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Jillian Andersen

## Questions of Authorship in Josquin, Monteverdi, and Mozart: Documentary versus Stylistic Evidence

Questions of authorship in regard to musical compositions have long vexed and even plagued musicologists. Ideally, a scholar would be able to count on reliable biographical or documentary evidence, such as musical manuscripts, letters, and editions of musical scores, to identify the true composer of a work. Unfortunately, this is often not possible. When a previously accepted attribution comes into question due to a lack of sources or when the evidence based on available sources is inconclusive, a popular strategy has been to compare the stylistic musical features of the work to other compositions by the alleged composer. Such an investigation includes the examination of motives, melodic patterns, the larger form of the work, the harmonic blueprint, and the techniques the composer uses in voice-leading and counterpoint. In many cases, stylistic evidence has ultimately been used as a means for further supporting an erroneous attribution based on arguably inconclusive documentary evidence. In the absence of decisive evidence derived from sources, scholars have reinterpreted or overridden theories based primarily on documentary evidence in favor of conjectures relying on stylistic evidence. Stylistic analysis has long played a role in authorship debates; however, the drive in the late twentieth century to infuse musical analysis with objectivity and scientific rigor has changed the nature of stylistic evidence in musicological debates. By attempting to apply objective criteria to a subjective approach, can such studies result in objective and definite answers? To what degree are scholars successful at being objective? How does the availability of documentary evidence affect the nature of consequent stylistic analyses? Within this study, I seek to explore concrete examples of

the use of this stylistic approach in order to better understand the virtues and failings of stylistic analysis and to answer such questions.

Three popular subjects of musicological study are often subjected to musical analysis in an effort to determine the authenticity of problematic works: Josquin des Prez (c. 1450-1521), Claudio Monteverdi (1567- 1643), and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). Scholars have applied distinct approaches when scrutinizing the works of these composers. Josquin and Monteverdi scholars face biographical challenges because both composers lived before an age in which composers were subjected to scrupulous biography and cataloguing. Consequently, modern scholars were left with a murky biography and an even more ambiguous works list for the two men. Adding to the confusion of Josquin research, scholars only recently untangled the composer from three other musicians that had been mistakenly believed to be synonymous to Josquin des Prez: Juschinus de Kessalia, Johannes Stokem, and Josquin Steelant.<sup>1</sup> Even though Monteverdi belonged to a later generation, we still have little factual information about his final years. Yet more disheartening, scholars have knowledge of a number of works attributed to Monteverdi through a handful of letters and librettos, but have no manuscripts or printings of the works to examine. Such challenges, as well as the historical importance of the composers in question, have caused the two composers to become increasingly popular topics of musicological study.

The case of Mozart is quite different than that of Josquin's and Monteverdi's since scholars have access to letters to and from the man himself, diary entries written by his wife and other people close to him, a thematic index prepared by the composer himself covering his works from 1784 up to his death in 1791, and extensive autograph material, including some sketches and heavily marked autograph scores, much of which is dated. Accordingly, countless Mozart biographies line library shelves, filled with detailed historical information. These invaluable

clues into Mozart's life give an advantage to Mozart scholarship simply unavailable to Renaissance scholars. However, despite this overwhelming discrepancy in resources, stylistic analysis has gained an increasing role in the debates over works of questionable authenticity for numerous Josquin and Monteverdi works as well as fewer but still a significant number of Mozart works. Three key works illustrate this phenomenon in instructive ways: *Absalon fili mi*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and the Requiem mass. The distinct variance in available documentary resources for the works reveals the strengths and a number of vital flaws of the stylistic approach and promotes informed discussion of the efficacy of stylistic studies.

### *Absalon fili mi*

Little documentation exists to provide scholars with the details of Josquin's life; however, the available sources confirm he was embraced as a talented musician and attained notable success within his lifetime. Josquin was the first musician to be called *maestro di cappella* at the chapel of Ercole d'Este in Ferrara from the end of April 1503 to April 1504 and the payment of 200 ducats made him the "highest-paid singer in the history of the Ferrarese chapel."<sup>2</sup> Petrucci's publications of three books devoted to Josquin in 1502, 1505, and 1514 further exemplify Josquin's popularity throughout his life. In the first half of the sixteenth century, Petrucci had not allotted another composer more than one book and it was exceedingly rare for him to compile an entire book with the works of only a single composer; clearly Josquin's music was held in especially high regard. After his death in 1521, Josquin's works continued to circulate and his popularity grew further still. Significantly, Martin Luther remarked in 1540 that Josquin is "the master of the notes, because they must do what he wants; the other composers have to do what the notes want."<sup>3</sup> In 1547 Henricus Glareanus, an influential music theorist, cited a

significant quantity of Josquin's works in his *Dodekachordon* and praised him as "the greatest of all composers."<sup>4</sup> Though Josquin's influence slowly began to decline by the end of the sixteenth century, his rediscovery in the late eighteenth century by Burney ignited newfound interest in the composer which has continued unabated in recent times. In 1984, Gustav Reese and Jeremy Noble labeled him "one of the greatest composers of the entire Renaissance and certainly the most important before the second half of the 16th century" and in David Fallows's comprehensive study he compares Josquin's influence on composers of the sixteenth century to that of Beethoven on the nineteenth and Stravinsky on the twentieth.<sup>5</sup> Often referred to as the parent of music, Josquin has long delighted both theorists and audiences alike with the beauty of his music.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, concerns over the authenticity of numerous works previously attributed to the composer have become increasingly problematic matters in Josquin scholarship.

A shockwave was sent through Josquin scholarship in 1987 when questions concerning the authenticity of the motet *Absalon fili mi*, once an all-time favorite among historians and listeners alike, were proposed independently by Joshua Rifkin and Jaap van Benthem. Rifkin's and Benthem's articles represented a turning point in debates of Josquin authorship. A piece that had previously been a stronghold in the Josquin canon was critically examined and deemed a misattribution. Looking back on this decisive moment David Fallows, in his new study of Josquin, dramatically wrote that "at this point it became an open field;" almost any Josquin work was now suddenly at risk.<sup>7</sup> The first factor that led this work into the line of fire was a growing drive in the musicological field to be more critical of centuries-old sources, especially when a source bearing an ascription was produced after the presumptive composer's death. While it appeared promising that three different sources ascribed *Absalon* to Josquin, this was hardly a good indication of accuracy, since all three are posthumous prints from Germany dating from

1540, 1558, and 1559 and the second two prints are clearly derivative of the first. Furthermore, the earliest source of the work, “a manuscript compiled by the scriptorium associated with the Habsburn-Burgundian court”<sup>8</sup> most likely printed sometime between 1513 and 1525 (placing the printing perhaps shortly before Josquin’s death or perhaps shortly after), is anonymous and considerably predates the first print bearing Josquin’s name.<sup>9</sup> Equally significant, as both Benthem and Rifkin mentioned, the 1540 printing that contains the earliest attribution to Josquin (Melchior Kriesstein’s *Selectissimae necnon familiarissimae cantiones* [Best and Best-Known Songs]) has not proven to be a reliable source for attributions.<sup>10</sup> According to Benthem, of Kriesstein’s eight attributions to Josquin within the collection, “apart from the Agnus dei of the *Missa Hercules dux Ferrarie*, only *Plus nulz regretz* and (perhaps) *N’esse point ung grant desplaisir* can be accepted as authentic.”<sup>11</sup> This realization undermines the credibility of all Josquin attributions made within this text. It is suspect that *Absalon* gained its attribution only after Josquin’s death and further rise to popularity and also that the ascription is contained within a source that many believe had falsely misattributed other works. Georg Forster’s remark in 1540, “I recall a certain great man saying that now Josquin is dead he is writing more compositions than when he was still alive;” illustrates the tricky nature of posthumous attributions.<sup>12</sup> Understandably, the uncertain documentary evidence caused many scholars, such as Benthem, Rifkin, and more recently Honey Meconi, to take pause.

Due to the inconclusive documentary evidence (not to mention the evidence that actually points away from Josquin), scholars have endeavored to reinforce their claims of misattribution with stylistic musical analyses. In the process of these stylistic investigations scholars have identified a number of musical features of *Absalon* that appear inconsistent with all other works reliably attributed to Josquin. One striking characteristic is the range of the bassus, which

descends all the way to a B-flat, an extremely uncommon range for the time. In fact, no other composition credited to Josquin, according to Nigel Davison, has a note lower than D.<sup>13</sup> In addition, *Absalon* has four signature flats in the bassus part, an anomalous trait for Josquin's motets. Rifkin contends that, disregarding the works he considers to be of dubious authorship (an ever-growing number), no other known composition of Josquin has a key signature with more than one flat in all voices. Rifkin also argues that while Kriesstein's edition uses a  $\text{C}$  mensuration, the anonymous transmission of *Absalon* has a  $\text{C}_2$  mensuration which is extremely rare in Josquin's works.

A further point of contention concerns the relationship between text and music within the motet. A few scholars have argued that the relationship between text and music within the first 60 bars is weak because not enough emphasis is placed on the declamation of the text. Meconi argues that the music-text relationship in *Absalon* may exhibit a close relationship between words and music in fifteenth-century terms, "where text expression was more often a matter of catching the mood of a text," but that the work does not musically interpret the text in a manner that would be satisfying according to the aesthetic standards of most sixteenth-century motets. This would be particularly true for motets by Josquin, because "proper text declamation, especially in motets, was of prime importance as one of the means of leading to a comprehension and thus expression of the text" and that this "characteristic feature of Josquin's music, is lacking in portions of *Absalon*."<sup>14</sup> While the relationship between words and music in *Absalon* does not seem to fit the usual aesthetic for motets at the time of its composition, Meconi claims that Josquin was particularly known for his uncanny ability to connect words with text, it would be especially unlikely that he composed *Absalon* and reverted back to a previous style of text declamation. Meconi also suggests that the pronounced use of melisma in *Absalon* argues

against its authenticity due to Josquin's immense concern with creating a close fit between text and music. Josquin extensively used "syllabic text setting, repeated notes, and rhythmic layout" to effectively emphasize the declamation of text; therefore, *Absalon* appears highly uncharacteristic of Josquin's musical output, leading Meconi to question the attribution.<sup>15</sup>

Rifkin, Benthem, and Meconi all cite these stylistic traits to claim that this work is incompatible with the Josquin repertoire. Furthermore, they each suggest that these features are far more congruent with the stylistic characteristics of composer Pierre de la Rue, a contemporary of Josquin who was employed by the Habsburg-Burgundian court (where scholars believe *Absalon* was commissioned) around the time they believe the work was composed. In a 1989 article "Lazarus versus Absalon: About Fiction and Fact in the Netherlands Motet," Benthem explains that while the contra B-flat in *Absalon* would be anomalous to Josquin's works, La Rue uses the unusually low note both in the "Introitus, Kyrie, and Agnus dei of his *Requiem* setting, and the early chanson *Pourquoy non*."<sup>16</sup> Also, the use of the C2 mensuration instead of  is more commonly found in primary sources for La Rue compositions than in the sources for securely attributed Josquin works and La Rue has been shown in his early chansons to incorporate "a descendant 'modulation' with an apparently symbolic meaning on the text," just as the composer does for the word "non" (mm. 52-56) of *Absalon*.<sup>17</sup> Overall, Benthem argues that the striking parallels in vocal range, the presence of an unprepared D-flat major chord (at the words "La fin"), and the "strongly related melodic formulas as well as phrase structures" between *Pourquoy non* and *Absalon* suggest that *Absalon* is likely La Rue's composition, not Josquin's.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, if scholars are correct in their beliefs of when, where, and why the composition was commissioned it would make perfect sense that the current court composer, La Rue, would be the man hired to compose *Absalon*.

However, the view that La Rue composed *Absalon* is certainly not held by all. Davison, a respected scholar who has extensively studied the life and works of La Rue, argues that these features may not be characteristic of Josquin, but they are technically not typical of La Rue either. In the discussion over the multi-flat signature of *Absalon*, Davison notes: “Josquin occasionally gives a composition a partial two-flat signature, and La Rue occasionally gives a composition a two-flat signature in all voices. Neither Josquin nor La Rue is known to have given a signature of more than two flats to any voice in any composition, and the four flats found in the bassus of *Absalom* [sic] are as untypical for one as for the other.”<sup>19</sup> Davison’s comments on Benthem’s and Rifkin’s articles clearly show that the stylistic analysis of *Absalon* is by no means clear-cut. While a stylistic feature may be slightly more in line with one composer’s compositional output than another’s, if the trait is foreign to both composers then the judgment may require further scrutiny. Davison ultimately takes a more neutral stance, suggesting that the authorship of *Absalon* cannot be determined by these stylistic components alone and that the work should “remain an *opus dubium* for both composers, until such time as more unassailable evidence is forthcoming.”<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, David Fallows emphasizes the risky nature of style in debates of attribution. In light of his desire to focus on the documentary evidence available, Fallows does not outright reject the attribution of *Absalon* to la Rue, but he does claim that the documentary case for La Rue’s authorship is “almost non-existent” and “it rests mainly on the observation that the London choirbook was copied in the Alamire workshop that is generally associated with the Hapsburn-Burgundy court.”<sup>21</sup> Fallows claims that several other men are equally—if not more—likely to have composed the work including Brumel, who also used low clefs and the mandarin imitative style present in *Absalon* as well as Josse van Steelant, a musician and contemporary of Josquin

des Prez. Though no evidence exists to reveal that Steelant was a composer, Fallows claims that many musicians of the time occasionally composed; more importantly, if Josse van Steelant did compose *Absalon*, it could explain how the work came to be ascribed to Josquin in 1540. While Fallows admits his theory of Steelant's authorship is "obviously just a guess," he argues that to ascribe *Absalon* to la Rue or Brumel would be just as much of a gamble since stylistic evidence cannot provide definitive answers to questions of musical authorship.

The combination of uncertain documentary evidence and highly contested stylistic indicators has fueled the debate over *Absalon*'s authenticity since the appearance of Rifkin's and Benthem's provocative articles. The unfortunate fact that the first known source for the work bears no ascription to Josquin causes the later ascriptions to appear highly suspicious; however, it would be imprudent to use these circumstances to definitively rule out Josquin as the composer of *Absalon*. Perhaps other, earlier sources bearing Josquin's name existed at one time and the anonymous source was more of an anomaly. It is impossible to know for sure. Consequently, with a lack of definitive documentation, scholars have focused on the stylistic oddities of *Absalon*. The current consensus is that these features completely rule out Josquin as *Absalon*'s composer, though a few scholars such as Davison still resist this conclusion as decisive. In general, the stylistic analyses of the work have been well-received, largely due to the seemingly objective aspects of these studies. While stylistic studies are inherently subjective, at least in part, evident care has been made to avoid *value* judgments by focusing much of the discussion on the specific musical details, such as the number of flats in the key signature or the ranges of the vocal lines, to prove that the style of *Absalon* is vastly different than the style of confirmed Josquin works. Benthem, Rifkin, and Meconi may not have provided a definitive argument that Josquin cannot be considered a candidate for authorship, but their use of precise stylistic

evidence has opened up the discourse of *Absalon* by encouraging scholars to include such musical factors when considering authenticity of Josquin works.

In contrast, the debate over the authenticity of *Absalon fili mi* exemplifies a major weakness of stylistic analysis: widespread views on the stylistic qualities of a work are subject to change due to external forces, whether this involves a reevaluation of current sources or the discovery of a new document. For example, Meconi staunchly claims that the relationship between text and music in the motet is uncharacteristic of Josquin, however previous scholars often viewed this aspect within *Absalon* as representative of Josquin's works. In a 1968 book, James Thomson cited the end of the motet when the vocal lines descend in pitch to accompany the words "But I shall go down weeping into the grave" in his explanation of Josquin's typical attentiveness to the connection between words and music.<sup>22</sup> This phenomenon illustrates the direct impact that revelations concerning the reliability, or in this case unreliability, of documentary evidence have on consequent stylistic studies. Rather than approach the work objectively, such discoveries cause scholars to revisit the score with the preconceived notions that affect their understanding of the musical traits of the work. Many style characteristics, such as the manner of text expression, are not objective qualities and could be interpreted in more than one way. Accordingly, the composer's technique in fusing text with music within *Absalon* may appear to be typical of Josquin to a scholar when the work had appeared securely attributed, but later appear uncharacteristic of Josquin after questions concerning authenticity had already surfaced.

In understanding both the strengths and weaknesses of the stylistic arguments, I must side with Davison on one central observation: scholars should not be so hasty to deem the work as authentic or inauthentic, even if they concern themselves with only the more objective musical features of the work. Can we assume that anomalous features of a work are clear signs of a

misattribution? If so, how can we explain the atypical, yet certifiably genuine, pieces in other composers' canons? In fact, within a 2002 review of Richard Sherr's *The Josquin Companion*, Allan Atlas explains this issue in a "make-believe story" he has often told his students.

Imagine that in 1847 a knowledgeable English musician returns from twenty-five unbroken years at sea and heads directly to the Hanover Square Rooms where he hears a piece that the program claims is by Beethoven and calls his Ninth Symphony (the Philharmonic Society did in fact perform it that year). He listens intently, but then: 'No, it can't be', says the knowledgeable musician, who himself had often played nos. 1-8 and knew them inside-out: 'Beethoven never wrote a symphony with voices, never reversed the traditional order of the slow movement and the scherzo, never recalled the themes of the first three movements at the beginning of the fourth; no, this isn't Beethoven'. Obviously, the knowledgeable musician was wrong.<sup>23</sup>

As scholars, we strive to look for patterns that will provide us with answers to centuries-old questions; the truth is that these matters are never quite so simple. Like Beethoven explored the realm of voice in his Ninth Symphony, perhaps Josquin explored the lowest reach of the bassus; just as Beethoven experimented with the symphonic form in his reversal of the movements, maybe it was Josquin that experimented with an unusual key; and as Beethoven employed the themes from previous movements within the fourth, maybe Josquin was the composer that employed a style of voice declamation atypical of his other well-known motets. We simply cannot be sure.

Yet the inclination to purge the Josquin canon of uncharacteristic works has grown in recent decades. For example, *Missa Une mousse de Biscaye* is undoubtedly one of the more secure works in the Josquin canon in light of the documentary evidence. In contrast to *Absalon*, the attribution of *Missa Une mousse* to Josquin was included on a manuscript copied during the composer's lifetime and meets several important criteria for authenticity that many Josquin attributions cannot.<sup>24</sup> However, such apparent authenticity has not prevented some scholars from feeling a great unease about *Missa Une mousse*, largely because it shows an unfamiliar stylistic side of the composer that sets it apart from other attested Josquin works.<sup>25</sup> In particular, the work has

been largely criticized for its “lack of clarity and consistency” in addition to its “crudities of part-writing and dissonance treatment.”<sup>26</sup> Though many scholars refuse to accept the authenticity of the mass, the debate over *Missa Une mousse* provides an excellent example of a securely documented work that appears largely uncharacteristic of current understandings of Josquin’s style. Consequently, these stylistic studies leave room for doubt and we must not purge *Absalon* from the Josquin canon when so much ambiguity still exists.

### *L’incoronazione di Poppea*

Claudio Monteverdi played a crucial role in the transition from the late Renaissance to the early Baroque style and his works have long been revered by musicologists, especially those interested in the Italian madrigal and early opera. In his 2011 *New York Times* article “The Greatest Composers,” Anthony Tommasini may not have selected Monteverdi as one of the top ten composers of all time, but he clearly struggled with the decision to omit him from the exclusive list.<sup>27</sup> Such admiration is by no means only a recent trend. In fact, during his lifetime, many professional musicians were appreciative of his work: Adriano Banchieri wrote in his *Conclusioni del suono dell’ organo* in 1608 “I must not omit the name of the most sweet composer of music in the modern style, Claudio Monteverdi . . . since his expression of the emotions, full of art, is truly worthy of complete commendation.”<sup>28</sup> In 1640, Benedetto Ferrari, Monteverdi’s friend and admirer, addressed the respected composer as “Oracolo Della Musica,” or “the prophet of music.”<sup>29</sup> As Monteverdi entered the arena of commercial opera, he became popular with audiences as well. Early in the twentieth century, C. Hubert H. Parry in his 1916 article “The Significance of Monteverde [sic]” described Monteverdi as “the fountain-head of

modern opera”<sup>30</sup> as well as “one of the most significant figures in the story of Music.”<sup>31</sup> Praise and admiration have endured in recent scholarship; contemporary scholars imagine Monteverdi to have been larger than life. In his influential *Short History of Opera* first published in 1945, Donald Jay Grout argues that Monteverdi was a revolutionary composer and that his “greatness lies in his power of interpreting human character and passions – a power which ranks him among the foremost musical dramatists of all times.”<sup>32</sup> Lorenzo Bianconi in 1982 sums up the modern view of Monteverdi’s musical influence when he describes the figure of Monteverdi as “towering over the entire musical scene of early seventeenth-century Italy.”<sup>33</sup> Calling this praise a considerable distinction for Monteverdi would be a gross understatement. In brief, Monteverdi has long been honored as a forward-looking composer who became a pioneer of the opera genre itself. To support their bold assertions concerning the perceived genius of his musical talent, many musicologists have held up the late opera *L’incoronazione di Poppea* as the pinnacle of Monteverdi’s musical achievement.

*L’incoronazione di Poppea*, Monteverdi’s final Venetian opera, was met with success in its premiere performance.<sup>34</sup> His contemporaries alleged that through his Venetian operas, Monteverdi had reclaimed his birthright and reasserted himself in the present and future of music.<sup>35</sup> Though the manuscript scores of the opera had been missing for almost two centuries, *Poppea* rapidly became a staple of the Monteverdi canon when one of the scores was rediscovered in 1888. Since then, critics and historians alike have lavished praise on the opera, citing the work as the result of Monteverdi’s natural progression toward musical genius.<sup>36</sup> Claudio Sartori went so far to say *Poppea* is “the culmination of his creative efforts, the fulfillment of a lifelong quest... It is the masterpiece desired and prepared for over an entire lifetime.”<sup>37</sup> The opera was first published by Hugo Goldschmidt in *Studien zur Geschichte der*

*italienischen Oper*, 2 in 1904 and was almost immediately performed in Paris in 1905 as well as in 1913, both times directed by Vincent d'Indy.<sup>38</sup> Following those performances, *Poppea* was directed by Charles Van den Borren at Brussels in 1914 and by Jack Westrup at Oxford in 1927.<sup>39</sup> Gian Francesco Malipiero soon included the opera in his edition for the Collected Works in 1931 and a facsimile of the work was published in 1938, edited by Giacomo Benvenuti.<sup>40</sup> Not only did *Poppea* enjoy a positive reception among scholars, its authenticity was initially unquestioned.<sup>41</sup> More recently, however, a critical look at the documentary evidence revealed the attribution to Monteverdi to be considerably shakier than previously acknowledged, sparking questions over the authenticity of sections of the work and even of the opera as a whole. The ensuing debate has become increasingly important in Monteverdi scholarship because the implications of the *Poppea* authenticity discussion extend far beyond the scope of the work alone: Monteverdi's legacy itself is at stake.

Long before they possessed manuscripts, librettos, or scenarios, scholars knew that Monteverdi had written operas for the Venetian stage thanks to librettist and historian Cristoforo Ivanovich. In an appendix to his 1681 book, *Minerva al tavolino*, Ivanovich attributes only two operas to Monteverdi: *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* in 1641 and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* in 1643, also citing a revival in 1646.<sup>42</sup> Shortly after the discovery of the *Ritorno* manuscript in 1881, "the Venetian librarian Taddeo Wiel identified one of the anonymous manuscripts in the Contarini Collection of the Biblioteca Marciana as the long-lost *Incoronazione di Poppea*"<sup>43</sup> under the title *Nerone*. With the known libretto (printed in 1656), the manuscript score, and Ivanovich's attribution in mind, scholars quickly accepted that Monteverdi was the composer of the score, despite a number of plot and musical discrepancies between the libretto and the manuscript.<sup>44</sup>

This attribution remained unquestioned until a second score was discovered by librarian Guido Gasperini at the Conservatorio S. Pietro a Majella in Naples in 1931; this score presented a number of problems. The score was “clearly linked to a libretto published in conjunction with a performance in Naples in 1651, eight years after Monteverdi’s death,” yet “it contained more music than the Venice score (and more text than the published libretto of 1656).”<sup>45</sup> Scholars struggled to explain how the work was expanded and additions were made eight years after Monteverdi’s death. This sparked a discussion among several key scholars, including Malipiero, whose aforementioned edition of Monteverdi Collected Works became a preferred source for scholars and performers, and Benvenuti, the Italian composer and musicologist that edited the Venice manuscript in 1938, over the importance of the Naples manuscript and what it reveals about the editing process of *Poppea*.<sup>46</sup> However, seventeenth-century Venetian opera authority Ellen Rosand contends that it was not until Wolfgang Osthoff’s research in the 1960s that scholars began to seriously doubt the authenticity of *Poppea*, or at least sections of the work. Osthoff “discovered that some of the music in the Venetian score, namely, the overture, was probably by [Francesco] Cavalli, that Cavalli had edited the score for performance, and that it was copied by one of Cavalli’s regular copyists active exclusively during the early 1650s.”<sup>47</sup> In raising questions of authenticity through evidence found in the Venetian manuscript, Osthoff opened up the proverbial floodgates and added even more complexity to the attribution debate.

Thomas Walker’s 1976 study casts further doubt on Ivanovich’s attributions to Monteverdi by discrediting *Minerva* and uncovering a number of crucial errors within the book.<sup>48</sup> Rosand cites Walker’s study and provides a few examples of Ivanovich’s erroneous claims: Ivanovich “attributed the Venetian revival of *Arianna*, Monteverdi’s most famous opera during his lifetime, not to Monteverdi but to Saccati; and he mistook the year, placing it in 1641

rather than 1640. He also attributed *Le nozze d'Enea e Lavinia* to Cavalli, erroneously assigning the libretto to Giacomo Badoaro.<sup>49</sup> At the time of Walker's study, *Minerva* was one of the most important pieces of documentary evidence supporting Monteverdi's authorship of *Poppea*.

Scholars had uncovered seven librettos, one scenario, and two scores, but while a few of these sources provide some information regarding the dates, theaters, and librettist for the opera, they remain silent on the topic of composer. Consequently, when *Minerva* became highly suspect, it appeared abundantly clear that "none of the known sources reliably ascribed the work to him."<sup>50</sup> As a result, the Monteverdi attribution began to appear tenuous.

The doubts provoked by Osthoff's and Walker's commentaries encouraged scholars such as Alessandra Chiarelli<sup>51</sup> and Lorenzo Bianconi<sup>52</sup> to question and examine the authenticity of other sections within the opera in addition to the overture: primarily the final love duet "Pur ti miro," which is considered by many to contain some of the most famous and well-crafted music of the whole of seventeenth-century opera. Bianconi explained in his 1982 book *Music in the Seventeenth Century* that "while both scores conclude with this duet, it is nevertheless absent from the Venetian performance of 1643." The solidly dated Scenario from the 1643 performance ends not with a sensual love duet, but with Nerone solemnly looking on as the consuls, tribunes, and Cupid himself all crown Poppea. More suspicious yet, "the 'Poppea' duet had already appeared as the final number in Benedetto Ferrari's *Il pastor region* – not, however, in the original Venetian production of 1640, but in a Bolognese revival of 1641" as well as "upon the 'musical chariot' *Il trionfo della fatica*, staged during the Roman Carnival of 1647 with music by Filiberto Laurenzi."<sup>53</sup> Bianconi also notes that Francesco Sacrati sets a trio in his opera *Finta pazza* on the same ground bass. Relying largely on documentary sources, including the operas of Ferrari, Laurenzi, and Sacrati, Chiarelli and Bianconi concluded that this beloved duet

was likely not composed by Monteverdi; Bianconi suggests that Ferrari, Laurenzi, Cavalli, and Sacrati are much likelier candidates.<sup>54</sup> This was a shocking blow to Monteverdi scholarship, which had long viewed the duet as the exemplar and capstone of Monteverdi's true musical talent and genius.

Due to the conflicting and confusing nature of the documentary sources, scholars took up stylistic studies of *Poppea* with renewed vigor in order to buttress their arguments for or against the authenticity of the work. In a 1989 article, “‘La Poppea Impasticciata’ or, Who Wrote the Music to ‘L’Incoronazione’ (1643)?,” Alan Curtis, who successfully conducted the opera in performance and on record, attempted to face the attribution issue through a careful analysis of the small musical “fingerprints” found within the opera, but first he justified his approach through an explanation of the inherent ambiguity found in the documentary sources. Curtis notes that Ivanovich's *Minerva* is the only source to attribute *Poppea* to Monteverdi and it originated long after the composer's and librettist's deaths.<sup>55</sup> As previously stated in the discussion of *Absalon*, this is a highly undesirable trait in an attribution source. The two older sources for *Poppea*, the scenario from Venice in 1643 and the 1651 Naples libretto, contain no reference to Monteverdi, which is also disappointing. Curtis also reminds the reader that Walker's study revealed several key inconsistencies in the ascriptions of *Minerva*, proving the book's attributions are far from reliable. In addition, Curtis asserts that it is highly questionable that *Poppea* is not mentioned in the “Laconismo delle alte qualità di Claudio Monteverde” by Matteo Caberloti Piovan di S. Thomà (1644). According to Curtis, Caberloti “knew Monteverdi well during the decade prior to his death in 1643” and his account provides us with “the principal – nearly the sole – source for our present-day knowledge of the composer's very last years.”<sup>56</sup> In

Curtis's opinion, the apparent lack of documentary evidence in support of Monteverdi's authorship of the opera opens the door to a stylistic approach to the authenticity debate.

This is certainly not to say Curtis believes that Monteverdi composed none of the music in *Poppea*. On the contrary, he quotes a letter recently discovered by Margaret Murata that "strengthens the possibility of a connexion [sic] between Monteverdi [and] *L'incoronazione di Poppea*."<sup>57</sup> Within this anonymous letter to Cardinal Mazarin dated March 25, 1643 the writer implies that Monteverdi was the star composer of the 1642-43 season. Since *Poppea* is the only opera that, to our knowledge, has been linked to Monteverdi's name for that season, Curtis suggests that this document attests that Monteverdi was in some way involved in its production. In addition to the implications of the letter, Curtis acknowledges that specific qualities present throughout most of the opera, including "the stylistic connections of much of it to *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* and, for 1643 in Venice, the conservative nature of certain of its particulars (the monodic laments of Ottavia, for example), as well as the dramatic force and economy of such dialogues as act I, scene 9 (Nerone / Seneca)" all strongly point to Monteverdi as the composer.<sup>58</sup> However, Curtis argues that the presence of these characteristics does not necessarily mean Monteverdi composed the entire opera alone.

Curtis first casts suspicion on the vocal line for the character Ottone through a discussion of the discrepancies between Ottone's solo and the instrumental lines. For example, in act I, scene 1, the instrumental ritornelli is pitched in C with a semibreve-triple time signature (three beats with the semibreve as unit) while the vocal line is in D with a minim-triple time signature (three beats with the minim as unit).<sup>59</sup> Further inconsistencies between Ottone's part with other vocal lines are present in both act I, scene 11 (Ottone and Poppea) and act II, scene 9 (Ottone and Drusilla). Curtis mentions that in other seventeenth-century operatic manuscripts, changes in cast

usually resulted in notational discrepancies such as these when the vocal part was rewritten, often by another composer. Consequently, Curtis avers that this is the most likely explanation for the inconsistencies and that “the role of Ottone had at some point to be rewritten for a singer with a slightly higher voice. Monteverdi, presumably because of illness or death, was unable or unwilling to make these changes, and the task was given to a younger composer, who used a more modern notation for triple meter.”<sup>60</sup> Curtis does not feel that an editor could have made these changes because he strongly believes “Ottone’s music was largely rewritten, not merely transposed,” thereby requiring the work of a composer.<sup>61</sup>

Concerning the authorship of the entire finale to *Poppea* (all of act III, scene 6), Curtis persuasively argues that musical characteristics occur in these sections that are not present within the more Monteverdian parts of the opera:

The style of the entire finale, whether in *Nap* [score found in Naples] or *Ven* [score found in Venice], contrasts sharply with that of the main body of the opera – so sharply and consistently, in fact, that I fail to see a single reason to attribute *any* of it to Monteverdi. The scene abounds with traits of the younger generation, traits which one also finds occasionally in acts 1 and 2 in the role of Ottone, but nowhere else in the opera, or in works known to be by Monteverdi.<sup>62</sup>

These “traits of the younger generation” include “written-out ornaments such as the appoggiatura both from above and from below,” “Lombard snaps” [a rhythm pattern that uses a sixteenth note on the downbeat followed by a dotted eighth note], “the slide,” various ‘free’ sequential ornaments, as well as the continuo “postlude,” the “unresolved fourth above the dominant which simply becomes the tonic without ever resolving to the leading tone” (often known as the “Clorinda cadence”), and the opening of a triple-meter section “with a rest on the downbeat, bass entrance on the second beat, and vocal entry on the third”<sup>63</sup> Along with the conflicting sources concerning the finale, as explained earlier by Bianconi, Curtis takes issue with the abrupt harmonic transition from the “exit of the two Consuls and two Tribunes (in B-flat) and the final

duet (in G)” and implies that this would not have been intentional on Monteverdi’s part.<sup>64</sup>

Overall, Curtis claims that the absence of these features from Monteverdi’s earlier works in conjunction with the inept harmonic transition and conflicting documentary evidence reveal that Monteverdi almost certainly did not take part in the composition of the finale. He also argues that these telltale characteristics exist not only in the finale but in Ottone’s vocal line as well, implying that “the entire final scene and most of the role of Ottone was written by another composer than was the main body of the opera:” a composer of “a generation younger than Monteverdi’s.”<sup>65</sup>

Though Curtis does not hastily rush to firmly attribute the work to another composer, he mentions a newly found source that “has at least cast a bold new light on the matter.”<sup>66</sup> The discovery of Sacrati’s *La finta pazza* revealed that Sacrati often used a fingerprint that Curtis had recognized in *Poppea*: the aforementioned opening of a triple-meter section with a rest on the downbeat, a bass entrance on the second beat, and the vocal entry on the third.<sup>67</sup> Largely, this feature has convinced Curtis that Sacrati likely participated in the revision and completion of *Poppea*. Concerning authorship of the duet “Pur ti miro,” Curtis originally believed that the most likely candidate for authorship of the duet was Ferrari once “Bianconi had discovered [Ferrari] to be in fact the author of the text of ‘Pur ti miro’ and so possibly, though not inevitably, also of the music.”<sup>68</sup> However, after the discovery of *La finta pazza*, Curtis found the musical features of the trio “Il canto m’alletta” from act I, scene 5, of Sacrati’s *La finta pazza* to be similar to those of the duet.<sup>69</sup> In addition to the melodic similarities and the analogous use of the G-major descending tetrachord, Curtis ultimately believes “Il canto m’alletta” also best corresponds to the erotic spirit that envelopes “Pur ti miro.”<sup>70</sup> Curtis ultimately believes that the

debate over authorship of “Pur ti miro” should not be a case of Ferrari vs. Monteverdi, but instead of Ferrari vs. Sacrati.<sup>71</sup>

Curtis’s compelling argument had an immense impact on the future scholarship of *Poppea*. One aspect of his argument, however, leaves something to be desired. Curtis accepts that Monteverdi was involved in the opera, yet he offers an extensive array of examples implying that Monteverdi was not involved including the inaccuracies of Ivanovich’s *Minerva*; the obvious lack of attributions to Monteverdi on extant scores, librettos, and scenerios, and the failure of Caberloti to reference the opera in his writings on Monteverdi. The main documentary evidence Curtis used to support Monteverdi’s involvement, the 1643 letter, is by no means definitive and, furthermore, Curtis buried the reference within a footnote. Since much of Curtis’s documentary evidence seems to call Monteverdi’s authorship of any part of the opera into question, one would expect him to devote more energy into asserting Monteverdi’s role through stylistic evidence. Unfortunately, Curtis included only a cursory description of the general “Monteverdian” qualities of the opera; the stylistic characteristics he noted to support his argument that Monteverdi composed at least parts of *L’incoronazione di Poppea* are hardly specific and rather subjective. Curtis’s subconscious willingness to readily accept Monteverdi as a contributor to *Poppea* largely reflects the overall reception of *Poppea* since its discovery. A bias that favors authenticity of the work has pervaded its history, even if the documentary case for it is dubious and the stylistic case revolves around generalities and subjectivities. This is not to say that the assumption is incorrect; the 1643 letter may be a more convincing source of evidence than the conspicuous silence of the other sources and perhaps no other composer of the time would be masterful enough to compose some of these “Monteverdian qualities” present in *Poppea*. However, this bias toward at least partial authorship reveals the pliability of stylistic

analyses, and in some cases the interpretation of documentary evidence, when assumptions have been made about the authenticity of a work. However, regardless of Curtis's failure to clearly support his certainty that Monteverdi played at least some role in the opera, his observations about the striking shifts in style and musical ornamentation do provide a useful view in the authenticity debate when documentary evidence remains silent on these matters.

Despite the increased role stylistic analysis has played in the authenticity discussions of recent decades, the discovery of a new source was required to significantly alter the discourse in the discussion over *Poppea*. Paolo Fabbri's discovery in 1993 of a previously unknown manuscript libretto in Udine, Biblioteca Comunale, Fondo Joppi 496 (referred to as *U*, standing for the location in which the manuscript was found, Udine) is particularly remarkable due to the colophon that reads "“Fine della coronation di / Poppea. / Del sig. Businello. / Recitata in Musica del sig. Monte Verde / nel Theatro da chà Grimani a San / Gio. E Paolo l'anno 1642' (End of the *Coronatione di Poppea*, by Signor Busenello, performed in music by Signor Monteverdi in the Grimani theatre at SS Giovanni e Paolo in the year 1642 [=1643]’).”<sup>72</sup> More promising yet is the fact that Fabbri, and later Rosand, believe that this source “seems a well-informed source with, indeed, some new elements as regards the first performance” and “there are many indications to suggest that *U* – like in large part *LN* [the 1651 printed libretto found in Naples] – is a libretto taken not from another libretto but from a score.”<sup>73</sup> Rosand cites the precise descriptions given for the visual effects of many scenes as well as the four and one-half-page poem included which addressed the singer of the role of Poppea as indicators that the libretto “fairly bristles with the immediacy of a performance.”<sup>74</sup> These qualities of *U* have had a huge impact on *Poppea* scholarship due to the intriguing fact that *U* contains “Pur ti miro.”<sup>75</sup> The newfound libretto counters the previously-held theory that “Pur ti miro” was a song added for a revival and not part

of the original production which developed due to the absence of the duet from the Venetian performance of 1643.<sup>76</sup> The “discovery [also] permitted the hypothesis that Ferrari or Laurenzi, or both, were somehow involved with the original production” instead of editing the opera years later for the revivals.<sup>77</sup> The new libretto manuscript, in combination with Curtis’s musical analysis, may point toward a new theory of a collaborative effort on the production of *Poppea* amongst Monteverdi, Cavalli, Ferrari, Laurenzi, Saccati, or others.

The rediscovered Udine libretto had a remarkable impact on *Poppea* discourse, not only in discussions concerning documentary evidence, but also in stylistic debates. Though Curtis’s ideas gained wide acceptance after the publication of his 1989 article, this evidence encouraged a fresh look at the work, particularly act III and the final duet. Six years after Curtis’s influential article Anthony Pryer confronted Curtis directly in “Authentic Performance, Authentic Experience, and *Pur ti Miro* from *Poppea*.”<sup>78</sup> Pryer contends that Curtis’s carefully crafted list of the non-Monteverdian stylistic traits present throughout the final scene of *Poppea* does not serve as undeniable evidence against Monteverdi’s authorship of the final duet because “not one of [these traits] occurs in “*Pur ti miro*.”<sup>79</sup> Instead, much of Curtis’s argument against “*Pur ti miro*” relies on a chronology constructed through the documentary evidence available by 1989, particularly the dating of Ferrari’s *Il pastor regio*. Pryer explains that the Udine source challenges the previously assumed timeline of the “*Pur ti miro*” text’s appearances in the two Venetian operas. Scholars can no longer be sure that the text appeared in *Il pastor regio* before it appeared in *Poppea*. The evidence now strongly implies that “*Pur ti miro*” was included in the first performance of *Poppea* and Pryer presents a cogent argument as to why the chronology for Ferrari’s opera may suggest that “*Pur ti miro*” may have appeared first in *Poppea*, not *Il pastor regio*:

It is by no means clear when exactly the text “Pur ti miro” became attached to the libretto of Ferrari’s *Il pastor regio*. It is not at the end of the 1640 version produced for the Venice performance... It is in the libretto commemorating the 1641 Bologna performance, but it is not completely clear when this libretto was produced. Ferrari himself printed his librettos in 1644 –after the première of *Poppea*.<sup>80</sup>

Furthermore, according to a libretto commemorating the 1641 performance of *Il pastor regio* and the scores and librettos for *Poppea*, the text for “Pur ti miro” is not identical within the two operas. In fact, they each use different words within the second stanza.<sup>81</sup>

STANZA 2 ( <i>Poppea</i> scores)		STANZA 2 (Ferrari source)	
Io son tua. Tuo sono io.	c	Io son tua, tuo son’io,	c
Speme mia, dillo di’,	d	questo cor (tu lo di’)	d
tu sei pur l’idol mio,	c	non è tuo, egli è mio,	c
si, mio ben, si mio cor,		si mio ben, si mio cor,	
mia vita si	d	mia vita si	d

This clearly demonstrates that the text was not directly transplanted from Ferrari’s *Il pastor regio* into the end of *Poppea*, weakening the claim for Ferrari’s musical authorship of the *Poppea* duet. In addition, Pryer claims that even if a version of the “Pur ti miro” text originated with *Il pastor regio*, this does not necessarily prove that Ferrari’s music was lifted from the opera and adapted for *Poppea*. Around the same time as the production of these two operas, Monteverdi and Ferrari both individually set another text, “Voglio di vita uscir,” with their own music.<sup>82</sup> Clearly this practice was not a rare phenomenon and since we possess no surviving music for *Il pastor regio*, it is conceivable that the two versions of “Pur ti miro” attracted different music.

Pryer also contests Curtis’s major claim that Sacrati’s music from *La finta pazza* implies that Sacrati, not Monteverdi, composed “Pur ti miro.” Due to the similarities between the trio “Il canto m’alietta” and the “Pur ti miro” cited earlier, Curtis implies that if Sacrati composed a song similar to “Pur ti miro” two years earlier, he might have written “Pur ti miro” for a production of *Poppea*. Pryer counters by mentioning that scholars are not entirely certain that Sacrati

composed “Il canto m’alletta,” because the surviving score is not from a 1641 performance but a touring version of the opera which “contains music by more than one composer.”<sup>83</sup> Pryer further alleges that even if scholars identified that “Il canto m’alletta” was composed by Sacrati and was completed before “Pur ti miro,” the duet should not be considered a “straightforward adaptation of the trio,” but more likely “as an allusion to it.”<sup>84</sup> Paying homage to fellow composers was a common compositional practice of the time and it would have been much more unusual for Sacrati to allude to one of his previous works rather than simply re-use it. Ultimately, Pryer is disinclined to believe that the author of “Il canto m’allette” had the artistic capabilities to compose “Pur ti miro” since the “short breathered and ill balanced” trio cannot compare to the dramatic and musical prowess exhibited in “Pur ti miro.”<sup>85</sup>

Furthermore, Pryer contends that several late Monteverdi works reveal strong similarities to “Pur ti miro” and suggests that Monteverdi could likely have composed the duet.<sup>86</sup> The first work mentioned is “O mio bene o mia vita” from Monteverdi’s ninth book of madrigals. Pryer claims that even though the madrigal has a more decorated bass and melody than “Pur ti miro” they both have a descending bass on G as well as a “distinctive melodic contour of a rising third followed by a descending fourth (at the same pitch as “Pur ti miro”).”<sup>87</sup> Even more telling, “O mio” shares lines of text with “Pur ti miro;” the opening words of the madrigal almost exactly quote the last line of the duet. Pryer argues that since Monteverdi was often inspired toward melodic reminiscence when he encountered similarities in text, these musical and textual similarities reveal that it is not impossible that Monteverdi composed the duet for *Poppea*. Pryer also discusses the similarities between “Pur ti miro” and the duet “Bocca, bocca” from a preceding and uncontested portion within act II of *Poppea*. In “Bocca, bocca,” Nerone and his friend Lucano sing a sensuous song praising Poppea’s great beauty. At the beginning of the

section, the melodic rising third and falling fourth motif in addition to the falling tetrachord on G connect the two duets. The musical connections between the sections lead Pryer to argue not only that Monteverdi could have composed the final duet, but also that Monteverdi might have worked on these two separate duets simultaneously, creating unity through such musical links.<sup>88</sup>

Paralleling Pryer's assertions, Carter suggests in his 2002 book *Monteverdi's Musical Theater* that yet another Monteverdi trio that displays remarkable similarities to "Pur ti miro." The central section of "Come dolce hoggi l'auretta," beginning with the word "lascivetta," is remarkably similar to the section of "Pur ti miro" beginning on the words "Io son tua."<sup>89</sup> Though the bass lines differ considerably, the melodic contours of the vocal lines are nearly – in some places completely – identical. Carter also goes on to compare the music of *Il ritorno* with that of *Poppea* and finds the musical styles to be quite close indeed, even in the highly contested act III of *Poppea*. One important set of examples comes from act II, scene 3 of *Il ritorno* and act III, scene 5 of *Poppea*. Ulisse's melodic and bass lines on the words "Vanne, vanne alla madre, va, porta, porta alla reggia il piè" match quite closely with Poppea's melody and bass for the text "al ripudio, al ripudio hor hai, hai guista ragione."<sup>90</sup> While such overt similarities may only reveal the hand of an able imitator, such musical findings suggest that scholars shouldn't rule out Monteverdi as composer of act III of *Poppea*.

Stylistic analysis has noticeably gained momentum in the *Poppea* debate and much can be said about the reliability of this approach. The discovery of the Udine source has once again demonstrated the effect of documentary evidence on stylistic evidence. As in the circumstance for *Absalon*, a reevaluation of the documentary evidence encouraged a new interpretation of the stylistic features of the work. After Osthoff's commentary on the connections between Cavalli and the overture of *Poppea*, suddenly the characteristics of the final scene that had attested to

Monteverdi's versatility as a composer appeared to be undeniable proof of the finale's inauthenticity. When the Udine source informed scholars that both Monteverdi and "Pur ti miro" were most likely involved in the earliest production of *Poppea*, both Pryer and Carter felt confident in suggesting that "Pur ti miro" was more stylistically in line with Monteverdi's later works than had been recently suggested. The remarkably diverse interpretations undermine the stability and reliability of the stylistic approach, particularly when only shaky documentary evidence is available to prove or disprove a claim of authenticity.

This approach to authenticity studies may also prove to be ineffective when scholars do not possess the extent of a composer's works. Manuscript material for the Venetian operas is generally lacking. Rosand claims that "of the nearly fifty operas performed [in Venice] between 1637 and 1650, music has survived for only thirteen."<sup>91</sup> This is also the case in Monteverdi scholarship and, regrettably, "more than half of Monteverdi's operas are actually lost to us."<sup>92</sup> We only have the scores for *La favola d'Orfeo* (1607), an early court opera from the early period of Monteverdi's career in Mantua, a single aria from *Arianna* (1608) and the two Venetian operas, *Ritorno* and *Poppea*. However, scholars like Tim Carter claim that we can deduce with some confidence through letters to and from Monteverdi and surviving librettos that Monteverdi composed operas that are now lost to us, including the full score to *Arianna*, *Andromeda* (1620), abandoned project *Armide abbandonata* (1627), *Proserpina rapita* (1630), and *Le nozze d'Enea in Lavinia* (1640-1).<sup>93</sup> Additionally, not only do remarkable stylistic differences exist between the Mantua opera and the Venetian operas, but even *Ritorno* and *Poppea* differ considerably in a number of ways, including musical style. Monteverdi was a living, evolving composer and his musical language would also have developed and changed over time. Since scholars are missing key works that would illustrate this evolution, stylistic analysis may not be an effective tool in

isolation. If we do not possess all of Monteverdi's operas, scholars cannot be entirely sure that the sections they have labeled atypical of Monteverdi truly are uncharacteristic. Just as in the previously referenced allegory Atlas created, ruling out such sections of *Poppea* on this stylistic evidence alone may be a fruitless venture.

Immediately after its discovery, scholars were struck with *Poppea*'s youthful and radiant spirit and they marveled at Monteverdi's ability, as a seventy-four-year-old man, to capture those qualities in his composition.<sup>94</sup> Critics viewed the composition as a perfect union of vibrant youthfulness and wise experience, praising Monteverdi for his brilliance as a musical dramatist because his music could express the true emotions and psyches of the characters.<sup>95</sup> Yet these youthful qualities for which Monteverdi had been revered are what has helped mount the case against authenticity for sections of *Poppea* and supported the argument that a younger group of composers was involved in its production: this is the great irony in Monteverdi studies. The case of *Poppea* also provides an excellent example of one of the major downfalls to the stylistic approach. *Poppea* was accepted as authentic from the beginning and its musical characteristics became defining qualities of Monteverdi as a composer. In fact, the earlier Venetian opera *Ritorno*, now generally accepted as a genuine Monteverdi work, was long doubted due to its inability to measure up to the standards of *Poppea*. Grout argued that "on the whole... *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* is not to be compared with Monteverdi's next (and last) opera, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, a masterpiece of the composer's old age paralleled only by the last two operas of Verdi."<sup>96</sup> With the same dismissive reaction, Claudio Sartori wrote of *Ritorno* in 1953 that "if many of its qualities can make one think of Monteverdi, its numerous defects have caused scholars to consider it either an inferior work of the master or even the creation of an imitator or student. Given these doubts, we skip *Ritorno* and come finally to *L'Incoronazione*."<sup>97</sup> Herein lies

another danger of stylistic analysis: stylistic comparisons of two works can be misleading when the work used as the rubric may potentially be inauthentic. The takeaway message from *Poppea* is that debates over authenticity should not be taken lightly because they have the power to dramatically change a composer's legacy.

### The *Requiem* Mass

From the beginning, the history of the Requiem mass was shrouded in mystery; the resulting myths of the “Grey Messenger” even bordered on the fantastic. Fortunately, with the help of individuals close to Mozart and the Requiem, the chain of events leading up to and following Mozart's death was generally unraveled as early as around 1800.<sup>98</sup> Franz Count von Walsegg commissioned Mozart to compose a Requiem mass in loving memory of his wife after her death on February 14, 1791. Count von Walsegg made a practice of commissioning music for private performances and then claiming the work as his own, explaining Walsegg's need of an anonymous messenger and his desire for discretion. The commission is believed to have reached Mozart in the summer of 1791, but he was unable to devote full time and attention to the Requiem at that time since he was absorbed by his work on *Die Zauberflöte*.<sup>99</sup> Around the same time, Mozart was also paid to compose yet another opera, *La clemenza di Tito* in time for Leopold II's coronation as King of Bohemia on September 6.<sup>100</sup> The deadline for *Tito* was the closest, so *Die Zauberflöte* and the Requiem were put on hold as Mozart traveled to Prague for the opera's premiere. After Mozart's return to Vienna he quickly finished the remaining sections of *Die Zauberflöte*, “the Priests' March” and the overture, and the opera premiered on September 30.

Work on the Requiem was further delayed by other compositional projects, including the Clarinet Concerto he wrote for clarinetist Anton Stadler and the “Little” Masonic Cantata. With so many projects underway, it is difficult to imagine that Mozart would be able to dedicate full attention to the work until November; however, through studying the paper used in the Requiem manuscripts, Konrad Küster suggests that between approximately October 8 and October 16 Mozart allowed himself to devote a solid week for work on the Requiem.<sup>101</sup> After the interruptions of failing health and the “Little” Masonic Cantata, Mozart probably had scarcely another week before worsening health halted all work. Mozart took to his bed November 20 and lost his battle with illness on December 5, 1791, “leaving the Requiem unfinished.”<sup>102</sup>

After Mozart’s untimely death, Frau Mozart quickly sprang into action. She approached several composers that had been part of Mozart’s intimate circle and implored them to complete the Requiem so she could collect the rest of the commission fee from Count von Walsegg and also cash in on other transactions involving the work in the future. Due to the discretion and the loyalty to Mozart’s legacy shown by Frau Mozart and the composers involved, scholars and music editors were soon unsure of the extent to which Mozart himself completed the Requiem. This cover-up was facilitated further by the absence of the Requiem manuscripts. However, in 1800 Franz Xaver Süssmayr, a pupil of Mozart, cleared up some of the ambiguity in his letter to the publishing house, Breitkopf & Härtel.<sup>103</sup> Süssmayr explained that after “several masters” (possibly including Joseph Eybler, Maximilian Stadler, and Franz Jacob Freystädler<sup>104</sup>) were asked to complete the work and had declined, “eventually the task came to me.”<sup>105</sup> Overall, Süssmayr claimed that Mozart completed the four vocal parts and the figured bass for the “Requiem,” which included the Kyrie, “Dies irae,” and “Domine Jesu Christe,” meaning that

Süssmayr had orchestrated these movements using motivic ideas Mozart had left behind and also had composed the Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei by himself. Süssmayr also claimed that:

Eventually the task came to me, because it was known that while Mozart yet lived I had often sung and played through with him the movements that were already composed; that he had frequently talked to me about the detailed working of this composition, and explained to me the how and the wherefore of his instrumentation.<sup>106</sup>

Scholars were not always inclined to accept Süssmayr's statements as accurate. In fact, in his 1825 article "Über die Echtheit des Mozartschen Requiem," Gottfried Weber argued that Süssmayr had slightly exaggerated Mozart's role in the Kyrie, the "Tuba mirum," the "Confutatis," and the "Quam olim Abrahae" and that Mozart may have played a greater role in the movements Süssmayr claimed to have composed wholly by himself: the Sanctus through the Agnus Dei.<sup>107</sup> To Weber, these sections were simply too masterful, too musical, and too good to be the work of anyone else but Mozart himself. Weber's justifications were often harsh and unsupported; he severely criticized the vocal line in the Kyrie and described the section as "such warbling" that would cause "howls of protest on all sides... if such *gorgheggi* were offered under the name of Rossini, perhaps, or any other composer less highly respected than Mozart."<sup>108</sup> Almost comically, the eventual reappearance of the manuscript papers revealed that this "horrific" and "painful" musical passage was clearly in Mozart's hand. Nevertheless, without access to these crucial manuscripts, Weber's judgements gained wide acceptance.

Maximilian Stadler, Mozart's old friend, refuted Weber's arguments in the 1826 article "Vertheidigung der Echtheit des Mozart'schen Requiem" ["In Defense of the Authenticity of Mozart's Requiem"] and defended the authenticity of the work based on handwriting analysis and the advanced use of Handelian motives.<sup>109</sup> Stadler credited Mozart with more of the Requiem's conception than Süssmayr and Weber suggested, claiming that "it is his most perfect, his most finished, as far as he was not able to execute it before his death, a work genuinely and

purely Mozart's. It was not cobbled together by Süßmayr from 'sketches,' 'rough drafts,' 'croquis,' and 'snippets of paper.'"<sup>110</sup> He argued that Mozart had orchestrated most of the "Requiem" and "Dies irae," up to the "Lacrymosa," leaving "not much more for Süßmayr to do than what most composers leave for their amanuenses to do."<sup>111</sup> Stadler claimed in the enclosing remarks within Johann Baptist Streicher's 1826 letter to Johann Anton André that "Mozart himself composed the "Hostias." If Stadler is correct, it would mean that the only sections Süßmayr could truly claim as his own are the Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei.<sup>112</sup> For a time, Stadler had possession of parts of the autograph and made copies that indicated Mozart's and Süßmayr's contributions.<sup>113</sup> He claimed to be well-equipped to accomplish this because he had acquired "the most exact knowledge possible of Mozart's handwriting" and knew it as well as his own.<sup>114</sup> This would suggest that Stadler was in a much better position to answer these questions of authorship than Weber, who did not have access to these resources. For years, the debate continued unabated due to a lack of available documentary evidence to elucidate matters.

This changed when the original manuscripts began to surface. In 1826, Stadler "gained possession of the autograph score of the Sequence, lacking only the "Lacrymosa" ... and sold it to the Court Library in Vienna in or about 1829;"<sup>115</sup> Joseph Eybler, one of Mozart's students, gave both of his manuscripts to the Court Library in 1833; and in 1838 the Court Library in Vienna purchased the complete "original" score that had belonged to Count von Walsegg.<sup>116</sup> Consequently, both handwriting and paper analysis supported the claim that much of the Requiem manuscript was not written in Mozart's hand, but primarily in that of Franz Xaver Süßmayr, another one of Mozart's pupils, with some work and sketches done in the hands of the previously listed "masters."<sup>117</sup> From the complete manuscript (Mus. Hs. 17.561 a) that was delivered to Count Walsegg, scholars have discerned that the only movement completed entirely

by Mozart is the first: “the 48 measures of the Requiem [the Introit]”<sup>118</sup> According to the official Bärenreiter manuscripts edited by Günter Brosche, of the Kyrie, Mozart composed the choral parts as well as the instrumental bass, Franz Jakob Freystädler finished the violin I and II, viola, basset-horns and bassoon parts, and Süssmayr completed the trumpet and timpani parts. Within this manuscript everything else from the Dies irae to the end of the work, is written in Süssmayr’s hand.<sup>119</sup>

The “working score” of the Requiem (Mus. Hs. 17.561 b) contains “the Sequence and Offertory in fragmentary form and is written by at least three different hands.”<sup>120</sup>

The score begins with a draft in Mozart’s hand in which he wrote out the choral voices and the figured bass from the Dies irae through the Hostias. He notated only a few measures of the instrumental parts, leaving space for the remaining voices, which he never completed. Some of the blank staves were filled in with early completion attempts by Joseph Eybler. Using these manuscripts along with correspondences and other sketches found, Wolff surmised that after Mozart’s death Freystädler, Eybler, and Stadler orchestrated the “Kyrie” through the “Hostias,” which was then edited by Süssmayr; and Süssmayr finished the “Lacrymosa” and composed the Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei.<sup>121</sup> In the early 1960s, Wolfgang Plath discovered an important page of sketches found amongst Mozart’s papers.<sup>122</sup> These sketches included four bars of sketches for *Die Zauberflöte* as well as a 16-bar exposition to an “Amen” fugue (presumably for the end of the Lacrimosa) and four bars of sketches for the Rex tremendae.<sup>123</sup> This discovery revealed that the Rex tremendae was the first movement Mozart began work on and the “Amen” fugue fueled accusations that Süssmayr, who had only composed an ‘Amen’ cadence at the end of the Lacrimosa had either ignored Mozart’s intentions or was ill-equipped to carry out the man’s visions.

While these documents answer several questions, they prompt many more; scholars may have discovered who physically put pen to paper for each section, but the new debate was over the extent of Süßmayr's involvement as a creator. For each movement, was he acting as an independent composer or as executor of Mozart's musical will? While some extant sketch material exists, these bits of documentary evidence are far from definitive. As a result, similar to the approach made by Josquin and Monteverdi scholars, Mozart scholars have relied on a variety of stylistic analyses and judgments in combination with documentary evidence to debate what sections, even what specific measures, were conceived of by Mozart himself, even if they were written in another's hand. When Süßmayr's letter was received in 1800, Friedrich Rochlitz, the founding editor of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, instantly greeted it with suspicion. Rochlitz could not reconcile the "perceived qualitative discrepancy between Süßmayr's extant works and Mozart's Requiem."<sup>124</sup> Due to the clumsiness and errors within the orchestration, Rochlitz was able to accept Süßmayr's role in the instrumentation of the Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei, but he simply refused to believe the more inspired passages could come from Süßmayr's mind alone. In fact, Rochlitz even reported in 1798 his belief that "Mozart finished the Requiem before his death."<sup>125</sup> Rochlitz's review sparked the trend of critical thought concerning the alleged exaggeration of Süßmayr's work on the Requiem. Stadler's statement that Constanze had told him "a few scraps of paper with music on them were found on Mozart's desk after his death, which she had given to Herr Süßmayr"<sup>126</sup> encouraged further speculation concerning the amount of credit Süßmayr deserved. Even though hard evidence for this theory is lacking, scholars still appear disposed to believe Süßmayr had such materials to help him complete the Requiem.

Friedrich Blume also weighed in on the authenticity issue in his 1961 article “Requiem, But No Peace,” echoing Rochlitz’s harsh critique of Süssmayr and refuting the arguments of another Mozart scholar, Alfred Einstein.<sup>127</sup> According to Blume, Einstein believed that “other than the well-known fragmentary autograph of the Vienna Nationalbibliothek, ‘exactly’ nothing exists in Mozart’s hand.”<sup>128</sup> Einstein also suggested that Constanze “must have felt obliged to make Mozart’s share appear as great, and Süssmayr’s as small, as possible; and that if then, contrary to this interest, Süssmayr represented his share as so important, credence must be given him.”<sup>129</sup> Blume strongly disagrees with Einstein’s decision to accept Süssmayr’s claims and instead asserts that Süssmayr overstepped his boundaries and claimed credit where credit was not due. Blume is inclined to believe Süssmayr’s role was relegated to that of an amanuensis (an artistic assistant acting as a scribe) and that the remaining work on the Requiem would not have been too daunting, since Constanze had mentioned in May 31, 1827 letter to Stadler that she felt “anyone could finish it, since all the important passages had been set out already.”<sup>130</sup> Blume also grounds his opinion in Stadler and Süssmayr’s statements that Süssmayr and Mozart played and sang through parts of the Requiem and discussed elements of its completion as well as Constanze’s statement that she had handed over scraps of paper over to Süssmayr before he completed the work; he believes “the quantity of statements to the effect that sketches by Mozart existed is overwhelming.”<sup>131</sup> While these “scraps of paper” have never been found, Blume simply suggests that all of the sketches surely would have been destroyed by Süssmayr after he finished using them. Blume also argued that the “Requiem” and the Kyrie movements “are complete in Mozart’s handwriting,” blatantly contradicting Süssmayr’s statement that he had orchestrated both of those movements using the motivic ideas Mozart had included with the vocal parts and the figured bass.<sup>132</sup>

In addition to historical statements made concerning the possible use of sketches in the Requiem, Blume also suggests that it is the quality of the Requiem that renders him unable to accept Süßmayr could have completed the Requiem without relying upon a substantial number of sketches from Mozart. He avers that “at least the *Lacrimosa*, the *Benedictus*, and the *Agnus* reveal the hand of a master of Mozart’s rank – who could it have been if not Mozart himself?”<sup>133</sup>

The most problematic aspect of the attribution to Süßmayr is that scholars have not found qualities in Süßmayr church composition that suggest he possessed the ability to faithfully imitate Mozart’s style. For this reason, Blume believes it is reasonable to assume that Süßmayr could not have completed this complex work without outside help from Mozart himself. He does, however, assert that the quality of the Requiem’s instrumentation confirms that Süßmayr was largely in control of that aspect. He feels that the unusual instrumentation features of the work, like the absence of flutes, oboes, clarinets, and horns, the use of basset horn throughout the piece, and the homogenous instrumentation for all of the movements suggest that the instrumentation as a whole “teems with thoughtless and gross procedures” that are entirely un-Mozartian.<sup>134</sup> To quickly digress, it is important to note that it was Mozart who provided the fundamental instrumentation for the completed Introit and Süßmayr likely chose to continue where the master had left off.<sup>135</sup> Blume, however, disagrees with Süßmayr’s choice to maintain the same instrumentation throughout the Requiem and believes Süßmayr made a myriad of instrumentation decisions that contradict what Mozart intended for the Requiem. Though Blume admits that no sufficient documentary evidence exists to confirm exactly the role Mozart played in the completion of the Requiem, he believes that the stylistic evidence he compiled strongly suggests that “except for unimportant additions and except for the instrumentation the Requiem was composed by Mozart.”<sup>136</sup>

Christoph Wolff continues, and in many ways supersedes, Blume's scholarship on the Mozart Requiem in his excellent 1994 book, *Mozart's Requiem*. Like Blume, Wolff believes that the final movements were not entirely Süssmayr's conception, as Süssmayr himself claimed, and he also makes a number of stylistic judgments considering the contentious movements. In the case of the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei, the movements that are "entirely the works of Süssmayr," Wolff suggests that the movements "betray an especially high degree of technical unevenness and a large number of mistakes in the voice leading."<sup>137</sup> However, the vocal parts, when separated from the instrumental parts, contain significantly fewer errors and "the first five bars of the Sanctus... present an impeccable piece of vocal writing."<sup>138</sup> Wolff uses this information to suggest that Mozart composed, or at least provided the ideas for, the vocal sections and Süssmayr blundered through the completion of the orchestral work. Wolff further asserts that bars 4-6 of the Sanctus contains a clash of A- and C- major chords that "is crude and un-Mozartian" and the cause of the problem is most likely Süssmayr's misunderstanding of Mozart's ideas and sketches.<sup>139</sup> Indeed, Wolff suggests that this may also be the reason for the "absurd key change... at the Hosanna repeat" as well as for some of the "awkward writing in the Benedictus."<sup>140</sup> Ultimately, Wolff argues that the "unique and curious mixture of amazingly good ideas and the less successful execution or development of those ideas"<sup>141</sup> proves Mozart must have left behind sketches and drafts and also had played and sung material that ultimately aided Süssmayr in the completion of the Requiem. Though we have no such sketches of the Sanctus, Benedictus, or Agnus Dei in our possession and it is impossible to ever recover the conversations between Mozart and Süssmayr, Wolff presents a compelling stylistic argument that may be a viable explanation for the features of the work.

New capabilities in handwriting analysis have changed prevailing views on this issue. For example, Blume had been convinced that the entry at the beginning of the score, “di me W.A. Mozart mpr. 792,” could be used to reliably date the score because “there is not the slightest reason to question the authenticity of this entry... it corresponds in every respect with the other writing on the first page of the score and with Mozart’s other handwriting habits.”<sup>142</sup> Wolff asserts that “closer scrutiny has shown that it is in the hand of Süßmayr and must be a deliberate forgery.”<sup>143</sup> This conclusion is further strengthened by the observation that Mozart would have had no reason to “postdate” the manuscript to 1792 in the first place. Wolff also reveals that in 1979 Leopold Nowak discovered that the Kyrie is not completely finished in Mozart’s hand, as Blume claimed, but in the hand of two of the other “masters.”<sup>144</sup> These revelations drastically changed the interpretation of the extent manuscript and held massive implications for Requiem studies; they also bring up a particularly intriguing point for this study. It is easy to criticize the use of stylistic judgment because it appears to be more subjective measure of authenticity; however, documentary evidence also has the potential to deceive and mislead – especially when a cover up was involved in the work’s history. As a result, documentary evidence may not prove to be more reliable than stylistic evaluations. To compensate for questionable or lacking documentary evidence, Wolff has provided a detailed study of the stylistic aspects of the work and the implications for these features. Overall, the way Blume and Wolff each blend documentary and stylistic evidence is commendable because it enhances the scholarly tradition surrounding the authenticity debate by offering new theories to explain the history and style of the Requiem.

On the other hand, the stylistic approach may have a number of unintended consequences for Mozart’s – and Süßmayr’s – legacy. Simon P. Keefe asserts in a 2008 article that Mozart

scholarship has long put Süssmayr, quite unfairly, in a no-win position; any portion of the Requiem that reveals the slightest bit of mastery is decidedly deemed the work of Mozart and any flaw is unhesitatingly credited to Süssmayr.<sup>145</sup> Keefe explains that this was not always the case. Early listeners, when they believed Mozart and not Süssmayr had composed most if not all of the Requiem, praised the heavenly orchestration of the instrumental lines. E. T. A. Hoffmann famously called the Requiem “the sublimest achievement that the modern period has contributed to the church” largely due to Mozart’s blending of voices and wind instruments and “wisely handled orchestration.”<sup>146</sup> Even after listeners first learned of Süssmayr’s general involvement, Süssmayr’s contributions were discussed constructively, sharply contrasting the stern tone of reproof present within later commentaries. Mozart was unquestionably one of the extraordinarily talented composers in the history of modern music and scholars would readily agree that Süssmayr was considerably less talented at composition, particularly in matters of part-writing, harmony, and counterpoint. Consequently, it is reasonable to argue that many of the compositional errors found within the Requiem were composed by Süssmayr. However, the current stylistic analyses are quick to make assumptions about the limits to Süssmayr’s abilities as a composer that contradict documentary evidence. The intent to determine Mozart’s contribution to the Requiem and afford him his full due is laudable and scholars’ access to volumes of firmly attested Mozart works as well as numerous church works by Süssmayr allows for a fuller examination of the composers’ style and lends credibility to the use of style comparison. Unfortunately, this approach slightly overreaches in its assumption that stylistic evidence can so easily outweigh documentary evidence.

## *Implications*

Despite the large discrepancy in available information about the lives and works of Josquin, Monteverdi, and Mozart, all three composers present scholars with complex authenticity issues. Similarly, the debates over *Absalon fili mi*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and the Requiem mass all form striking parallels. These works were not simply appendages to their respective composer's repertoire, they were often seen as the epitome of that composer's prowess and craftsmanship and became the aesthetic standard to which other attributed compositions were inevitably compared. In all three cases, questions of authenticity were sparked due to the discovery of new documentary evidence or through a reevaluation of previously accepted sources and for each work scholars have tried to answer these questions through study of the style and musical characteristics of the composition. By comparing and contrasting the specific tactics scholars have used in these three debates, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the efficacy and validity of stylistic analysis.

Scholars face many of the same problems when studying *Absalon* and *Poppea*: simply put, this problem can be characterized as a general lack of primary sources. The first known attribution for each work was found in a posthumous source (*Absalon* in Kriesstein's *Selectissimae necnon familiarissimae cantiones* and *Poppea* in Ivanovich's *Minerva al tavoline*). Later, after careful scrutiny, scholars deemed both publications unreliable for attributions. This situation has become increasingly common in Renaissance research and explains the surge in popularity and use of the stylistic approach; when documentary evidence is silent on matters of attribution, scholars often choose to search for other indications of authenticity or inauthenticity. However, another commonality between the two studies exemplifies why the use of stylistic evidence, while tempting, may not be fully effective in studies of music from Antiquity or the

Renaissance. The unavailability of original manuscripts for works by Josquin and Monteverdi leave perceptible gaps in our knowledge of these men and their repertoires. Scholars may not have enough information to even estimate what may be missing in our collections. As a result, scholars may presume based on the current evidence that a particular characteristic would be atypical of a composer when the composer may actually have experimented with these musical features in a work that is now lost. In addition to the gaps in knowledge, false attributions, particularly in Josquin studies, run rampant and make it even more challenging to pin down and categorize a composer's true style. The two debates have their differences: the *Absalon* debate focuses on the sheer aberrant nature of work in the context of Josquin and his contemporaries while the *Poppea* debate struggles with the striking similarities found between portions of the opera and the operas of the younger generation of composers. However, one point ultimately rings true for both disciplines: stylistic studies, even when paired with the implications of shaky documentary evidence, leave too much doubt in authenticity debates because our knowledge of Renaissance music is incomplete. Stylistic analysis may evoke insightful and beneficial observations, but such findings should not be treated as fact.

A number of correlations between *Poppea* and the Requiem also elucidate the consequences of stylistic analysis. In both debates the focus is often not on the attribution of the work as a whole, but on the attribution of various sections within the larger work; nonetheless, one major discrepancy sets them apart. For the Requiem, scholars have manuscript sketches and scores with identifiable handwriting as well as a volume of letters written by Süssmayr and others involved in the completion effort. Scholars know Mozart and Süssmayr each composed parts of the Requiem; the debate is over the extent of each composer's compositional work. On the other hand, scholars tentatively agree that Monteverdi was involved in the opera in some capacity, but little documentary evidence exists to explain what role he played or what other

composers, if any, were also involved in the production of *Poppea*. Since Mozart scholars have numerous primary sources at their disposal, one would expect the Requiem debate to be more clear-cut. However, scholars from both fields of study struggle to answer a very challenging question: how can the discrepancies between documentary sources and stylistic analysis be reconciled in the authorship debate? Audiences were highly impressed by early performances of the Requiem and the rediscovery of the *Poppea* manuscript score was met with remarkable enthusiasm. To understand the elements of perfection present in the context of a work that the composer did not (or likely did not) entirely compose himself, some scholars rely on stylistic arguments to prove that the masterful composer must have had at least some hand in all of the most sublime moments of the work. Recent scholarship of the Requiem attempts to resolve the disparities between the various statements made by Süssmayr and Stadler and the handwriting analyses of the manuscript scores with the stylistic analysis of the skillfully composed vocal line in some of the later sections Süssmayr claimed as his own. In similar fashion, Eric Thomas Chafe in 1992 proposed that the musical links between the securely attributed scenes and the questionable scenes of *Poppea* exhibits a coherence that speaks for Monteverdi's involvement even if Monteverdi was technically not the composer of certain sections:

“it might be worth considering, therefore, that Monteverdi, perhaps unable for reasons unknown to us to complete his last opera, communicated aspects of his intent to one or more of the younger composers in the circle that undoubtedly surrounded him, and they helped finish a project that was very near completion.<sup>147</sup>

Such arguments reveal an inclination to accord stylistic evidence the same level of reliability as documentary evidence. In fact, Wolff allows stylistic analysis to supersede documentary evidence in his theory concerning the vocal lines. While Wolff's and Chafe's theories provide plausible and intriguing theories for further study, scholars must be cautious when constructing

such an argument from stylistic evidence due to the impact authenticity debates have on our perceived vision of a work and its presumed composer.

One noteworthy example of this phenomenon is the changing reception of the *Sinfonia Concertante for Winds*, K. 297b.<sup>148</sup> The documentary evidence linking the *Sinfonia Concertante* to Mozart has long been excessively vague and, sadly, definitive proof will likely never surface and help clear up the issue. As a result, subjective distinctions have been used to justify the authenticity – or lack thereof – for the *Sinfonia* and the debate of the *Sinfonia*'s authenticity has largely become a conflict over the perceived quality of the work. More specifically, those that claim the *Sinfonia* is banal, inept, clumsy, blundering, illogical, or monotonous usually argue that the work cannot have been composed by Mozart while those that have deemed the work to be intricate, delicious, songful, lyrical, elegant, exceptional, expressive, beguiling, or beautiful are more likely to cite Mozart as the author. While this is a relatively exaggerated example of such circumstances, elements of this incident are present in the authenticity debates for Josquin, Monteverdi, and Mozart. The desire to see these composers as unmatched in their musical genius often influences the stylistic analysis at hand. Since attribution debates have been shown to likely impact the reception of a work, the subjective nature of stylistic studies must be acknowledged and addressed when such evidence is used as proof of authenticity or a lack thereof.

This essay may appear to serve as a polemic against any and all forms of stylistic analysis. On the contrary, I feel indebted to these musicological studies. Although I have expressed skepticism for the stylistic approach, I also delight in the fruits of its labor. Stylistic analysis expands the musicological discourse by emphasizing important musical details that could potentially provide us with perceptive new theories about countless works. When

documentary evidence is not forthcoming, scholars only have a limited number of ways to creatively state, “we simply do not know the answer to this authenticity question.” Stylistic analysis prompts new examinations and, more importantly, it keeps the discussion alive.

Without question, musicology does benefit from well-crafted stylistic arguments; the purpose of this discussion, then, is to warn that this approach should be used responsibly. Stylistic analyses do not provide definitive answers and the resulting conclusions should not be treated as indelible. In debates over *Absalon fili mi*, *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, and the Requiem mass, questions of authenticity dramatically affect not only Josquin’s, Monteverdi’s, and Mozart’s oeuvre, but they also impact our understanding of the musical capabilities of other potential composers, including La Rue, Cavalli, Ferrari, Sacrati, and Süssmayr. It is these composers’ very legacies at stake, so it is imperative to understand the limits of stylistic evidence when it is used to determine the fate of a work.

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<sup>1</sup> David Fallows. *Josquin*. (Turnout: Brepols Publishers, 2009), 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Gustave Reese, Jeremy Noble, Lewis Lockwood, Jessie Owens, James Haar, Joseph Kerman, and Robert Stevenson. *The New Grove high Renaissance masters: Josquin, Palestrina, Lassus, Byrd, Victoria* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 11.

<sup>3</sup> Fallows, 297.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 392

<sup>5</sup> Reese, 1 and Fallows, 349.

<sup>6</sup> See Richard Sherr. “Introduction” in Richard Sherr, *The Josquin Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Fallows, 324.

<sup>8</sup> Honey Meconi. “Another Look at Absalon.” *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*. D. 48ste, No1 (1998): 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Murray Steib. “A Study in Style, or Josquin or Not Josquin: The *Missa Allez regretz* Question.” *The Journal of Musicology* 16 (Autumn, 1998): 519. Also, I must thank Dr. Aislinn Melchior for her help with this translation.

<sup>11</sup> Jaap van Benthem. “Lazarus Versus Absalon: About Fiction and Fact in the Netherlands Motet. For Willem Elders.” *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*. 39 (1989): 61-62.

<sup>12</sup> Fallows, 324.

<sup>13</sup> Nigel Davison. “Absalom Fili Mi Reconsidered.” *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, Deel 46, No. 1 (1996): 43.

<sup>14</sup> Meconi, 11.

- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, 12.
- <sup>16</sup> Benthem, 66.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, 62.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, 67.
- <sup>19</sup> Davison, 44.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, 42.
- <sup>21</sup> Fallows, 330.
- <sup>22</sup> James C. Thomson. *Music Through the Renaissance*. (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1968), 106.
- <sup>23</sup> Allan W. Atlas. "Canon Fodder: *The Josquin Companion* by Richard Sherr." *The Musical Times*, 143:1879 (Summer, 2002), 64.
- <sup>24</sup> Rob C. Wegman. "Who Was Josquin?" in Richard Sherr, *The Josquin Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 30.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid, 31.
- <sup>26</sup> Jeremy Noble, 'Josquin,' New Grove ix. 724.
- <sup>27</sup> Anthony Tommasini. "The Greatest Composers." *The New York Times*, January 21, 2001. Accessed 28 June, 2012 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/23/arts/music/23composers.html?pagewanted=all>
- <sup>28</sup> Found in Denis Arnold. *Monteverdi*. (London: J.M. Dent and Sons LTD, 1963), 156.
- <sup>29</sup> Leo Schrade. *Monteverdi: Creator of Modern Music*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1950), 11.
- <sup>30</sup> C. Hubert H. Parry. "The Significance of Monteverde." In *Proceedings of the Musical Association 42<sup>nd</sup> Session* (1915-1916), 51-67.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid, 65.
- <sup>32</sup> Donald Jay Grout. *A Short History of Opera*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 88.
- <sup>33</sup> Lorenzo Bianconi. *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. David Bryant. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 21.
- <sup>34</sup> *Poppea* "was revived more than once in later years, probably in Venice as well as Naples, and perhaps even Paris" in Ellen Rosand. *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 10.
- <sup>35</sup> Rosand, 12.
- <sup>36</sup> McNaught, 186.
- <sup>37</sup> Claudio Sartori, *Claudio Monteverdi*, (Brescia: La Scuola, 1953), 227.
- <sup>38</sup> Hugo Goldschmidt. *Studien zur Geschichte der italienischen Oper, 2* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1904; repr. 1967), 33-203.
- <sup>39</sup> Rosand, 30.
- <sup>40</sup> Claudio Monteverdi. *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Venice manuscripts. Facsimile. Edited by Gicomo Benvenuti. (Milan: Bocca, 1938).
- <sup>41</sup> Rosand, 34.
- <sup>42</sup> Cristoforo Ivanovich. *Minerva al tavolino*. (Venice: Pezzana, 1681).
- <sup>43</sup> Rosand, 29.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid, 30.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid, 35.
- <sup>46</sup> Malipiero realized that some sections of the Naples manuscript conformed more to the Busenello's libretto than did the Venice manuscript. Benvenuti simply dismissed the Naples readings outright on a stylistic basis, stating "these musical passages... contrary to what Malipiero believes, reveal not even the slightest artistic value. They were probably interpolated on the occasion of the performance of *Poppea* in Naples in in 1651 and are neither Monteverdian nor by Cavalli, nor do they have even the most distant Venetian scent" (Benvenuti, "Il manoscritto," 177).
- <sup>47</sup> Rosand, 35.
- <sup>48</sup> Thomas Walker. "Gli errori di 'Minerva al tavolino.'" In Muraro, Maria Teresa, ed. *Venezia e il melodrama nel seicento*. Studi di musica veneta, no. 5. Florence, 1976, 7-20.
- <sup>49</sup> Rosand, 25.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid, 36.
- <sup>51</sup> Alessandra Chiarelli, "*L'incoronazione di Poppea o Il Nerone*," *Rivista italiana di musicologia* (1974):117-51.
- <sup>52</sup> Bianconi, 194-196.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid, 194-195.

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- <sup>54</sup> Ibid, 195.
- <sup>55</sup> Alan Curtis. “La Poppea Impasticciata” or, Who Wrote the Music to “L’Incoronazione” (1643)?” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 42:1 (Spring, 1989), 23.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid, 24.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid, 42.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid, 25.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid, 28.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid, 29.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid, 31.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid, 35
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid, 35
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid, 35.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid, 41.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid, 44.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid, 45.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid, 42.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid, 48-50.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid, 50.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid, 47.
- <sup>72</sup> Paolo Fabbri and Tim Carter. “New Sources for ‘Poppea.’” *Music & Letters*, 74:1 (Feb., 1993), 19-20.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid, 21.
- <sup>74</sup> Rosand, 62.
- <sup>75</sup> Fabbri, 22.
- <sup>76</sup> Bianconi, 194.
- <sup>77</sup> Rosand, 37.
- <sup>78</sup> Anthony Pryer. “Authentic Performance, Authentic Experience, and *Pur ti Miro* from *Poppea*,” in *Performance Practice in Monteverdi’s Music*, ed. Raffaello Monterosso (Cremona: Fondazione Claudio Monteverdi, 1995), 191-213.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid, 198.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid, 199.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid, 200.
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid, 199.
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid, 206-207
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid, 207.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid, 207.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid, 208-211.
- <sup>87</sup> Ibid, 208.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid, 212.
- <sup>89</sup> Carter, 233-35.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid, 268-69
- <sup>91</sup> Ellen Rosand. *Opera in Seventeenth Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 28.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid, 2.
- <sup>93</sup> Carter, 298-305.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid, 34.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid, 34.
- <sup>96</sup> Grout, 87.
- <sup>97</sup> Claudio Sartori. *Claudio Monteverdi* (Brescia: La Scuola, 1953), 207.
- <sup>98</sup> For an overall history of the Requiem, see Christopher Wolff’s *Mozart’s Requiem* 1994.
- <sup>99</sup> Konrad Küster. *Mozart: A Musical Biography*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 375.
- <sup>100</sup> H.C. Robbins Landon. *1791: Mozart’s Last Year*. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 88.
- <sup>101</sup> Küster, 379.
- <sup>102</sup> Christoph Wolff. *Mozart’s Requiem* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 3.
- <sup>103</sup> Wolff’s *Mozart’s Requiem* boasts an excellent collection of translated letters pertaining to the completion of the Requiem.

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- <sup>104</sup> Ibid, 22-23.  
<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 146.  
<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 146.  
<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 10.  
<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 11.  
<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 149-52.  
<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 150.  
<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 150.  
<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 156.  
<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 9.  
<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 150.  
<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 12.  
<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 13.  
<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 22.  
<sup>118</sup> Günter Brosche. *Requiem KV 626*. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1990), 32-36.  
<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 33.  
<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 33.  
<sup>121</sup> Wolff, 20.  
<sup>122</sup> Simon P. Keefe. "Die Ochsen am Berge": Franz Xaver Süssmayr and the Orchestration of Mozart's Requiem, K. 626." *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 61:1 (Spring, 2008), 5  
<sup>123</sup> Paul Moseley. "Mozart's Requiem: A Reevaluation of the Evidence." *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 114:2 (1989), 208  
<sup>124</sup> Keefe, 5.  
<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 11.  
<sup>126</sup> Wolff, 152.  
<sup>127</sup> Friedrich Blume. "Requiem, But No Peace." *The Music Quarterly*, 47:2 (April, 1961), 147-169.  
<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 150.  
<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 155.  
<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 170.  
<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 150.  
<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 151.  
<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 155.  
<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 163.  
<sup>135</sup> Keefe, 18  
<sup>136</sup> Blume, 169.  
<sup>137</sup> Wolff, 38.  
<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 38.  
<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 38.  
<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 40.  
<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 42.  
<sup>142</sup> Blume, 167,  
<sup>143</sup> Wolff, 17.  
<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 22.  
<sup>145</sup> Keefe, 5-7.  
<sup>146</sup> E.T.A. Hoffmann and David Charlton. *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, the Poet and the Composer, Musical Criticism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 370, 374.  
<sup>147</sup> Eric Thomas Chafe. *Monteverdi's Tonal Language*. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 299.  
<sup>148</sup> For a full discussion of this work, see John Spitzer. "Musical Attribution and Critical Judgment: The Rise and Fall of the Sinfonia Concertante for Winds, K. 297b." *The Journal of Musicology*, 5:3 (Summer, 1987): 319-356.