stroke. Other times he would form these notes with a single stroke extending down for the stem and then clockwise around the entire note head. His down-stem notes were usually formed with a single stroke that began with the top half of the note head, circled around for the bottom, and turned sharply down for the stem. Sometimes Mozart would create a similar figure by making this construction with two strokes, one arc for the top half of the note head and another stroke for the bottom half of the note head and the stem.

Single stroke,
Cary 336, recto,
system 4, m. 7,
left hand

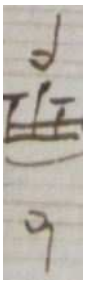
Two strokes,
Heineman MS 153,
f.6r, m. 8, bottom staff



One and two strokes, respectively
Add MS 31749,
f.10v, system 2, mm. 4-5,
top staff

In "Baci amorosi e cari," the open notes are constructed in a Mozartian manner, but they consistently use the two stroke constructions rather than the more varied constructions Mozart used. The stem-up open notes here are most often formed with one stroke for the stem and the bottom of the note head and one for the top of the note head. Down-stem open notes are most often constructed with one stroke for the top of the note and one for the bottom of the note and the stem, though Mozart usually used a single-stroke formation. Though these constructions were used by Mozart, we expect more variety from him. The fact that there is not more variety could be a sign of forgery, since forgers tend to limit their models. [50]

[50] Koppenhaver, *Forensic Document Examination*, 99.


"Baci," f.1v, system 4, m. 2, cembalo

Rests

Mozart's rests often take forms unlike their printed counterparts. Whole rests usually appear as a dot attached to the underside of the second line from the top. On occasion these rests will be small horizontal lines rather than dots and sometimes Mozart chose to leave the measure empty rather than write in the rest. Quarter rests are a small sideways S shape. This sideways S shape is often angled so that it is not exactly horizontal, but approximately 30 degrees from the baseline, lower than on the left and higher on the right. Frequently, the upper bend will be sharper than the lower bend. Mozart's eighth rests are formed with a downstroke to make a shape like a large apostrophe. Sixteenth rests look very much like these eighth rests, but with a stroke from left to right crossing through the eighth note stroke, making a figure that resembles the numeral seven.


Whole rest,
Heineman MS 153,
f.1r, m.4, staff 3


Quarter rest,
Add MS 31749,
f.2v, system 1, m. 1,
staff 3


Eighth rest,
Heineman MS 153,
f.9r, system 1, m. 6,
bassi


Sixteenth rest,
Heineman MS 153,
f.6r, m. 8, staff 6

In "Baci amorosi e cari," the larger-value rests look less like Mozart's than the smaller-value rests. There are half rests written here rather than whole rests in empty

bars. Though the shape of the rest is correct—usually a small dot, sometimes a small horizontal line—Mozart, even when writing in 2/4, used whole rests for empty bars, not half rests.[51] The quarter rests here are the right shape, a kind of sideways S, but their orientation is different. Mozart's quarter rests are most often angled about 30 degrees from the baseline, but these are most often between 45 and 60 degrees from the baseline, suggesting that they were not really the work of Mozart. Eighth and sixteenth rests between the two manuscripts look much the same, perhaps a angled a bit too much to the left in "Baci amorosi e cari," but not so much as to discount their plausibility.


Half rest,
"Baci," f.1r,
system 1,
m. 1, voice


Quarter rest,
"Baci," f.1r,
system 3,
m. 5, right hand


Eighth rest,
"Baci," f.2v,
system 1,
m. 2, left hand

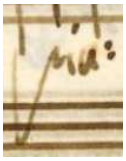

Sixteenth rest,
"Baci," f.2v,
system 3,
m. 3, voice

Dynamics

Dynamic markings in Mozart's manuscripts are mostly *piano* and *forte* indications. Most often his indications use the first three letters of the word (i.e. "pia" and "for") and sometimes he uses just the initial letter, but the shape of the initial letter is fairly consistent. When he writes out the first three letters, he usually puts a colon after the dynamic marking. Mozart's "p" shape is very distinctive. It begins with a line, usually straight down but sometimes with a tiny hook at the top. This line is approximately half a stave to a full stave length. At the bottom, the line changes direction abruptly and extends up and to the right, at an angle of about 30 degrees from the initial downstroke. This upstroke can end slightly above where the downstroke began, slightly below it, or at

[51] For example, Add MS 31749 ff.10v–14v is in 2/4 and uses whole rests for empty bars; many are on f.12r.

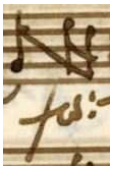
approximately the same height. Sometimes the stroke ends here and another stroke forms the loop of the “p,” and sometimes the “p” is completed with a single stroke. Either way, the loop of the “p” is never really a loop, but rather looks like a sharp curve down and to the right, usually extending about a quarter of the length of the upstroke. Here the line curves sharply again for a very short line segment, either up or to the right. When the “p” is connected to the “i,” this last line segment is longer than when the “p” stands alone.



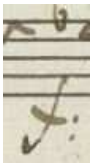
Add MS 31749,
f.1r, system 1,
m. 7, staff 4

Zweig MS 52,
f.3r, system 2,
m. 1, staff 2

The “f” of Mozart’s forte begins with a downstroke slightly angled to the left. This line usually fills up the space between staves and occasionally has a small curl up at the end. After this first stroke, the pen is almost always lifted and a second, horizontal stroke is made across the downstroke to the right and slightly down. When “for” is written out, this horizontal stroke connects to the “o.”



Add MS 31749,
f.1r, system 1,
m. 8, staff 1



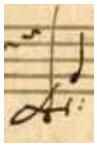
Heineman MS 153,
f.5r, staff 3, m. 4

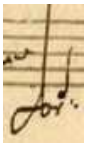
Though the dynamic markings are similar in “Baci amorosi e cari,” they show two distinct signs that they were most likely not written by Mozart. Perhaps the biggest giveaway is the two crescendo and one diminuendo instructions in the cembalo part of the manuscript. Not only do these directions not appear in the authentic manuscripts

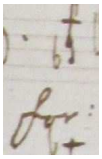
examined here, but the cembalo, more commonly known as the harpsichord, plays either loudly or softly, but cannot transition gradually between the two. Why would Mozart have ever taken the time to write out impossible instructions?

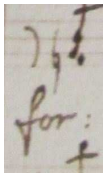
The other indication of inauthenticity here can be seen in the single-stroke "f" of the "for"s. Such a one-stroke "f" construction occurs only three times in the authentic autographs examined here,[52] but four of the five "f"s in "Baci amorosi e cari" use it and its appearance is different than in the authentic manuscripts. Though Mozart's "f"s are unadorned at the top, these five "f"s feature a loop to the left. That most of the "f"s in this manuscript use this one-stroke form even though it was rare for Mozart to do so, and that they all have a loop at the top that Mozart did not use suggests that someone else penned this manuscript.


Add MS 31749, f.5v, system 1, m. 3, staff 4


Molden 3120, verso, system 1, m. 5, bassi


Molden 3120, verso, system 1, m. 5, violin 2


"Baci," f2r, system 2, m. 4, cembalo


"Baci," f2r, system 4, m. 3, cembalo

Conclusions

Though in a few respects the handwriting in "Baci amorosi e cari" matches with Mozart's, the vast number of significant differences between Mozart's handwriting and that of this manuscript indicates that "Baci amorosi e cari" is not authentic. While the construction of the braces, accidentals and open note heads, the shapes of the rests, and some of the dynamic markings follow Mozart's own patterns, there are often slight deviations in these forms that suggest Mozart did not actually pen them. Other details,

[52] It occurs once on f.5v of Add MS 31749 and twice on f.1v of Molden 3120.

from the way stacked notes are connected to the shape of the clefs to the inclusion of impossible dynamic shadings, further cast suspicion on the authenticity of the manuscript. The differences between Mozart's braces, clefs, accidentals, beams, open note heads, rests, and dynamic markings and those of "Baci amorosi e cari" are just too many and too consistent for his manuscript to have been penned by Mozart.

Paper

The paper of "Baci amorosi e cari" in some respects looks as we would expect, but its watermark suggests it is inauthentic. The song is on laid paper, which is what Mozart would have used. Here, the ink did not feather out from the writing, suggesting that the ink and paper are fairly contemporary. In addition, the manuscript does not glow under ultraviolet light and the ink is not fractured when examined under magnification, indicating that the paper was not chemically treated to keep the ink from bleeding.

The watermark, however, is odd. It is in the middle of f.2 and is a shape like a Christmas ornament or pocket watch. Alan Tyson has reproduced all the watermarks Mozart used in his first Italian journey,[53] when this manuscript was supposedly written, and though this watermark is similar in shape to one of them, the details do not match. The watermark here has a single circle at the top and nondescript squiggles in the middle, while the Mozartian one it most closely matches has a three-leaf clover shape at the top and the letters "PM" in the middle. In addition, all the watermarks in paper used by Mozart in this time period are bisected and on the edge of quarto-size paper, but the one in "Baci amorosi e cari" is whole and in the middle.

[53] Tyson, *Mozart*, 14.

Conclusion

"Baci amorosi e cari" is not an authentic Mozart autograph. Though it was penned with a quill, some of the ink has the appearance of iron-gall ink, and the paper was written on near its manufacture date, there are many more significant aspects of the manuscript that are not as they should be. The many inaccuracies in the handwriting, from the clefs to the beams are enough to show that the manuscript was not written by Mozart. That the paper was ruled line-by-line and without iron-gall ink, that there are crescendo and decrescendo marks in the cembalo part, and that the paper's watermark does not match those of the paper Mozart used in 1770 suggest not only that Mozart did not create this manuscript, but that it is a more modern forgery.

Chapter 4: "Non mi negar signora"

In 1923 the Library of Congress bought an autograph manuscript of the song "Non mi negar signora"[54] by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi from G. Nicotra, Esquire.[55] This song, in 2/4 and G minor, was written for soprano and spinetta. The single, oblong quarto folio bears the music on both sides. There is a signature of the composer at the end along with a dedication to "Fra Bernardo Feo" and the date 1731.[56] Unfortunately, the manuscript was damaged by water at some point in its history.

In the time since the Library of Congress purchased this manuscript, scholars have noted that many presumed Pergolesi autographs are forgeries and misattributions. There were so many that no one knew exactly what Pergolesi's handwriting looked like. In 1982, Barry S. Brook and Marvin E. Paymer addressed the issue by systematically determining the true handwriting of Pergolesi.[57] They identified eleven different hands in twenty-six manuscripts and asserted that eleven of those twenty-six manuscripts were written by a single person and were authentic autographs. Another four of the manuscripts, they claimed, were better forgeries than the rest and were created by Tobia Nicotra. "Non mi negar signora" is one of these four manuscripts.[58] While Brook and

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[54] Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, "Non mi negar signora," The Library of Congress, M1621.P (Case).

[55] Acquisition record 315507, "Non mi negar signora," Library of Congress, Order Division, Control File 313743–318636, reel 50.

[56] This date is difficult to read, but seems to me to be 1731. Brook and Paymer agree. See their "The Pergolesi Hand," 563.

[57] Ibid., 550–578.

[58] Ibid., 554–555.

Paymer do an excellent job of contrasting Pergolesi's true hand with imitations of it, there are a number of additional elements signifying that this manuscript is a forgery.

Stave Ruling

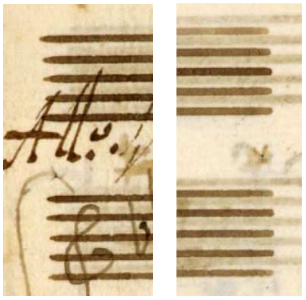
"Non mi negar signora" is written on paper ruled with ten staves per side. As has already been noted, these staves should have been drawn with a rastrum. Here the evidence suggests a rastrum was likely not used, though several factors align with rastrum use.

The uniform ruling in part suggests the staves could have been drawn with a rastrum. First, each of the five lines of a staff begins in approximate vertical alignment, indicating that each set could have been created simultaneously as a unit. The lines of each staff are parallel, about two millimeters apart, further indicating that they were created with a single tool. In fact, all the lines on the page are parallel, such as would have been possible with a multi-stave rastrum.

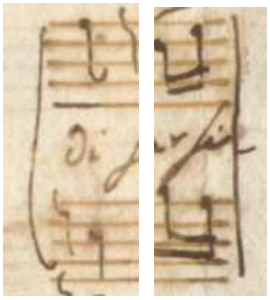
This manuscript was more likely not created with a rastrum, however. When the manuscript is held up to the light, one can see that the stave lines on the front and back are in exactly the same place vertically. Though it is true that a rastrum will create stave lines with more-or-less uniform spacing, the rastrum is a hand tool. As such, the likelihood of a person naturally ruling two pages with one of these instruments so that the staves on opposite sides of the page line up perfectly is very, very small. The folio was more likely ruled by either a printing press or by someone skillfully ruling line by line.

Another point of suspicion with the ruling of this manuscript is the way each of the staff lines starts and ends. Here we see lines that consistently begin and end bluntly

and with a slightly heavier deposit of ink than is present in the middle of the lines. This effect is not typical of printed staves and while it is certainly not impossible to create such an effect with a rastrum, the typical appearance for rastra-ruled stave beginnings and endings is that the lines quickly taper at both ends and show a more-or-less uniform flow of ink. The blunt endings with higher ink concentration consistently found in this manuscript suggest that their creator carefully set the pen to the paper, moved it across, and removed it from the paper in three separate actions. Overall, the stave lines here show a higher level of concentration, care, and concern in their creation than is usual.



Rastrum-ruled staves, beginning and ending staves in Gb-Lbl Add MS 31749, Mozart, *String Quartet in B flat*, K. 172, f.1r, staves 1 and 2



Stave beginnings and endings in “Non mi negar signora,” verso, staff 2

Writing Tool

As already discussed, the writing tool Pergolesi would have used for this manuscript is a quill, and this manuscript was most likely written with one. The flow of the ink across the page is fairly smooth, as is expected from a quill. Though the writer seems to write with strokes of fairly consistent width, strokes of varying width can be seen in the manuscript, particularly when one compares beams to stems, which points to the flexible nature of the quill pen. In addition, are no marks, like those a steel-nib pen would have left behind.

Smooth ink applied to the page with varying widths of strokes,
“Non mi negar signora,” recto, staff 1, m. 11

Ink

There are three aspects of the ink in this manuscript that are easily observed that suggest it was penned with iron-gall ink, the kind Pergolesi would have used. We can see here that the ink used in this document is acidic, like iron-gall ink, in the way that writing from the opposite side can be seen through the page. The acidic nature of the ink has allowed it to burn into the paper enough for us to see the writing from the wrong side. Furthermore, the water damage evident in the bleeding and blurring of the ink here suggests it is iron-gall ink. Since iron-gall ink is water-based, it can dissolve in water even after it has dried. It appears the ink has done precisely that on this manuscript; the ink has bled and blurred in places where water touched the page. Finally, the colors also indicate iron-gall ink. The ink here appears more brownish-black in some places and more reddish-brown in others. It is worth noting that the more reddish-brown ink often coincides with water damage, which suggests the ink contains iron because the process of oxidation is accelerated by water. The acidic nature of the ink, its solubility in water, and its oxidation all suggest that “Non mi negar signora” was penned with iron-gall ink, the proper ink for the eighteenth century.

Handwriting

Scholars have known since at least the late 1940s that many Pergolesi autographs are false attributions or forgeries.[59] "Non mi negar signora" is one of the twenty six manuscripts supposedly penned by Pergolesi that Brook and Paymer analyze in their "The Pergolesi Hand: A Calligraphic Study."[60] In this article, they examine twenty-five elements of music handwriting as well as Pergolesi's signature. They note that Pergolesi is very consistent in his handwriting and has a unique manner of writing C clefs, bass clefs, trills, and *dolce*. Unfortunately, trill and *dolce* markings are not present in "Non mi negar signora." The following analysis applies the observations made by Brook and Paymer in their article specifically to "Non mi negar signora" and makes a few further observations. Examples here will be drawn from Pergolesi's *Mass in F Major*, Cary 438 at The Morgan Library and Museum[61] because this is the only manuscript authenticated by Brook and Paymer that is readily accessible. For further handwriting examples of Pergolesi from other sources, please see Brook and Paymer's "The Pergolesi Hand: A Calligraphic Study."

Clefs

All clefs (C, bass, and treble) are consistently drawn distinctively in Pergolesi's writing. His treble clefs are drawn with a single stroke and look much like a cursive

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[59] For example: Frank Walker, "Two Centuries of Pergolesi Forgeries and Misattributions," *Music & Letters* (Oct. 1949): 299–320; Francesco Degrada, "Alcuni falsi autografi pergolesani," *Rivista italiana di Musicologia* 1 (1966): 32–48 (translated and summarized for me by Dr. Richard King); Marvin E. Paymer, *The Instrumental Music Attributed to Giovanni Battista Pergolesi: A Study in Authenticity* (PhD diss., CUNY, 1977).

[60] Brook and Paymer, "The Pergolesi Hand," 550–578.

[61] Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, *Mass in F Major, version 2*, [1734?], autograph, The Morgan Library & Museum, Cary 438, http://www.themorgan.org/music/manuscript/115475.

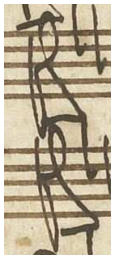
capital J with the E4 line between the upper and lower loops. The bottom loop usually ends very close to the vertical stroke, while the upper loop circles around to the right and usually ends on the G4 line, sometimes in the middle of the upper loop.


Cary 438, p.1,
top 2 staves, m. 1


Cary 438, p.5,
top 2 staves, m. 1

Pergolesi's C clefs, described as highly individual by Brook and Paymer,[62] begin with a downstroke that curves ever so slightly to the right. At the bottom of this stroke, the line quickly changes direction, making an upstroke slightly to the right of that first stroke about two-thirds of the way up the initial stroke. The line sharply changes direction, extending up and to the right, making a counterclockwise loop that extends above the place the figure began. The loop closes to the right of where it began, and from there line goes down and to the right at about a 45-degree angle from horizontal. When the line is almost at the level of the bottom of the figure, it sharply changes direction again. The final line segment is a stroke to the left that ends near the initial vertical strokes.

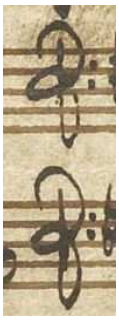

Cary 438, p.1,
staves 19-20, m. 1


Cary 438, p. 5,
staves 6-7, m. 1

[62] Brook and Paymer, "The Pergolesi Hand," 571.

Pergolesi's bass clef is likewise highly distinctive.[63] It begins with a downstroke. The line then changes direction, arcing up and to the left on the right side of the downstroke, crossing the initial vertical line about halfway up. There it forms a small counterclockwise loop, vertically bisected by the initial downstroke. After closing the loop to the right of that initial downstroke, the line loops up and to the left again, circling around the top of the initial stroke, ending pointed down on the left side of the clef. Here Pergolesi lifted the pen and drew two dots to the right of the clef, one on either side of the F3 line. The resulting shape is almost symmetrical along a horizontal axis.


Cary 438, p.1,
staves 21-22, m. 1


Cary 438, p.21,
staves 21-22, m. 1

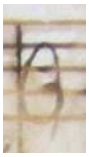
There are two kinds of treble clefs in "Non mi negar signora," both of which Brook and Paymer overlooked. One type slightly resembles Pergolesi's version and the other does not at all. These treble clefs are all in the vocal part of the song, and both are a single stroke that loops around the G4 line. The type that more closely resembles Pergolesi's version occurs only once in the manuscript, on the verso in the third measure of the fifth system. It clef looks like our modern treble clef with the top loop chopped off. The main difference between this clef and those of Pergolesi is that here, there is a tail with a hook to the left at the bottom rather than a full loop.

[63] Brook and Paymer, "The Pergolesi Hand," 571.

“Non mi negar signora,”
verso, system 5, voice, m. 3

Cary 438, p.1,
top 2 staves, m. 1

The other kind of treble clef occurs twice in “Non mi negar signora” and does not look like Pergolesi’s at all. Both times it appears on the verso of the manuscript, in the vocal part. The first is in the sixth measure of the second system and the other is in the seventh measure of the third system. This kind of treble clef is also one stroke. It begins on the G4 line and then loops around clockwise, forming an egg shape between the E4 and D5 lines, with the narrow part of the egg at the top. The line closes the egg shape when it returns to the G4 line and from there continues down and slightly to the left, past the bottom of the staff.



“Non mi negar signora,”
verso, system 2, m. 6

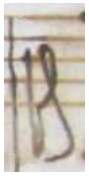
“Non mi negar signora,”
verso, system 3, m. 7

Cary 438, p.1,
top 2 staves, m. 1

The C clefs and bass clef in the manuscript here much more closely resemble Pergolesi’s own. There are four C clefs in the manuscript, one at the beginning, and one each between one and three measures after each treble clef. All of them are soprano clefs and they all closely resemble Pergolesi’s distinct form; however, there are two clear and consistent differences suggesting that these clefs might not be the work of Pergolesi.

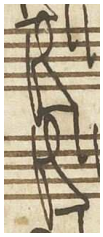
First, whereas Pergolesi's initial downstroke typically curves to the right, these downstrokes are all more or less straight. Second, Pergolesi's C clefs usually end with a stroke that is usually straight to the left that ends very close to the initial downstroke. The C clefs in "Non mi negar signora," on the other hand, have a final stroke usually angled about 30 degrees below horizontal that end further away from the initial downstroke than is typical for Pergolesi.


"Non mi negar signora," recto, system 1, m.1, voice


"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 2, m. 7, voice

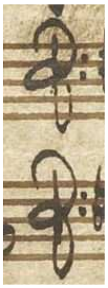

"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 3, m. 9, voice


"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 5, m. 6, voice


Cary 438, p. 5, staves 6-7, m. 1

The bass clef in "Non mi negar signora" looks very close to Pergolesi's own. It is obscured by water damage, but its form is still fairly legible. Like Pergolesi's, it has a vertical line extending a little beyond the staff lines with two arcs and a loop up the right side. The loop is bisected by the vertical line and the top arc ends on the left side of the clef. There are two differences between this clef and Pergolesi's usual form. First, the line at the bottom of the clef changes direction more sharply than in Pergolesi's bass clefs, and second, the top arc of the line turns back toward the clef rather than ending pointed down. The dots are unfortunately illegible, if they exist at all. This shape is so close to Pergolesi's own that it could be taken for authentic, though the couple oddities in its shape make that authenticity less certain.


"Non mi negar signora," recto, system 1, m. 1, voice


Cary 438, p.21, staves 21-22, m. 1

Accidentals

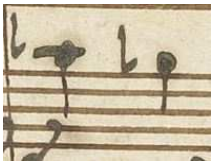
Brook and Paymer show pictorial comparisons of all three types of accidental—natural, flat, and sharp—but only discuss the natural and do not discuss the arrangement of accidentals in the key signature. Pergolesi's natural is a single stroke and can vary in size. The stroke extends down, then sharply bends up and to the right at about a 45 degree angle from horizontal for a short distance before sharply turning down again.


Cary 438, p.4, staff 8, m. 1


Cary 438, p. 7, staff 6, m. 6


Cary 438, p. 16, staff 13, m. 3

Pergolesi's flats are also a single stroke, often resembling a backwards checkmark. One part of the stroke is a very short line angled about 45 degrees from horizontal, lower on the left and higher on the right. At the bottom, the line sharply turns and extends up. This vertical segment is usually very long, about three or four times the length of the shorter line, and is usually very straight. Flats in the key signature are arranged typically for the time period, with the highest pitch to the left and the lowest pitch on the right.


Cary 438, p. 3,
staff 10, m. 5


Cary 438, p. 35,
staff 18, m. 7


Cary 438, p. 5,
staff 3, m. 1

There is really nothing very distinctive about Pergolesi's sharps. They are usually formed with three separate strokes. The vertical lines are a "v" shape, formed from one stroke, while the horizontal lines are two parallel strokes. The whole sharp is often rotated slightly to the right.


Cary 438, p.21,
staff 5, m. 1


Cary 438, p.23,
staff 1, m. 3


Cary 438, p. 26,
staff 14, m. 1

In "Non mi negar signora" there are many naturals, and none of them look authentic. These naturals are constructed from a single stroke like Pergolesi's, but there the similarity ends. Whereas Pergolesi's naturals are very angular, these are gentle squiggles. They are a vertical line drawn top to bottom with a very soft turn to the right and then back down.

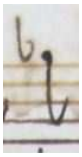

"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 1, m. 8, voice


"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 2, m. 1, voice

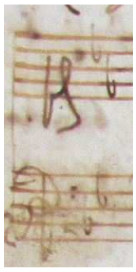

"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 2, m. 4, voice


Cary 438, p.4, staff 8, m. 1

There are only five flats in “Non mi negar signora,” four of which are in the key signatures, and none of them looks Pergolesian. Each is a single stroke, but is curved on the bottom. In addition, whereas in Pergolesi’s flats the short line segment to the right extends away from the vertical line, the short lines here curve back around toward it. Furthermore, the flats in the key signatures here are always written in today’s standard order, B-flat first and then E-flat, no matter which is higher. Pergolesi, on the other hand, wrote his flats from highest to lowest.



“Non mi negar signora,” verso, system 2, m. 5, voice

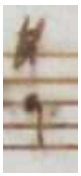


“Non mi negar signora,” recto, system 1, m. 1

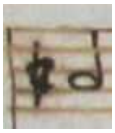
Cary 438, p. 35, staff 18, m. 7

Cary 438, p. 5, staff 3, m. 1

The sharps in “Non mi negar signora” are not convincingly like Pergolesi’s. Here the sharps are often very messy, so much so that it is impossible to say with certainty how many times the pen was typically lifted in their construction, yet most of Pergolesi’s sharps are neat enough that it is clear they were formed with three separate strokes. Of the sharps that are more legible, many have vertical lines that come closer together at the bottom. The horizontal lines, however, do not seem to have been made with separate strokes very often, and the majority of the sharps are straight up and down rather than angled to the right.

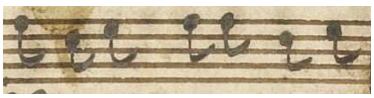

"Non mi negar signora," recto, system 2, m. 2, spinetta


"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 1, m. 2, voice


"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 3, m. 1, voice

Flags and Beams

Brook and Paymer illustrate and discuss Pergolesi's beams and flags on sixteenth notes and illustrate his eighth notes, but by considering all these beams and flags together, we can make a more in-depth comparison of beaming and flagging techniques in a genuine Pergolesi autograph and "Non mi negar signora." In general, Pergolesi tends to flag down-stem eighth notes by drawing the stem and the flag as a single stroke, curving the line to change from stem to flag. These flags often extend slightly up and to the right about two-thirds to three-quarters the length of the stem. Up-stem eighth notes are also stemmed and flagged in a single stroke, but where the line turns for the flag is often a sharper angle. The flag then extends down and to the right at about a 45 degree angle. Sixteenth notes are flagged in the same manner, but also have a slash through the stem, headed in the same direction as the flag.


Cary 438, p. 21, staff 9, m. 5

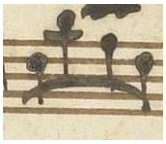

Cary 438, p. 22, staff 21, m. 1


Cary 438, p. 23, staff 9, m. 3


Cary 438, p. 23, staff 21, m. 1

In beamed groups of eighth and sixteenth notes, the ends of the beams most often do not line up with the first and last stems. The stems of the notes sometimes end at the beam, sometimes do not make it to the beams or to the end of the beams, and sometimes

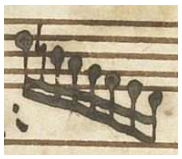
extend past the beams. The beams can be straight, curve in one direction, or curve in one direction and then back the other way. Multiple-beam sets (sixteenth, thirty-second, etc.) can be parallel or not. In other words, Pergolesi's beams show a lot of variety.


Cary 438, p. 2, staff 16, m. 4

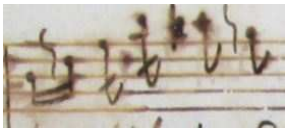

Cary 438, p. 23, staff 13, m. 2

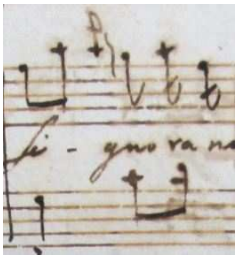

Cary 438, p. 25, staff 14, m. 3

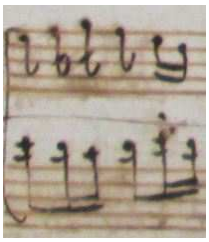

Cary 438, p. 25, staff 5, m. 2


Cary 438, p. 2, staff 14, m. 2

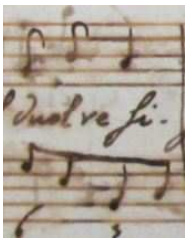
The beams and flags in "Non mi negar signora" are different from those of Pergolesi's true writing. All flags here attach to their stems with a curve, though Pergolesi's up-stem flags attach at an angle. Furthermore, while Pergolesi's flags often extend away from the stems at a 45-degree angle, these flags often curve back towards their stems or extend closer than 45 degrees from their stems. As a result, the lines through the stems on sixteenth notes are not roughly parallel to the top flag, though Pergolesi's are. The beams are much more likely to begin and end with the outer stems of the group. Occasionally the stems do not reach the beam, but most of the time they end right at the outermost beam and rarely extend past it. Most of the beams here are straight and the beams on multi-beam notes are always parallel. A general overall observation is that the beaming and flagging of notes in "Non mi negar signora" is more consistently, precisely, and neatly executed than we would expect of Pergolesi's true writing.


"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 2, m. 2, voice


"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 2, m. 4



"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 5, m. 1



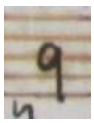
"Non mi negar signora," recto, system 3, m. 2

Open Note Heads

Pergolesi's open notes are all a single stroke, but he used different constructions for ones with stems up and ones with stems down. His up-stem open notes are formed with a counterclockwise motion around the note head and then a line up for the stem, sometimes curved very slightly to the left. Notes with downward stems are formed like the numeral nine. They also begin with a counterclockwise loop, but the line changes direction to draw a stem down. All stems are on the right of open notes.

The open notes in "Non mi negar signora" look much like those in Pergolesi's real writing. Both types of open notes here are constructed in the same way as those above, and the upward-facing stems sometimes curve slightly to the left. All the stems here are attached to the right side of the open notes as well. The noteheads in this manuscript appear smaller than the ones Pergolesi wrote, but are otherwise similar enough to pass as Pergolesi's.

"Non mi negar signora," recto, system 4, m. 6, voice



"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 4, m. 3, spinetta

Cary 438, p. 7, staff 18, m. 4

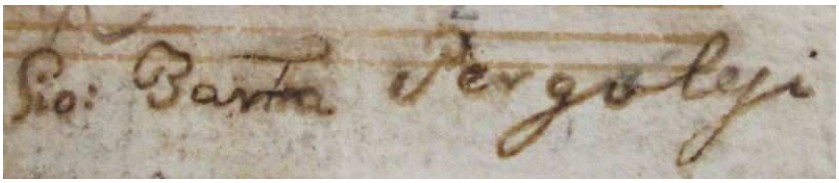
Cary 438, p. 7 staff 15, m. 2

Signature

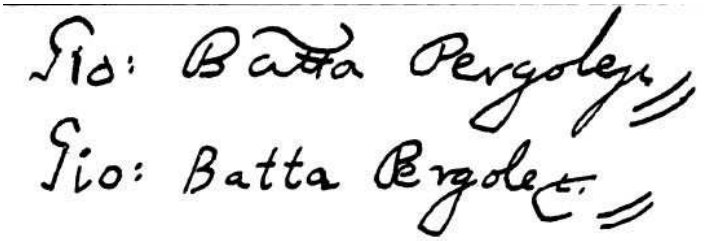
Some of the manuscripts Brook and Paymer studied have Pergolesi's signature on them, including three of the manuscripts they concluded are authentic. Each of these three signatures is placed on the upper right hand corner of the manuscript's first page. There are not enough of them to draw definitive conclusions and there is no known genuine signature of Pergolesi to compare them with. While acknowledging the limits of using these signatures for authentication, Brook and Paymer note that the connections between letters, the capital G, the colon after "Gio," the capital P, the lowercase R, and the lowercase G have distinct shapes.[64]

The signature on "Non mi negar signora" is different from the signatures on Pergolesi's autographs. First, it is placed at the end of the manuscript, rather than the top right of the first page. Second, this signature does not match with regard to three of the distinctive points Brook and Paymer noted. The capital G is so smooth, it looks much like a capital S, whereas the version in the authentic manuscripts is much more angular. The capital P is formed from two strokes, rather than one, and features a hook at the bottom of the stem rather than a looped stem. Additionally, the loop on the lowercase G is too small and too smooth. Finally, the "Batta" is spelled "Barta" in this manuscript. Due to the unverified nature of the Pergolesi signatures on the authentic manuscripts, this very different signature cannot be considered a primary piece of evidence in identifying "Non mi negar signora" as a forgery, but strengthens the other evidence that this manuscript is a forgery.

[64] Brook and Paymer, "The Pergolesi Hand," 573–577.



"Non mi negar signora," verso, bottom right corner

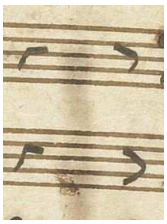


Brook and Paymer, "The Pergolesi Hand: A Calligraphic Study," 574.

Rests

Brook and Paymer choose not to examine rests as part of their calligraphic study, but I think they are worth examining. Since quarter and eighth rests are the only rests used in "Non mi negar signora," these are the only types of rests I will address here.

Pergolesi's eighth and quarter rests are very consistent. His quarter rests are a single stroke with two equal-length segments. The line typically begins near the second staff line from the bottom and goes up and to the right at an angle of about 30 to 45 degrees from vertical. Somewhere between the middle staff line and the second staff line from the top, the line sharply switches direction. It then usually extends to the right and slightly down, sometimes just to the right. His eighth rests look very similar to his quarter rests, but are facing the other way and are less angular. These rests are drawn from top to bottom, and each line segment is often about 45 degrees from vertical.

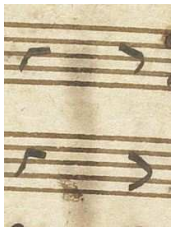


Quarter rest-eighth rest
Cary 438, p. 2,
staves 3-4, m. 5

The rests are similar in “Non mi negar signora” but they are angled slightly differently. Quarter rests are formed with the same stroke up and sharp turn to the right, but here this upstroke is typically vertical and the stroke to the right usually extends up and to the right, rather than directly right or slightly down and right. Though the eighth rests have the right shape, they are likewise more vertically oriented than their authentic counterparts.

Quarter rests
“Non mi negar
signora,” verso
system 1, m. 1

Eighth rests
“Non mi negar
signora,” recto,
system 3, m. 3, voice



Quarter rest-eighth rest
Cary 438, p. 2,
staves 3-4, m. 5

Conclusions

Overall, though the handwriting in “Non mi negar signora” resembles Pergolesi’s in a few respects, there are enough significant differences to say that it is not his writing. The construction and appearance of the half notes here are indistinguishable from Pergolesi’s, and the rests, though they are oriented slightly differently, strongly resemble Pergolesi’s own. While the C clefs, bass clef, beams, flags, and sharps in “Non mi negar

signora" look similar to Pergolesi's versions at first, a closer examination shows they are not quite right. What really shows that this manuscript is not an autograph are the wide discrepancies between the treble clefs, flats (shape and placement in the key signature), naturals, and signature in this manuscript and authenticated Pergolesi manuscripts.

Paper

The paper used for this manuscript is at first what we would expect from Pergolesi. Held up to the light or placed on a light box, one can see the laid and chain lines characteristic of laid paper. The paper also features a watermark, as is common in laid paper. The watermark is in the middle of the bottom of the page, where it should be in oblong quarto paper. Its shape is that of a flower or starfish and it fits between the middle two laid lines. Unfortunately, to the knowledge of this researcher, a record of watermarks used by Pergolesi does not exist at this time. Such a document would likely be very helpful in the authentication of Pergolesi's autographs, but without it, one can only say that this paper was formed in the same manner as typical paper of the early eighteenth century.

Though the paper used in this manuscript at first seems to be authentic, it shows evidence of a more modern chemical treatment. When examined with an ultraviolet light, the whole manuscript glows blue. This glow is not a feature of normal eighteenth-century paper, but it is characteristic of paper treated with hydrogen peroxide to keep the ink from bleeding.[65] Areas of the paper around significant water damage glow a more greenish color and a little more brightly, perhaps indicating that the hydrogen peroxide pooled or mixed with the dissolved ink, or both. In some of the less water-damaged places on the

[65] Rendell, *Forging History*, 28–31.

manuscript, it is possible to see some cracking of the ink under magnification. This cracking is another effect of a hydrogen peroxide treatment. Because of this chemical treatment, we can say “Non mi negar signora” is most likely a modern forgery.

Conclusion

“Non mi negar signora” at the Library of Congress is not an autograph of Pergolesi, but rather a more modern forgery. The manuscript is on laid paper and was most likely penned with a quill and iron-gall ink, which all point to the document’s authenticity, but other aspects of the manuscript show that it is a forgery. Though the staves are parallel and aligned enough to have been drawn with a rastrum, their blunt beginnings and endings combined with the alignment of the staves on both sides suggests they might have been carefully ruled line-by-line instead. The handwriting in the manuscript, though resembling Pergolesi’s in some respects, is different enough to cast great doubt on the manuscript’s authenticity. Finally, the chemical treatment evident in the manuscript indicates that it is a modern forgery.

Chapter 5: "Rejoice greatly"

There is a manuscript of George Frideric Handel's "Rejoice greatly" from his oratorio *Messiah* in the Jacob M. Coopersmith Collection at the University of Maryland's Special Collections in the Performing Arts (SCPA).[66] The score consists of four oblong quarto folios, and each page features ten staves. The music is in 4/4 and B-flat major and features a soprano voice and continuo line. Most of the manuscript also features a melodic instrumental line, written above the voice. The manuscript, which bears a signature of the composer and the name "Signora Avolio" at the top of the first folio, shows a striking resemblance to the autograph version of this piece in the conducting score of the *Messiah* at St. Michael's College in Tenbury.[67] At first glance, this manuscript appears to be an autograph of the composer, but it is not. Though the forms of the writing are quite convincing, the anachronisms in the manuscript's construction show that it is a later forgery of Handel's work rather than an autograph.

Stave Ruling

The staff lines in this manuscript show evidence of having been ruled line-by-line, rather than with a rastrum. The beginnings and endings of each line in a staff do not always align vertically, as they typically would with a rastrum. Additionally, the stave lines show blunt beginnings and endings, signs that the lines were drawn more carefully

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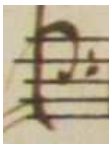
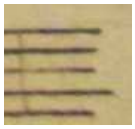
[66] George Frideric Handel, "Rejoice greatly," from *Messiah*, [ca.1890–1930,] forged manuscript, University of Maryland, Special Collections in the Performing Arts, Jacob M. Coopersmith Collection, series 2.4, box 8, folder 51.

[67] George Frideric Handel, "Rejoice greatly," in *Handel's Conducting Score of* Messiah*: Reproduced in Facsimile from the Manuscript in the Library of St Michael's College Tenbury Wells*, introduction by Watkins Shaw (London: Scholar Press, 1974), ff.66r–70v.

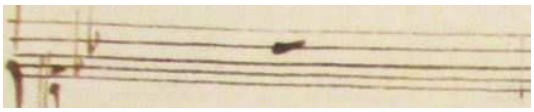
than they usually are with a rastrum. Furthermore, the staff lines here are not parallel, as rastrum-ruled staff lines are. This property is easily seen with the naked eye in some places, and measurements show that non-parallel lines are ubiquitous throughout the document; many of the staves span half a millimeter more on one end than the other.



Blunt beginnings, "Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.1v, system 2, continuo



Blunt endings, "Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.1r, system 3, voice



Non-parallel staff lines, "Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.1v, system 1, m. 1, voice

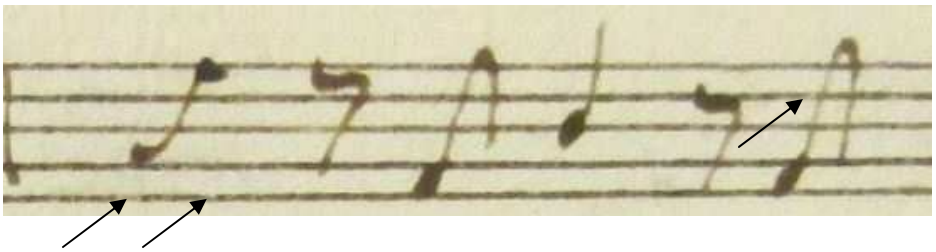
Writing Tool and Ink

This manuscript is peculiar in the difference in appearance between the staff lines and the rest of the writing. In authentic Handelian writing, both should have been created with quill pens and iron-gall ink. Here, however, it seems the staff lines were written with one kind of tool and ink and the rest of the writing with a different tool and ink. A further examination shows that both writing tools used were written with instruments developed after Handel's time and that the staff lines were written with an anachronistic ink as well.

Staff Lines

The staff lines in this version of "Rejoice greatly" seem to have been created with ballpoint pen and ink. Writing done with a quill or steel-nib pen and iron-gall ink should, in most cases, result in a smooth and even flow of the ink over the paper, with the flexible nature of the pen and the fluid nature of iron-gall ink easily filling the slightly lower areas of the uneven surface of the paper. The staff lines in this manuscript, in contrast to the writing of the music and text, have a lot of tiny gaps in the ink's application to the paper.

This pattern, best seen on f. 3r, is much more characteristic of the inflexible tip of the ballpoint pen and the less-fluid nature of its ink.



"Rejoyce Greatly," SCPA, f.3r, system 2, m. 3, top staff

That the staff lines in this manuscript were most likely written with a ballpoint pen immediately removes the possibility that this manuscript is Handel's autograph and can also help us approximate its date of creation. Ballpoint pens were first patented in 1888 by John J. Loud.[68] The earliest record of this version of "Rejoice greatly" is currently its sale in 1930 at an American Art Association, Anderson Galleries auction, to a Mrs. George F. Handel.[69] We can thus safely say then that this manuscript was probably created between about 1890 and 1930, and certainly not as far back as the 1700s.

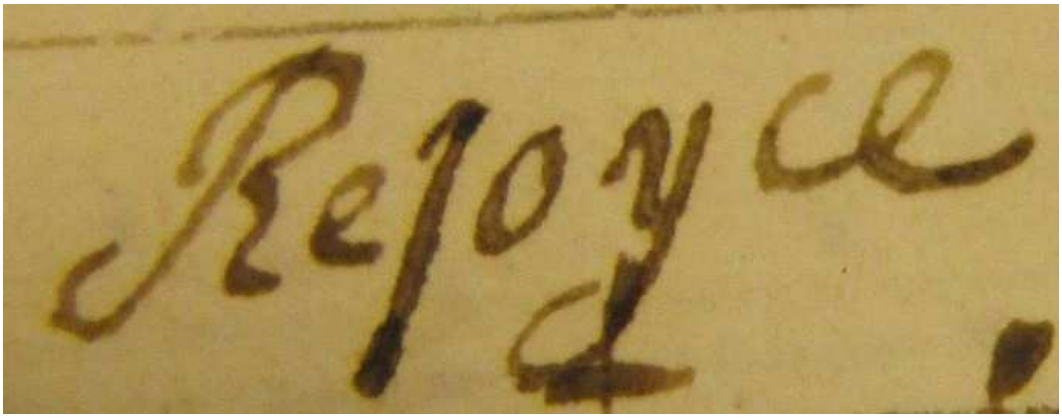
Other Writing

The flow of the ink and the shape of the writing for everything but the staff lines looks much more authentic, but even this writing betrays signs of forgery. Here the non-stave writing shows exactly the smooth line of flexible width one expects from a quill

[68] Nickell, *Pen, Ink, and Evidence*, 197.

[69] Receipt, American Art Association Anderson Galleries, sale 3850, 12–13 May 1930, University of Maryland, Special Collections in the Performing Arts, Jacob M. Coopersmith Collection, series 2.4, box 8, folder 51. I suspected that the forger of this manuscript was laundering the manuscript and had a sense of humor, using a pseudonym that matched the name of the composer. However, Mr. and Mrs. George F. Handel were real people. "Washington Fete is Holiday event at Castle Harbour," *The New York Sun*, 23 February 1935, http://fultonhistory.com/Newspaper%2018/New%20York%20NY%20Sun/New%20York%20NY%20Sun%201935/New%20York%20NY%20Sun%201935%20-%200835.pdf (accessed 30 March 2014).

and the acidic nature expected from the ink. With a magnifying glass, however, one can easily see that the writing here was formed with a steel-nib pen, a tool that was invented after Handel's time. A steel-nib pen will leave two shallow ruts in the paper as it writes, one on either side of the ink's intended path, because steel is a harder substance than quill and will not give when it comes into contact with the paper, but rather gouge into the paper a little bit. These ruts will sometimes fill with a little extra ink, making them particularly visible.



"Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.1r, system 2, m. 3, voice; unfortunately this effect is very difficult to see in reproductions, but near the edges of the letters, particularly the "j," "y," and "e," the ink is darker where it has filled in the ruts made by the steel-nib pen.

Handwriting

This manuscript of "Rejoice greatly" looks very similar to the corresponding aria in the conducting score of *Messiah.*[70] The main difference between the two is that in the Tenbury version there are sometimes two lines for the orchestral parts and sometimes one, while in the SCPA version there is sometimes one line for the orchestral parts and sometimes none at all. Though most of the Tenbury manuscript was copied by J. C.

[70] The manuscript, now MS. Tenbury 346 at Oxford's Bodleian Library, is reproduced here: George Frideric Handel, "Rejoice greatly," in *Handel's Conducting Score of* Messiah*: Reproduced in Facsimile from the Manuscript in the Library of St Michael's College Tenbury Wells*, introduction by Watkins Shaw (London: Scholar Press, 1974), ff.66r–70v.

Smith, senior, the upper two staves of this aria are in Handel's hand.[71] In both manuscripts the time and key signatures, clefs, and continuo part are not in Handel's hand (see "stems" and "clefs" below). Despite a few small differences in the handwriting, an analysis of it in these two manuscripts would seem to show that the SCPA version was plausibly penned by Handel.

Accidentals

While we have already established that the time and key signatures, clefs, and continuo are not in Handel's hand in either manuscript, there are many accidentals in the parts of the music that, in the Tenbury at least, are in Handel's hand. While there are not enough flats in the piece for a comparison of them to be reliable, there are enough sharps and naturals to merit a comparison. In the end, it would seem that these accidentals in the SCPA manuscript are plausibly Handel's.

The naturals in the two manuscripts are indistinguishable from one another, which would indicate that the SCPA manuscript is authentic. They look much like our naturals do today. Most often, they are slanted to the right a little bit, but the right side of the parallelogram in the middle is higher than the left. They are furthermore consistently sized, with the middle parallelogram typically spanning about a third.


"Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.2v, system 1, m. 1, top staff


"Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.3r, system 1, m. 1, voice


"Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.3r, system 3, m. 2, voice


"Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.67v, system 1, m. 3, top staff

[71] Ibid., introduction.

The sharps are not quite as consistent between the two manuscripts, but are also fewer in number and therefore less reliable. In the Tenbury version the sharps are messier, typically either with a central box but very short or no lines extending past this box or with no space in the middle but lines extending outward. They are also often oriented so that the top is a little more to the right than the bottom. In contrast, the sharps in the SCPA version are neat. They often have both a small box in the middle and lines extending past the box and are furthermore oriented vertically.


"Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.2v, system 2, m. 2, top staff


"Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.2v, system 2, m. 3, top staff


"Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.67v, system 3, m. 3, top staff

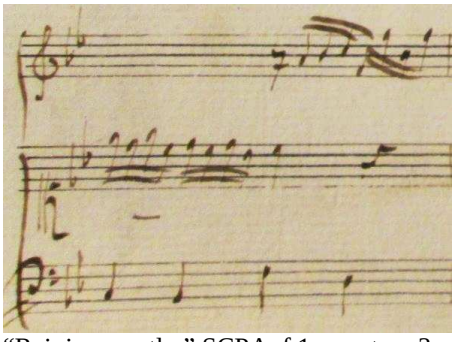

"Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.67v, system 3, m.3, top staff

Though one could argue that the differing shape of the sharps contradicts the idea that both manuscripts were penned by the same person, since there are only seven of them in the SCPA manuscript, this conclusion is tenuous. It is particularly so because the sharps in the two manuscripts take generally the same form; it is just their appearance that differs, not their construction. Handel could easily have penned the manuscripts under slightly different circumstances, perhaps in more of a rush for one, which caused the difference in appearance.[72]

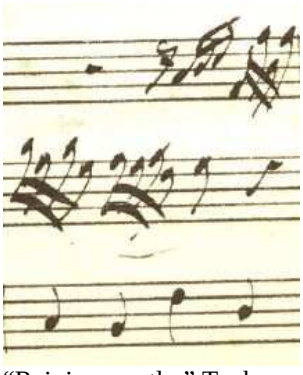
[72] Koppenhaver, *Forensic Document Examination*, 27–29.

Stems

The stems in the SCPA version of "Rejoice greatly" cast suspicion on the authenticity of the manuscript. First, the stem placement shows that someone else wrote the continuo part of both manuscripts. In the orchestral reduction part(s) and voice part in both manuscripts, stems always adjoin to note heads on the right. Yet, in the continuo part, upward stems are on the right of the notes while downward stems are on the left of the notes. In the *Messiah* manuscript that is a complete autograph,[73] Handel's continuo stems (and other stems) are always on the right of the notes, like the top parts in the Tenbury and SCPA manuscripts. It seems a bit peculiar that Handel would write only the top parts in both the Tenbury and SCPA manuscripts, but if he had someone else write his continuo part once, he could just as easily have someone write it a second time.



"Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.1v, system 3, m. 1

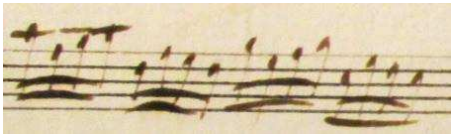


"Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.66v, system 3, m. 2

The shape of the stems is very different between the two manuscripts, suggesting that the manuscripts might have been written by different people. In the Tenbury version, all the stems are arcs, with their bend to the right in the orchestral and vocal parts (Handel's stems). Yet in the SCPA version, the stems are consistently straight. This variation is particularly suspicious because stems are one of the most frequently-drawn

[73] George Frideric Handel, *Messiah,* HWV 56, 1741, autograph, British Library, R.M.20.f.2, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=R.M.20.f.2. "Rejoice greatly" is ff.43r–45v.

parts of music, and their formation is thus likely to be very habitually ingrained in the writer. That Handel would draw all his stems curved in one manuscript and straight in another manuscript of the same piece seems unlikely. Since this difference is one of appearance and not construction, however, it is still possible that this discrepancy could simply indicate that Handel wrote the two manuscripts under slightly different circumstances.[74]



"Rejoice greatly," SCPA,
f.1v, system 2, m. 1, voice

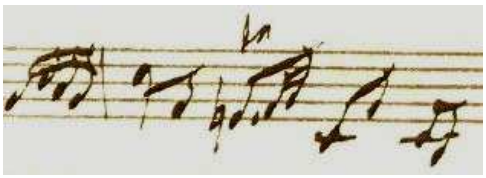
"Rejoice greatly," Tenbury,
f.66v, system 2, m. 3, voice

Beams and Flags

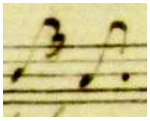
The beams and flags in both manuscripts look alike. In both versions the beams most often line up with the left-most stem and sometimes extend past the right-most stem. The stems of the notes sometimes extend past the beam, and typically there is at least one such stem in each beam group, though this effect seems a little more prominent in the Tenbury version. The beams also typically show a wider middle with gradually tapered endings. They can be constructed with straight lines or lines bowed one way in the middle, and when the notes have multiple beams, the beams are usually more or less parallel. The flags in the manuscripts are always drawn to the right, and usually attach to the stem with a curve, though this curve tends to be tighter on down-stem notes. This curve tends to be more angular in the SCPA version. Sixteenth-note flags are crafted with a single stroke for the stem and both flags. They are a series of two humps, kind of like how one might draw part of a cloud, the outer one smaller.

[74] Koppenhaver, *Forensic Document Examination*, 27–29.

"Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.2v, system 1, end of mm.1-2, top staff

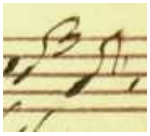


"Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.67v, system 1, end of mm. 3-4, top staff

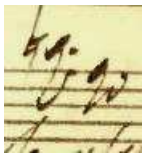


"Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.4r, system 2, m. 5, voice

"Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.2r, system 1, m. 3, voice



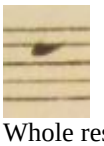
"Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.70r, system 2, m. 4, voice



"Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.67r, system 1, m. 4, voice

Rests

The rests in the two manuscripts are also quite similar. Half and whole rests are small horizontal lines drawn from left to right and are often wider on the left, tapering to the right. Quarter rests look like tall "s" shapes tilted to the right and were formed with a single stroke. Though their placement can vary, they usually span about a fifth. Eighth rests are also a single stroke and look a lot like the number seven. They usually span a fifth to a sixth. Occasionally there is a little hook curling away from the figure at its top end. A small, horizontal stroke is added across the more vertical part of the eighth-note figure to make a sixteenth note.

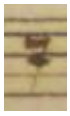


Whole rest, "Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.1r, system 1, m.2, voice

Half rest, "Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.1r, system 3, m. 1, voice

Quarter rest, "Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.1r, system 1, m.1, top staff

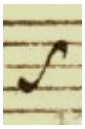
Eighth rest, "Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.1r system 1, m. 1, top staff

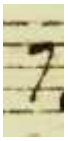


Sixteenth rest, "Rejoice greatly," SCPA, f.1r, system 3, m. 4, top staff


Whole rest, "Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.66r, system 1, m. 1, voice


Half rest, "Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.66r, system 3, m. 3, voice


Quarter rest, "Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.66r, system 1, m. 1, top staff


Eighth rest, "Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.66r, system, 1 m. 1, top staff

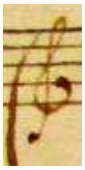

Sixteenth rest, "Rejoice greatly," Tenbury, f.66v, system 1, m. 2, top staff

Clefs

The forms of the clefs are quite similar in the two manuscripts, but cannot lend much credence to the authenticity of the SCPA manuscript. Clefs can, in many cases, be very helpful in determining the writer of a manuscript, which is why they were analyzed in the two preceding chapters. They are reliable in this task because they are common figures, which results in a habitual construction on the part of the writer, and intricate, allowing plenty of room for individual characteristics in their construction. Unfortunately they can not tell us much here because they were not written by Handel himself.[75] Though the clefs in both of these manuscripts look similar, neither resembles the versions in Handel's complete autograph of the *Messiah*;[76] for example, the treble clefs here look much like our modern printed version, but in the complete autograph, the treble clefs are merely a line down through the staff that then circles around to the G4 line. Because of this difference, the clefs here are not a good indicator of the handwriting's authenticity. It might seem a bit peculiar that Handel did not write the key and time signatures and clefs but wrote the music in both manuscripts, but if this manner of creation was executed once, who is to say it did not happen a second time?

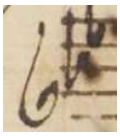
[75] Handel, *Handel's Conducting Score of* Messiah, introduction.

[76] Handel, *Messiah*, R.M.20.f.2.



"Rejoice greatly,"
SCPA, f.1r,
system 1, m. 1,
top staff

"Rejoice greatly,"
Tenbury, f. 66r,
system 1, m. 1,
top staff



"Rejoice greatly,"
R.M.20.f.2, f.43r,
system 2, m. 1,
top staff

Conclusions

A comparison of the handwriting in the two manuscripts shows that there are a few variances between the two, but that they are similar enough that one cannot say with much certainty whether the handwriting of the SCPA "Rejoice greatly" is an autograph or not. Unfortunately, since the time and key signatures, clefs, and continuo part were not penned by Handel in either manuscript, we are not able to use these elements to verify the handwriting. It would be odd if the same parts of both manuscripts were not written by Handel, but certainly not out of the realm of possibility. The shape of the stems and sharps in the orchestral and vocal parts of the SCPA version do not match those in the corresponding parts of the Tenbury version, suggesting that the SCPA version might not be an autograph. The differences are not quite enough to definitively discount Handel, however, because they are differences in appearance only and not in manner of construction; different factors can affect the appearance of one's writing, such as the speed of the writing, the writing surface, or even mood.[77] On the other hand, the naturals, placement of stems on note heads, beams, flags, and rests are all very similar between the two manuscripts. A handwriting comparison, in this case, is not enough to authenticate the SCPA manuscript.

[77] Koppenhaver, *Forensic Document Examination*, 27–29.

Paper

At first the paper used in the SCPA version of "Rejoice greatly" seems authentic. It is laid paper, as Handel would have used, and features a couple of watermarks. When one shines an ultraviolet light on the manuscript, there is no sign of chemical treatment. Yet the collation of the document and the type of paper used in the manuscript do not align with Handel's patterns and instead indicate that this manuscript is a forgery.

Handel was most likely to use paper from the same stock in his manuscripts and only switch to new paper when he had used up his previous supply. Sometimes he did change paper supply in a document and sometimes he did add extra sheets or gatherings on different paper later, but in this single, four-folio gathering, we expect that Handel did not change his paper supply. Typically, his gatherings were made by setting two bifolia on top of one another and folding them in half.[78]

If this manuscript were constructed in the manner we expect from Handel, f.1 and f.4 should be one bifolio and f.2 and f.3 should be another, and both bifolia should be from the same type of paper. A close inspection of the binding shows that the gathering of the SCPA "Rejoice greatly" is constructed from two bifolia, one inside the other. The watermarks in this manuscript, however, show that each bifolio is a different type of paper.

Two different watermarks can be seen in the document; the first, in the top right corner of f.1, is the letters "PA" and the second, along the middle of the bottom of f.3, is a little more than half of a horizontally bisected set of three crescent moons. Folios 2 and 4 do not show watermarks. The bifolia here are clearly not the same half of the larger

[78] Donald Burrows and Martha J. Ronish, *Catalogue of Handel's Musical Autographs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), xxvii–xxix.

sheet. Neither are they from opposite sides of the same larger sheet; if they were, the other half of the set of crescent moons would have to be somewhere on f. 1 or f. 4, but it is not. Since these bifolia cannot be from the same sheet watermark, we know they came from different sources.

In addition, the source of the paper in this manuscript is unexpected. Burrows and Ronish have constructed an extensive catalog of watermarks found in Handel's autographs. Though the crescent moon watermark is common in multiple papers Handel did use,[79] none of the paper he used has a PA watermark. Though possible, it seems unlikely that Handel would have used multiple sources of paper for such a small gathering and that he would have used paper he never used in any other manuscript. The paper used here seems to me more characteristic of a forger amassing whatever old and unused paper he or she can find.

Conclusion

The SCPA manuscript of "Rejoice greatly" is a well-executed modern forgery of the same piece in the Tenbury conducting score of Handel's *Messiah*. In general appearance, the SCPA manuscript seems to be an autograph of the composer. Its writing looks much like the authentic handwriting of Handel and most of it is written with what mostly appears to be iron-gall ink on laid paper. However, a few elements strongly point to the document's inauthenticity. The paper source and collation of the manuscript are uncharacteristic of Handel, and the ruling of the staves is very obviously anachronistic, appearing to have been done line-by-line with a ballpoint pen. The other writing, too,

[79] Burrows and Ronish, *Catalogue of Handel's Musical Autographs*, Moons AZ20; Moons SS10, 20, and 30; Moons G; Moons FS; Moons Az10; Moons 10, 20, and 30.

upon close examination, is anachronistic, showing evidence of a steel-nib pen. That ballpoint and steel-nib pens were used in the creation of this manuscript immediately discounts any possibility of the manuscript's authenticity because those tools were not used in Handel's time.

Chapter 6: Synthesis

Mozart's "Baci amorosi e cari" and Pergolesi's "Non mi negar signora" at the Library of Congress and Handel's "Rejoyce Greatly" in SCPA are all clearly inauthentic. At this point, the question becomes: if Mozart, Pergolesi, and Handel did not write these manuscripts, who did? Tobia Nicotra, a prolific twentieth-century forger, has ties to the two Library of Congress manuscripts and might also be tied to the SCPA manuscript. By comparing the two Library of Congress manuscripts, we can identify elements of how Nicotra worked and what his forgeries look like. Then we can use that information to decide whether Nicotra created the SCPA manuscript or not.

The Author of "Baci amorosi e cari" and "Non mi negar signora"

Identifying Nicotra as the creator of "Baci amorosi e cari" and "Non mi negar signora" at the Library of Congress is pretty straightforward thanks to the Library's acquisition records and discussion of these manuscripts in newspapers and scholarly articles.

"Baci amorosi e cari" has the most straightforward connection to Nicotra. He sold the manuscript to the Library of Congress in 1928 under his real name from Milan (see appendix 1). This manuscript is also mentioned as being his product in a number of

newspaper articles,[80] and Mozart's handwriting was allegedly one of Nicotra's specialties.[81] It would seem then that Nicotra is indeed the creator of this "autograph."

"Non mi negar signora" can also be connected to Nicotra. This manuscript was sold to the Library of Congress in 1923 by one G. Nicotra, Esq. from Cantu Como, Italy (see appendix 1). Although this record shows a different name, Nicotra was known to assume other identities, most notably Richard Drigo and Anna Onsteigel.[82] G. Nicotra Esq. could easily another of his pseudonyms, an idea strengthened by the fact that they have the same last name. Since he was known to use a fake name from time to time, he might also have used a fake address. Additionally, in the five years between the sale of the two manuscripts, Nicotra might have simply moved. Cantù, in the Province of Como, is a city a little less than twenty five miles from Milan.

The tenuous connection to Tobia Nicotra presented by the Library's acquisition record for "Non mi negar signora" is strengthened by the fact that other scholars also assert that this manuscript was his work. Otto E. Albrecht seems to have been the first to claim that this manuscript was created by Tobia Nicotra. Francesco Degrada and Barry S. Brook and Marvin E. Paymer later also asserted that Nicotra perpetrated this forgery.[83]

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[80] "Mozart Forger Sentenced" *Washington News*; "Music Forger Who Defrauded Experts Jailed," *New York Tribune*; "Autograph Faker Gets Prison Term," *New York Times*; "Toscanini's Son Trips up Forger," *The Lock Haven Express*; "The World's Champion Antique Faker," *San Antonio Light* and *American Weekly*,; Johnson, "Matching Wits" *The Laredo Times*.

[81] "Autograph Faker Gets Prison Term," *New York Times*; Stefan Zweig, "Ein gefährlicher Fälscher von Musik-Autographen," *Philobiblon* 4 (1931): 276.

[82] "The World's Champion Antique Faker," *San Antonio Light* and *American Weekly*; Zweig, "Ein gefährlicher Fälscher," 276.

[83] Otto E. Albrecht, *A Census of Autograph Music Manuscripts of European Composers in American Libraries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), 211; Degrada, "Alcuni falsi autografi pergolesiani"; Brook and Paymer, "The Pergolesi Hand," 550–578.

Nicotra's Forging Methods and Style

Having reasonably ascribed both Library of Congress manuscripts to Nicotra, we can now compare them to find a few elements of Nicotra's forging methods and style. Since this is a regrettably small representation of Nicotra's output,[84] information gleaned about his work from newspaper articles can also help in distilling signs of it.

Writing Tool and Ink

First, it seems evident that Nicotra used a quill pen and iron-gall ink to create his forgeries. As exhibited in chapters 3 and 4, above, both "Baci amorosi e cari" and "Non mi negar signora" exhibit the smooth and variable flow of ink over the page characteristic of the quill pen and lack evidence of a more rigid pen tip. The ink in both manuscripts is also the reddish-brown-black color characteristic of iron-gall ink.

Though the ink is the expected color, it seems Nicotra's ink recipe was not consistent. In the Pergolesi manuscript, the ink is clearly acidic because the writing in this manuscript can be seen from the wrong side of the paper, even without illuminating the underside. On the other hand, the Mozart manuscript needs to be held up to the light to see the ink from the wrong side. The acidic effect obviously will manifest slightly differently on different paper, but the extreme difference in how much the ink has and has not disintegrated the paper in these two cases suggests that a much less acidic ink was used in the creation of the Mozart manuscript than in the Pergolesi one.

[84] He is said to have created between 500 and 600 forgeries, see "The World's Champion Antique Faker," *San Antonio Light* and *American Weekly*.

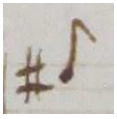
Handwriting

Though Nicotra imitated two different handwriting styles in these two manuscripts, there are a few similarities in his results that might help lead someone to positively identify him as the creator of other forgeries. These similarities are often slight and subtle and therefore cannot individually be a sign of Nicotra's forgeries. Instead, they should be considered to indicate Nicotra's work collectively.

Perhaps most obviously, Nicotra sometimes drew figures more vertically than their authentic counterparts. A prime example of this quality can be seen in the sharps of Nicotra's Mozart and authentic Mozart. Pergolesi's sharps were more vertically oriented than Mozart's to begin with, but nonetheless, we can see that Nicotra's Pergolesi sharps are once again turned a little more to the left than Pergolesi's actual sharps.

Pergolesi's sharp, Cary 438, p. 23, m. 2, staff 5

Nicotra's Pergolesi sharp, "Non mi negar signora," verso, system 3, m. 3, bottom part

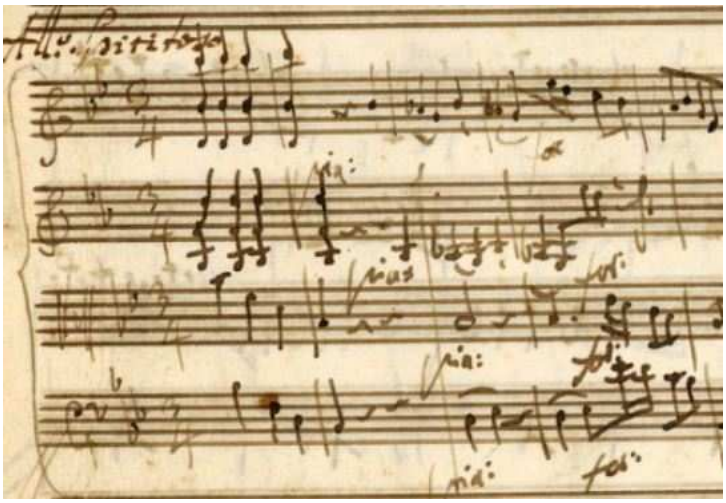


Nicotra's Mozart sharp, "Baci amorosi e cari," f.1r, system 3, m.4 voice

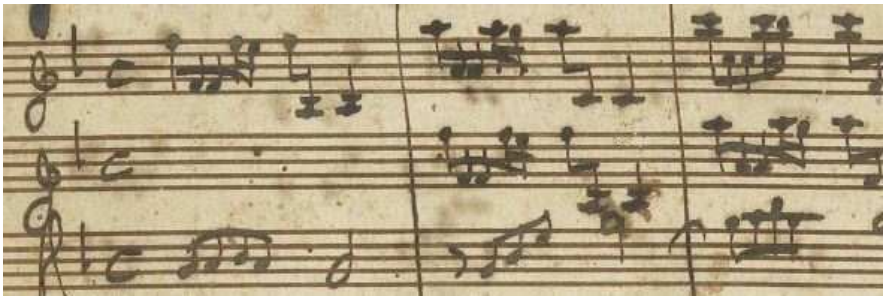
Mozart' sharp, Heineman 153, f.2r, m. 6, bottom staff,

Another characteristic that may help identify Nicotra is that he seems to have written the notes with a very similar size and shape in both manuscripts. When Mozart's and Pergolesi's music is placed side-by side, it is clear from even a glance that the two had very different handwriting styles. Pergolesi's note heads are bigger than Mozart's, his note heads are consistently very circular while Mozart's are sometimes closer to an egg or oval shape, and his stems often extend from the center of the note head, particularly on down-stem notes, whereas Mozart's extend from one side of the note head. Pergolesi's stems are often an even width through their length, but Mozart's are a little thicker near

the note head and thinner near their ends. In beamed groups, Pergolesi's stems are quite short, but Mozart's are usually a bit longer. While Mozart's writing often slants with its top to the left and bottom to the right, Pergolesi's writing is usually straight up and down.



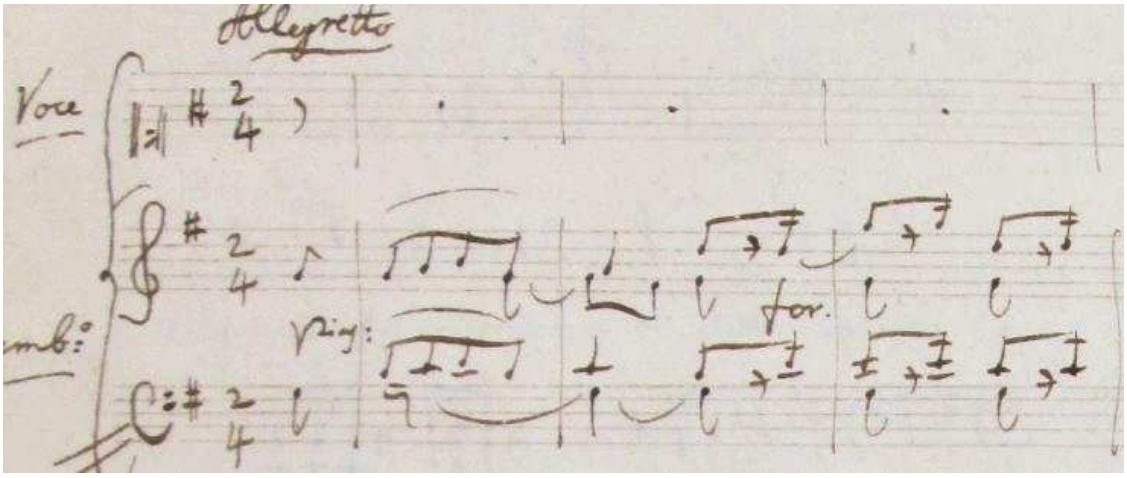
Mozart, Add MS 31749, incipit, mm. 1-4



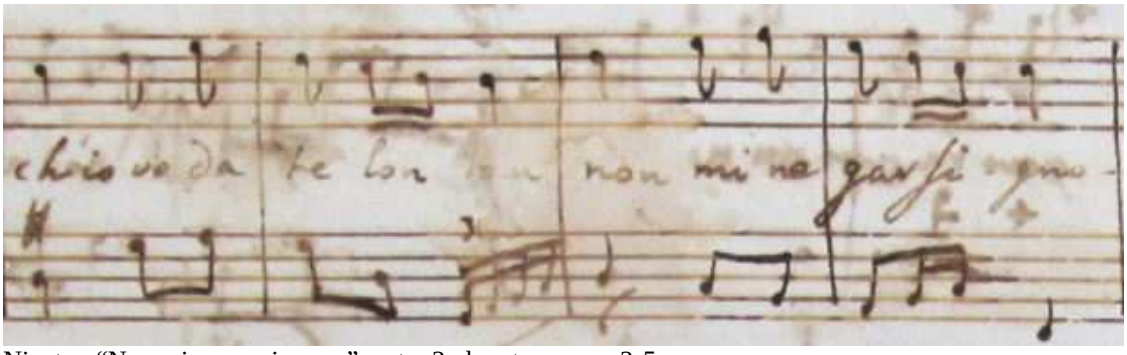
Pergolesi, Cary 418, incipit, lines 5-7, mm. 1-3

When "Baci amorosi e cari" and "Non mi negar signora" are placed side-by-side, however, these differences are much less distinct. Perhaps most noticeably, the note heads in both manuscripts have a very similar size and shape. They often fill up only about two-thirds of the space between stave lines. In addition they have an ovalish shape that is not smooth. Sometimes the note heads are a little bit flat, particularly on the upper left side, or have what look like rounded corners. This ovalish shape is often oriented so that a line drawn through the two foci would be angled from the bottom left to the upper

right. The joint between the stem and the note head is also similar in both manuscripts; right where the stem adjoins to the note, the line is thick but very quickly tapers to stem-proper width. In both manuscripts the stem length is variable. We can take the similarities in note appearance between the two manuscripts to be characteristic of Nicotra's hand, particularly because the similarity is not the result of his copying handwriting that was similar in the first place.



Nicotra, "Baci amorosi e cari," incipit, mm. 1-4



Nicotra, "Non mi negar signora," recto, 2nd system, mm. 2-5

Chemical Treatment

One newspaper article about Nicotra's activities claims that he used a chemical process in the creation of his forgeries, but does not mention what this chemical process

or its purpose was.[85] One possibility is that he treated his paper with hydrogen peroxide to keep the ink from feathering when applied to old paper.[86] Assuming a hydrogen peroxide treatment is what this article was talking about, it seems this treatment was actually not a consistent part of Nicotra's process. Under ultraviolet light, "Non mi negar signora" fluoresces blue, in keeping with the idea that Nicotra chemically treated the paper. However, "Baci amorosi e cari" shows no reaction under ultraviolet light.

Paper and Stave Ruling

Newspaper articles also report Nicotra's method of acquiring paper, and this claim can lead us to identify further characteristics of his paper use. They say that Nicotra acquired paper for his forgeries by tearing flyleaves and other unused pages out of books and manuscripts at Milan's library.[87] We can also understand from this information that Nicotra's manuscripts will likely be very short or composed of mismatched paper. Both "Baci amorosi e cari" and "Non mi negar signora" are very short, two and one folios respectively, and each only uses one piece of paper, suggesting that Nicotra was more likely to create a manuscript from a single paper source than to mismatch paper. "Baci amorosi e cari" is furthermore written on paper that was not likely to have been a flyleaf because the two folios are created from a single folded sheet. This construction suggests that Nicotra's paper source was not necessarily as consistent as the newspaper articles claim.

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[85] "Il Dulcamara degli autografi: Processo chimico che costa la prigione," *La Stampa*, 8 December 1933: 2. (I thank Dr. Richard King for bringing this article to my attention.)

[86] Rendell, *Forging History*, 28, 31.

[87] "The World's Champion Antique Faker," *San Antonio Light* and *American Weekly*; "Il Dulcamara degli autografi," *La Stampa*.

Nicotra ruled his staff paper by hand, line by line. In both manuscripts we saw that the lines are not consistently parallel and do not start and end as sets, but as individual lines. In "Baci amorosi e cari," we can even see residual pencil marks guiding the placement of each of the staff lines, further confirming that they were not drawn with a rastrum.

Content

The music Nicotra forged might also be considered part of his style. From these two manuscripts, it would seem that Nicotra tended to compose new material and write it in the handwriting of a renowned musician. "Baci amorosi e cari" and "Non mi negar signora" are unknown outside of these manuscripts and considered spurious compositions. Newspaper articles reporting Nicotra's activities list a large selection of historical figures whose writing Nicotra forged, but do not indicate whether he created new content.[88] J.M. Coopersmith suggests that Nicotra did also copy pre-existing works, at least part of Handel's *Messiah.*[89] He also seems to have made multiple copies of the things he did forge. Some newspaper articles concerning his activities mention that when the police searched his apartment, they found that Nicotra was preparing multiple copies of his manuscripts.[90]

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[88] "The World's Champion Antique Faker," *San Antonio Light* and *American Weekly*; "Dem Fälscher Tobia Nicotra," *Philobiblon* 7, no. 2 (1934): 98.

[89] J.M. Coopersmith, "Some Adventures in Handel Research," reprint of paper read before the American Musicological Society at Pittsburgh, Pa., December 29–30, 1937. University of Maryland, Special Collections in the Performing Arts, Jacob M. Coopersmith Collection, series 2.4, box 9, folder 6.

[90] "The World's Champion Antique Faker," *San Antonio Light* and *American Weekly*.

Why We Might Think Nicotra Created "Rejoice greatly"

Now that the beginnings of an identification of Nicotra's manner of forging has been constructed, we can apply this information to the forgery of "Rejoyce Greatly" in SCPA to see if it was he who crafted it or someone else. Circumstantial evidence might lead us to suspect that Nicotra is the creator of the Handel forgery. This manuscript is found in the Coopersmith collection at the University of Maryland along with a letter from Coopersmith to Nathan van Patten, a Stanford librarian, that claims Nicotra was responsible for a Handel forgery bought at an American-Anderson auction by George Frideric Handel, a description which matches this manuscript.[91] Unfortunately, Coopersmith says nothing about how or why he knows Nicotra did it. In that collection is also the record of the sale of the SCPA manuscript at an auction in 1930,[92] which is in the time period when Nicotra was active. In addition, one of the two Nicotra forgeries J.M Coopersmith addresses in his "Some Adventures in Handel Research" is part of *Messiah*, as is this manuscript (though they are different parts).[93] For these reasons, it seems plausible that Nicotra might have also written this forgery.

[91] "In 1945 I acquired another forgery of a Händel ms., also perpetrated by Nicotra; it was purchased by George Frideric Handel, a New York corporation lawyer at an American-Anderson sale before I had the pleasure of meeting him." Letter, J.M. Coopersmith to Nathan van Patten, 11 June 1953, University of Maryland, Special Collections in the Performing Arts, Jacob M. Coopersmith Collection, series 7, box 1, folder 18.

[92] Receipt, American Art Association Anderson Galleries, sale 3850, 12–13 May 1930, University of Maryland, Special Collections in the Performing Arts, Jacob M. Coopersmith Collection, series 2.4, box 8, folder 51.

[93] Coopersmith, "Some Adventures in Handel Research," 9–10, 12.

The "Rejoice greatly" Forgery Is Not Nicotra's After All

Since we have identified some of Nicotra's forging methods, we can test Coopersmith's claim that he also wrote the SCPA one and determine more reliably whether this manuscript is also Nicotra's or not.

Writing Tool and Ink

The two types of pen used in the SCPA forgery are both different from that of the other two forgeries. Whereas the Library of Congress forgeries were drawn with a quill pen, this one was written with ballpoint and steel-nib pens. The discrepancy in writing tool between the Library of Congress manuscripts and this one very strongly suggests that someone other than Nicotra created "Rejoice greatly."

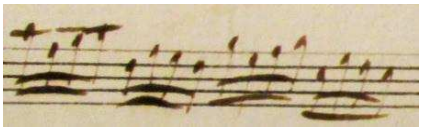
The ink of everything except the staff lines in the Handel forgery is in line with Nicotra's forging style. In all three manuscripts, the ink is iron-gall ink. Although the ink in "Rejoice greatly" seems to be a little less acidic than that of "Non mi negar signora" and more acidic than that of "Baci amorosi e cari," we have already seen that Nicotra's ink recipe does not seem to have been consistent.

The ink of the staff lines, however, does not match with Nicotra's method of forging. Nicotra used ink of a similar viscosity for everything he wrote, seen in the consistency of how smoothly the ink is spread across the paper in both Library of Congress manuscripts. The ink used for the staff lines in the "Handel" manuscript, on the other hand, was less fluid than the ink of the other writing, seen in the way it did not fill in the slightly lower places of the paper even though the ink for the rest of the writing did. The discrepency in ink type used for the staff lines between this manuscript and the

other two along with the discrepency in writing tool makes it less likely that Nicotra was the author the "Rejoice greatly" forgery.

Handwriting

The handwriting in this manuscript shows little resemblance to the elements I identified as similar in both Nicotra manuscripts at The Library of Congress.[94] The way it perhaps comes closest to matching Nicotra's is in the orientation of the figures. Handel's stems in the original manuscript are often slanted so that the bottom is more to the left than the top. In the SCPA version, however, the stems are often oriented more vertically. As we have already seen, Nicotra had a similar tendency to draw his figures more vertically than his subjects did.



"Rejoice greatly," SCPA,
f.1r, system 2, m. 1, voice

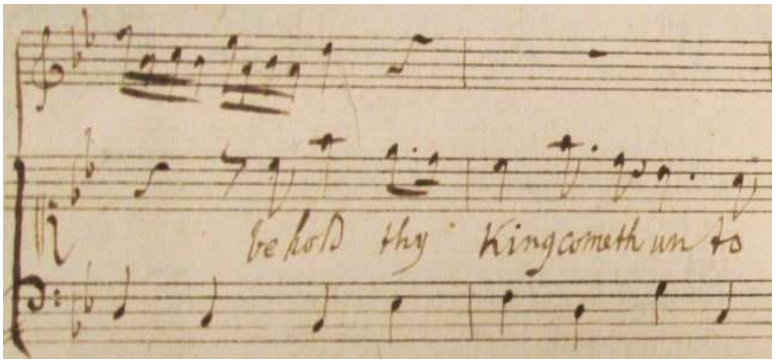
"Rejoice greatly," Tenbury,
f.66v, system 2, m. 3, voice

The shape of the filled-in notes is not quite like Nicotra's. In "Baci amorosi e cari" and "Non mi negar signora," note heads often appear as a kind of ovalish shape with the major axis oriented from the bottom left to the top right. In both Nicotra manuscripts, the note heads were rarely perfect oval shapes, but rather had uneven edges. In the "Rejoice greatly" forgery, the note heads are similarly-oriented imperfect oval shapes, but do not join to their stems the same way. The stems here generally have the

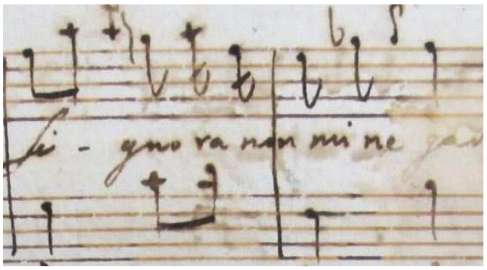
[94] Though the SCPA forgery is a copy of a particular manuscript and the Library of Congress forgeries are new music, all three are modeled on particular handwriting. The appearance of the handwriting can therefore still be effectively compared.

same width all the way through, while in the Nicotra manuscripts, they are fatter right near the note head.

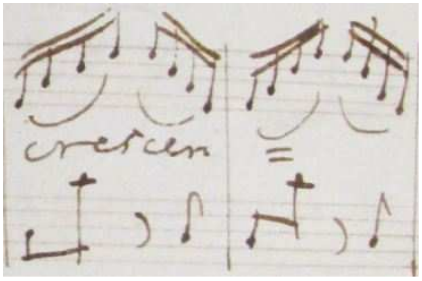
Where the handwriting of the SCPA manuscript differs the most from that of the Library of Congress manuscripts is in the size of the notes. These notes are relatively bigger than those of the other two manuscripts. Whereas Nicotra's filled-in notes only use up about two-thirds of the space between stave lines, the notes here consistently fill up that space.



"Rejoyce Greatly," SCPA, f.3v, system 3, mm. 1-2



"Non mi negar signora," verso, system 2, mm. 4-5



"Baci amorosi e cari," f.1.v, system 3, mm. 5-6

Chemical Treatment

The SCPA forgery does not show a reaction under ultraviolet light. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient evidence at this point in time to determine whether or not a hydrogen peroxide paper treatment was typically part of Nicotra's process. The observation that there is no ultraviolet light reaction with the SCPA forgery means nothing with regard to Nicotra until this part of his process is more certain.

Paper and Stave Ruling

The paper type indicates that the SCPA forgery is not the work of Nicotra. Though Nicotra and the creator of this manuscript seem to have both been using whatever paper they could find, Nicotra, from the two Library of Congress manuscripts, seems to have limited himself to one paper source per composition. In contrast, the SCPA manuscript has two types.

"Rejoice greatly" is also a longer forgery than the other two. The Pergolesi manuscript is one folio and the Mozart is two. From this, it would seem that Nicotra tended to limit the length of his creations. The Handel manuscript, on the other hand, is four folios in length. That this forgery is twice the length of the longer Nicotra manuscripts at The Library of Congress suggests that he did not create this one. This conclusion is tenuous, however, because in the shorter forgeries, Nicotra was creating new music, but the forger of the Handel manuscript was modeling it on a pre-existing manuscript. The differing subject matter between the Library of Congress forgeries and the SCPA one makes a comparison of the length for the purposes of determining the writer less sure.

The method of ruling the staff lines in the Handel forgery aligns with Nicotra's method. Nicotra ruled his paper in "Baci amorosi e cari" and "Non mi negar signora" line-by-line by hand, and the staff lines were drawn individually in the "Rejoice greatly" forgery too. However, that the staff lines in this manuscript, but neither of the others, were drawn with ballpoint pen lends less credence to this connection to Nicotra.

Content

The music the forger chose to create is like what Nicotra seems to have chosen. "Rejoice greatly" is a replication of an existing piece of music from Handel's *Messiah*. Though the Nicotra forgeries studied here are both entirely new creations, it seems he also replicated known works; according to Coopersmith, he even did part of the *Messiah*.[95] In addition, newspaper articles claim that Handel was one of Nicotra's forging specialties.[96] That the forger chose to create part of Handel's *Messiah* is in line with the little we know about Nicotra's selected forging material.

Conclusion

Though some elements of the SCPA forgery align with Nicotra's forging process and method, it is more likely that he was not its creator. The strongest piece of evidence is that the steel-nib and ballpoint pens used in the creation of the Handel forgery are not tools Nicotra seems to have used as part of his process. The relative size of the handwriting in "Baci amorosi e cari" and "Non mi negar signora" is also not consistent with the SCPA version of "Rejoice greatly," suggesting that it was created by a different

[95] Coopersmith, "Some Adventures in Handel Research," 9–10, 12.

[96] "Autograph Faker Gets Prison Term," *New York Times*; Zweig, "Ein gefährlicher Fälscher," 276.

person. That “Rejoice greatly” is longer than the Nicotra forgeries at The Library of Congress and uses two types of paper also suggests Nicotra was not responsible for it. Finally, though the staff lines in all three manuscripts were created in the same way, the use of ballpoint pen in only the SCPA forgery further dissociates Nicotra from this manuscript. The only things left that might link Nicotra to this manuscript are that the note heads are a similar shape and that the material chosen for forging is something Nicotra would very believably have selected to replicate; however, these correspondences are not enough to suggest that Nicotra wrote all three manuscripts in light of all the evidence pointing to a forger other than Nicotra.

If Nicotra did not create the Handel forgery in SCPA, then who did? Our suspects should be skilled music forgers who were active between about 1890 and 1930. Unfortunately, forgers are little-addressed in musicology, so it is possible that some, or even many, suspects have simply disappeared with the passage of time, never to be recovered. One possible suspect might be a forger identified as Lorenzo Alpino, although he seems to be more of a letter forger than an autograph forger.[97] In order to determine the real culprit of this forgery, one would have to engage in a study like this one of other forgers.

Conclusion

It has been my observation that serious scholarly consideration of musical manuscript forgeries is rare, and that in the handful of quality music forgery scholarship out there, consideration is not given to the manuscript as a whole, but is rather concerned

[97] Frank Walker, “Verdian Forgeries II: Letters Hostile to Catalani,” *The Music Review* 20 (February 1959): 28–37.

with its handwriting or content. It is disturbing to think that many of Tobia Nicotra's forgeries, and those of other forgers, could be lurking out there, still fooling the world, in part because of the lack of serious consideration given to music forgeries. Hopefully this thesis begins to rectify the situation by showing how to examine a manuscript for authenticity more holistically and to report the results, beginning to provide the tools to identify Nicotra's work, and providing a method with which to identify and trace the work of music forgers.

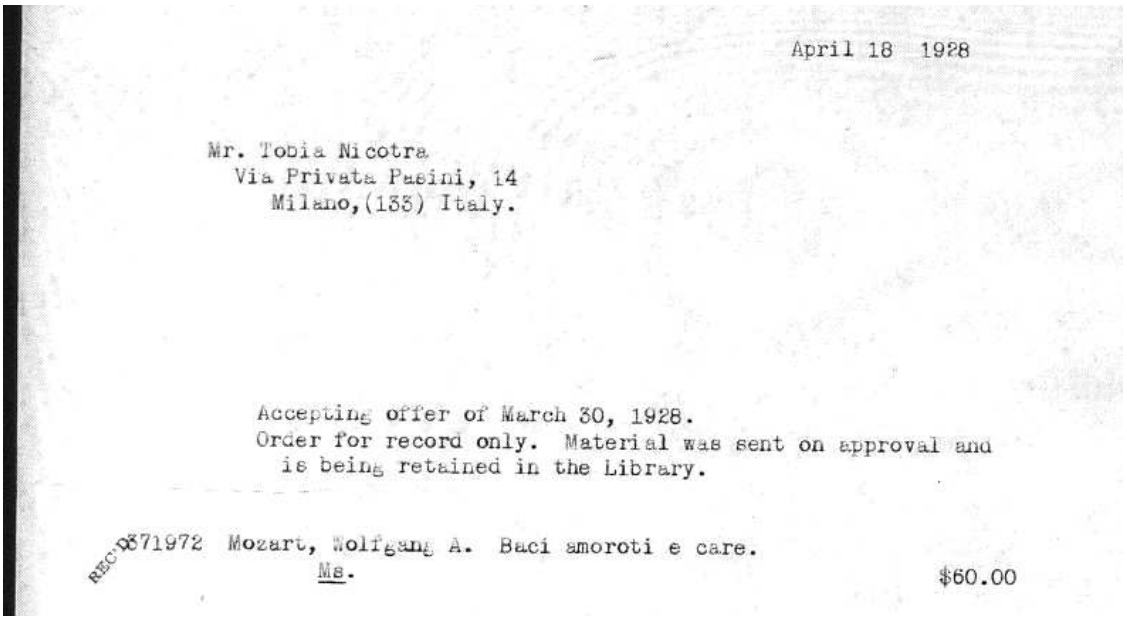
Each manuscript tells the story of its creation to those who know how to read it. As shown in chapters two through five, there is more to authenticating a manuscript than examining the handwriting. While a handwriting examination is a very important part of the process, that alone is not enough to authenticate a manuscript; the Handel forgery examined in chapter five might have been authenticated if we were only concerned with the handwriting. One also needs to take into account the manner in which the staves were ruled, the writing tool, ink, and paper that were used, and the possibility that the paper was chemically treated. In all these areas, anachronistic elements point to the inauthenticity of the document, while the lack of them suggests an authenticity that can be ascertained through an examination of the handwriting.

It is also important to try to identify the creator of forged manuscripts so that their output might be traced and, in the case of good forgers, so that we might identify their forgeries more easily in the future, as shown here in chapter six. To begin to identify a forgery, one should examine its provenance and any other archival information that might accompany the manuscript. Sometimes the identity of a forger might become clear or at least suspected, as was the case with the forgeries here. The next step is to get an idea of

how the forger works, as much as is possible with limited resources, as was done here with the two Library of Congress forgeries. Once one has an idea of the forging style of and methods used by a particular forger, it becomes possible to use that information to determine if other forgeries were likely executed by the same person or not, in the manner shown here with the Handel forgery.

Tobia Nicotra was an interesting person who, up until now, was just a sensational story. In the course of this thesis I have identified seven of his forgeries, examined two of them in depth to verify their status as forgeries, identified some characteristics of his manner of forging, and used this information to show that a forgery thought to be his by at least one scholar is really not one of his. The stage is now set for future scholars to examine other Nicotra forgeries, expand and refine the characteristics of his forgeries that I have identified, and perhaps even uncover some of the rest of his forgeries.

Appendix: Acquisition Records



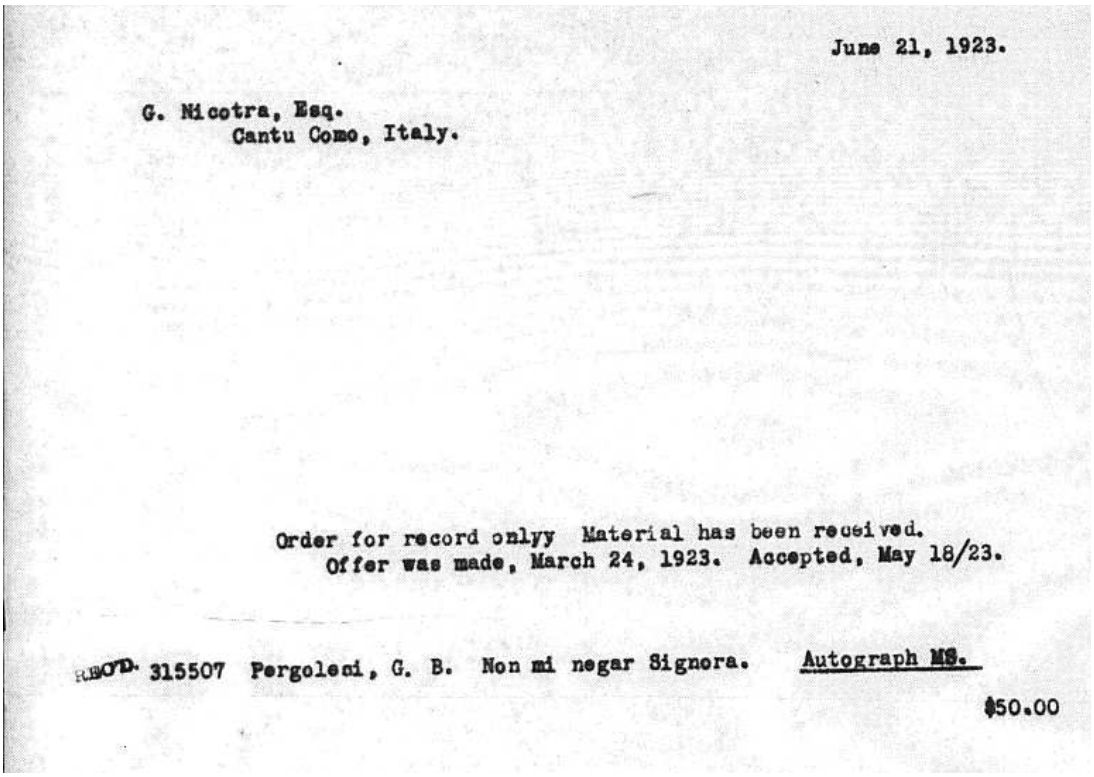
April 18 1928

Mr. Tobia Nicotra
Via Privata Pasini, 14
Milano,(133) Italy.

Accepting offer of March 30, 1928.
Order for record only. Material was sent on approval and is being retained in the Library.

RECORD 371972 Mozart, Wolfgang A. Baci amoroti e care.
Ms. $60.00

Acquisition record for "Baci amorosi e cari," Library of Congress, Order Division, Control File 368940–372956, reel 62.



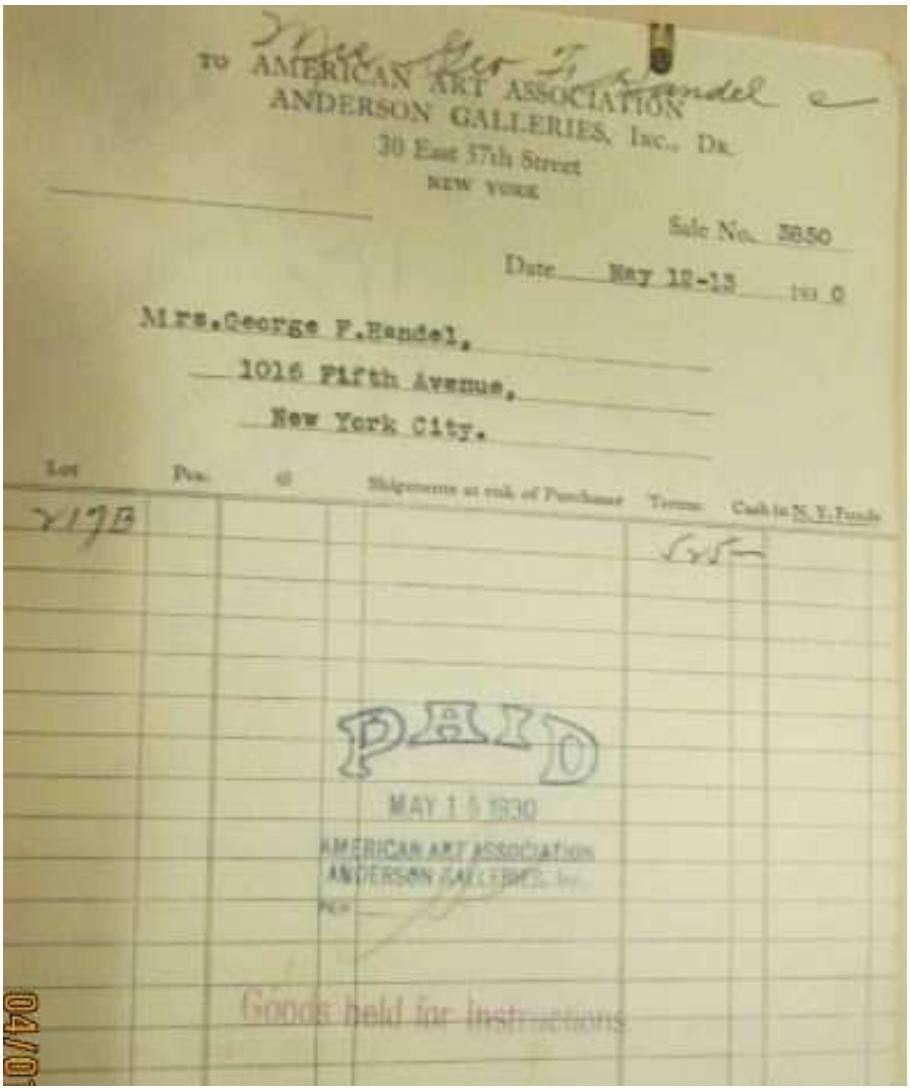
June 21, 1923.

G. Nicotra, Esq.
Cantu Como, Italy.

Order for record only Material has been received.
Offer was made, March 24, 1923. Accepted, May 18/23.

RECORD 315507 Pergolesi, G. B. Non mi negar Signora. Autograph MS.
$50.00

Acquisition record for "Non mi negar signora," Library of Congress, Order Division, Control File 313743–318636, reel 50.



Receipt for "Rejoice greatly," University of Maryland, Special Collections in the Performing Arts, Jacob M. Coopersmith Collection, series 2.4, box 8, folder 51.

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