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ARTICLE

Verdi's Emperor Charles V: Risorgimento Politics, Habsburg History, and Austrian-Italian Operatic Culture

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Abstract

This article considers the figure of Habsburg Emperor Charles V in relation to Italy, first as perceived by Italians in his own time, the sixteenth century, but then especially as evaluated by Italians of the Risorgimento—and notably by Verdi in his operatic work. The article emphasizes opera as a crucial cultural medium of Habsburg engagement with the Italian peninsula and of Italian culture within the Habsburg monarchy. Contemporary Italian evaluations of Charles's role in the domination of Italy were both regretful of his military interventions (including the sack of Rome in 1527) and respectful of his political skills. During the Risorgimento, the conventional Mazzinian perspective was deeply hostile to the Habsburgs and conditioned the wars of Italian unification against the Habsburg monarchy. Italian opera, however, especially Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (1829), Verdi's *Ernani* (1844), and Verdi's *Don Carlos* (1867) indicate a complex operatic perspective on the Habsburgs in Risorgimento culture. While the Austrian Habsburg representative Gessler is the villain in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, Verdi's *Ernani* actually places Charles V on stage in a major baritone role with beautiful music and an ambivalent presence. In *Don Carlos*, the ghost of Charles V hovers over and haunts the whole opera.

Keywords: Emperor Charles V; Risorgimento; opera; Giuseppe Verdi; Giuseppe Mazzini; Habsburg Empire; Gioachino Rossini

Introduction: The Risorgimento and the Habsburgs

In 1831, the twenty-five-year-old Giuseppe Mazzini was released from prison in Savona and founded the movement "Giovine Italia"—Young Italy—inaugurating the Italian Risorgimento with a letter to Carlo Alberto, the new Piedmontese king in Turin, with a call for war against Austria as the imperative of Italian national independence. Austria, for the young Mazzini, represented "terror" (*terrore*), and "the Austrian" (*l'Austriaco*) was denounced as "the tyrant of Italy" (*il tiranno d'Italia*) and also as "the executioner" (*il carnefice*).[1] The actual government in Vienna was that of Emperor Franz and chancellor Metternich whose political conservatism had shaped the post-Napoleonic settlement of Europe, seeking to frustrate liberal and revolutionary movements, including the Italian Carbonari whose energies were about to be rechanneled into Mazzini's Young Italy.

Vienna ruled over most of northern Italy, principally the combined province of "Lombardy-Venetia," but there was also a Habsburg presence in Parma, Modena, and Florence. Lombardy, in particular, had been a Habsburg territory—first Spanish Habsburg, then Austrian Habsburg—dating back to the age of Charles V in the sixteenth century. Mazzini now called for Carlo Alberto to wage war against the Austrian—"gridategli guerra e assalite" (cry war against him

[1]Un Italiano [Giuseppe Mazzini], *A Carlo Alberto di Savoia* (1831), republished in Giuseppe Mazzini, *A Carlo Alberto di Savoia* (Paris, 1847), 7, 14; Roland Sarti, "Giuseppe Mazzini and His Opponents," in *Italy in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. John Davis (Oxford, 2000), 74–84; see also Bruce Haddock, "State and Nation in Mazzini's Political Thought," *History of Political Thought* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 313–36; Nadia Urbinati, "Mazzini and the Making of the Republican Ideology," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 17, no. 2 (2012): 183–204; Harry Hearder, *Italy in the Age of the Risorgimento 1790–1870* (London, 1983), 182–89.

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and attack)—and echoed Machiavelli by relaunching the slogan, "Liberate l'Italia dai barbari!" (Liberate Italy from the barbarians!).[2] For Mazzini, as for Machiavelli, the northern barbarians dwelled beyond the Alps, and foreign domination of Italy—in the age of Metternich as in the age of Charles V—was a barbaric subjugation of civilized Italians.

The idea that the Habsburgs were absolutely foreign and extraneous to the Italian peninsula, barbarians from beyond the Alps, would lie close to the ideological core of the Risorgimento in the nineteenth century, culminating in war against Austria in 1859—and then again in 1866—thus leading to Italian unification and independence with the liberation of Lombardy (and Tuscany) from the Habsburgs in 1859, and Venice and Venetia in 1866. Unification with Italy was confirmed by plebiscites, and while an Italian text of 1867 might speak of "Venezia rivendicata all'Italia,"[3] this "revindication" had to be considered in problematic relation to the fact that Venice had never belonged to a united Italy, and that a united Italy had never actually existed. "Italian" was not a term that signified political nationality in early modern Europe, and even in the nineteenth century, it did not clearly identify and unify the regionally diverse populations of the peninsula. It was nevertheless sometimes meaningful for Italians to speak of Italian culture based on Italian language, and, more broadly, to recognize the categories of Italian art, literature, and opera, even while acknowledging the importance of regional variations.

The relations between Italian culture, the Italian political principalities, and the Habsburg dynasty were complex and longstanding, dating back to the fifteenth century when the Sienese humanist Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II) was crowned as the poet laureate of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III. It was during the reign of Charles V, over the first half of the sixteenth century, that the Habsburg dynasty became most deeply involved in Italian political life, with the sack of Rome in 1527, the almost-compelled coronation of Charles by the pope in Bologna in 1530, the installation of the Medici as ducal rulers in Florence with Habsburg support, and the annexation of Lombardy.

In the 1820s, Florentine writer and reformer Gino Capponi began to write an essay about Pietro Leopoldo, the enlightened eighteenth-century Habsburg Grand Duke of Tuscany and, eventually, Holy Roman Emperor Leopold II. Capponi was full of admiration for the enlightened reforms of Pietro Leopoldo and did not doubt that even a Habsburg prince could "quickly become sincerely Tuscan" in the eighteenth century.[4] Yet, when Capponi looked back to the sixteenth century, he took a much more jaundiced view of Charles V: "lord of Spain and Flanders, emperor in Germany, powerful in arms as no other prince had been for many centuries, oppressing in servitude the glories and the discords of Italy; he eliminated there the last refuge that remained to popular liberty."[5] Capponi, writing as a historian in the nineteenth century, could appreciate the eighteenth-century Habsburg reforms of Pietro Leopoldo in Tuscany, but could only condemn the impact of Charles V on the Italian peninsula.

In the nineteenth-century age of the Risorgimento, modern ideas of national identity reshaped the perceived relation between the Habsburgs and the Italian lands. This article will consider Italian perspectives on Charles V and Habsburg history, with particular attention to how those perspectives were shaped by the dynamics of Habsburg-Italian operatic culture. After noting the significance of Austria in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, the discussion will focus especially on Verdi, the leading operatic composer of the Italian Risorgimento, considering his operatic representations of the figure of Charles V in *Ernani* and *Don Carlos*. While Mazzini's animosity toward the Habsburgs was emphatic, Verdi's treatments of Charles V suggest notable ambivalence in coming to terms with the history of the Habsburgs in Italy. Opera will be considered as an art form that helped to define the relation of the Habsburg court to Italian culture while also contributing to the ideological articulation and legitimation of both Habsburg imperial identity and Italian national identity.

[2]Un Italiano [Mazzini], *A Carlo Alberto* (1831), 16.

[3]Giuseppe Marco Bourelly, *Cento biografie di fanciulli illustri italiani* (Milan, 1867), 309.

[4]Gino Capponi, *Storia di Pietro Leopoldo* (CreateSpace, 2012), 52; Capponi, *Introduzione alla istoria civile dei papi & Storia di Pietro Leopoldo* (Florence, 1976); Piero Treves, "Capponi, Gino," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 19 (Rome, 1976), https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gino-capponi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/.

[5]Capponi, *Storia di Pietro Leopoldo*, 8.

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The nineteenth-century unification of Italy did not actually attenuate Italian resentment against Austria since the Italian claim upon the "irredenta" (unredeemed lands) of Trieste, South Tyrol, Istria, and Dalmatia, all within the Habsburg Empire, eventually brought Italy into World War I against Austria-Hungary, a war that was, for some Italian nationalists, simply a continuation of the wars of national independence.[6] The Tuscan general Mario Lamberti sought to revise Italian views of the "new Austria" in the 1920s, but still recalled "la Vienna odiata dai nostri patriotti" (the Vienna hated by our patriots), as the conventional perspective of the Risorgimento.[7] Reciprocally, Habsburg historical thinkers partly accepted this perspective, viewing the loss of the Italian territories in the nineteenth century as a nationally logical development that encouraged the consolidation of the monarchy in the lands of East Central Europe as Austria-Hungary. In the 1920s, the Hungarian political thinker Oszkár Jászi, looking back at the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire, noted the significance of the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 which led to the loss of Venice by the Habsburgs: "now locked out from the German imperial connection and having lost its Italian properties . . . the road was open to the historical mission of Austria."[8] Both Italian and Habsburg perspectives have thus often underplayed the integral significance of the Italian aspects of Habsburg history, both inclined to accept that these were separate histories that had been only artificially and temporarily joined. Yet, the figure of Charles V, both in his sixteenth-century political context and his nineteenth-century cultural representation, offers insight into the complex dynamics of divergence, antagonism, intimacy, and interrelationship that characterized the Habsburg political and cultural connection to the Italian lands.

Peninsular Perspectives on Charles V

Charles V, inheriting the crown of Spain from his Aragonese grandfather Ferdinand in 1516 and succeeding to the Holy Roman Empire after his Habsburg grandfather Maximilian in 1519, would ultimately establish Habsburg power in Lombardy by defeating François I of France at the battle of Pavia in 1525. In his vast agglomeration of lands (including the New World of the Americas), Charles adopted a theory of universal empire that, as historian Frances Yates demonstrated, was partly derived from the Italian Ghibelline writings of Dante and Petrarch. This ideology of empire was developed for Charles by his Piedmontese chancellor Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara, who also encouraged him to pursue the domination of Italy. Gattinara did not hesitate to invoke God's providence in addressing Charles: "he has set you on the way towards a world monarchy, towards the uniting of all Christendom under a single shepherd."[9]

Florentine republicans like Niccolò Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini were wary of Charles and contemplated with concern the imperial presence in Italy.[10] Machiavelli's death in June 1527 coincided with Charles's most fiercely destructive intervention in Italy, the sack of Rome by his imperial armies, humiliating the Medici Pope Clement VII, and affirming the violent Habsburg mastery of the peninsula. For Francesco Guicciardini, the sack represented the climactic Italian catastrophe in his *Storia d'Italia*, while his brother Luigi Guicciardini wrote a separate history, *Il sacco di Roma*, focused particularly on the horrific violence of 1527, "the cruelties practiced continuously . . . by

[6]Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919* (2001; New York, 2003), 281–87; Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 28–29, 150–51, 165–67; Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* (Princeton, 2003), 15–45; Marina Cattaruzza, *Italy and its Eastern Border, 1866–2016*, trans. Daniela Gobetti (New York, 2016), 7–82.

[7]Mario Lamberti, "La nuova Austria," http://liberale.erasmo.it/testi/1891.htm.

[8]Oscar Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (1929; Chicago, 1971), 106.

[9]Frances Yates, "Charles V and the Idea of the Empire," in *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Francis Yates (1975; London, 1985), 10–26; Geoffrey Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V* (New Haven, 2019), 514–24; Rebecca Boone, "Empire and Medieval Simulacrum: A Political Project of Mercurino di Gattinara, Grand Chancellor of Charles V," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 42, no. 4 (2011): 1027–49.

[10]Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (1965; Princeton, 1973), 240–42, 282–88.

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the Germans and the Spanish in such a rich and noble city."[11] These were precisely the soldiers of Charles V, King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor of Germany, though he was not personally present for the assault on Rome.

For Luigi Guicciardini, these soldiers were barbarians, desecrating the civilization of the Italian Renaissance as the Goths had once laid waste to ancient Rome: "how many courtiers, how many genteel and cultivated men (*quanti cortigiani, quanti gentili e delicati uomini*)," he asked rhetorically, "became the miserable prey of these cruel foreigners!"[12] The sack of Rome has been seen as marking the end of the golden age of the Roman Renaissance, and yet Luigi Guicciardini, in his dedication to Cosimo de' Medici, acknowledged the ascendancy of the Habsburg emperor as the supreme master of Renaissance political practice: "from this account, Your Excellency will understand how much God favors the worthy and humane undertakings of the emperor; and little by little discloses that He has designated him monarch of the universe, fit with his rare goodness and unique prudence to reorder the ruined world (*con la sua rara bontà ed unica prudenza riordini il guasto mondo*)."[13] Renaissance Italians were certainly able to recognize the Machiavellian qualities—combining goodness with prudence, along with military might—that made Charles the political master of Italy.

Charles summoned Clement VII to Bologna to provide an imperial coronation in San Petronio in 1530, and established the Medici as hereditary dukes in Florence after the city surrendered to an imperial siege in that same year. The emperor enjoyed a triumphal procession in Rome in 1536, following his conquest of Tunis in 1535. He followed a route through the ruins of the Roman Forum toward the Capitoline Hill, as if he were an ancient Roman emperor, and his presence led to one of the great urban design projects of the Renaissance: Michelangelo's transformation of the muddy hilltop into the modern Campidoglio.[14] The crucial focus of the Campidoglio would be the equestrian bronze statue of Marcus Aurelius, which would later serve as a model for Titian's equestrian portrait of Charles in 1548.

At around this time, the Venetian envoy Marino Cavalli penned his own Renaissance appreciation of Charles in clearly Machiavellian terms, praising not only his horsemanship, but also his political skill:

> He is very well advised, and with much secrecy, by all parties; he discusses business for four or five hours continuously, remaining seated, and he writes sometimes the reasons for and against in order to see better how to proceed. He deliberates at length and is then resolute . . . In sum, his negotiations are so well understood, so well justified, ordered, and carried out that whoever admits the first principle almost cannot honorably fail to admit the indicated conclusion. He knows very well the nature of all the princes with whom he treats and spends much time instructing himself further about them; he is therefore almost never wrong in the prognostications that he makes.[15]

The Habsburg emperor, whom Machiavelli certainly regarded as a transalpine barbarian from the perspective of Renaissance Italy, had come to represent the Machiavellian paragon of a modern Renaissance prince.

In the eighteenth century, the enlightened Scottish historian William Robertson wrote about the reign of Charles V with philosophical admiration for his statesmanship.

[11]Luigi Guicciardini, *The Sack of Rome*, trans. James McGregor (New York, 1993), 60; Luigi Guicciardini, *Il sacco di Roma* (Lucca, 1758), 109–10.

[12]Guicciardini, *The Sack of Rome*, 97–98, 114; Guicciardini, *Il sacco di Roma*, 187, 223; André Chastel, *The Sack of Rome*, 1527, trans. Beth Archer (Princeton, 1983), 115–48; Parker, *Emperor*, 171–75.

[13]Guicciardini, *The Sack of Rome*, 4; Guicciardini, *Il sacco di Roma*, xvii.

[14]James Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo* (1961; Chicago, 1986), 136–70; Arthur DiFuria, *Maarten van Heemskerck's Rome: Antiquity, Memory, and the Cult of Ruins* (Leiden, 2019), 105–7; Marcello Fantoni, "Carlo V e l'immagine dell'*imperator*," in *Carlo V e l'Italia*, ed Marcello Fantoni (Rome, 2000), 101–14.

[15]Marino Cavalli, "Relazione di Marino Cavalli ritornato ambasciatore da Carlo V l'anno 1551," in *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, vol. 4, ed. Eugenio Albèri (Cambridge, 2012), 215.

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> As Charles, by extending the royal prerogative, rendered the monarchs of Spain masters at home, he added new dignity and power to their crown by his foreign acquisitions. He secured to Spain the quiet possession of the kingdom of Naples . . . He united the duchy of Milan, one of the most fertile and populous Italian provinces, to the Spanish crown; and left his successors, even without taking their other territories into the account, the most considerable Princes in Italy.[16]

Habsburg supremacy in Italy was not something that the Scottish historian felt compelled to deplore in the eighteenth century, though Robertson did observe of the Habsburgs that "a family so great and aspiring became the general object of jealousy and terror."[17] Robertson's history, appearing in English in 1769, was promptly published in Italian translation in the Republic of Venice in 1774 and republished in Habsburg Milan in 1820.[18] By 1831, when Mazzini wrote to Carlo Alberto, Austria represented "terror" to Italians.

"On the 15th of May, 1796, General Bonaparte made his entry into Milan," wrote Stendhal in 1839, in the opening paragraphs of his novel *The Charterhouse of Parma*.

> A whole nation became aware, on 15 May 1796, that everything it had respected up until then was supremely ridiculous and on occasion hateful. The departure of the last Austrian regiment marked the collapse of the old ideas; to risk one's life became the fashion. People saw that, in order to be happy after centuries of insipid sensations, they had to love their country with real love and seek to perform heroic actions. They had been plunged in darkest night by the continuation of the jealous despotism of Charles V and Philip II; they overturned these despots' statues and all at once found themselves flooded with light.[19]

By the time, Stendhal's novel appeared, in the decade of Mazzini's Young Italy, the French conquest of Milan and expulsion of the Habsburgs in 1796 could be marked, at least retrospectively, as the inauguration of a new era. The toppling of the Habsburg statues of Charles V and his son Philip II symbolically defined the political agenda of the Risorgimento.

Metternich and Rossini

After the Napoleonic Wars, the Habsburgs not only resumed rule over Lombardy but joined that province to Venice and its terraferma territories to form the new kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, constituting a very large part of northern Italy. A Lombard crown had been associated with the medieval Holy Roman Empire, and that "Iron Crown" (which supposedly contained an iron nail from the crucifixion) was brought to Bologna for Charles V in 1530. Now that same crown was redeployed for nineteenth-century Lombardy-Venetia as one of the several Habsburg crowns pertaining to Emperor Franz. Archduke Ferdinand Karl, Franz's uncle, ended his long governorship in Milan by fleeing in 1796, but Archduke Rainer Joseph, Franz's brother, presided as Viceroy of Lombardy-Venetia from 1818 to 1848, throughout the whole Metternich era. In 1838, Franz's son Emperor Ferdinand was ceremonially invested with the Iron Crown in Milan.

While the conventional Risorgimento perspective considered it an axiom that Italians were oppressed by the Habsburgs during this period, and hated Metternich with liberal and nationalist fervor, historian David Laven has demonstrated that many residents of Lombardy-Venetia probably felt more oppressed by the Napoleonic regime of taxation and conscription that preceded the

[16]William Robertson, *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, in *The Works of William Robertson*, vol. 4 (London, 1817), 308.

[17]Robertson, *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, vol. 4, 310.

[18]Guglielmo Robertson, *La Storia del Regno dell'Imperatore Carlo Quinto* (Colonia [Venice], 1774); Guglielmo Robertson, *La Storia del Regno dell'Imperatore Carlo Quinto* (Milan, 1820).

[19]Stendhal, *The Charterhouse of Parma*, trans. Margaret Shaw (London, 1958), 19; Stendhal, *La Chartreuse de Parme* (Paris, 1964), 39–40.

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Habsburg restoration. Laven, in fact, has argued that "the 'black legend' of oppressive Austrian rule was the invention of patriotic propagandists who paid scant regard to reality," that "the relative quiescence of Lombardy and, especially, Venetia . . . must in large part be attributed to good government."[20]

In 1815, the Congress of Vienna approved the conservative restoration of most of the pre-Napoleonic principalities of the Italian peninsula.[21] The dynastic conservatism of the Congress, politically and ideologically guided by Metternich himself, was consolidated in the Holy Alliance of Austria, Prussia, and Russia. This alliance declared itself the enemy of all revolutionary movements—especially the Carbonari—and when a Carbonari revolt temporarily unseated the Bourbon king in Naples in 1820, the Austrian army actually invaded. Metternich thus brought about the restoration in 1821 of the Bourbon King Ferdinand of Naples and Sicily, carried out in the name of dynastic legitimism.

Present in Naples at the moment of the Carbonari revolt of 1820 was composer Gioachino Rossini, preparing his opera *Maometto Secondo* for the Teatro San Carlo. Rossini, born in Adriatic Pesaro within the Papal State in 1792, became a famous composer very young, within the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy, but after Waterloo his works were triumphally successful in all the opera houses of Habsburg northern Italy, most eminently La Scala in Milan and La Fenice in Venice. In 1819, Rossini dutifully composed a cantata to celebrate the visit of Habsburg Emperor Franz to Naples, but in 1820, the composer suggested the dark side of imperial absolutism with *Maometto Secondo*, an opera about the personal tragedy that shadowed the Ottoman campaigns of Sultan Mehmed II, the conqueror of Constantinople and Greece. *Maometto Secondo*, set in the fifteenth century, was not directly politically pertinent in revolutionary Naples in 1820, but it became much more relevant in 1821 when the Greek revolt against Ottoman rule gave the historical work a new contemporary context.[22] While Metternich was very wary of the Greek national revolution, Rossini seemed to be implicitly celebrating the contemporary Greeks within his historical operatic scenario.

The Holy Alliance met at the Congress of Verona from October to December 1822, seeking to contain the revolutionary movements in Italy, Spain, and Greece. Metternich and Emperor Franz were both present, and Rossini briefly visited Verona in November, and composed a cantata entitled "La Santa Alleanza" (The Holy Alliance), fully conforming to the values of Habsburg conservatism.[23] Earlier in 1822, Rossini had visited Vienna, the Habsburg capital, where his operas were hugely popular, as elsewhere in Europe. Metternich gave a dinner in honor of the composer, who claimed to be amazed "at seeing, by comparison, myself treated with such regard by that brilliant Viennese assemblage," while Beethoven, residing in Vienna, endured relative neglect.[24] Rossini's Italian celebrity status in 1822 Vienna might also be compared to the harsh fate of his contemporary Silvio Pellico, a young Piedmontese dramatist active in the Carbonari movement, arrested in Habsburg Milan in 1820. In 1822, his death sentence was commuted to imprisonment and he was sent to the Habsburg Moravian fortress prison of Spielberg (Spilberk). The publication of his prison memoirs in 1832 would complement the anti-Habsburg animus of Mazzini's 1831 letter to Carlo Alberto. Years later, in 1854, when Pellico died, Rossini would improvise a piano piece in patriotic commemoration.[25]

Rossini's *Maometto Secondo* was performed in Vienna in 1823, in German as *Mahomet der Zweyte*, at the Kärntnertor court theater.[26] Even if the opera's anti-Ottoman dynamics were not fully consistent with Metternich's policy, Rossini, with his cantatas for Franz and for the Holy Alliance, had steered clear of any seeming involvement with Italian anti-Habsburg currents. The composer had become precociously famous when he was twenty in the opera houses of Milan and Venice in 1812 and 1813,

[20]David Laven, "The Age of Restoration," in *Italy in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Davis, 59; David Laven, *Venice and Venetia under the Habsburgs 1815–1835* (Oxford, 2002), 1–7, 67–74; Hearder, *Italy in the Age of the Risorgimento*, 16–42.

[21]Brian Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA, 2014), 233–77.

[22]Larry Wolff, *The Singing Turk* (Stanford, 2016), 305–36.

[23]Richard Osborne, *Rossini* (1986: Oxford, 2001), 59–60.

[24]Herbert Weinstock, *Rossini: A Biography* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1987), 120–22.

[25]Weinstock, *Rossini*, 251.

[26]Wolff, *The Singing Turk*, 326.

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during the Napoleonic wars, and he had smoothly navigated the transition to the Restoration era and Habsburg rule in Lombardy-Venetia. His principal allegiance, however, was to the operatic public, and his works sometimes offered some ambiguous political signals, without compromising the composer, who continued to be acclaimed for his music all over the operatic terrain of Habsburg Italy. *Semiramide*, his operatic treatment of Assyrian-Babylonian absolutism, had its premiere in Habsburg Venice at La Fenice in 1823, the same year that *Maometto Secondo* was performed in Vienna.

The Habsburgs and Italian Opera

While La Fenice was opened in the late eighteenth century, under the Republic of San Marco, before the advent of Habsburg rule, La Scala in Milan was a Habsburg theater from the very beginning of its history in 1778. Its inaugural production that year was Antonio Salieri's *L'Europa riconosciuta*, the performance dedicated to Habsburg Archduke Ferdinand Karl, governor of Milan, and to his wife Maria Beatrice d'Este of Modena.[27] Lombardy was a Habsburg land, and Milan a Habsburg city, dating back to the age of Charles V, at first governed from Madrid, and then, after the War of the Austrian Succession, from Vienna. The great age of the Milanese Counter-Reformation in the sixteenth century, under Archbishop Saint Carlo Borromeo, took place under Spanish Habsburg rule. The brilliant generation of the Milanese Enlightenment in the eighteenth century—the circle of writers around the journal *Il caffè*, including Cesare Beccaria, author of *On Crimes and Punishments (Dei delitti e delle pene)* in 1764—philosophized under Austrian Habsburg auspices.

Though Salieri, who composed an Italian opera for the opening of La Scala, was born near Verona, his long service at court in Vienna meant that Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa did not consider him strictly Italian but, rather, a Habsburg composer, one of "ours": "for the theater, I confess that I prefer the least Italian to all our composers: Gassmann, Salieri, Gluck, and others," wrote the empress in 1772. "They can sometimes write one or two good pieces, but on the whole I always prefer the Italians."[28] The Italian comic operas of the Neapolitans Giovanni Paisiello and Niccolò Piccinni were regularly performed in the Vienna of Maria Theresa, but she appropriated Salieri, who had been shaped by Austrian-Bohemian musical influences, for the Austrian tradition that she herself claimed not to prefer; it was striking testimony to the intertwined development of Italian opera and Habsburg court opera, dating back to the establishment of opera itself as a genre in the early seventeenth century.

Emperor Ferdinand II, who launched the Thirty Years' War within the Holy Roman Empire in 1618, married as his second wife in 1622 Eleonora Gonzaga of Mantua, who became a particular patron of Italian music and musicians in Vienna. Claudio Monteverdi's *Orfeo* had its landmark premiere in Mantua during her childhood in 1607, and her presence may have helped bring Italian opera promptly to the Habsburg monarchy, first in Prague in 1627 and then in Vienna. Steven Saunders has shown that Italian musicians, both singers and instrumentalists, were predominant in Vienna under Ferdinand II, and "the imperial *Kapelle* had representatives from every important musical center in Italy."[29] After the Thirty Years' War, the connection between Mantua and Vienna was reaffirmed by the marriage of Eleonora's grandniece, also Eleonora Gonzaga, to Emperor Ferdinand III in

[27]John Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago, 1998), 258–67; *Europa riconosciuta: dramma per musica da rappresentarsi nel nuovo Regio Ducal Teatro di Milano, nella solenne occasione del suo primo aprimento nel mese d'Agosto dell'anno 1778* (Milan, 1778).

[28]Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera*, 9.

[29]Steven Saunders, "The Habsburg Court of Ferdinand II and the *Messa, Magnificat et Iubilate Deo a sette chori concertati con le trombe* (1621) of Giovanni Valentini," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 44, no. 3 (Autumn 1991): 365–70; Herbert Seifert, "Vienna (Up to 1740)," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, vol. 4, ed. Stanley Sadie (Oxford, 1997), 989; Almut Bues, "Eleonora Gonzaga, Imperatrice," *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 42 (1993), https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/eleonora-gonzaga-nevers-imperatrice_(Dizionario-Biografico).

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1650, bringing another Italian court to Vienna. She outlived her husband and then presided, until her own death in 1686, as Empress Dowager at the court of her stepson Emperor Leopold I who reigned from 1658 to 1705. Under Leopold both Italian literary and musical culture, and especially Italian opera, became fundamental to the baroque culture of the Viennese court. R. J. W. Evans has further argued that baroque opera was an important cultural vehicle of ideological legitimation in the Habsburg monarchy of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, staging the spectacular performance of imperial power.[30]

Emperor Leopold was himself a composer, setting Italian texts to music, and opera became the defining musical form of his reign, dating from the presentation of the monumental operatic composition *Il pomo d'oro* in 1668, composed by Antonio Cesti, celebrating Leopold's empress, the Spanish Infanta Margarita Teresa, on her seventeenth birthday. The elaborate baroque production, involving storms, earthquakes, and dragons, was designed by Ludovico Burnacini from Cesena, and culminated in an apotheosis of the Habsburg Emperor and Empress among the clouds. Burnacini was not quite a foreigner at this court, since his father Giovanni had served as a stage designer under Ferdinand III. It was none of the Greek goddesses, but rather the teenage empress, who received the golden apple at the opera's conclusion, thus making Italian opera into an ideological affirmation of the cousinly union between the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs in their global dynastic enterprise.[31]

Burnacini would stage Italian operas throughout Leopold's reign, working often with composer Antonio Draghi from Rimini and librettist and court poet Nicolò Minato from Bergamo.[32] It was also Burnacini in the 1680s who sketched the designs for the Plague Column (*Pestsäule*) in the Graben; the monument, executed by Tyrolean sculptor Paul Strudel, showed Leopold in prayer, the Holy Trinity, and the three crowns of the Habsburgs: Imperial, Hungarian, and Bohemian. The themes of Habsburg ideological legitimation were represented in the baroque style through both monuments and operas.[33]

The great crisis of Leopold's reign was the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683, and with the breaking of that siege, followed by the Habsburg conquest of Hungary from the Turks, a spirit of Habsburg triumphalism was present also in the Italian lands. In Habsburg Milan, the Lombard poet Francesco De Lemene published in 1684 his tribute:

O d'Europa tremante,	Of trembling Europe,
Invitto Leopoldo, anima, e core…	O Invincible Leopold, the spirit and heart…[34]

Yet Leopold would prove less invincible in the war that concluded his reign, the War of the Spanish Succession, against his French contemporary and rival Louis XIV. The Habsburgs lost Spain to the Bourbons with the conclusion of the war in 1714, but Lombardy, and for one generation even Naples, were retained by the Habsburgs and governed from Vienna.

It was in Habsburg Naples in 1722 that the Roman-born poet Pietro Metastasio made his first connection with the dynasty, writing a libretto for the castrato Farinelli to sing in honor of the visit of Empress Elisabeth Christine, the wife of Emperor Charles VI, Leopold's son. Metastasio settled in Vienna in 1730 and served as the Habsburg court poet producing opera libretti that both entertained and celebrated the imperial family and court. In 1732, for instance, he presented *Adriano in Siria*, set to music by Venetian composer Antonio Caldara (who also held a post at court in Vienna) with sets by

[30]R. J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550–1700* (Oxford, 1979), 152–54.

[31]John Spielman, *Leopold I of Austria* (New Brunswick, 1977), 55; Maria Goloubeva, *The Glorification of Emperor Leopold I in Image, Spectacle and Text* (Mainz, 2000), 106–11; Carl Schmidt, "Antonio Cesti's *Il pomo d'oro*: A Reexamination of a Famous Habsburg Court Spectacle," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 29, no. 3 (Autumn 1976): 381–412.

[32]Goloubeva, *The Glorification of Emperor Leopold I*, 49–51; Mary Beare, *The German Popular Play Atis and the Venetian Opera* (Cambridge, 1938), 4–6.

[33]Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister, and City: The Art and Culture of Central Europe, 1450–1800* (Chicago, 1995), 298–300; Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 442–46.

[34]Salvatore Canneto, *Il turco, l'assedio di Vienna, la poesia italiana 1683–1720* (Rome, 2012), 190.

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Antonio Galli da Bibbiena (of a celebrated family of designers from Bologna). The hero of the opera was Roman Emperor Hadrian, and it was performed in honor of Habsburg Emperor Charles VI on his name day, staged at the Kärntnertor court theater which had been designed in 1709 by the Bolognese architect Antonio Beduzzi.[35] There were artists from all over the Italian peninsula present in Vienna and they contributed to the production of Italian opera that was also Habsburg and Viennese in its context and inspiration.

"Emperor, fear not," wrote Metastasio to Charles, "Adriano does not dare compare himself to you. He makes not a model but a spectacle of himself . . . He was sometimes great and just; you are always so."[36] Metastasio not only celebrated the Habsburg dynasty in Vienna, but made Vienna into a European center for the production of Italian operatic texts. *Adriano in Siria*, like many Metastasio libretti from the 1730s and 1740s, was constantly recomposed all over Europe in the eighteenth century. Metastasio's libretto for *La clemenza di Tito*, composed first by Caldara for Vienna in 1736 to celebrate the clemency of Charles VI as Titus, was still being adapted in 1791 when Mozart composed his opera to celebrate the clemency of Emperor Leopold II, the former Grand Duke of Tuscany. Beduzzi died in Vienna in 1735, Caldara died in Vienna in 1736, but Metastasio lived on in Vienna until his death in 1782, half a century after *Adriano in Siria*.

The Italian figures who contributed to Habsburg culture were not just visitors; many of them lived and died in Vienna. In the case of Salieri, composing an opera for the opening of La Scala in 1778, it would have been difficult to say whether he was an Italian composer working for a special occasion in Habsburg Milan or whether he was a Viennese composer visiting Italian Lombardy under Habsburg auspices. These ambiguities of identity and context continued to be true in the early nineteenth century when Rossini, and then Verdi, wrote operas for performance in Habsburg Milan, Venice, and Florence, operas that were also performed in Vienna. In 1822, Rossini was still able to meet with Salieri in Vienna, seeking an introduction to Beethoven.[37]

Austria and William Tell

In 1825, the year that Salieri died in Vienna, Rossini settled in Paris where he became involved in the operatic politics of Restoration France. Charles X, the last surviving brother of Louis XVI, succeeded to the French throne in 1825, and Rossini promptly composed the brilliant comic opera *Il viaggio a Reims (The Voyage to Reims)*, performed in Paris in 1825 in honor of the coronation of Charles in Reims. This was yet another token of Rossini's readiness to participate in the culture of the conservative Restoration.[38] Yet, at the same time, in Paris, he began to undertake a series of operatic compositions—in French—for the Paris Opéra, sometimes with less conservative political implications. The first, in 1826, was a reworking of *Maometto Secondo* as *Le siège de Corinthe*, which, though still ostensibly historical, was now even more clearly allusive to the contemporary Greek war for independence. The French version, which included a rousing Greek anthem of national liberty and an invocation of the ancient spirit of Marathon, seemed to allude so closely to the current Greek War of Independence that one French journalist commented, "if the new work is a bulletin on Greece, then print it in the *Moniteur*. If it is an opera, then perform it; but choose."[39] Now living and working in Paris, Rossini sought to gratify the ardent philhellenism of the French public.

Rossini's second grand opera for Paris, in 1827, was a French reworking of his *Mosè in Egitto* (composed in Italian for Naples in 1818) as *Moïse et Pharaon* (*Moses and Pharaoh*), which set the freedom of the Hebrews in opposition to the absolutism of Pharaoh. Most directly relevant to Austria, however, was Rossini's last opera, *Guillaume Tell*, about William Tell's struggle for Swiss freedom against the oppressive Habsburgs. Performed in Paris in 1829, *Guillaume Tell* struck a specifically

[35]Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty: Transforming Myths in Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago, 2007), 230–33, 258–65.
[36]Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty*, 263.
[37]Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera*, 119.
[38]Benjamin Walton, *Rossini in Restoration Paris: The Sound of Modern Life* (Cambridge, 2007), 19–21.
[39]Walton, *Rossini in Restoration Paris*, 114; Wolff, *The Singing Turk*, 337–58.

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anti-Habsburg note in the name of liberty, and in 1831, the same year that Mazzini published his letter to Carlo Alberto, *Guillaume Tell* was performed in Lucca and then Florence—both cities of Habsburg Tuscany—with an Italian libretto as *Guglielmo Tell*. In fact, the Florence libretto, published in the Stamperia Fantosini for a performance in the Teatro della Pergola, presented the opera under the protection of His Imperial and Royal Highness Leopold II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, the nephew of Habsburg Emperor Franz in Vienna.[40] That is, *Guglielmo Tell*, an opera about the great Swiss enemy of the Habsburgs, was being presented in Italian under the protection of the Habsburg family, which was coming to be seen as the great enemy of Italy.

Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* staged an armed rebellion against Habsburg Austria, undertaken by the Swiss in the late Middle Ages, but conceived for the nineteenth-century operatic stage. The villainous Gessler who compelled Tell to shoot the apple off his son's head was the Austrian representative of Habsburg power in Switzerland, and the chorus of the Swiss were in full revolt against "a cruel and perfidious tyrant." In the French libretto by Victor-Joseph Étienne de Jouy and Hippolyte Bis, based on Friedrich Schiller's play of 1804, the chorus labeled Gessler in Mazzinian language as a "tyrant," and rhymed "perfide" with "homicide" in French.[41] That libretto was then translated into Italian by Calisto Bassi for the performances in Lucca and Florence in the fall of 1831. The denunciation of Gessler would become less explicit in Italian, with northern Italy under Habsburg rule, but the chorus could do no less than call for arms (*ad armarci*) and for vengeance (*vendetta*).[42] *Guglielmo Tell* in Italian, coming to Italy in 1831, thus seemed to echo Mazzini's call for war against Austria. It was also in 1831 that there occurred Italian revolutionary risings in the Habsburg-dominated duchies of Parma and Modena, promptly suppressed.[43]

Following the famous overture, *Guillaume Tell* (*Guglielmo Tell*) moves quickly in its opening scenes to the brilliant duet between Tell and young Arnold who is in love with Mathilde, designated in the Italian libretto as "principessa di Hasbourg."[44] Mathilde herself, though a Habsburg, would ultimately appreciate the villainy of Gessler, the Austrian governor (her brother, in the French libretto). In the heroic key of E-flat, Tell warns Arnold against the Austrian enemy, and Arnold launches into a dazzling series of high Cs as he sings out his love for Mathilde while acknowledging his duty to his country (*alla patria, al dover mio*). In the Italian libretto of 1831, Tell sounds the note of "vendetta" against "l'oppressor" (the Habsburg oppressor), urging Arnold to think about liberating his country (*la patria a liberar*).[45] When Gessler, as the representative of Habsburg power, appears in the third act, he declaims on behalf of the "German empire":

Che l'Impero Germano oggi riceva	Let the German empire today receive
Della vostra obbedienza il sacro pegno.	The sacred pledge of your obedience.[46]

When this was performed in Lucca and Florence in 1831, the German empire would have been readily identified with the Habsburg Empire of Franz and Metternich in Vienna. By the end of the act, following Tell's defiance of Gessler and Gessler's cruel challenge to shoot the apple, the chorus of Austrian soldiers sings "Evviva Gessler!" while the chorus of Swiss people counters *fortissimo* with "Anatema a Gessler!"[47] In 1831, the Italian public would have found it easy to identify with the Swiss chorus cursing the tyranny of Habsburg rule. After Gessler meets his death in the fourth act, felled by Tell's arrow, the celestial sounds of the harp introduce Tell and the Swiss chorus, singing

[40]Walton, *Rossini in Restoration Paris*, 257–92; Rossini, *Guglielmo Tell: da rappresentarsi nell'Imp. e R. Teatro in Via della Pergola* (Firenze, 1831), libretto; Weinstock, *Rossini*, 508; see also Cormac Newark, "'In Italy We Don't Have the Means for Illusion': *Grand opéra* in Nineteenth-Century Bologna," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19, no. 3 (November 2007): 199–222.

[41]Rossini, *Guillaume Tell*, orchestral score (Paris, 1829), act 4, 755.

[42]Rossini, *Guglielmo Tell*, libretto, act 4, 39.

[43]Alan Reinerman, "Metternich, the Powers, and the 1831 Crisis," *Central European History* 10, no. 3 (September 1977): 206–19.

[44]Rossini, *Guglielmo Tell*, libretto, 3.

[45]Rossini, *Guglielmo Tell*, libretto, act 1, 10–11; Rossini, *Guillaume Tell*, orchestral score, act 1, 120–130.

[46]Rossini, *Guglielmo Tell*, libretto, act 3, 29.

[47]Rossini, *Guglielmo Tell*, libretto, act 3, 37.

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the final patriotic ensemble in C-major: "Tout change," ("Tutto cangia"), sings Tell: everything is changing. In Paris, in 1829, the Swiss chorus, taking its cue from Tell, sang, "Liberté, redescends des cieux!" (Liberty, descend again from the heavens). It was sufficiently provocative at this politically sensitive moment so that, in the published Italian libretto of 1831, the invocation of liberty was completely eliminated.[48] When the opera was staged in Bologna in 1840, the scene was discreetly shifted from Switzerland to Scotland to dramatize a Scottish revolt against the English king.[49]

Charles V in Verdi's *Ernani*

Giuseppe Verdi was born in 1813 in the village of Roncole which was, at that moment, still part of the Napoleonic empire, but sovereignty soon shifted to the Duchy of Parma under the rule of Maria Luisa who was both the former Napoleonic empress and, more importantly during the Restoration, the daughter of Habsburg Emperor Franz. Verdi thus grew up within the Habsburg family sphere of influence, appealing to Maria Luisa in 1831 for a scholarship to support his musical training, but then in 1832 moving from the town of Busseto, within the Parma duchy, to the city of Milan, which was ruled directly by Franz from Vienna as part of the Habsburg monarchy. Now he appealed to the Habsburg government: "Giuseppe Verdi has begun the study of music, but, not having the means in his own homeland, Busseto in the State of Parma, to attain that perfection to which he aspires, would like for such purpose to be admitted as a student paying room and board in the Imperial Royal Conservatory of Music in Milan. Therefore he addresses his application to the Imperial Royal Government."[50] The formula *imperiale-regio* (Imperial Royal, abbreviated I. R.) was the Italian translation of the German designation *kaiserlich-königlich* (abbreviated k. k.) that characterized the government of Franz as Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, but also King of Lombardy-Venetia. The Viceroy of Lombardy-Venetia, from 1818 to 1848, was Franz's brother Archduke Rainer Joseph, married to Elisabeth of Savoy, the sister of King Carlo Alberto in Turin. Verdi, who would come to see himself as a Mazzinian enemy of the Habsburgs over the course of the following decade, and who would even self-consciously wear a very full Mazzinian beard, pursued his musical studies and early career within the institutions and under the patronage of the Habsburg Empire.

His first great success, *Nabucco*, had its premiere at La Scala in 1842, and though the libretto by the Ferrarese writer Temistocle Solera concerned the exile and oppression of the Hebrews in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar, it became plausible over the course of the following decades for the Italian public to associate the Babylonian tyrants with the Habsburgs who ruled over Italy and the biblical Hebrews with the oppressed Italians of the early nineteenth century. Certainly, Verdi's anthem of Hebrew national longing, "Va pensiero sull'ali dorate" (Go, thought, on golden wings) eventually (though not immediately) became an unofficial anthem of the Italian Risorgimento and remains an alternative national anthem in Italy to this day. The libretto was supposed to allude to Psalm 137, "By the rivers of Babylon," but the swelling choral climax, "O mia patria, sì bella e perduta" (O my fatherland, so beautiful and lost) could be implicitly understood by Italians to refer to politically subjugated Italy, to Italians who felt like exiles even within their own fatherland.[51]

[48]Rossini, *Guillaume Tell*, orchestral score, act 4, 828–33; Rossini *Guglielmo Tell*, libretto, act 4, 45.

[49]Newark, "'In Italy We Don't Have the Means for Illusion,'" 199–208.

[50]Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, *Verdi: A Biography* (1993; Oxford, 1996), 39–43; "Supplica di Verdi all' I. R. Governo," 22 June 1832, *Autobiografia dalle lettere di Giuseppe Verdi*, https://www.google.it/books/edition/Autobiografia_dalle_lettere/PaqkAQAAQBAJ?hl=it&gbpv=1&dq=verdi+1832+perfezionamento&pg=PT56&printsec=frontcover

[51]Mary Ann Smart, "Liberty On (and Off) the Barricades: Verdi's Risorgimento Fantasies," in *Making and Remaking Italy: The Cultivation of National Identity around the Risorgimento*, eds. Albert Ascoli and Krystyna von Henneberg (Oxford, 2001), 105–09; Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, vol. 1, *From Oberto to Rigoletto* (1973; Oxford, 1992), revised edition, 89–112; Philip Gossett, "Becoming a Citizen: The Chorus in Risorgimento Opera," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2, no. 1 (March 1990): 41–64; Roger Parker, "'Va pensiero' and the Insidious Mastery of Song," in *Leonora's Last Act: Essays in Verdian Discourse* (Princeton, 1997), 20–41; Stephanie Ruozzo, "Membranza Sì Cara e Fatal: Verdi's 'Va, pensiero' as an Icon of Italian Culture from the 1850s to the Present Date," *Italian Americana* 36, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 151–63.

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Living in Habsburg Milan, Verdi participated in the salon of Countess Clara Maffei which was closely associated with Young Italy. Yet, this did not prevent him from traveling to Vienna in April 1843 to conduct the successful premiere of *Nabucco* in the Habsburg capital; nor did it prevent Maria Luisa, the duchess of Parma, from attending *Nabucco* when it was performed in Parma later that same month, the performance at which Verdi was crowned with a laurel wreath on stage. His next opera *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* was, in part, a tribute to Milan and the medieval Lombard crusaders, but was actually dedicated to Maria Luisa in Parma. She expressed her thanks with the gift of a diamond pin.[52] Verdi, like Rossini before him, was perfectly well able to balance his career between the exigencies of Habsburg power and patronage on the one hand and the signaling of Italian patriotic sentiments on the other.

One nineteenth-century account of Verdi noted "the burning impassioned melodies that Verdi composed when [dramatic] situations or even single passages of poetry reminded him of Italy's unhappy condition or of its hopes," claiming that "the audience saw allusions everywhere; but Verdi perceived them even before the audience did."[53] Verdi would eventually become a patriotic citizen of Italy after its unification in 1859, and was even chosen as an Italian senator in 1874, but he had made his career in the 1840s and 1850s in the context of Habsburg domination over the peninsula and especially the opera capitals where he was most active. Among his major premieres La Scala in Habsburg Milan produced *Nabucco* (1842) and *I Lombardi* (1843), and La Fenice in Habsburg Venice gave *Ernani* (1844), *Attila* (1846), *Rigoletto* (1851), *La Traviata* (1853), and *Simon Boccanegra* (1857), Habsburg Trieste *Il Corsaro* (1848) and *Stiffelio* (1850), Habsburg Florence *Macbeth* (1847).

While various libretti, like those of *Nabucco*, *Macbeth*, and *Attila*, offered Verdi the occasion to reflect on issues of tyranny, the early work that most explicitly addressed the Habsburg dynasty was *Ernani* which included the figure of Charles V as one of its principal roles. Based on the play by Victor Hugo, with a libretto by Venetian writer Francesco Maria Piave, *Ernani*, set largely in Spain, featured a soprano heroine Elvira who was loved by three distinct vocal types: a cruel bass, Silva; a commanding baritone, Carlo; and the heroic tenor bandit, Ernani.[54] The baritone Carlo was the historical figure of the first Spanish Habsburg King Charles I who, in the course of the opera, was elected Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Verdi thus had the opportunity, while living under Habsburg rule, to set Habsburg history to music and, in fact, to dramatize the very Habsburg ruler who had imposed himself by military force upon the Italian peninsula in the sixteenth century, the emperor who had sacked Rome in 1527 and initiated centuries of Habsburg rule over Milan and Lombardy, lasting into Verdi's own lifetime. *Ernani*, first presented in Habsburg Venice in 1844, was also performed that same year in Habsburg Vienna, Milan, and Parma.

At his first appearance Carlo, the king of Spain, appears in disguise, to woo Elvira by night, regretting that she seems to favor the love of his enemy, the tenor bandit Ernani. Carlo sings lyrically of his love for Elvira, but then attempts to force himself upon her—at which point Ernani appears on the scene and comes to her defense. The distinctiveness of Carlo's historical character becomes more evident in the A-major final ensemble of the act when he contemplates the imminent election as Holy Roman Emperor that would make him the most powerful man in Europe. Elvira and Ernani sing about resisting and defying tyranny, but Carlo meditates (his text barely comprehensible within the ensemble) on the splendor of the imperial crown and reflects that, if chosen, he would need to show himself worthy (*degno mostrarmi*) by the virtues of "clement justice" (*clemente giustizia*).[55] Verdi and Piave thus establish, almost from the beginning, that Carlo would not be just a vengeful baritone villain, but rather a powerful baritone authority capable of envisioning his own moral reform from a sense of political responsibility. Verdi himself, perhaps because he lived under Habsburg rule

[52]Phillips-Matz, *Verdi*, 132–34, 145–49.

[53]Phillips-Matz, *Verdi*, 144.

[54]Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, vol. 1, *From Oberto to Rigoletto*, 137–72; Philip Gossett, "The Composition of *Ernani*," in *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner*, eds. Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker (Berkeley, CA, 1989), 42–43.

[55]Verdi, *Ernani*, (Milan, n.d.), orchestral score, act 1, 202–04.

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and was presenting *Ernani* in a Habsburg city, was inclined to treat the historical figure of Charles V with some indulgence, indeed with "clement justice."

The full extent of Verdi's indulgence would become evident in the third act which was dominated by the figure of Carlo and presented the historical moment of his elevation as Holy Roman Emperor in Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen in German, Aquisgrana in Italian), abruptly displacing the whole opera from its Spanish setting. Actually, Charles was elected as Holy Roman Emperor in Frankfurt in 1519 and then crowned in Aix-la-Chapelle in 1520, but the opera conflates the two occasions and presents Charles awaiting his election at the tomb of Charlemagne in Aix-la-Chapelle. Charlemagne was crowned as the very first Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III in Rome on Christmas Day 800 AD, while Charles V was crowned as "King of the Romans" (or the "Roman-German King") at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1520 and, ultimately, as Holy Roman Emperor in Bologna in 1530, though this latter coronation lay outside the plot of the opera.

At the tomb of Charlemagne, awaiting the news of his election, Carlo sings with a noble sense of political responsibility, the dark colors of clarinet, bass clarinet, and bassoon introducing his cavatina in A-flat (Oh de' verd'anni miei), recalling his younger "green years" over an oscillating cello figure. He sees himself called to "the most sublime throne," ascending aloft like an eagle—the emblematic Habsburg eagle—and he imagines his name resounding triumphantly across the centuries.[56] Indeed, it was still a name with powerful historical associations, not all of them negative, for nineteenth-century Italians like Verdi. Carlo inaugurates the act's concluding ensemble by invoking the spirit of Charlemagne, *adagio*, with harp accompaniment (*O sommo Carlo*); aspiring to Charlemagne's virtues, not only his name, Carlo magnanimously pardons the conspirators (including Ernani) who were seeking to assassinate him.[57] Verdi in the 1840s thus seemed to absolve Charles V with an entire act of gorgeous vocal music, expressing magnanimous sentiments, culminating in an inspirational ensemble to celebrate his imperial accession.

Verdi and the Habsburg Barbarians

Verdi was living in Paris when revolution broke out there in February 1848, and reported to Emilia Morosini in Milan that he was an eyewitness to "the scenes, both serious and comic (*le scene e serie e buffe*) that have occurred"—writing as if the revolution were an operatic matter of undetermined genre, something between *opera seria* and *opera buffa*.[58] Because he was in Paris, Verdi was not an eyewitness to the revolution in Milan in March, the struggle at the barricades against the Habsburg forces, but he traveled to Milan in April to exult in the revolutionary victory. In a letter from Milan to Piave in Venice, Verdi declared himself "drunk with joy" at the departure of the Austrians.[59] At Mazzini's request, Verdi composed a national choral anthem (to a text by Goffredo Mameli) to send Italians into battle against the Habsburg colors of yellow and black:

Suona la tromba: ondeggiano	Sound the trumpet: they waver,
le insegne gialle e nere,	the black and yellow flags,
Fuoco! per Dio, sui barbari…	Fire! by God, upon the barbarians…[60]

The Habsburgs were labeled as barbarians, the same epithet that Mazzini had used in 1831. By the time, Verdi completed the anthem to send to Mazzini (with "a cordial greeting from someone who has complete veneration for you"), the composer was already back in Paris, Mazzini in Swiss

[56]Verdi, *Ernani*, orchestral score, act 3, 379–89.
[57]Verdi, *Ernani*, orchestral score, act 3, 428–29.
[58]Verdi to Emilia Morosini, 9 March 1848, in Giuseppe Verdi, *Lettere*, ed. Eduardo Rescigno (Turin, 2012), 191; Phillips-Matz, *Verdi*, 225–34.
[59]Verdi to Piave, 21 April 1848, in Verdi, *Lettere*, 193.
[60]Goffredo Mameli, "Suona la tromba," in *Scritti editi e inediti*, ed. Anton Giulio Barrili (Genoa, 1902), 464–65.

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Lugano, and the Habsburg army under octogenarian Field Marshal Joseph Radetzky had retaken Milan.[61]

Verdi's anthem saluted "the martyrs killed by tyrants"—Italian martyrs and Habsburg tyrants. Verdi wrote to Giuseppina Appiani in Milan that "even if the Austrians were induced to leave Lombardy," they might first "sack and burn everything" (saccheggerebbe e abbruccerebbe tutto).[62] The use of the conditional tense only emphasized the destructive potential of the Habsburg enemy to sack and burn, like true barbarians—and "the sacking of Rome" was in fact closely associated with the Habsburg subjugation of Italy by Charles V.

In February 1859, Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* had its premiere in Rome, but the story of the assassination of Swedish King Gustavus III was deemed unacceptable by the censorship, and the plot was transposed from Stockholm to Boston. In April 1859, the Italian war of independence was already beginning, with Cavour supposedly singing a fragment of the martial aria "Di quella pira" from *Il Trovatore* at the outbreak of war, and Verdi anxious because his villa at Sant'Agata, near Busseto, was menaced by the Austrian troops in the ensuing hostilities. "Finally they are gone!" wrote Verdi to Clara Maffei in June. "Or at least they are at a distance, and may our lucky star distance them more and more, until they are chased back beyond the Alps to enjoy their own climate."[63]

The war of 1859 led to the definitive removal of the Habsburgs from Lombardy and the unification of Italy, but Verdi was distressed to learn in July that the Habsburgs would hold onto Venice: "so where is the so much desired and promised independence of Italy?"[64] Venice remained under Habsburg rule until 1866, when it was seized by Italy at the time of Bismarck's Austro-Prussian War, and by then Verdi was hard at work on *Don Carlos*, his most important operatic account of the Habsburgs, addressing the afterlife of Charles V, the Spanish reign of his son Philip II, and the tragedy of his grandson the Infante Don Carlos.

The Ghost of Charles V in *Don Carlos*

Between 1859 and 1872, the German historian Ferdinand Gregorovius published his multivolume history of medieval Rome, concluding with the sack of Rome in 1527 and subjugation of Italy by Charles V. In 1872, the work began to appear in an Italian edition, published in Venice, and represented a clear articulation for Italians of the Risorgimento thesis of Charles V as the conqueror of Italy and terminator of Italian freedom. The historian vividly described the imperial pillaging of Rome in 1527 using the ancient Vandals as a point of reference: "the sack of Rome in the barbarous times of Genseric was humane in comparison to the horrors inflicted by the army of Charles V."[65] The coming of Charles V, culminating in his coronation at Bologna in 1530, represented the final catastrophic chapter in the glorious history of medieval and Renaissance Italy: "the darkest night of Italy's suffering, the desolation left by the sack of Rome, the degradation of Milan, the death of Florence, and a hundred destroyed and depopulated cities, served as a foil to the imperial coronation of Charles V."[66] With the ensuing imperial siege of Florence, and the establishment of the Medici there as the protégés of the Habsburgs, Italian freedom suffered its final blow: "Florence fell only three years after Rome, and at the hands of the same soldiers of the emperor, who threw Italy into fetters. . . . With Florence expired not only the freedom of Italy, but the most brilliant period of Italian culture." Italy now became "an

[61]Verdi to Mazzini, 18 October 1848, in Verdi, *Lettere*, 199.

[62]Mameli, "Suona la tromba," 464–65; Verdi to Giuseppina Appiani, 24 August 1848, 197.

[63]Phillips-Matz, *Verdi*, 388–89; Verdi to Clara Maffei, 23 June 1859, in Verdi, *Lettere*, 383; Geoffrey Wawro, "Austria versus the Risorgimento: A New Look at Austria's Italian strategy in the 1860s," *European History Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1996): 7–29.

[64]Verdi to Clara Maffei, 14 July 1859, in Verdi, *Lettere*, 387.

[65]Ferdinand Gregorovius, *History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages*, vol. 8, part 2 (1522–1534), trans. Annie Hamilton (London, 1912; reprint New York, 2004), 590; Gregorovius, *Storia della città di Roma nel medio evo dal secolo V al XVI*, trans. Renato Manzato (Venice, 1872–76).

[66]Gregorovius, *History of the City of Rome*, vol. 8, part 2, 677.

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enslaved country."[67] Indicting Charles V for the enslavement of Italy, Gregorovius was attuned to Italian national hostility to the Habsburgs in the era of the Risorgimento.

Don Carlos, presented in French in Paris in 1867 (and in Italian, as *Don Carlo*, that same year in London and Bologna), was based on the play by Friedrich Schiller from the 1780s, and set in the aftermath of the reign of Charles V, following his abdication in 1556 and his death in 1558. Verdi, with his French librettists Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle, dramatized the Spanish reign of Charles's son Philip II, who was presented as politically and religiously oppressive, in contrast to (and in conflict with) his more liberal son, the eponymous Don Carlos. The romantic drama concerns Carlos's love for his stepmother Elisabeth de Valois, who, in reality, married Philip II in 1559, and the opera concludes with Carlos's death, which actually took place in 1568. These historical dates suggest that the opera scenario must be taking place in the 1560s. The first act is set at Fontainebleau to show Carlos's first meeting with Elisabeth, just before her marriage to his father, with the music focused on the duet for tenor and soprano. The second act brings the drama to Spain and (in a divergence from Schiller) sets the scene at the monastery of San Jerónimo de Yuste, where Charles V lived as a monk following his abdication.

The stage directions specify that "on the right is an illuminated chapel with the tomb of Charles V seen through a golden grille," and the scene begins with a quartet of horns sounding a solemn rising musical phrase, increasing in volume, *crescendo*, and then descending and softening, *diminuendo*. A chorus of monks in the chapel of Charles's tomb is chanting softly in solemn D-major but preserving almost a monotone—"Charles Quint l'auguste Empereur"—with the orchestra shifting anxiously to the augmented D chord for the last syllable.[68] The spirit of the deceased Charles V thus dominates the scene from the beginning, which is set beside his tomb, and opens with a chorus of commemoration, as if his death had just occurred, or as if he were being mourned eternally. The chorus, however, draws a lesson from his life.

Charles Quint l'auguste Empereur	Charles V the august emperor
N'est plus que cendre et que poussière.	is no more than ash and dust.
Et maintenant son âme altière	And now his proud spirit
Est tremblante aux pieds du Seigneur.	is trembling at the feet of the Lord.[69]

Verdi's chorus was not a celebration of Charles but rather a chastisement and humbling of the late emperor for his proud spirit. Following the choral quatrain, a single monk, a basso, takes up a solo chant, beginning on a monotone B-flat over tremolo strings.

Il voulait régner sur le monde,	He wanted to rule the world,
Oubliant Celui dont la main	forgetting Him whose hand
Aux astres montra leur chemin.	showed the stars their path.
Son orgueil était grand,	His pride was great,
Sa démence profonde!	his madness profound![70]

The particular indictment of Charles V and his pride was thus related to his political ambition to "rule the world"—which included his subjugation of Italy.

In the 1860s, when the Habsburgs had been humbled by losing successive wars to France and to Prussia, and were compelled to surrender their Italian territories to the newly unified Italian kingdom, Verdi created a chorus of monks to sing with pious reproach about the false pride of Charles V, the madness of his belief that he could rule the world. In 1867, the year of *Don Carlos*, Habsburg Emperor

[67]Gregorovius, *History of the City of Rome*, vol. 8, part 2, 686–87.

[68]Verdi, *Don Carlos* (Paris, 1867), vocal score, act 2, 48–49; Verdi, *Don Carlo*, 1886 version, 5 acts (Milan, n.d.), orchestral score, act 2, 89–90; Paul Robinson, *Opera and Ideas: From Mozart to Strauss* (1985; Ithaca, NY, 1986), 155–209.

[69]Verdi, *Don Carlos*, vocal score, act 2, 49.

[70]Verdi, *Don Carlos*, vocal score, act 2, 49–50; Verdi, *Don Carlo*, orchestral score, act 2, 91.

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Franz Joseph had to surrender his pretensions to political absolutism, grant full autonomy to his Hungarian lands in the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867, and concede constitutional government in both halves of the Habsburg Empire. In that same year, Franz Joseph's brother, Maximilian, was executed in Mexico following his failed attempt to establish a Habsburg Mexican empire (originally established in 1521 by Charles V when Hernán Cortés conquered Tenochtitlan). "God alone is great," sang the monks in *Don Carlos*, affirming that the Habsburg emperor was presumptuous in his proud aspirations to greatness. They now sang in the solemn key of F-sharp major, the same key that Verdi had employed for the chorus of the Hebrews, "Va pensiero," in *Nabucco*.[71]

Following the monks' choral commentary on Charles V, his grandson Don Carlos arrives at the monastery: "where my ancestor Charles V concluded his life." Carlos is seeking a refuge from his personal distress (his love for his stepmother). Yet the solo basso monk issues him a warning, "my son, the griefs of the earth follow us even here." Carlos barely hears the message, because he is so struck by the voice of the monk: "at that voice I shiver," he sings, over shivering tremolo strings. "I thought I saw, oh terror, the shade of the emperor (*l'ombre de l'Empereur*)." He wonders whether the monk's habit is covering Charles's crown and golden armor.[72] The opera thus alerts us from this early scene that either Carlos is exceptionally susceptible and mentally unstable or else, perhaps, the basso monk actually is the ghost of Charles V, emerging from his own tomb and haunting the monastery and his grandson. This opening to the second act would become the opening of the whole opera when Verdi eventually revised and condensed his five-act French opera into a four-act Italian opera, and, since the monk and monastery would return to the stage in the opera's final scene, the tomb and ghost of Charles V fully framed the whole opera in its Italian version.

Carlos's tremulous recognition of his grandfather's voice leaves him in terror—"ô terreur, ô terreur"—but the voice of the monk becomes more distant.[73] The scene then continues with the arrival of Carlos's great friend Rodrigo, and they join in the friendship duet for tenor and baritone. While the mysterious monk admonished rulers, like Charles V, who wanted to rule the world, it is Rodrigo, just returned from the Habsburg province of Flanders, who appreciates the brutal implications of imperial rule. From the 1560s, Spanish rule over Holland and Flanders was increasingly tense, as Philip's Counter-Reformation Catholicism came into repressive conflict with Dutch and Flemish Protestantism. Charles V was actually born in Flanders, in Ghent, and felt a strong attachment to the province, but his son Philip II had no such sentimental associations. His troops would carry out the violently destructive "sack of Antwerp" in 1576, half a century after Charles's sack of Rome in 1527, and decades of revolt would lead to the independence of Holland but the subjugation of Flanders.

Within the opera, Rodrigo is the great proponent of the Flemish cause, determined to rally Carlos, the Habsburg heir, to the cause of Flanders' salvation. "The voice of the Flemish calls you," sings Rodrigo. "Help them, Carlos, be their God and savior." Together, in their duet, they sing of their "love of liberty."[74] By the time, Verdi composed his opera in the 1860s, however, the cause of Flanders was somewhat obsolete, apparently resolved by the independence of Belgium in 1830. For Verdi, "Flanders" surely represented the Habsburg-Italian provinces, like Lombardy, that had only recently been liberated in 1859, or Venice, which was redeemed in 1866 at the very same time that Verdi was composing *Don Carlos*. Writing in 1866 to his friend Giuseppe Piroli, Verdi claimed to be distressed to have to leave for Paris to work on *Don Carlos* just as war against Austria was about to begin again. Verdi sympathized with Piroli's anxiety over his son, who would be fighting: "glorious affliction that I hope will be converted into joy when you next embrace this son among the redeemers

[71]Verdi, *Don Carlos*, vocal score, act 2, 52–53.
[72]Verdi, *Don Carlos*, vocal score, act 2, 53–55.
[73]Verdi, *Don Carlos*, vocal score, act 2, 55.
[74]Verdi, *Don Carlos*, vocal score, act 2, 57–58, 68.

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(*redentori*) of poor Venice."[75] Thus, Verdi wrote to Piroli in the spirit of Rodrigo counseling Carlos to become the savior of Flanders.

Verdi's hostility to sixteenth-century Habsburg rule, heightened by his nineteenth-century anti-clericalism, was perhaps most clearly evident in the disturbing auto-da-fé scene of the third act, with Philip presiding over the public execution of heretics, the victims of the Spanish Inquisition. The pomp and pageantry of the auto-da-fé culminates in the appearance of King Philip and Queen Elisabeth, but here Carlos interrupts the proceedings to present, like an operatic impresario, six Flemish deputies, all bass-baritones, who will sing to Philip in unison of the sufferings of their homeland.

Darkly accompanied by the cellos, in the soulfully expressive key of A-flat major, the sextet commences with a long descending melodic line, ornamented by a plaintive grace note.

> La dernière heure, a t'elle donc sonné, pour vos sujets flamands?
> Tout un people qui pleure Vous adresse ses cris et ses gémissements!
> Has the last hour struck for your Flemish subjects?
> An entire people weeping who address to you their crying and moaning.[76]

When this was sung in Italian, it became even more immediately plausible that the Flemish deputies could be, for Verdi, nineteenth-century Italians with grievances of their own against the Habsburg dynasty.

The setting of the final act reverts to the monastery of San Jerónimo de Yuste, where Elisabeth waits for Carlos; she is kneeling at the tomb of Charles V, and begins her great aria by dramatically addressing the dead emperor, *a cappella*: "toi qui sus le néant des grandeurs de ce monde."[77] In Italian, she would sing: "tu che le vanità conoscesti del mondo"—that is, you who knew the emptiness, or vanities, of this world. The abdication of Charles V in 1556, and his subsequent retreat to the monastery, permitted Verdi to treat him as a sort of saintly intercessor, and Elisabeth, accompanied by an angelic flute, asks the late emperor to carry her tears to God's feet. When Carlos arrives, they say farewell to one another, for he is departing to fight for the freedom of Flanders, but, before he can leave, they are surprised by Philip who orders the prince's arrest. At this moment, the grille before the tomb of Charles V mysteriously opens, and the solo basso monk, who sang in the first monastery scene, now reemerges, recognizable as the ghost of Charles V, rising from his own tomb. He takes his grandson Don Carlos in his arms and under his cloak, thus rescuing the prince from the king's men and, accompanied by trombone and ophicleide, he sings that spiritual peace can only be found with God in heaven.[78]

The later Italian libretto of the 1880s would explicitly identify the monk as Charles V, though the original French libretto was clear enough by implication, with testimony from the other characters on stage. "It's the voice of the emperor," sings the blind Grand Inquisitor, recognizing Charles V by ear. "My father," exclaims Philip, confirming the identification. In the revised Italian score, Elisabeth concludes the opera by expressing her astonishment with a sustained high B, addressed to heaven, "O ciel!" In the original French version, however, an offstage chorus of monks returns to the chant of the earlier monastery scene, "Charles Quint l'auguste Empereur."[79]

Charles V thus plays a very significant role in the opera from beginning to end, and in the final scene, he appears not just to Elisabeth as a saintly intercessor, but also as the supernatural rescuer of the unhappy prince who longs in vain to achieve salvation for Flanders. If the ghost of Charles V embraces Carlos and takes him under his cloak, it is Verdi who, perhaps unexpectedly, embraces the figure of Charles V, the Habsburg conqueror of Italy, at the very moment when Italy was

[75] Verdi to Giuseppe Piroli, 9 June 1866, in Verdi, *Lettere*, 493.

[76] Verdi, *Don Carlos*, vocal score, act 3, 227.

[77] Verdi, *Don Carlos*, vocal score, act 5, 330; Verdi, *Don Carlo*, orchestral score, act 5, 561.

[78] Verdi, *Don Carlo*, orchestral score, act 5, 614–15; Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, vol. 3, *From Don Carlos to Falstaff* (1981; Oxford, 1992), revised edition, 152.

[79] Verdi, *Don Carlos*, vocal score, act 5, 358–59; Verdi, *Don Carlo*, orchestral score, act 5, 615–16.

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repudiating centuries of Habsburg domination and establishing independence—in the spirit of Verdi's Flemish deputies.

The Habsburg emperor who sacked Rome in 1527 and established Habsburg power in Italy for the next three centuries, appeared in Verdi's work—in *Ernani* and in *Don Carlos*—as a magnanimous, sympathetic, even redemptive figure, presented during the Risorgimento period of mid-century Italian emancipation from centuries of supposed Habsburg oppression. These Verdian representations of Charles V strongly suggest the complex entanglement of modern Italian culture with the long Habsburg legacy and the ways in which this history fails to fit conventional Risorgimento formulas.

Conclusion and Coda: Fin-de-siècle Vienna

Habsburg culture remained reciprocally concerned with Italy, even after the Risorgimento period, and notably in the modernist moment of fin-de-siècle Vienna. After Verdi's final opera *Falstaff* had its premiere at La Scala in February 1893, in the composer's eightieth year, the Milan cast went on tour and gave two performances in Vienna in May. Vienna, however, did not have a *Falstaff* production of its own until 1904, three years after Verdi's death, when Gustav Mahler, as musical director of the Habsburg court opera, conducted the work (in German) with sets by Sezession artist Alfred Roller. In 1875, Verdi himself had come to Vienna and conducted Aida at the Hofoper, but Mahler also conducted *Aida* repeatedly in Vienna between 1898 and 1903 (when he offered a spectacular new production), though it seems that he never conducted *Don Carlos*.[80]

Verdi's popularity in Vienna was such that he continued to be performed there even during World War I—after Italy declared war against Austria-Hungary in the hope of obtaining, according to the logic of the Risorgimento, the Habsburg territories of Trieste, South Tyrol, Istria, and Dalmatia, with their partially Italian populations. Franz Joseph characterized the Italian declaration of war in 1915 as "a betrayal (*Treubruch*) the like of which is unknown in history," and invoked "the spirit of Radetzky" on behalf of the Habsburg armies.[81] Yet, the Hofoper still presented the most popular Verdi masterpieces between 1916 and 1918: *Aida*, *Il Trovatore*, *La Traviata*, *Otello*, *Rigoletto*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera*.[82]

In spite of Verdi's popularity in Vienna, *Don Carlos*, problematic for its multiple versions and revisions, was not produced there until 1932. At that time, the writer Franz Werfel, born in Habsburg Prague, conceived of a production that would focus on the figure of Charles V, appearing in golden armor and performing his abdication in pantomime during the prelude. "While the friars sing their funeral chorus about the transience of all earthly splendor, he sets aside his imperial glamour, placing his helmet, armor, purple cloak, and scepter into his own coffin, which stands open before him. Thus he transforms himself before the audience's eyes from the ruler of the world into a low-ranking friar, a servant of God."[83] By 1932 the Habsburgs had been banished from the Austrian republic and Verdi, as interpreted by Werfel, helped the Viennese to reflect upon their own Habsburg history. Composer Ernst Křenek, born in Vienna in 1900, prepared a twelve-tone opera *Karl V* for performance at the Vienna Opera in 1934, but it was canceled on account of pressure from Nazi Germany, and had its premiere in Prague in 1938. In 1942, Viennese composer Arnold Schoenberg, then living in exile in California, created an atonal setting of Lord Byron's ironically intended "Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte" (1814), intended as an indictment of tyrants. One verse compared Napoleon to Charles V, abdicating from his "despot's throne": "the Spaniard when the lust of sway/Had lost its quickening spell/Cast crowns for rosaries away/An empire for a cell." The verse was recited in sarcastic

[80]Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Vienna: The Years of Challenge (1897–1904)*, 14, 596–97, 678–80; Phillips-Matz, *Verdi*, 614, 721–22.

[81]Emperor Franz Joseph, "An meine Völker!" 23 May 1915, British Library digital collection, https://www.bl.uk/de-de/collection-items/king-of-italy-declared-war-franz-joseph.

[82]Wiener Staatsoper, archive online: https://archiv.wiener-staatsoper.at/search/person/6?since=01.01.1916&until=01.11.1918.

[83]Gundula Kreuzer, "Voices from Beyond: Verdi's 'Don Carlos' and the Modern Stage," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 2 (July 2006): 159–60.

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Schoenbergian *Sprechstimme*, accompanied by a piano and string quartet. The most obvious contemporary despotic allusions were to Hitler and Mussolini.[84]

When Mahler presented Verdi's *Falstaff* in Vienna in 1904, it was only one token of the complex interest of fin-de-siècle Viennese culture in Italy. Sigmund Freud, visiting Italy in 1897, just on the verge of creating psychoanalysis, wrote to his friend Wilhelm Fliess from Siena: "one savors the strange kind of beauty and the enormous creative urge; at the same time my inclination toward the grotesque, perverse, psychological gets its due." For a long time Freud was drawn to, but resisted, going to Rome, an ambivalence that he attributed to his childhood identification with Hannibal who had aspired and failed to conquer the ancient city.[85] Freud finally conquered his own resistance and arrived in Rome in 1901 as the twentieth century began. Gustav Klimt's visits to Ravenna in 1903 and his appreciation of the mosaics in Byzantine style probably shaped the use of gold that would become the defining aspect of his later Sezession painting, as used in such masterpieces as *The Kiss* and *The Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*.[86] Klimt, in turn, was hugely influential on the Florentine art nouveau master Galileo Chini whose *Primavera* mural at the Venice Biennale of 1914 was less a tribute to Botticelli than to Klimt and the Viennese Sezession, with shiny gold and tiny flowers and mysterious female forms.[87]

The most celebrated poet of fin-de-siècle Vienna, and later the city's most important opera librettist, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, looked to Italy in an early verse play of 1892, "The Death of Titian," exploring Viennese aestheticism by evoking the artistic culture of Renaissance Venice. In 1899, Hofmannsthal published his "Cavalry Tale" (*Reitergeschichte*) focused on an Austrian officer in and around Milan at the time of Radetzky's campaign against the Italian revolutionaries of 1848. Hofmannsthal's grandmother, Petronella von Rhò, was actually Italian, born in Habsburg Milan in 1815.[88]

"*Was war mir Italien?*" What did Italy mean to me? wondered Hofmannsthal in 1917, following Italy's great "betrayal" in World War I. Hofmannsthal himself was an emblematic Habsburg subject of partly Italian descent, a typical Viennese man of culture in his appreciation of Italian art and literature. In 1917, he was already phrasing the question in the past tense.[89] Back before the war, Italy was easily accessible; in the fall of 1913, he was meeting with Diaghilev in Venice to discuss ballet projects after a spring meeting in Rome with Richard Strauss to discuss opera plans.[90] In the spring of 1912, Hofmannsthal was in Florence and Siena, in formerly Habsburg Tuscany, and wrote to Strauss from Siena to outline the route home to Austria: "I shall drive on Tuesday morning straight across the mountains via Modena to Padua (that night, at Stella d'Oro, Padua). In the evening of the 22nd I shall be at Cortina d'Ampezzo." The Hotel Fanti Stella d'Oro in Padua had a long Habsburg history and had hosted both Metternich and Radetzky.[91]

Hofmannsthal himself poetically imagined the former fusion of Austrian and Italian culture when he presented, together with Strauss, the opera *Der Rosenkavalier*, set in the Vienna of Maria Theresa.

[84]Judith Ryan, "Schoenberg's Byron: The 'Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte,' the Antinomies of Modernism, and the Problem of German Imperialism," in *Music and the Aesthetics of Modernity*, eds. Karol Berger and Anthony Newcomb (Cambridge, MA, 2005), 201–16.

[85]Sigmund Freud, *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887–1904*, ed. Jeffrey Masson (Cambridge MA, 1985), 6 September 1897, 262–63; Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (1899; New York, 1965), 229–30.

[86]Carl Schorske, "Gustav Klimt: Painting and the Crisis of the Liberal Ego," in *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (1980; New York, 1981), 266–67.

[87]Giulia Jurinich, "Spirito Klimtiano: Galileo Chini, Vittorio Zecchin e la grande decorazione a Vienna" (30 May 2012), https://www.2duerighe.com/cultura/5660-spirito-klimtiano-galileo-chini-vittorio-zecchin-e-la-grande-decorazione-a-venezia.html.

[88]Carl Schorske, "Politics and the Psyche: Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal," in *Fin-de-siècle Vienna*, 16–18; Ulrich Weinzierl, *Hofmannsthal: Skizzen zu seinem Bild* (2005; Frankfurt, 2007), 26; "Petronella von Hofmannsthal (von Rhò)," *Geni*, https://www.geni.com/people/Petronella-von-Hofmannsthal/6000000010259398616; see also Egon Wellesz, "Hofmannsthal and Strauss," *Music and Letters* 33, no. 3 (July 1952): 239.

[89]Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Aufzeichnungen*, in *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben*, vol. 15 (Frankfurt, 1959), 232.

[90]Hofmannsthal to Richard Strauss, 24 September 1913 (Venice), in *A Working Friendship: The Correspondence of Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal*, trans. Hanns Hammelmann and Ewald Osers (New York, 1961), 173–74; Bryan Gilliam, *Rounding Wagner's Mountain: Richard Strauss and Modern German Opera* (Cambridge, 2014), 160.

[91]Hofmannsthal to Richard Strauss, 18 May 1912, in *A Working Friendship*, 130; "Albergo Fanti Stella d'Oro," *lavecchiapadova*, http://www.lavecchiapadova.it/02-TESTI/SANTINA%20BLIN/PDF/Albergo%20Fanti%20Stella%20d_oro.pdf.

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The premiere took place in Dresden on 26 January 1911, and even before the first Vienna performance on 8 April, the opera had already come to La Scala in Milan on 1 March, translated into Italian by Ottone Schanzer as *Il cavaliere della rosa*. The conductor, Tullio Serafin, came from the Veneto region, and both of his parents were probably born as Habsburg subjects. Hofmannsthal, depicting a Viennese society with Italian accents, had included in the libretto two scheming Italian intriguers—Annina and Valzacchi—and the Milanese were offended by the stereotype, so the names and nationalities of the intriguers had to be altered for La Scala.[92] Also perhaps stereotypical, but in this case endearing, was the role of the Italian tenor who appeared at the Marschallin's morning audience to sing one gorgeous aria—"Di rigori armato"—before vanishing from the opera. The Italian text could have been a verse from Metastasio at the court of Maria Theresa—who confessed her unshakable preference for Italian music—and Hofmannsthal, in his libretto for *Der Rosenkavalier*, showed himself well-attuned to what Italy meant for the nobles of eighteenth-century Vienna: *Was war ihnen Italien?*

In fact, the opera had a mixed reception in Milan, but nothing could have been more appropriate than to bring *Der Rosenkavalier* promptly to La Scala, the opera house built under Maria Theresa.[93] The Habsburg nostalgia of *Der Rosenkavalier* could thus be evoked for a Milanese public whose grandparents had all been born as subjects of the Habsburg monarchy. At La Scala in March, the role of the Italian tenor was sung by Neapolitan Armando Marescotti—while in Vienna in April, the role would be sung by Tyrolean tenor Georg Maikl.[94] The Italian text of the aria concerns the irresistibility of love—the man who thinks he has armed his heart against love but succumbs nevertheless—and both the Milanese and Viennese operatic publics of 1911, from their different perspectives, might have resisted, succumbed to, or experienced ambivalence about the opera's Habsburg nostalgia for the world of Maria Theresa. Yet, the tenor's Italian aria stood as an ardent tribute to the integral, fundamental, and complex significance of Italian culture across the centuries of Habsburg history.

[92][libretto], *Il Cavaliere della Rosa: commedia in tre atti di Hugo von Hofmannsthal, traduzione ritmica italiana di Ottone Schanzer, musica di Richard Strauss* (Milan, 1911).

[93]Strauss to Hofmannsthal, 17 March 1911, and Hofmannsthal to Strauss, 20 March 1911, in *A Working Friendship*, 75.

[94]*Il Cavaliere della Rosa*, 1 March 1911, La Scala, Milan, https://www.worldcat.org/title/cavaliere-della-rosa-commedia-in-tre-atti/oclc/85760937#details-allauthors; *Der Rosenkavalier*, 8 April 1911, Hofoperntheater, Vienna, Spielplanarchiv der Wiener Staatsoper, https://archiv.wiener-staatsoper.at/performances/21774.

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