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Opera *Costanza e Fortezza*: The Victory of Constancy, Strength, Virtue and Love over Pride and Tyranny

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Abstract

The opera *Costanza e Fortezza*, by P. Pariati and J. J. Fux, performed in Prague at the behest of Emperor Charles VI (1685–1740), exemplifies the symbolic self-representation of a Baroque Habsburg monarch. In the absence of a male heir, Charles VI used the opera to counter the hereditary claims of the Saxon and Bavarian Prince-electors and to advocate for the Pragmatic Sanction. Based on a Classical story by Livy, it is set in Rome republic besieged by the Etruscan king Porsenna, supporting a heir of the royal Gens Tarqunii. The study examines the opera's central conflict between virtue (*virtù*) and pride, and the fight for freedom through Constancy and Strength, exploring the role of love in this conflict. Particular attention is paid to the symbolical source of the opera's themes – the tale of Lucretia, a virtuous Roman woman defiled by a member of the Tarquin family.

Key words

Costanza e Fortezza, Emperor Charles VI (1685–1740), Empress Elisabeth Christine (1691–1750), Pietro Pariati, baroque opera, Habsburg court

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Introduction

Much scholarly attention has been recently given to the festive opera *Costanza e Fortezza* (Constancy and Strength) written by the librettist Pietro Pariati (1665–1733) and the composer Johann Joseph Fux (c1660–1741). Its premiere and only repeat performance took place in Prague in the summer of 1723, shortly before the Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI (1685–1740) was crowned as the King of Bohemia. The work was dedicated to his wife Elisabeth Christine von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1691–1750) on the occasion of her 32nd birthday. Research has revealed that Pariati's libretto offers fresh insights into the political and dynastic context of the era, exploring a Classical subject to express the dynastic and political intentions of Charles VI.[1]

A shining example of the symbolic self-representation of the Habsburg monarch, the opera's libretto is of great interest to scholars, who have been pointing out the intended meaning of the allusions to the current dynastic and political situation. While portraying a Classical story, the opera was in fact concerned with the lands of the Bohemian crown, which, as a part of the Austrian heritage were to be subject to the Pragmatic sanction in the future.[2]

1 WESSELY, Othmar. *Pietro Pariatis Libretto zu Johann Joseph Fuxens „Costanza e fortezza": Vortrag gehalten von der Jahreshauptversammlung der J. J. Fux-Gesellschaft am 9. Mai 1966*. Graz: Johann-Joseph-Fux-Gesellschaft, 1969. Jahresgabe 1967 der Johann-Joseph-Fux-Gesellschaft. Graz: Johann-Joseph-Fux-Gesellschaft, 1969; BÖHM, Claudia. *Theatralia anlässlich der Krönungen in der österreichischen Linie der Casa d´Austria (1627–1764)* [dissertation thesis]. Wien: Universität Wien, 1986; STROHM, Reinhard. Costanza e Fortezza: Investigation of the Baroque Ideology. In GALLIGNANI, Daniel (ed.). *I Bibiena: una famiglia in scena: da Bologna all'Europa*. Alinea: Firenza, 2002, pp. 75–91. For further publications on this opera, see HOCHRADNER, Thomas (ed.). *Thematisches Verzeichnis der Werke von Johann Joseph Fux (? 1660–1741) (FuxWV): Völlig überarbeitete Neufassung des Verzeichnisses von Ludwig Ritter von Köchel (1872). Vol. I*. Wien: Hollitzer Verlag, 2016, pp. 233–251.

2 VÁCHA, Štěpán – VESELÁ, Irena – VLNAS, Vít – VOKÁČOVÁ, Petra. *Karel VI. a Alžběta Kristýna: česká korunovace 1723* [Charles VI and Elisabeth Christine: The Bohemian Coronation 1723]. 1. Ed. Praha – Litomyšl: Národní galerie – Paseka, 2009; VÁCHA, Štěpán – VESELÁ, Irena – VLNAS, Vít – VOKÁČOVÁ, Petra. Karl VI. & Elisabeth Christine: Die böhmische Krönung 1723. *FrühNeuzeit-Info* 2010, vol. 21, no. 1–2, pp. 226–231; VOKÁČOVÁ, Petra. The Bohemian Coronation of Charles VI and Its Hidden Message. In VAN GELDER, Klaas (ed.). *More than mere spectacle: Coronations and Inaugurations in the Habsburg Monarchy during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. NewYork – Oxford: Berghahn, 2021, pp. 143–167; VESELÁ, Irena. Giovanni Bononcinis Oper Muzio Scevola (1710) und Johann Joseph Fux' Festa teatrale Costanza e Fortezza (1723): vom musikalischen Drama zur Allegorie. *Musicologica Brunensia* 2018, vol. 53, Supplementum, pp. 73–83; VESELÁ, Irena. Das Libretto zur Oper Porsena von Agostino Piovene (Venedig 1712) als Vorläufer der Festa teatrale Costanza e Fortezza von Pietro Pariati (Prag 1723). *Musicologica Brunensia* 2021, vol. 56, no. 1, pp. 59–79; NIUBO, Marc – BOBKOVÁ-VALENTOVÁ, Kateřina. Hudba a divadlo [Music and Theatre]. In HRBEK, Jiří et al. *Panovnický majestát: Habsburkové jako čeští králové v 17. a 18. století* [Imperial Majesty: Habsburgs as the Kings of Bohemia in the 17th and 18th centuries]. Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny ve spolupráci s Historickým ústavem AV ČR, v.v.i., [The publisher of Lidové noviny in cooperation with the Institute of history of the Czech academy of Sciences] 2021, p. 159–163. VESELÁ, Irena. „La difesa del ciel vince ogni sforza": Symbolical Presentation of the Habsburgs' Dynastic Situation in the Operas Il fuoco eterno custodito dalle Vestali (1674) and Costanza e Fortezza (1723). *Opera Historica* 2022, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 227–252. VESELÁ, Irena: *Slavnostní opera Costanza e Fortezza (Praha 1723): Příspěvek k 300. výročí provedení* [*Festive opera Constanza e Fortezza (Prague 1726): contribution on the occasion of the 300th anniversary since its performance*]. Brno: Moravská zemská knihovna [Moravian Library], 2023, e-book: https://www.mzk.cz/costanza_fortezza. VESELÁ, Irena. The Habsburg Succession addressed on the Operatic Stage: The Court Operas Teofane (Dresden 1719), Adelaide (Munich 1722) and Costanza e Fortezza (Prague 1723). In ANDERSON, Roberta – EISENDLE, Reinhard – SUNA, Suna

The present paper, which is the author's contribution to the 56th International Musicological Colloquium in Brno (2022) on the subject of "Love and Virtue in Musico-Dramatic Works ca. 1660–1800", considers how love and virtues work as central themes in a large scale allegorical tribute written for a specific occasion and a unique dynastic and political context, which is not the typical baroque *dramma per musica*, but a theatrical festivity with music (*festa teatrale per musica*). To demonstrate this, the plot of the opera *Costanza e Fortezza* is explored with focus on love and virtue and their different conceptions. As this opera is not *dramma per musica* per se, the plot is not built on the typical conflict of love and virtue or love and duty. The opera *Constanza and Fortezza* features a conflict, in which love and virtue stand on the same side: virtue (*virtù*),[3] Constancy, (*costanza*), Strength (*fortezza*), and love are the main agents in a fight for freedom against pride and tyranny. This struggle also represents the conflict of two political systems – hereditary royal rule and free republic – while the virtues and true love intervene on behalf of the latter. The key role these virtues and love play is critical to the denouement, which is the main feature that distinguishes this tributary piece from other contemporary *dramma per musica* pieces.

The paper looks upon these virtues (i.e. virtù, Constancy and Strength) along with love as agents leading to a happy resolution of the conflict, focusing mainly on their role in the allegorical layer of the opera portraying the current political intentions of Charles VI. A considerable part of the paper is dedicated to a synopsis of the plot, necessary to point out the key scenes where the virtues are agents in the conflict against tyranny and step into the conflict on behalf of freedom. These particular scenes are often interwoven with lines that contain numerous innuendos alluding to the current political situation, which are then described in more detail and analysed further. The analysis also points out the context in which other virtues attributed to the imperial couple are mentioned. These royal virtues (justice, clemency), however, do not play a part in the plot, but are rather of tributary character.

The paper also touches upon the context of former librettos dealing with the same subject matter, pointing out in what aspects is this libretto unique. Due to the limited scope of the paper, however, this subject is discussed only briefly, but will be treated in more detail in the author's forthcoming monograph on *Costanza e Fortezza*.

The Libretto's Classical Subject Matter

The librettist sought inspiration in the story of the siege of the city of Rome by the troops of the Etruscan king Porsenna. This episode from the early history of the Roman

(eds.). *Performing Diplomacy in the Early Modern World*. Wien: Hollitzer Verlag, 2025 (= Diplomatica, vol. 3), pp. 587–608 (in print).

3 Virtue (*virtù*) in this opera is to be understood in its Classical sense, as one of the foundational ethical ideals of Classical antiquity. Rooted originally in the concept of virility or bravery (from the Latin *vir*, meaning "man"), the term *virtù* gradually expanded to encompass qualities that physically and morally ennoble an individual.

Republic dates to the late 6th century BC and was taken from the second book of Titus Livy's *History of Rome*.

Porsenna's siege of Rome was preceded by the violent overthrow of the last Roman king, Lucius Tarquinius also known as Superbus (his cognomen meaning "proud", "arrogant"), whose rule was marked by tyranny, imprisonment and executions. His overthrow was triggered by the heinous act committed by his son and heir, Sextus Tarquinius. According to Livy, Sextus became infatuated with Lucretia, the virtuous wife of his cousin Tarquinius Collatinus. Intent on having her regardless of the means, he visited her, professing love, threatening violence and ultimately defamation. Only then did Lucretia submit herself to him, but subsequently took her life. This deed sparked a revolt against the ruling dynasty, ultimately leading to their overthrow and exile as well as to the subsequent establishment of the Republic. One of the leaders of the revolt was Publius Valerius, who would become a Roman consul later and as such he is featured in the opera *Costanza e Fortezza*.[4]

Although *Costanza e Fortezza* does not deal directly with the tragic fate of Lucretia, her story is crucial to understanding the broader context of the opera and its allusions.

The Tarquinii soon attempted to reclaim the Roman throne and sought military aid from Porsenna, an Etruscan king ruling over Clusium, who captured the Ianiculum Hill and launched an unsuccessful attack on the city, followed by a siege. According to Livy, the Romans were able to withstand the Etruscan superiority in arms and numbers thanks to the heroic deeds of three Roman citizens: Horatius, Mucius, and the Roman maiden Clelia. These deeds became the foundation stone for the plot of the opera *Costanza e Fortezza.*

Before Pietro Pariati, several librettists had used this subject matter in their work. The first was Nicolò Minato (*Mutio Scevola*, premiere in Venice, 1665), whose libretto was later adapted and shortened by Silvio Stampiglia (*Mutio Scevola*, Rome, 1695 and Vienna, 1710). Minato's text was also adapted into a German version by Friedrich Christian Bressand (*Clelia,* Braunschweig 1695). The same subject matter was later used in librettos by Agostino Piovene (*Porsena*, Venice 1712) and Paolo Rolli (*Muzio Scevola*, London 1721).[5]

All these librettists followed Livy's the story, describing the three heroic deeds of the Romans. All of them also recalled the earlier humiliation and death of the virtuous Roman wife Lucretia.

Amorous feelings were a focal theme in all these librettos. The central story always recounts of a love between a young Roman, Mucius, later called Scaevola (the left-handed), and a Roman girl who becomes the object of interest of the Etruscan king Porsenna. Porsenna asks for the girl's hand in marriage as a pledge of future peace with Rome, but as the girl remains faithful to Mucius, the story always ends happily for the Roman couple. In *Costanza e Fortezza*, Pietro Pariati also followed this pattern, projecting the tragic story

4 See [LIVY]: *Livy In Fourteen Volumes I: Books I and II.* B. O Foster (ed.). Cambridge (Mass.) – London: Harvard University Press – William Heinemann Ltd., 1967. https://archive.org/details/livy-history-of-rome-12-volumes-in-1-searchable-loeb

5 The author compared the libretto to the opera *Costanza e Fortezza* with the adapted version of Minato's libretto (*Muzio Scevola*, Vienna 1710) and with Piovene's libretto (*Porsena*, Venice 1713) in two other papers (see footnote no. 2). Comparing it with the other mentioned librettos will be part of the author's monograph soon to be published.

of Lucretia into the plot and building dramatic tension on the rivalry between the Roman Mucius and the Etruscan king Porsenna. However, he was the first librettist to use the tale of Lucretia as well as the love stories in his opera to comment on the dynastic and political situation through the hidden meaning of allegory.

The Characters of the Opera *Costanza e Fortezza*

The leading Roman authority in the opera is consul Publius Valerius, also known as Publicola, while king Porsenna is portrayed as the leader of the Etruscan army. The exiled gens Tarquinia are represented by Titus Tarquinius, son of Lucius Tarquinius Superbus and brother to Sextus, who violated Lucretia. Unlike the previous librettists who tackled this subject, Pariati deliberately chose not to feature Lucius Tarquinius as the antagonist but instead assigned that role to his lesser-known son, whom Livy mentions only twice.[6] Titus Tarquinius, unlike his tyrannical father and violent brother, has a clean slate to begin with, having done no wrong to the Romans himself. Thus, in the eyes of King Porsenna, Titus Tarquinius has a legitimate claim to rule Rome as king. To the Romans, however, Titus, being a member of the Tarquin dynasty, bears the same guilt as his father and brother.

Other characters are also taken from Livy's history, among them the Roman warrior Horatius, the Roman maiden Clelia (Horatius's beloved in Pariati's version of the story), and the Roman young man Mucius. In the opera, he is betrothed to the Roman maiden Valeria, the consul's daughter,[7] who, along with her brother Herminius, is in Etruscan captivity as the opera starts. Both Roman maidens soon become objects of interest to Rome's enemies.

6 Livy briefly mentions Titus Tarquinius in the first and second book of his *The History of Rome,* but he does not give him much attention.

7 Livy does not mention Valeria, the daughter of consul Publius Valerius, but Plutarch does. PLÚTARCHOS. *Životopisy slavných Řeků a Římanů I.* [Parallel Lives I.]. Praha: Odeon, 1967, pp. 173–174.

Romans and Roman couples		**Enemies of Rome and the undesired suitors of the Roman maidens**
Publio Valerio Publicola / Publius Valerius Publicola Roman consul		
Muzio / Mucius Roman youth, betrothed to Valeria	*Valeria* Daughter of Publius Valerius, betrothed to Mucius	*Porsenna* Etruscan king, infatuated with Valeria
Orazio / Horatius Roman, in love with Clelia	*Clelia* Roman noble maiden, in love with Horatius	*Tito Tarquinio* / Titus Tarquinius The son of the Roman king Lucius Tarquinius, the heir to the Roman throne, infatuated with Clelia
Erminio / Herminius Roman, son of consul Publius Valerius, secretly in love with Clelia		

Tab. 1 An overview of the relations of the Romans and their rivals in the opera *Costanza e Fortezza*.

The Plot of *Constanza e Fortezza* Featuring the Role of Virtue, Constancy, and Strength

Act I

Prior to the opening events of the opera, Porsenna had already seized Ianicul Hill and established a military encampment there, separated from Rome only by the river Tiber.

The opera opens with a verbal confrontation between the two opposing sides (act I / scene 1), which takes place on the 'Roman' bank of the Tiber after Porsenna and Tarquinius have breached the defence and crossed the bridge Ponte Sublicio with a detachment of Etruscan soldiers. The passage to Rome is thus clear and they only need take the city by storm.

Porsenna and Tarquinius threaten to raze the city to the ground if the Romans do not surrender to the Etruscan army and accept Tarquinius as their rightful king (I/1). This verbal confrontation shows the two parties view pride and virtue differently. While the Etruscans view the Romans as proud and arrogant rebels, for the Romans their freedom is inextricably linked to virtue (*virtù*) and see the Tarquin dynasty as proud, refusing to see the royal rule restored. The Roman captives, the consul's own children, Valeria and Herminius, list the crimes of Tarquinius's relatives, including the rape and death of Lucretia.

Tarquinius, however, with Porsenna's backing, refuses to take responsibility for these actions and argue that they have the regal rights and the army on their side. Porsenna, starting to show signs of desire for Valeria, accuses the young woman of hatred and pride, to which she responds: "*A noble soul is stirred with righteous hatred of threats and pride is a merit when it serves virtue.*" (I/1). Herminius's question "*Can desire for freedom be*

considered pride?" is answered by Tarquinius, claiming that "*the freedom of rebels is ungodly*". His statement is immediately challenged by Valeria who responds that "*He who flees from tyranny is no rebel*" (I/1).

The Romans back their claim only by the Roman virtue (*virtù*) and steadfastness (*fermezza*). After Valeria claims that neither the gods nor the steadfast citizens of Rome will let the city fall, Porsenna loses patience, and orders his army to attack.

At that moment the gods (I/2 and I/3) actually do intervene. The god of Tiber (Tiberinus) rises from the riverbed accompanied by nymphs and lesser river gods, acting as the spokesman for the powerful goddess Vesta, who, though she never appears physically on the scene, holds a protective hand over Rome. Tiberinus reminds the characters that it is the birthday of Vesta, who protects Rome, and prophesizes that Rome will triumph that day *"without a single drop of blood being shed, a victory in which Constancy and Strength will triumph."* That is the first time when these two central virtues are mentioned.

Tiberinus then urges Porsenna to yield to the Roman virtue (*virtù*) – withdraw to the other side of the river, set aside his anger, and take to worshipping the goddess Vesta: "*And thou, hostile king, who boasts to cross my waters freely, begone to the other shore. Tempt fate there. There you will be saved from deadly peril by a goddess to whom clemency and benevolence are faithful servants. Yield to Roman virtue rather than to arms. Set aside your hostility and worship Vesta.*" (I/3). The story is just beginning to unfold, yet the gods have already openly declared their allegiance to Roman virtue, Constancy, and Strength. This marks the first and last time a deity appears before mortals (except licenza). From this moment on, it is the Roman virtues alone that will drive the plot in favour of the Romans.

Porsenna lays down arms but does not abandon his intention of installing Tarquinius on the Roman throne (I/4) through a peaceful and seemingly acceptable solution: love and marriage. Tarquinius offers his hand in marriage, along with the Roman throne, to Clelia, a noble Roman maiden. Porsenna, infatuated with the consul's daughter Valeria, offers her his heart and the Etruscan throne (I/5). Betrothed to the Roman citizen Mucius, Valeria turns down the offer. She and her brother Herminius also refuse Tarquinius's marriage proposal on Clelia's behalf, knowing her to be in love with the Roman Horatius: *Val.* "*Clelia is Roman; and loyal to her fatherland, she is no less loyal to valiant Horatius*". Herminius weighs in with the argument that Roman blood "*will not serve tyrants to expand*" (I/4).

Porsenna's concept of virtue differs fundamentally from the Roman view. Once again, he accuses Valeria of pride and urges her to show her virtue, marry him, and thereby bring peace to Rome (I/5), failing to understand that for both Roman maidens their love for their Roman suitors are inseparable from loyalty to their fatherland.

Since the arguments of the consul's children carry little weight for Porsenna, he turns to their father, Publius Valerius, sending Valeria and Herminius to Rome as emissaries to present his peace offer. If refused, the siblings vow to return to Etruscan captivity.

Publius Valerius does not comment directly on Porsenna's proposals, but by sending his two children back into captivity, he clearly declares his refusal (I/7). Seeing Valeria leave back to Porsenna, Mucius loudly objects, jealous of his rival and concerned that

Porsenna will see this display of Roman virtue as cowardice and will take advantage of the leverage he has gained through the return of the consul's children into captivity (I/9).

Publius Valerius responds to Mucius's concerns by asserting that as much as he loves his children, he is above all a son of Rome (I/10). He vows to remain steadfast (*costante*) in service to his city and its freedom, thereby being the first Roman who openly declares for one of the virtues featured in the title of the opera – Constancy. Mucius, however, secretly resolves to free Valeria.

Horatius also fears that Clelia might eventually accept Tarquinius's marriage proposal (I/11). The Roman maiden, however, puts his concerns to rest, confessing her unwavering love.

At that point, the Etruscan army lead by Tarquinius charges towards the Ponte Sublicio despite Porsenna's order to stand down (I/12). Horatius prays to the river god and ignoring Clelia's pleas, he takes his stand alone on the bridge against the advancing Etruscan army. Meanwhile, the Roman soldiers sing of the power of Roman virtue: "*The virtue of the Romans dares to do anything and overcomes all*." (I/12).

The Etruscans disagree: "*Foolish audacity is a frenzy or vanity, not a virtue*." and Tarquinius cries: "*Horatius himself? What vain and presumptuous pride!*" (I/12)

For the second time the different perspectives on pride and virtue are confronted.

Roman Strength manifests through Horatius, who bravely fights against the Etruscan superiority and ultimately defies capture by flinging himself into the river and pulling the bridge down underneath him (I/13). While Clelia falls into despair at the thought of having lost her lover, the consul admires Horatius's Strength and tells Clelia to practice Constancy. This is the second time that both key virtues from the opera's title are mentioned, this time through the words of the consul, who speaks for Rome from the position of the highest authority.

Yet Horatius turns out to be alive, possibly by intervention of the goddess Vesta. The first act closes with Salian priests of Mars dancing in her honour, accompanied by two allegorical figures: Roman Constancy (*La Constanza Romana*) is attacked with a spear by Etruscan Valour (*Il Valore degli Etruschi*). At first, the Roman Constancy only stands by and does nothing, but then she takes the spear from Etruscan Valour and breaks it. This encapsulates the events of the first act: the consul's Constancy has overcome the Etruscan military superiority. Similarly, the Roman virtue, embodied by Horatius, has humbled the prideful Tarquinius.

Act II

The second act takes place in an Etruscan military camp; the set portrays two sumptuous tents in the foreground, one is Porsenna's, the other Tarquinius's.

Porsenna accuses Tarquinius of acting against his will when the latter broke the truce and attacked the bridge (II/1). This conflict reveals that the two enemies of Rome, hitherto undistinguishable in terms of character and motivation, actually have very different

personalities. Offended by Clelia's refusal to his offer of marriage and throne, Tarquinius is frustrated. Porsenna, on the other hand, patiently suffers Valeria's defiance, and even appreciates the virtue of the Romans who stand by their word, keeping up the promise they gave him when they promised to return the captives. Claiming "*Virtue to virtue I owe*," (II/1) Porsenna firmly rejects Tarquinius's view of Valeria as spoils of war to be used for vengeance.

Porsenna wants to speak to Publius Valerius in person (II/2). It is not only the appearance of Tiberinus, but also Horatius's bravery and the triumph of the Roman Strength (*Fortezza*), that sway him towards seeing the Romans as something other than mere rebels.

Valeria's betrothed Mucius, however, unaware that Porsenna actually respects Valeria's virtue, cannot bear the thought of her being in the hands of his rival (II/3). Therefore, he secretly leaves Rome to save her. However, Valeria will not leave, reminding him of her patriotic and filial duty and assuring him that she will manage to defend her virtue on her own. Disappointed and desperate, Mucius sees no other option but to kill Porsenna. This is the only moment in the plot where Roman virtue manifests as patriotic duty, standing in direct opposition to love.

Mucius pretends to leave the Etruscan camp, but as soon as Valeria averts her gaze, he slips into Porsenna's tent (II/4). Moments later, the audience sees Tarquinius emerge from the tent, calling for the guards to capture Mucius, who mistook Porsenna's treasurer for the king, killing him by mistake (II/5). Upon discovering his error, he bitterly regrets the deed, and allows himself to be taken prisoner. Porsenna condemns Mucius to death. Mucius, however, threatens the king that another Roman will take his place and ultimately kill him. Porsenna then orders Mucius to be tortured by fire to extract further information, but before the order can be executed, Mucius himself places his hand into a sacrificial fire. Without flinching, he endures the pain and demonstrates unwavering Constancy and Strength. Eventually, it is Porsenna who orders Mucius to be dragged away, not bearing to watch his pain any longer.

At that moment, Valeria speaks up, displaying her own Constancy and Strength (II/5). Tearing her veil, she bandages Mucius's burnt hand. Despite her inner suffering, she confidently presents herself as a fearless woman prepared to endure any hardship for her love, even seeing Mucius die. This scene between Porsenna, Mucius, and Valeria no longer centres on the conflict between virtue and pride; instead, the central virtues of Constancy and Strength take the foreground. This moment is pivotal, as it showcases the simultaneous practice of both virtues—remarkably, by two characters at once.

Porsenna is astonished at such strength of character, which he had not expected in a weak woman (II/6). Mucius therefore explains that strength is intrinsic to being Roman. At this point, the Roman consul Publius Valerius arrives at the military camp.

While Porsenna intends to greet the consul with royal honours, Tarquinius has no intention of meeting the leader of the rebels until he has received what he believes is rightfully his: the throne and Clelia's hand in marriage. He cowardly hides in his tent to avoid confrontation with the consul, which he knows he cannot win.

At Porsenna's request, Publius Valerius is to pronounce sentence over the accused Mucius (II/7), who refuses to give the names of the Romans who plan to kill Porsenna.

The consul therefore condemns his future son-in-law to death and leaves it to the Etruscan king to carry out the sentence. Porsenna, however, impressed by Mucius's Strength and Constancy, gives the young man his life and liberty back. This virtuous gesture earns Porsenna the sincere admiration and recognition of the Romans and Etruscans alike.

Afterwards the consul and Porsenna agree that the Senate will receive his peace terms by sunset, deliberate overnight, and deliver the decision at dawn (II/8). In the meantime, both sides will exchange hostages: for the Romans, Clelia, Horatius, Mucius, Valeria, and Herminius are selected among others. Porsenna agrees, remarking that peace would be best sealed if he could marry the consul's daughter Valeria.

After Porsenna retires to his tent, the Romans (Publius Valerius, Horatius, Herminius and Clelia) discuss their standpoint (II/9). Though they appreciate Porsenna's conciliatory and non-confrontational approach, the consul remains unwavering on the matter of restoring Tarquinius to the throne. He relies on the help of the gods, who are the source of Roman virtue and proclaims: "*I will hear what Porsenna has to say; and if he intends to humiliate Rome's freedom and laws through an unworthy peace, he will be reproached and meet our arms*." (II/9). He then enters Porsenna's tent.

Horatius, who has always stood firmly by the consul, suddenly begins to doubt him. He fears that Publius Valerius will eventually yield and give Clelia's hand in marriage to Tarquinius (II/10). Clelia herself firmly rejects this possibility as her love for Horatius is unwavering and she would rather die than betray her heart.

Tarquinius, secretly listening to Clelia's confession, was finally bold enough to step out of his tent now that the consul was no longer present, and openly asks Clelia why she will not marry him (II/11). Clelia basically repeats her previous declaration of love for Rome and Horatius in front of Tarquinius. Before speaking for herself and emphasizing her love for Horatius, she speaks for Rome, asserting that the city refuses to re-establish tyranny (II/11). This marks the first direct confrontation between this Roman couple and their adversary, accompanied by an open, albeit unarmed, clash between virtue and pride.

Tarquinius boasts of his royal blood, but for Clelia, Horatius's virtue is the highest merit, which equals having royal blood. Although the Romans have no king and need no king, they know what virtues a truly legitimate monarch should possess: justice and piety. Tarquinius reacts with an insult, referring to Roman "shameful pride.", to which Clelia responds: "*Noble is pride, if it defies presumptuous audacity*" (II/11), claiming that pride in league with virtue is different than a pride of a tyrant. Tarquinius resorts to hurling insults, provoking both Horatius and Herminius to draw their swords.

A duel is narrowly averted when Porsenna emerges from his tent and intervenes, summoning his haruspices (II/12).[8] The act closes with a singing ballet performed by the haruspices, who observe an eagle flying across the sky. A falcon attempts to catch up to the eagle but fails. The haruspices interpret this omen as favouring the Romans and their virtue, while it forbodes the downfall of pride and Tarquinius:

8 Haruspices, singular haruspex – Etruscan oracles foretelling future from the entrails of killed sacrificial animals. Here, however, they make prophecies based on the flight of birds, which is normally a practice done by Roman augurs. ADKINS, Lesley – ADKINS, Roy A. *Antický Řím: Encyklopedická příručka* [*Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome*]. Praha: Slovart, 2012, p. 277.

"The eagle's splendid flight,
soaring up, she splits the air
tells us that virtue
will remain unbeaten an free.
And the falcon, so bold and swift,
that cannot overtake its pray,
foretells that pride
will never ascend the throne."

Two allegorical figures mingle between the dancing haruspices: Love of Glory (*l'Amor de la Gloria*) and Roman Strength (*La Fortezza Romana*).

Act III

The set shows the former royal gardens on the Etruscan-occupied hill of Ianicul on a moonlit night.

Tarquinius and a handful of soldiers quietly approach the dwellings of the Roman women held hostage (III/1). Porsenna's amicable negotiations with the consul are diminishing Tarquinius's hopes of the Roman throne, so he decides to seize Clelia as leverage. Meeting her in the gardens, he grabs her hand and attempts to drag her to his tent. Forced to defend her virtue, Clelia has found herself in a same situation like poor Lucretia. Tarquinius mirrors Sextus's actions, seizing her at night, with charm and force, ultimately threatening her reputation (III/1):

Cle. *Let go of me. Is this how you keep the hostages safe?*
Tar. *Come willingly to my love, or you'll be forced to follow my will.*
Cle. *First schemes, and now threats?*
Leave, or my virtue will summon the guards.
Tar. *Guards? Against Tarquinius?*
I will say I was lured here by your invitation,
and your virtue will be called in question.
Cle. *A true brother of Sextus! Ungodly knave, would you...?*
Tar. *You resist in vain. Let's go. And Clelia has no reason to fear Sextus in Titus. My love will be set aflare by Hymenaios, not violence.*
Cle. *Only Horatius...*
Tar. *Horatius is not here. Come.*

Then Clelia takes fate into her own hands and manages to snatch Tarquinius's sword (III/1). She is about to stab him with his own weapon, when Herminius intervenes having witnessed the whole exchange. He challenges Tarquinius to a duel, but Clelia refuses to return Tarquinius's sword, leaving him humiliated and seething with anger. Defeated and vowing revenge, Tarquinius exits (III/2).

Clelia also leaves, resolved to prove that as a woman, she is not any weaker than a man (III/3). Inspired by Horatius's bravery, she wishes to demonstrate her own Roman Strength (*Fortezza*) and thus she refuses the help offered by Herminius.

Shortly afterward, Porsenna receives word that a group of soldiers has attempted to infiltrate the camp of the Roman female hostages (III/5). In Mucius's presence, Porsenna swears that the perpetrators, whoever they may be, will not go unpunished. As they talk, Mucius gradually dashes Porsenna's hopes of a favourable resolution with the Roman Senate:

"*The laws of our fatherland do not support your desires: daughters of Rome are not allowed to bear heirs to foreign kings*." (III/5). Just as Herminius rejected Tarquinius's offer for Clelia to become the mother of future Tarquinii, Mucius now refuses a "foreign king's" offer, placing Valeria in the same role for potential Etruscan heirs. At the same time, he asserts the Constancy with which he is prepared to defend his love for Valeria, confronting Porsenna with one of the central virtues. The Etruscan king cannot help but admire Mucius's Constancy.

Valeria enters with a chorus of gardeners, praying for the Morning Star to rise and bring peace (III/6). Porsenna questions her desire for peace, which she could easily secure by marrying him. However, she again declares her love for Mucius, at the same time asserting (just like the consul moments ago) that Rome will not agree to such a humiliating peace. Her refusal is reminiscent of Clelia's earlier reply to Tarquinius (II/10), but unlike Clelia, Valeria does not represent the Roman virtue, but Constancy, through which she earns (just as Mucius did) Porsenna's admiration.

Tarquinius arrives on scene and accuses Horatius of treason for aiding Clelia and the Roman hostages escape across the Tiber (III/7). Mucius, however, persuades Porsenna to trust Horatius's virtue, let him keep his sword and have Publius Valerius judge him.

As Tarquinius expresses his own distrust of all the Romans (III/8), Mucius reiterates to Tarquinius the same concept conveyed by Horatius and Clelia (II/11): a true sovereign displays virtue, not vice (see the analysis for Mucius's exact words).

Unlike Tarquinius, however, Porsenna trusts the Romans' virtue and integrity, values Roman Constancy and Strength and now openly acknowledges the truth of the words of Tiberinus (III/9).

Publius Valerius arrives at Ianicul at dawn (III/10). He has brought along Clelia, who then recounts how she fled with the other women across Tiber to Rome, but is reluctant to reveal the reason for her flight. Herminius, who has witnessed what happened between Tarquinius and Clelia, speaks up and Clelia shows the sword as proof, earning Porsenna's admiration – Porsenna admires Clelia's Strength, and despises Tarquinius's fury. Both she and Horatius are acquitted and their virtue triumphs over Tarquinius's pride.

As expected, the consul does not bring news of Roman surrender: "*We wish for peace, but this peace cannot violate our laws. Porsenna, these laws forbid Valeria to marry a king. The community would rather have bloodshed than the rule of kings. The last day of our freedom would be the last day of Rome. Such is the answer of the people and the Senate. Peace is in your hands, but war is in your hands too.*" (III/10)

In the end, Porsenna chooses peace, hoping he will be as steadfast and strong as the Romans: "*Yes, I want peace. I yield to the haruspices' pronouncements, your deities, your virtue,*

and the great Goddess, who desires your welfare." (III/10). Afterward, Porsenna withdraws his support for Tarquinius and asks the consul to grant him at least his hereditary royal property, which Publius Valerius is happy to do. Tarquinius offers no protest, concluding his role with a curt remark that it is necessary to yield to fate. Porsenna also renounces his desire for Valeria and becomes a friend of Rome, even if the peace is not sealed with marriage. Constancy and Strength triumph, just like the Tiberinus had predicted.

The opera ends in celebrating the two Roman virtues featured in the title: "*CONSTANCY and STRENGTH beget the most illustrious heroes*." (III/10).

In the final *licenza*, the personified Spirit of Rome (*Genio di Roma*) accompanied by Di Penates appears, celebrating the goddess Vesta. At the same time they reveal that behind the identity of Rome, Bohemia was hidden. Likewise, the goddess celebrating her birthday was supposed to represent Empress Elisabeth Christine. At the same time, the Di Penates celebrate peace and two allegorical figures dance with them: the Love of Peace (*l'Amore della Pace*) and the Public Wellbeing (*la Pubblica Felicità*).

Analysis

Love as a Force in the Struggle for Freedom against Pride and Tyranny

Love has a cardinal role in the struggle of virtue (*virtù*) with pride (Horatius and Clelia) as well as when Constancy and Strength drive the actions of the characters (Mucius and Valeria). Pariati is the first librettist to place both young women and both couples in comparable situations when facing the enemy. He deliberately draws parallels between them, even as their love stories unfold differently. Though Porsenna and Tarquinius are distinct antagonists, who treat their intended lovers and rivals each in their own way, both Roman couples ultimately fight for the same cause.

Both young women first decline the amorous proposals of their enemies (Valeria I/5, Herminius on behalf of Clelia I/5) and then profess love for their Roman lovers (Valeria I/8, Clelia I/11).

In the second and third acts Clelia and Valeria's rejection of their foreign suitors becomes a matter of patriotic duty, besides their personal reasons, emphasising that they reject them on behalf of their fatherland. Clelia also confronts Tarquinius with Horatius's virtue (II/11), while Valeria and Mucius both proclaim the constancy of their love when speaking to Porsenna (III/6). Just as Clelia would rather die than betray Horatius and Rome, Valeria would rather place her hand in fire (like Mucius did) than give it in marriage to her enemy.

Both Valeria's and Clelia's love for their chosen men is inextricably linked to Rome's freedom, underscored by their anger and hatred for their city's enemies. While Clelia struggles with a proud tyrant who wants to claim Rome by force, Valeria opposes a king who would honourably gain her as a pledge for peace, albeit humiliating.

Valeria (I/1) and Clelia (II/11) are both accused of being proud by their unwanted suitors. They each have to defend this pride – which, by extension, refers to all of Rome.

Yet, in the eyes of the Romans, only this kind of "Roman" pride is justified: "*pride is a merit when it serves virtue*" (Valeria) and "*Noble is pride, if it defies presumptuous audacity*" (Clelia).

Similarly, when the two young men confront their adversaries, they both voice the same belief—that it is utterly unacceptable for Roman women to marry tyrants or foreign kings and bear them heirs.: "*our blood will not serve tyrants to expand*" (Herminius about Clelia, I/4); "*daughters of Rome are not allowed to bear heirs to foreign kings*." (Mucius about Valeria, III/5).

It is precisely these parallel situations in their love stories, particularly where the young women are identified with Rome, that resonate most strongly with the contemporary reality of 1723 and represent the strongest political allegory. At the time, Charles VI had two daughters, who could potentially become pawns in the marriage plans of the elector of Saxony Frederick Augustus II, who had set his sights on them already in their early years as potential brides for his sons. [9]

These parallels between the love stories do not appear in earlier operas mentioned above, possibly because they are not tributary pieces. The earlier *dramas per musica* tend to focus on the inner suffering of Mucius, torn between his love for Rome and his love for Valeria, whom he must relinquish to Porsenna for the sake of his fatherland. Pariati, however, has only hinted at Mucius's inner struggle in order to give him a reason to attack Porsenna and then demonstrate his Constancy and Strength before him.

Roman Virtue in Opposition to Pride, and Freedom Defended through Constancy and Strength

The opera's plot clearly alternates between moments where the conflict of Roman virtue (*virtù*) and Tarquinius's pride is the pivotal theme and those where Constancy and Strength take centre stage. While Roman virtue is mentioned in the very outset of the opera in the verbal confrontation between the captives and the enemies (I/1), Constancy and Strength begin to play a role only after they are introduced by Tiberinus as the guiding forces behind Rome's ultimate victory (I/3). From that moment, these two virtues drive the Romans' transformation from ordinary yet resolute individuals into heroes capable of superhuman feats. Constancy is first notable in the Consul (I/7–9), and Strength is shown soon after through Horatius, who at the same time represents the triumph of Roman virtue over Tarquinius's pride at the Ponte Sublicio (I/12). This pivotal moment also marks the first instance in which Porsenna recognizes and admires both Roman Strength and virtue (II/1).

From this moment on, the battle between virtue (*virtù*) and pride takes shape as the personal struggle between Horatius and Clelia on one side, and Tarquinius on the other (II/11-12, III/1-2, III/7, III/10). In contrast, Roman Constancy and Strength are directed exclusively at Porsenna, who admires both virtues as they manifest through

9 VÁCHA et. al. 2010, pp. 125–126.

Mucius and Valeria (II/5-7, III/5-6), while he admires Strength in Horatius first (II/2) and ultimately in Clelia (II/10). Porsenna is not meant to be defeated, but to be enlightened: through the influence of Constancy and Strength, he comes to recognise that the virtuous Romans are worthy of their freedom and that Rome is protected by the gods' supernatural power from the hereditary claims of its former kings. Porsenna ultimately accepts that it would be futile to fight to restore tyranny and aspires to embody Constancy and Strength himself (III/10).

Thus, while Roman virtue (*virtù*) triumphs over the "native" tyrant, Constancy and Strength defend Roman freedom against the "foreign" king Porsenna. While the earlier librettists also presented two different antagonists beaten through different means, Pariati was unique in his emphasis on the means of defeating the "virtuous". Porsenna was not beaten by the Roman heroes, but his true opponents were actually Constancy and Strength – implicitly referring Emperor Charles VI and his political message. Given the dynastic context of the work's creation, Porsenna's defeat through Constancy and Strength is an allegorical depiction of Charles being able to defeat his political adversaries through virtues rather than arms.

Virtuous Woman Opposing a Tyrant: the Opera *Costanza e Fortezza* Echoing the Struggle of Lucretia with Sextus Tarquinius

Pariati was not the first to reference Lucretia's tragic fate through the plot itself – placing one of the heroines into a situation where her honour is at risk had already appeared in Minato's original version of the story from 1665. However, Pariati also set the struggle between virtue (*virtù*) and pride against the backdrop of Lucretia's struggle with Sextus Tarquinius, at times alluding to her humiliating defeat. The opera establishes a parallel between Lucretia and Rome (feminine in Italian), both once humiliated by the Tarquini. Yet but as the plot unfolds, it becomes clear that history will not repeat itself and Rome will not be humiliated again.

Lucretia's tragic fate is explicitly mentioned only in the first confrontation of the Roman captives with Tarquinius and Porsenna (I/1) and then clearly alluded in Clelia's fight with Tarquinius (III/1).

While at the onset of the opera, the whole city of Rome shares Lucretia's vulnerability, once the enemies propose marriage to the two Roman maidens, this vulnerability shifts to them and they gradually become identified with Rome.

The tension between Rome and the two young women, on one side, and Tarquinius and Porsenna, on the other, culminates in Tarquinius's attempt to kidnap Clelia (III/1), which is yet another different, more insidious, attack on Rome after Porsenna's first attempt (I/1) and Tarquinius's charge on the Ponte Sublicio (I/11–12) failed. This time, however, no deity intervenes, nor does a hero like Horatius come to her aid. Instead, Clelia discovers her own Roman Strength, bravely defending her virtue and even going on the offensive. She becomes the personification of Rome, ready to fight the enemy (III/10). In the end, it is Clelia's Strength that leads to a happy resolution.

The only alternative to this happy ending is total destruction, as was the case in Lucretia's story. This is still a very real possibility towards the end of the story. The Romas would rather be destroyed than dishonoured by the tyrant Tarquinius.

This constant tension between virtue and pride, manifested as the struggle between a threatened woman and a tyrant, mirrored the contemporary political situation. The plot itself, in which Rome symbolized Bohemia (both of feminine gender in Italian), effectively conveyed the message, while symbolic motifs further underscored it. The eagle, a Habsburg symbol, in the sky at the end of Act II represented undefeated virtue and freedom.[10] The proud falcon's futile attempt to catch up with the eagle was interpreted as the triumph of virtue over arrogance. Notably, eagle (*la aquila*) is a feminine noun in Italian, which aligns with the opera's broader theme of the threatened feminine element resisting a masculine threat. This is in line with the previously published assertions that *Costanza e Fortezza* was an appeal for retaining the Lands of the Bohemian Crown in the Austrian succession, rejecting hereditary claims through marriage and advocating for Charles VI's female offspring to be prioritized as rightful heirs. Neither his daughters nor any of Habsburg hereditary lands would not become victimised by tyrants a give them heirs – words used by Herminius as he declines Tarquinius's offer on behalf of Clelia (I/4, see above). Even virtuous "foreign kings" are subject to this rule (III/5, see above).

Positive	**Negative**
Lucretia	Sextus Tarquinius
Rome	Titus Tarquinius and his relatives
Virtù (Horatius and Clelia)	Pride (Tarquinius)
Constancy and Strength (Publius Valerius, Valeria, Mucius)	Humiliating peace, loss of freedom (Porsenna)
Clelia	Titus Tarquinius
Valeria	Porsenna
La Costanza Romana (dancing allegorical figure)	Il Valore degli Etruschi (dancing allegorical figure)
Eagle (*la aquila*)	Falcon (*il falco*)
Bohemia, Charles VI and his female offspring	Electoral Princes of Saxony and Bavaria and anyone who does not respect the Pragmatic Sanction

Tab. 2 Motifs and characters used as unarmed feminine symbols, protected by gods and defended by virtue against the armed masculine tyranny.

10 WESSELY 1969, p. 18.

The Roman virtues of Constancy and Strength as a hidden image of Charles VI

Constancy and Strength, virtues driving Rome's struggle for freedom, affect solely the virtuous King Porsenna, guiding him to embrace a form of governance he had never known before – one without kings or hereditary rule, yet founded on virtue and sanctioned by the gods. In this light, the opera demonstrates how victory over an adversary as noble as Porsenna can be achieved "without shedding a single drop of blood" (Tiberinus, I/3). This noble peace is celebrated in the final *licenza* ("*O bella, nobil pace!*"). Likewise, Charles VI would defend his realm – secured by the Pragmatic Sanction – not through war, but by persuading his virtuous adversaries to choose peace. Such peace is attainable only if the citizens of Rome – and, allegorically, of Bohemia – are guided by the same virtues as their monarch, whose personal motto was *Constantia et Fortitudine*. This is in line with the final declaration of all the characters at the plot: "*Constancy and Strength beget the most illustrious heroes*" (III/10). The librettist himself also pointed out the close connection between the two virtues featured in the title and Charles VI in the preface to his libretto.[11]

The Ideal Image and Virtues of the "Rightful King"

Charles VI is celebrated in the libretto also as a ruler and king, though the royal tribute paid to the emperor is subtle. Instead of celebrating the Emperor directly, the opera portrays an ideal image of a virtuous ruler, whose personality profile is strikingly similar to the ideal self-representation of Charles VI. It is against this ideal "rightful king" that the Romans evaluate Tarquinius, and the tyrant repeatedly falls short.

The first time the image of this ideal ruler is portrayed during the verbal confrontation between Clelia, Horatius, Herminius and Tarquinius in the Etruscan camp (II/11). Tarquinius boasts of his royal blood. In the eyes of Clelia and Horatius, however, royal blood means nothing if its bearer is an unvirtuous and cowardly tyrant. Horatius, on the other hand, is virtuous and is therefore worthy of Clelia's love despite having no royal blood. Tarquinius claims that Horatius's defiance is wrongful, as he considers himself the rightful king of the Romans. Horatius and Clelia then list the qualities a truly legitimate king must possess and royal blood is not one of them. The image of the ideal ruler is brought up by Horatius and Clelia: "*A rightful king, with both Justice and Piety ever by his side, does not want for kingdoms. Nay, Heaven crowns him with diadem over diadem and the love of his subjects places thrones at his feet.*" (II/11). The use of plural in "kingdoms" and "thrones" clearly point to Charles VI, Emperor of Rome, King of Bohemia and Hungary. Horatius then names justice and piety as his chief virtues.

Besides the mentioned virtues, but also his merits are emphasised, ensuring that such a ruler obtains the favour of the Heavens (II/11).

11 See the foreword to the libretto: PARIATI, Pietro: *Costanza e Fortezza: Festa teatrale per musica da rappresentarsi nel reale castello di Praga* [...]. G. P. van Ghelen: Vienna, 1723.

In Act III, Mucius finds himself in a similar situation, when confronted by Tarquinius. In his aria (*Mal brama il regno*, III/8), Mucius lists virtues that ruler worthy of ruling the Romans should have: just clemency, pure innocence and pious benevolence.[12] Again, justice and piety appear, this time combined with benevolence and clemency and innocence, all portraying the idealised image of Charles VI, hidden behind the description of the worthy ruler.

The Virtues of the Goddess Vesta and the Empress Elisabeth Christine

From the moment the god of the Tiber reveals that Vesta is celebrating her birthday on the very day of the decisive battle for Roman freedom, it becomes evident that the goddess is supposed to represent the empress, who was also celebrating her birthday. The praise bestowed upon Vesta at this point is, in fact, already directed toward Elisabeth Christine. While the reference to the "happy" and "radiant" day of her birth serves as the most overt indication of this connection, it is far from the only one. He ascribes to Vesta two virtues, same as those that the "ideal king" has: clemency and benevolence that are not typically attributed to Roman citizens, but are traditionally associated with rulers (I/3).[13]

In the opera's *licenza*, the Genius of Rome no longer mentions Vesta's virtues but reveals to the audience that it is Elisabeth Christine who is being honoured through the figure of Vesta. He then turns to the empress, seated in the stalls beside her imperial husband, and addresses her directly. He extols her "great light" and her merits which elevate her above all goddesses.[14]

Conclusion

The paper has explored but a small fragment of what can be said about the opera *Costanza e Fortezza*. It highlights the central role of love and virtues, which are depicted in this allegorical tribute through a different lens than in the contemporary *dramma per musica*. It explores the tension between the Roman virtue (*virtù*) and Tarquinius's pride as well as the pivotal role that Constancy and Strength played in defence of the Roman

12 Othmar Wessely mentions this passage in the libretto, drawing a parallel with specifically Habsburg clemency (*clementia austriaca*). See WESSELY 1969, p. 18.

13 Othmar Wessely claims that these "more feminine" virtues of Vesta and the Empress are an opposing counterpart of Strength and Constancy, the "more masculine" virtues. See WESSELY 1969, p. 18.

14 The author explores some of Pariati's topoi used as tribute to Elisabeth Christine in 1723 in a study based on her dissertation: VESELÁ, Irena: "Venga quel Dì felice!" Dynastisch-politische Botschaften der musikalischen Huldigungswerke für Karl VI. und Elisabeth Christine (1723), In TELESKO, Werner (ed.). *Die Repräsentation der Habsburg-Lothringischen Dynastie in Musik, visuellen Medien und Architektur / Representing the Habsburg-Lorraine Dynasty in Music, Visual Media and Architecture 1618–1918*. Wien–Köln–Weimar 2017, pp. 135–157. See the relevant chapter in the prepared monograph.

freedom, ultimately leading to a peace dignified worthy of Roman dignity. It follows the love stories of two Roman couples facing similar trials but employing different virtues in their struggles; the first couple represents Strength and Constancy in particular, while the other combats pride through virtue while demonstrating remarkable Strength. It also emphasizes the importance of Lucretia's story as an underlying metaphor for the idea of a threatened virtuous Rome defending herself from a violent proud aggressor. All of this shows Pariati's unique approach to a tributary piece, employing a subject matter taken from previous *drammas per musica*.

The analysis has drawn attention to key moments within the narrative, pointing out how they were interconnected and how they underscore the political message of the work in terms of the dynasty. Focusing on the particular passages that highlighted the importance of virtue, Constancy and Strength and the connection between love and patriotism has also brought insights on how these passages might refer to the current dynastic and political situation of the Habsburgs. Not letting daughters marry "foreign kings" and tyrants who would seize the throne or showing how virtue has greater importance than royal blood were clear messages to anyone who would aim to gain the crown of Bohemia in a time when male heirs were scarce and the future implementation of the Pragmatic Sanction was imminent.

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