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DONIZETTI IN HABSBURG EUROPE

edited by
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Roger Parker

Donizetti *dappertutto*: how to fix the unfixable

Ainsi, toujours poussés vers de nouveaux rivages,
Dans la nuit éternelle emportés sans retour,
Ne pourrons-nous jamais sur l'océan des âges
Jeter l'ancre un seul jour ?
[...]
« Ô temps, suspends ton vol ! et vous, heures propices,
Suspendez votre cours !
Laissez-nous savourer les rapides délices
Des plus beaux de nos jours ! »
Lamartine, *Le Lac* (1820)

I want to explore here the tension between the idea of a "critical" edition of an opera (which serves to fix its text, in the process giving it the stamp of a composer's authority, as well as the authority that institutional scholarship might still command) and the idea of operatic mobility: of the fact that the work in question was often subject to multiple revivals, multiple re-imaginings (both with and without that composerly authority), multiple reinterpretations, multiple meanings. The case of Donizetti, the most widely disseminated operatic composer from the mid-1830s to the mid-1840s, and amongst the most prolific, brings these issues into sharp focus. So much about this composer challenges the rhetoric that conventionally accompanies critical editions, and perhaps even challenges the very basis on which they make their small ripples in today's vast musical-industrial complex. But what is also challenged by Donizettian praxis is the manner in which we think of composers' works more generally as they migrated from one urban centre to another.

My starting point is scraps of paper. I begin there because I want to remind the reader of material things, of paper in the hand, of legibility or lack of it, of the logistical difficulties and sheer material weight of operatic transmission. My exemplum comes from material traces that have come to light in connection with recent work on a critical edition of one of Donizetti's lesser-known but most thought-provoking late works, *Caterina Cornaro*. I should stress immediately that the musicological sleuthing involved is in large part

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the work of that publication's editor, Eleonora Di Cintio.[1] Just a brief historical account of that opera will demonstrate that its *mise-en-place* is inescapably bound up with the geographical eclecticism of Donizetti's life at this point in his career, the first half of the 1840s; it will also gesture towards the manner in which his personal sphere of operations was expanding ever more widely just as his career was, alas, about to come to an abrupt and tragic end. As a preface to that account, and to those circumstances, we might recall a letter the composer wrote around this time (from Vienna on 4 June 1842) to one of his domestic acquaintances:

> I don't know if you're familiar with Figaro's aria in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*... "tutti mi chiedono, tutti mi vogliono", etc... That's the way it is.... Paris says: "come at once". No! Naples: "come running". No! Bologna: "settle down here; these are your terms". No. – Do you want to accept (here comes the *adagio*) the post in V...i...en...na... of M.º di Corte... [...] M.º di Corte, that looks all right to me... if the pay is OK. – The title looks decent... the work shouldn't be too much.[2]

As so often, the humour and ventriloquism hide a deeper truth. Tellingly, Donizetti depicts his life in terms of a notoriously hectic (and much travelled) comic opera: caught up in a multi-vocal vortex, one that saw him speeding around the most prestigious theatrical venues in Europe, and in ever-more-dizzying circles.

Placed amid this furious activity, here—briefly—is the story of *Caterina Cornaro*.[3] It started life around the time of the letter just quoted, when Doni-

1. Gaetano Donizetti, *Caterina Cornaro*, critical edition by Eleonora Di Cintio (Milan: Ricordi, 2024), which appeared as a volume in *Le opere di Gaetano Donizetti*, a series directed by Gabriele Dotto and the present writer. My sincere thanks to my friend and colleague Di Cintio: for her exceptional dedication to this, one of Donizetti's most complex scores; and also, more immediately, for her willingness to allow me to appropriate her work as a launching pad for my own in this essay.

2. "Non sò se voi conoscete l'aria di *Figaro* nel Barbiere di Rossini... *tutti mi chiedono, tutti mi vogliono* etc... Eccoti il caso.... Parigi: *venite subito*. No! Napoli: *correte*. nò! Bologna *quì stabilirvi ecco le proposizioni*. Nò. – Volete voi accettare... (quì vien l'adagio)... il posto in V...i... en...na... di M.º di Corte... [...] M.º di Corte, va bene, mi pare... se il quibus è discreto. – Il titolo è decoroso... il travaglio non dovria esser molto". Letter to Giuseppina Appiani, dated "Vienna, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 Sabbato insomma 1842", actually 4 June 1842; Guido Zavadini, *Donizetti. Vita - musiche - epistolario* (Bergamo: Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1948), no. 424 (henceforth Z. 424), p. 611.

3. What follows is largely indebted to the historical introduction of Di Cintio's edition (see fn 1, pp. XXXIII–XLVII), which offers by far the most complete account of the opera, in the process correcting many details that escaped earlier commentators. For previous accounts of the

zetti, in the wake of the extraordinary success of *Linda di Chamounix* at the Kärntnertortheater in Vienna (May 1842), had indeed assumed the position of *Kammercapellmeister* to the Austrian Emperor, at an annual and not insignificant salary of 12,000 *lire austriache*. *Caterina Cornaro* was intended for—indeed commissioned by, as a sequel to *Linda*—the Kärntnertortheater, a venue for which Donizetti would write some of his most innovative works of musical theatre in these years. (Here a brief but significant interstice is useful: we should immediately be aware that this "progressive" music, the music of the future, the music he wrote for Vienna, was for Donizetti not a matter of artistic credo, not a way of carving out identity in the world; it was, rather, a *style*, a mode to be assumed or cast aside depending on circumstances. This clarification is important in what follows, as the prestige of the "progressive" may—sometimes—serve to distort decision-making about how to edit his operas.)

However, when Donizetti was in mid-composition with *Caterina*, it became clear that another composer, the Bavarian Franz Lachner, had already written a German-language opera on that very theme (*Catharina Cornaro*, first performed in Munich in 1841), and that—worse—Lachner's opera had now been scheduled for revival in Vienna. So Donizetti's commission was cancelled. He was obliged to halt composition in mid-stream and turned instead to *Maria di Rohan* (another of those innovative works for Vienna). Then, with *Maria di Rohan* finished, and as something of a stop-gap, he returned to *Caterina*, refashioning it for Naples. The immediate problem was that Naples prided itself on being one of the most conservative operatic centres in Italy at the time: in other words, something like the polar opposite of progressive Vienna. Small surprise, then, that the Italian city was, according to Donizetti, by no means the best place for such a premiere. As he wrote to his brother-in-law Antonio Vasselli even before the first performance:

> I am anxiously awaiting news of a *Caterina Cornaro* fiasco in Naples. [Fanny] Goldberg as a prima donna is my first disaster without knowing it. I wrote for a soprano, they give me a mezzo! God knows if [Filippo] Coletti [the baritone], if [Gaetano] Fraschini [the tenor], understand their roles as I intend them. God knows what butchery the censorship has brought about.[4]

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opera, see William Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Operas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 180–183; and, with the supplement of reprinting many reviews of the first performances, *Le prime rappresentazioni delle opere di Donizetti nella stampa coeva*, edited by Annalisa Bini and Jeremy Commons (Rome–Milan: Accademia nazionale di Santa Cecilia–Skira, 1997), pp. 1308–1335.

4. "Attendo con ansietà le nuove del fiasco di *Caterina Cornaro* a Napoli. La Goldberg per prima donna è la mia prima rovina senza saperlo. Scrissi per un soprano, mi danno un mezzo! Dio sa se Coletti, se Fraschini intendono le parti come le intesi io; Dio sa la censura qual macello ha fatto". Letter of 6 January 1844 to Antonio Vasselli, Z. 531, p. 716.

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His fears were, alas, correct on all counts. When composing (or perhaps we might immediately say when "assembling") an opera, Donizetti was used to working closely with singers—or, at the least, according to his most recent knowledge of the singers' capabilities—to fashion what might best be called a composite creative achievement, one in which the traditions and tastes of a city, its dramatic and musical preferences, and the principal performers' individual talents and weaknesses could be joined with his dramatic ideas to form something modelled for a specific event. But in this case there was no possibility of such tailoring; the opera intended for Vienna was shipped off to Naples; the composer had commitments elsewhere and could not attend and make any necessary adjustments. Small surprise that *Caterina* was performed in January 1844 with no success at all.[5] After the Naples debacle, it seems likely that Donizetti again thought he might rescue the opera for Vienna, and even revised the final scene to make it more fluidly dramatic and less concentrated on vocal display. But this possibility again fell through, and he had to content himself with a premiere of this revised version (or at least a part of it) in a distinctly secondary theatre: Parma's Teatro Ducale (this was in February 1845). As it turned out, the Parma performances were the last time Donizetti would have an Italian premiere: within six months he was all but incapacitated; a year later he was in an asylum in the suburbs of Paris. As so often, and particularly in Donizetti's frenetic later career, one has the impression that the opera was not so much "finished" as "abandoned". Had, for example, the chance of a Viennese or Parisian premiere turned up, and had the composer's health not collapsed, we can be virtually certain that he would have returned to the score: to fashion it anew, to begin afresh.

With this brief background established, we come to the material traces. These might seem like three sheets of paper but actually there are just two: an original page (f. 72*v* of the composer's autograph score, Figure 1); then a supplementary page, also in his handwriting, that was pasted over this first page at a later date (Figure 2); and then the page that follows in the autograph score (f. 73*r*, Figure 3).[6] The plot of the opera up to this point hardly matters for our purposes, but I'll offer it in telegraphic form. The drama begins in Venice, in the middle of the fifteenth century. Caterina (soprano) is engaged to a young Frenchman called Gerardo (tenor): she loves him; he loves her. They are about

5. For an anthology of the critical response in Naples, which is full of offended local sensibilities (Donizetti's absence, and the fact that the opera had been intended for elsewhere, were found gravely insulting); see *Le prime rappresentazioni*, pp. 1323–1335.

6. Donizetti's score is housed in the library of the Conservatorio San Pietro a Majella (I-Nc), the shelf-mark is Rari 14.6.15. For a detailed description, see the "Sources" section of Di Cintio's edition (pp. 577–579).

to celebrate their wedding as the curtain rises. As one would expect in a work whose generic title is *tragedia lirica*, such joys are brutally short-lived. After a congratulatory opening chorus and some warbling in parallel sixths from the betrothed, a messenger arrives with desperate news: the Venetian authorities have decided that Caterina must, for political reasons, marry Lusignano, the King of Cyprus (baritone). The next act is set in Cyprus. Various opportunities for exotic *couleur locale* are musically explored, in the midst of which Lusignano arrives and makes clear in a lively *aria di sortita* ("Da che sposa Caterina") that he is aware the Venetians have offered him Caterina only because they wish to plot against him and control him. The passage we will focus on is the recitative preceding this aria (Figures 1 and 2), and then the aria itself (the first page of which is on Figure 3).

Judging from the paper used, the recitative that precedes the aria (Figure 1) was written by Donizetti in November 1842, when he assumed *Caterina* would be performed in Vienna. The aria (Figure 3), on the other hand, was probably written in Vienna in spring 1843, some time after the Kärntnertortheater premiere had fallen through and Donizetti was about to send the score to Naples. It is clear from Figure 1 that, originally, Donizetti did not envision an aria here for Lusignano, and fashioned a recitative that closed on the dominant of D, then to be followed by the Coro "Sgherri" (the present opera's No. 7, which follows Lusignano's aria and is in D major). But then, as we can see, he crossed through the recitative and on the right hand at the bottom wrote a curtailed recitative that turned the music to the dominant of B♭. This would then lead directly to Figure 3, which contains the start of Lusignano's B♭ minor aria.

A word or two about that aria, to which I've deliberately not given a generic descriptor. In common with so much of *Caterina*, the piece seems to put in play contradictory generic markers. On the one hand, as the opening of Figure 3 makes plain, it's a cabaletta; the "alla polacca" driving rhythms, the dotted notes in the melodic line, the two strophe structure, etc., etc. But the first vocal score (published by Ricordi) gave it the title "Romanza", and there are plainly elements of that very different generic type: the expansive melodic inspiration in the middle of each strophe, the movement both to the relative major and (in the second strophe) to the parallel major.[7] The curious tempo designation, "Andante mosso ma non troppo", seems in this sense a lapidary indication of the bifurcated generic aims: "Andante" (the tempo of a romanza),

7. Luca Zoppelli's continually informative new book on Donizetti, celebrated elsewhere in this collection, aptly describes the aria as having "il carattere di una cabaletta marziale in ritmo di polacca, con momenti di appassionata ribellione lirica"; Luca Zoppelli, *Donizetti* (Milan: il Saggiatore, 2022), p. 455.

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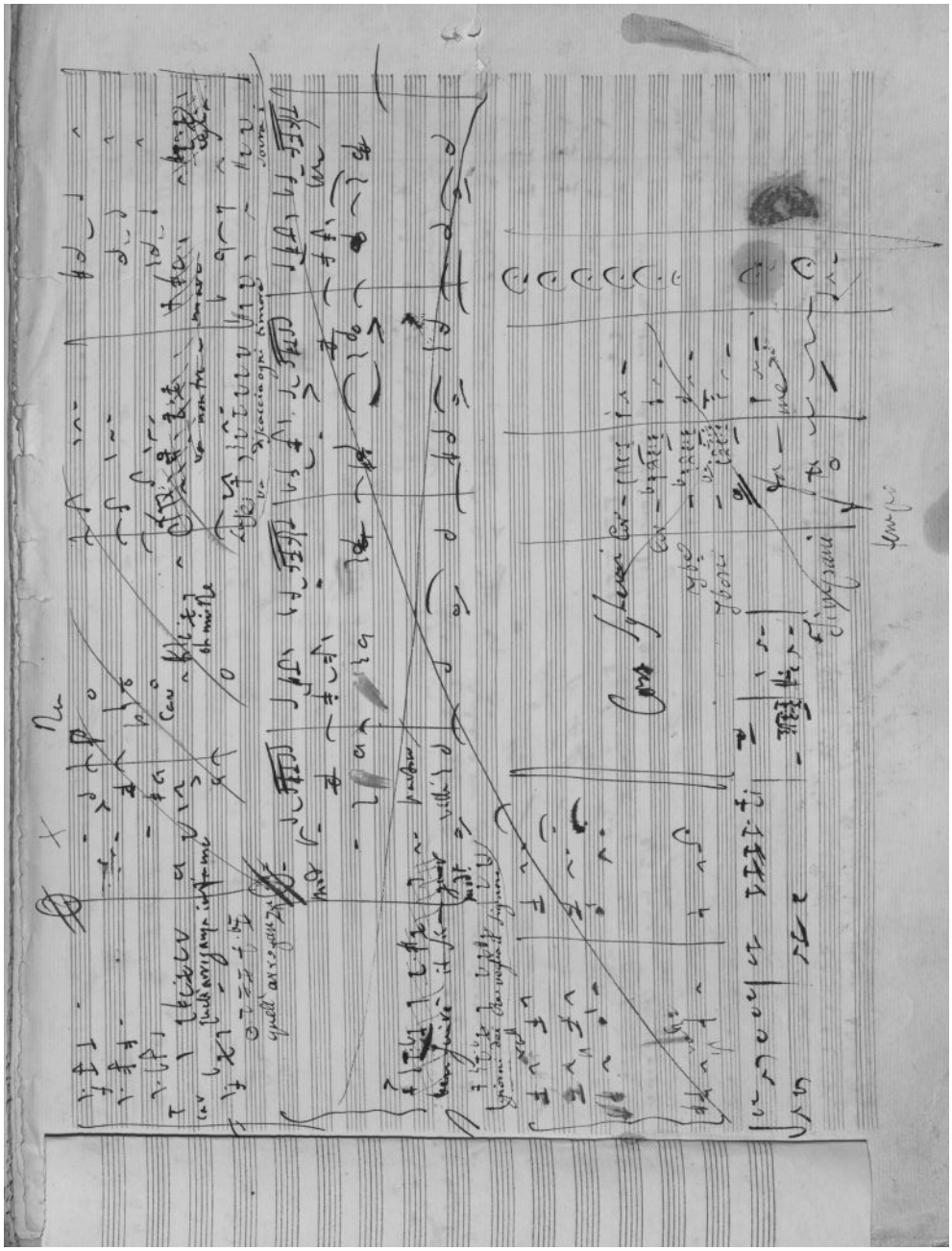

Figure 1
F. 72*v* of Donizetti's autograph score of *Caterina Cornaro*, showing the original configuration of the recitative before Lusignano's Act 1 aria "Da che sposa Caterina"; I-Nc, Rari 14.6.15.

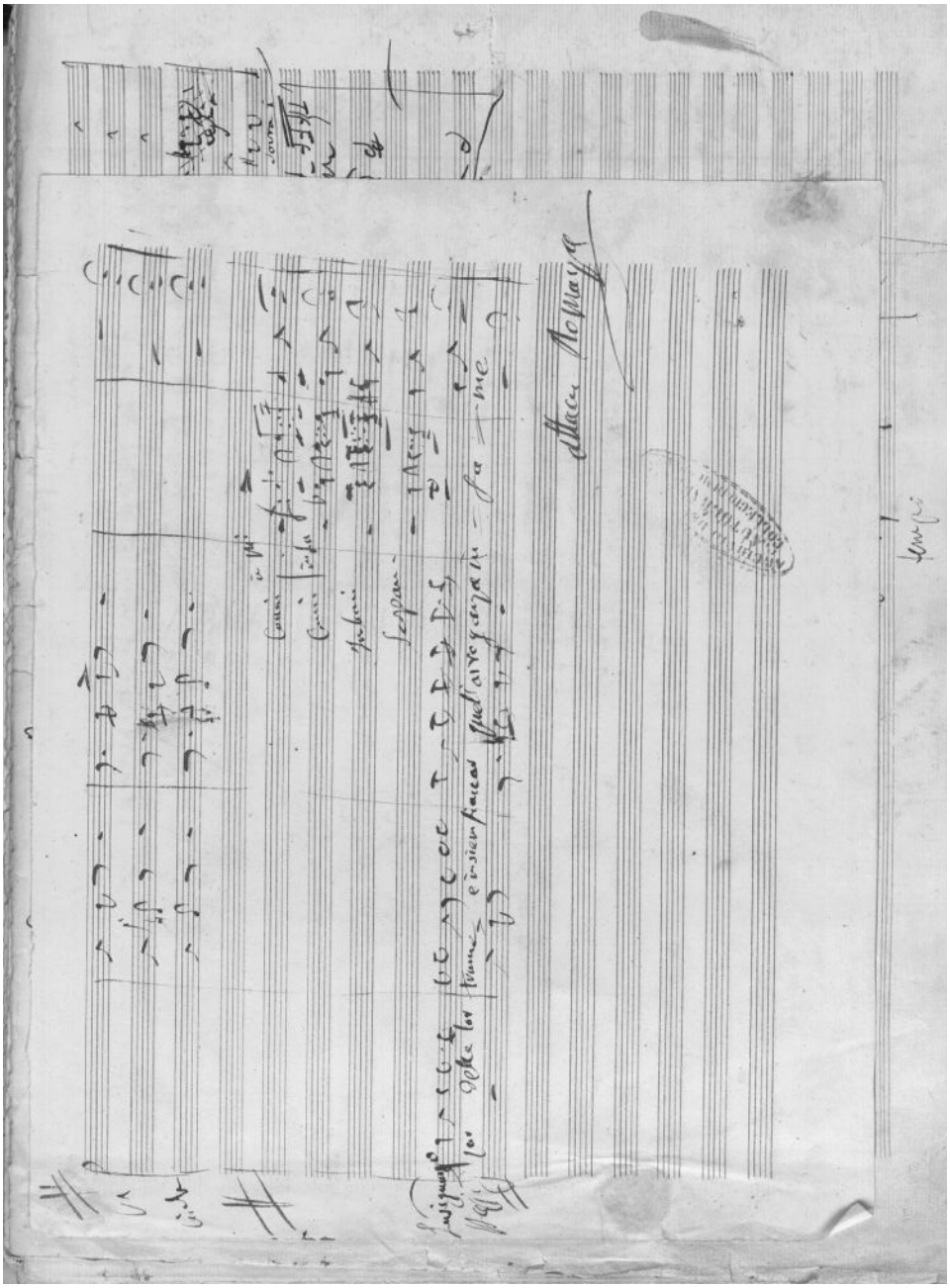

Figure 2
F. 72*v* of Donizetti's autograph score of *Caterina Cornaro*, showing a subsequent revision of the recitative before Lusignano's Act 1 aria "Da che sposa Caterina"; I-Nc, Rari 14.6.15.

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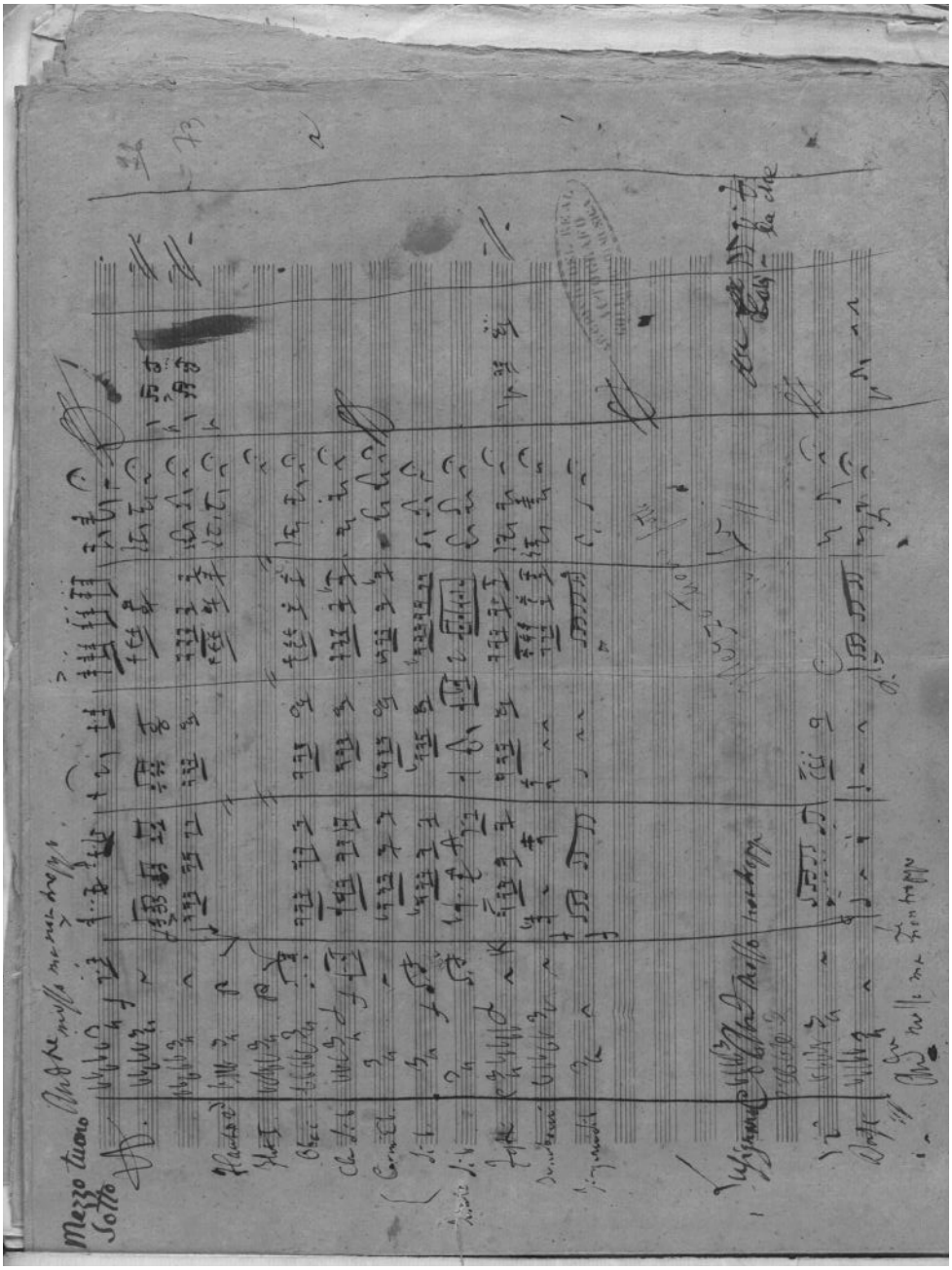

Figure 3
F. 73*r* of Donizetti's autograph score of *Caterina Cornaro*, showing the start of Lusignano's Act 1 aria "Da che sposa Caterina"; I-Nc, Rari 14.6.15.

"mosso" (the cabaletta element intrudes), "ma non troppo" (but not too much so).[8] To repeat, this type of generic confusion is a notable feature of *Caterina* as a whole, as it is of all the operas Donizetti wrote with a Viennese audience in mind (*Maria di Rohan* is the classic instance). The opera's first cabaletta, "Dell'empia Cipro il popolo" in the Prologo, is if anything even stranger, with a constant oscillation in tempo that eventually calls into question the dominant characteristic of what we might call the "cabaletta function".

Such ruminations on one of Donizetti's most challenging operas could continue, but we need to return, briefly, to the philology. In those material traces offered by our trio of figures, there is further evidence of yet further revision. Donizetti, perhaps adapting the part for baritone Filippo Coletti, who was to sing Lusignano in Naples, decided to lower by a semitone his Act 1 aria, thus necessitating further changes to the closing measures of the recitative in Figure 1. Possibly shortly before sending his revised score to Naples, he crossed out those three bars that he had composed at the end of Figure 1, with its preparation for B♭ minor and sketched a new version in the bottom left-hand corner, one that comes to a close on the dominant of A minor. Following that, and on a new page subsequently attached to Figure 1, he wrote an orchestration of the new conclusion of the recitative (the new page is shown in Figure 2). And then, in the centre of the first page of Lusignano's aria (Figure 3), he added the instruction "mezzo tuono sotto | in La", an indication that another hand repeated in the upper left-hand corner of the page.

There are various other strands of evidence, all presented with admirable clarity by Di Cintio in her edition. One further source, also present in the Naples Conservatory Library, is an additional autograph copy of the aria's melodic substance, again in B♭ minor/major and differing from the version seen in Figure 3 in important details. Quite why this further version exists, and what relationship it has to previous versions, is not entirely clear.[9] As if to demonstrate the surrounding confusion, the opera's first vocal score (published by Ricordi) presents a strange and surely mistaken confection: the re-

8. Two valuable essays concerning the romanza genre are worth noting here: Marco Beghelli, "Tre slittamenti semantici: cavatina, romanza, rondò", in *Le parole della musica*, 3, *Studi di lessicologia musicale*, edited by Fiamma Nicolodi and Paolo Trovato (Florence: Olschki, 2000), pp. 185–217; and Giorgio Pagannone, "Un genere particolare di aria. La 'romanza' operistica", *Quaderni dell'Istituto nazionale tostiano*, 2 (2022), pp. 87–104. Both demonstrate (although neither says so explicitly) the manner in which such generic markers are always open to deformation and creative manipulation as the nineteenth century unfolded, so much so that the very category they inhabit gradually becomes nugatory. On the continuing difficulties of adapting operatic music to generic categories, see Emanuele Senici, "Genre", in *The Oxford Handbook of Opera*, edited by Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 33–52.

9. See in particular the discussion on p. 590 of Di Cintio's edition.

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citative is consistent with the very first version that Donizetti conceived, but finishes prematurely on a D major chord (the dominant of G), a tonality that is harmonically incompatible with the subsequent Lusignano aria, which duly starts in B♭ minor. This vocal score version, incidentally, is followed in the most recent recording of the opera, by Opera Rara, a recording that generally takes seriously its philological duties; but they plainly got this aspect wrong, which is surprising given the blatant tonal *non-sequitur*.[10]

So there we have it, and if readers are bewildered, they can take comfort from a similar state among the specialists. We have, at the least, what cultural theorists like to call a surplus of authorial signature. There are four discrete and—at some point—composer-authorised configurations of this moment in which our principal baritone enters the scene: 1. with no aria at all (probably written for Vienna); 2. with an aria in B♭ minor/major (probably written for Naples); 3. with the same aria transposed to A minor/major (almost certainly written for Naples); 4. with the aria again in B♭ minor/major, but altered in significant details by the composer (the alterations possibly post-dating version 3, possibly not).

Version 1 is clearly an early draft, never performed anywhere, and subsequently cancelled by the composer; the critical edition relegates it to an Appendix, where it surely belongs unless one's Lusignano of choice has severely disappointed.[11] But the decision between versions 2, 3 and 4, and thus between preferring the aria in B♭ minor/major or A minor/major, is more complex. There is, as we have seen, conclusive evidence that, at some point and quite possibly for the Naples premiere, Donizetti wanted the aria transposed; but there is also evidence that this was for a particular performance opportunity (that offered by Naples, which he could not attend or supervise), and one he had little confidence in. There is also—as we have seen—the fact that in some (probably) post-autograph partial copies of the aria, he maintained the original key of B♭ minor/major: a circumstance that *may* reflect a continuing preference for that key even in the face of the transposition requested/required for Naples, or that *may* merely have resulted from the fact that these iterations preceded the decision to make the transposition. And in case the title of a famous Shakespeare comedy set in Messina is by now occurring to some readers, I should stress here an added circumstance: we have an autograph version of the aria in B♭ minor/major in full score, but we do not have his full score of the transposed version, and can guess that it never existed. What is important here is that transposing an orchestral composition at this period is

10. Gaetano Donizetti, *Caterina Cornaro*, conducted by David Parry (London: Opera Rara, 2013), ORC48.

11. The original recitative is printed as Appendix 1 in Di Cintio's edition, see p. 531.

never a simply mechanical operation: the brass in particular will need to be re-written, as their limitations at that time mean that a simple move down a semitone is rarely possible. In other operas of around this time, Donizetti took the trouble himself to write out important transpositions. In other words, if editors decided to favour the aria in A minor/major, they would need to invent themselves such adjustments.[12]

In other words, we are left with a conundrum, a moment poised between alternatives, each with a legitimate claim for our attention. What is more, lest readers think this is merely an especially difficult moment in an unusually complex work, such cruxes are virtually the norm so far as Donizetti's operas are concerned, and often involve not just simple transpositions but the very core of the dramatic articulation. While some of his operas, by force of circumstance, exist in one incontestable, author-approved version, the norm is quite other, with choices sometimes proliferating alarmingly. In a case on which the Donizetti edition is working at the moment, that of his *Otto mesi in due ore* (first performed in Naples 1827), the composer was actively involved with at least six subsequent versions (Palermo 1828, Milan 1831, Rome 1832, Turin 1834, Paris 1840 and London 1845), all of which have some considerable claim to "authenticity".[13]

As promised, in what remains of my paper I want to focus on two issues that might fold the present Donizettian investigation into the larger historical project to which this volume is dedicated. The first issue concerns the matter of "authorial intention" (that rock and refuge, not to say fetish object, of most critical editions): specifically the extent to which such a slippery term has purchase in Donizettian circumstances. On this topic, it is instructive to quote from a further Donizetti letter concerning *Caterina Cornaro*, this time addressed to his fellow composer, Naples-based Saverio Mercadante, whom he hoped might watch over preparations for the Neapolitan premiere of the opera. The letter was published in a musical journal before the Naples premiere and was probably intended for such wide dissemination: to demonstrate

12. A case in point is Donizetti's opera *Adelia* (first performed in Rome, 1840); the library of the Naples Conservatorio contains scores of several numbers that the composer himself took the trouble to transpose (see I-Nc, Rari 4.1.11/1-3). As far as this particular transposition goes, the surrounding tonality might fit either solution: B♭ major (the end tonality of Lusignano's aria) links comfortably to the D major of the following Coro (by means of the shared D), while A major clearly functions as the dominant of the Coro. In the end, Di Cintio's edition elected to publish only the B♭ minor/major version.

13. For the best published account of these versions, see Annalisa Bini, "*Otto mesi in due ore 'ossia' gli esiliati in Siberia*: vicende di un'opera donizettiana", *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, 22 (1987), pp. 183–260. The critical edition (forthcoming) is edited by Francesca Vella.

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publicly that, although Donizetti could not be present for the premiere of his opera, he was actively engaged in its final preparations. As part of this demonstration—and helpfully from our point of view—the composer proceeded to itemise what such "watching over" might entail: specifically what freedoms he was willing to allow Mercadante in managing the score onto the Neapolitan stage. Donizetti could be sure, he wrote, that his interlocutor was fully aware of the misunderstandings that manuscript transmission can engender, and so he humbly requested Mercadante to:

> Save me from the errors thus made, watch over with a benign eye my opera, do to what you think useful in the broadest sense of that term; increase, re-orchestrate, abbreviate, expand, transpose, in short do with [the opera] as you would with a work of your own, for you are in a position to appreciate *the weak side of the artists*.[14]

The tabula rasa thus offered was broad indeed: as the composer made clear, it encompassed "the broadest sense of that term" ("tutta l'estensione del termine"). As well as minor adjustments to the music text, it could involve adding supplementary movements or even entire numbers, whether by Donizetti or (shock, horror) by others. With such blanket approval—to do, in short, whatever local exigencies required—what are we to make of authorial intention? In this context, might any adaptation be deemed "authentic"?

If only matters were that simple. We have other letters from the composer—perhaps in other moods, or swayed by other motives (economic ones were often important)—in which he could pronounce himself incandescent about changes made to his scores. It is true that he rarely seemed to mind if singers incorporated their own favourite arias into his works (these additional or substitute pieces are often called *arie di baule*, suitcase arias, to be carried in a singer's luggage and pulled forth whenever applause was thought in need of solicitation).[15] But re-orchestrations from vocal score models, made to circumvent the cost of hiring orchestral materials, were a constant source of composerly anguish, and a form of meddling he actively disliked because it involved precisely the issue of transposition. While he was content for such changes of pitch to take place in vocal scores for the domestic market, he

14. "[...] toglimi di sì fatti errori, invigila con occhio benigno l'opera mia, fa in essa ciò che più credi utile in tutta l'estensione del termine; accresci, istrumenta, diminuisci, scorta [scorcia?], allunga, trasporta, in somma fanne cosa tua, che sei a portata di conoscere *le côté faible des artistes*". Letter to Mercadante, dated Paris, 5 November 1843, published in the Neapolitan journal *Il sibilo* on 28 December 1843; reprinted in *Le prime rappresentazioni*, pp. 1323–1324.

15. For a book-length study of this practice, see Hilary Poriss, *Changing the Score. Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

would complain bitterly about transpositions in the theatre, precisely because they might interfere with an orchestral sonority that he regarded as dramatically important.[16] Again, the issue would seem neatly balanced. What is plain, at least, is that "authorial intention" is by no means a simple concept (in this as in any other circumstance), and cannot reliably be burnished forth as a guiding principle in making the decisions we are faced with.

My second, related issue has some significant historical baggage in the musicological past. Should the composer's comparatively lax attitude to the claims of performance vs the claims of "the work" (a hierarchy admirably laid out in his letter to Mercadante, quoted above) be imported into our treatment of and attitudes to his music? Readers old enough to be familiar with the writings of Carl Dahlhaus might recall his famous (or, according to some, infamous) resurrection of an ancient binary that had once been iconic in the historiography of early nineteenth-century music. As one historian of the period put it, the early decades of that century were best seen as "The Age of Beethoven and Rossini".[17] And here's how Dahlhaus glossed the formulation. On the one hand was "Beethoven [who], virtually at one fell swoop, claimed for music the strong concept of art, without which music would be unable to stand on a par with literature and the visual arts"; this powerful concept to be juxtaposed with "Rossini, [...] preserving in the nineteenth century a residue of eighteenth-century spirit, [who] was completely oblivious to this concept [...]; a Rossini score is a mere recipe for a performance, and it is the performance which forms the crucial aesthetic arbiter as the realization of a draft rather than the exegesis of a text".[18]

Dahlhaus's formulation might be taken, in the context of its time and place (the book from which it came, a general history of nineteenth-century music, was first published in Germany in 1980), as an enlightened attempt

16. One of the most voluminous examples of Donizetti's contrasting attitudes to his operatic texts comes in the case of *Lucrezia Borgia* (first performed, Milan 1833), which travelled through multiple author-approved versions but was, because of its success, frequently pirated. For full details, see the historical introduction to the critical edition, edited by Roger Parker and Rosie Ward (Milan: Ricordi, 2019).

17. Raphael Georg Kiesewetter thus named what for him was the most recent epoch, that since 1800; see his *Geschichte der europäisch-abendländischen oder unserer heutigen Musik* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1834), especially pp. 9–8. For a book-length meditation on this formulation, see *The Invention of Beethoven and Rossini: Historiography, Analysis, Criticism*, edited by Nicholas Mathew and Benjamin Walton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

18. Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 9; the book originally appeared as *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1980).

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to find an alternative aesthetic space for Rossini, rather than—as had been commonplace in the immediate past—simply judging the music aesthetically inferior.[19] However, very soon after its English translation emerged a decade later there were loud complaints of hidden agendas, ones that might subtly aid marginalisation of the Rossini side of the equation. And it is surely no accident that such complaints issued from those attempting at the time to raise Rossini's prestige by making claims for the integrity of his operas as "works" in the strong sense, and doing so by creating a critical edition of his entire opus.[20] A middle ground in this *querelle* might conclude that, rather than Dahlhaus's binary (and he was, lest we forget, a remorselessly dialectic writer), there is a constantly shifting continuum along which the various genres and national schools of the early nineteenth century might tentatively be arranged. Small surprise, then, if the edifice of the "critical edition", which was constructed as a mean of shoring up (if not actually creating) one extreme end of the continuum is applied to a repertory at the other end.[21]

However, there is a much broader conclusion to be taken from this whole meditation on uncertainty and ambiguity. Like a good deal of music in the nineteenth century, Italian opera gained enormous momentum by making use of improved transportation systems to move around the continent (and, increasingly, beyond the continent) in search of new performers, new audiences, new profits. And, in part because it was so reliant on fragile human bodies to make its impact, in part because it involved dramatic representation, which could have political resonances that those in power found potentially danger-

19. Interestingly, Kiesewetter's *Geschichte* restricted itself to bland distinctions between instrumental music and opera, and declined to pass unequivocal judgment on the competing claims of his two protagonists, suggesting that only time would tell.

20. Philip Gossett, "Carl Dahlhaus and the 'ideal type'", *19th-Century Music*, 13/1 (1989), pp. 49–56, here pp. 55–56. For further critiques along the same lines, see the same author's review of Dahlhaus's *Nineteenth-Century Music*: "Up from Beethoven", *New York Review of Books*, 36/16 (28 October 1989), pp. 21–26.

21. Possible reactions to these remarks are pre-emptively ringing in my ears. What are you doing as General Editor of a critical edition (of Donizetti of all people), a type of publication that is, if anything, a celebration (not to say reification) of the composer's authority? To answer that—justified—question would take another paper entirely, and it's one I've written already and have no desire to repeat. See Roger Parker, "A Donizetti edition in the postmodern world", in *L'opera teatrale di Gaetano Donizetti. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studio, Bergamo, 17–20 settembre 1992*, edited by Francesco Bellotto (Bergamo: Comune di Bergamo, 1993), pp. 57–68. Briefly though I would continue to argue that the production of critical editions can, if one controls the surrounding rhetoric carefully, be an activity as likely to *demystify* the work of a composer as to give that work added authority: it can, in other words, encourage users (attentive users) to realise the limitations of Donizettian material traces and Donizettian intentionality.

ous, and in part because of the huge economic variations across the continent, it shape-shifted to a remarkable degree as it travelled. To take our present example, and to embroider only a little: in Vienna—had it happened there the first time—that aria of Lusignano would have been absent, and the comparatively lean, spare, "spoken drama" musical action that emerged would have been heartily approved; in Naples, on the other hand, it might have got by—just—in A minor, allowing the old-fashioned heroic bass now struggling with the higher tessitura of "modern" composers to gain some applause for his stentorian but less than stratospheric top notes;[22] but then, a little later, it might have been revived in Vienna, this time with the addition of the aria in B♭ minor, and would have helped to establish the new vocal persona of the high baritone and even served to impress a coterie of Viennese connoisseurs as an example of large-scale tonal articulation.[23] What is more, one might immediately imagine the scene at smaller venues, perhaps in the depths of the Austro-Hungarian empire: it might arrive there, somewhat bedraggled, a decade later, to be played by a company that perhaps had no bass or baritone, or before a ruling elite that disapproved of showing kings onstage, and so the aria was again omitted altogether.

I belabour this point because, if there is one inflection of our musical history that is still on occasion needed, it is surely to take such variability, whether or not willed by the composer, not as a sign of unfortunate compromise in the face of "practical considerations" but rather as a positive historical phenomenon: as further illustration—if we needed it—that mobility and malleability in musical works can be a cause for celebration rather than for confusion or lament. To put this another, more radical way: while we continue to think endlessly about the effect that musical works have on places (the arrival of Rossini in Vienna; the impact of Beethoven on London; and so on and on), we might usefully juxtapose those imaginings with examples of, as it were, the opposite direction of travel: the manner in which places—or, perhaps better, "spaces", in the distinction made by Michel de Certeau[24]—can inflect musical

22. In fact, though, there remains some doubt about whether the aria was actually performed in any key in the Naples performances. It is certainly present in the contemporary libretto (what Di Cintio's edition calls NA^{1844}, published in Naples by the Tipografia Flautina), but in the reviews collected by Bini and Commons (see *Le prime rappresentazioni*, pp. 1323–1335) there are multiple references to the fact that Coletti had too little to sing, and no specific comments on this piece for him in Act 1.

23. Although it would be dangerous to press the point too far, the key of B♭ has a prominent place in several numbers of *Caterina* and might—with a certain strain—be thought significant in a larger tonal argument.

24. In Certeau's words, place is comparatively neutral, "an instant configuration of positions"; while space is what he calls "a practised place", an "intersection of mobile elements [...] actu-

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works. In that sense, I would argue that "Habsburg Europe in Donizetti" is at the least as revealing a topic as is the more usual "Donizetti in Habsburg Europe". Indeed, one of the great advances of the present project, as I see it, is to take issue with a kind of music history that regards nation states as a prime classificatory category, and for the most part uses either larger conglomerations (empires, continents) or smaller ones (cities) as an alternative taxonomy. What I'm urging is that we go one stage further, and put equal critical pressure on another classificatory category, one just as tenaciously present in certain forms of music history: the category of the composer and his (it's almost always his) musical work. The manner in which cities inflect musical works is almost always seen as potentially disruptive and invasive of "the work", the villains being lazy or incompetent or ignorant or disrespectful musicians; overbearing or illiberal political authorities; grasping or cash-strapped administrators. Let's try harder to see another story: one in which individual cities creatively inflect the music that comes within their confines, thus serving an important social function that is far away from the moral uplift so routinely pronounced to come from rapt attention in the imaginary museum of musical works.[25]

ated by the ensemble of movements deployed within in it". See Michel de Certeau, "Spatial stories", republished in *Defining Travel: Diverse Visions*, edited by Susan L. Roberson (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), pp. 88–104, here p. 90.

25. My reference here is, of course, to Lydia Goehr's classical account, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Abstract
The paper explores the tension between the idea of a "critical" edition of an opera (which serves to fix its text, giving it the stamp of a composer's authority, as well as the authority that institutional scholarship might still command) and the idea of operatic mobility: of the fact that the work in question was often subject to multiple revivals, multiple re-imaginings (both with and without that composerly authority), multiple reinterpretations, multiple meanings. The case of Donizetti, the most widely disseminated operatic composer from the mid-1830s to the mid-1840s, and amongst the most prolific, brings these issues into sharp focus; as does my choice of a "case study" in his late opera *Caterina Cornaro*, which for many reasons had an extremely complex genesis and exodus. So much about this composer, and this opera, challenges the rhetoric that conventionally accompanies critical editions, perhaps even challenges the very basis on which such editions make their small ripples in today's vast musical-industrial complex. But what is also challenged is the manner in which we think of composers' operas more generally, particularly their status as "works" as they migrated from one urban centre to another.

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