

Chapter Seven

“Il convulso anelito di un ingegno già esaurito”

No more contrary, frustrating, difficult or distressing years from the mid century to the end of his life could ever be imagined, yet in many ways they proved the most heartening. At the beginning all went well: Pacini's popularity with the management of La Fenice survived the troubles of 1848. This was reassuring, he was “*second to Verdi*” it seems. When the 1850-51 season came up for discussion the *Presidenza* insisted that if the maestro from Busseto could not come and compose Pacini should be approached without delay. It was a rare affirmation: “*Non vi sarebbe altro maestro dopo il Verdi che il Pacini di un merito, e di un fama corrispondente alla scene nel nostro Gran Teatro.*”ⁱ

Alas, after *Rigoletto*, Pacini's courage and patience would be tested to the limits. His marriage and family have passed almost like a blur in this account of his life, reduced to tiny figures in the distance, waving repeated farewells and hailing his infrequent returns as if he was a half-forgotten comprimario singer permitted one brief chant of glory. His second wife died in 1849ⁱⁱ leaving him a daughter Giulia named after the famous *contessa*ⁱⁱⁱ and due to become his favourite child. He married again that same year and had three more children who would preside over his legacy together with their mother Marianna Scoti soon to emerge as the most personable and persuasive of all his three wives.

There can be no doubt that he was a devoted family man - peripatetic demands notwithstanding and quasi-unique among the operatic gratin nearly all of whom suffered a cold hearth. He would share a heartening domesticity with this large family paused only by the disparagement and disappointments of a musical career and sustaining him to the very end.

For the moment there was no interruption whatsoever to his frantic activities. In 1849 he had published *his Principj elementari di musica e metodo per l'insegnamento del Melo-Plasto* one of the more fundamental of his didactic offerings to the world outside. It cannot be said to have been more than *pasticcio* learning however in that its teaching was adapted from earlier French essays on musical notation through the use of figuration – most notably by Galin and Chev e refurbished by Philippe de Gaslin in the first decades of the nineteenth century,

but it did him credit in that a popular composer was willing to apply his mind to such technical dispensations. Otherwise his compositional nous continued at its usual hectic pace, possibly he began writing an *Alfrida*, certainly he started writing a *Belfagor* which did not appear for a decade but whose malefic subject-matter may well have been a snide comment upon the tricking and treating of an ambitious music establishment threatening the future of every composer in the Italian peninsula.

His opera *Zaffira o La riconciliazione* followed swiftly upon the *rifacimento* of *Allan Cameron* at Modena. No one can say that it was a momentous score - leaving as it did no trace on the music of its day or upon any reliable documentation. Its source was obscure,^{iv} its cast modest, and it was composed jointly in tandem with his *Malvina di Scozia* that took flight five weeks later in the same city. With a libretto by "A. de L" one of the many cyphers of the *marchese* Achille de Lauzières-Thémines to ensure a suitably aristocratic distance *Zaffira* was staged at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples on 14 November 1851 and came and went without a ripple, a *melodramma lirico in tre atti* notable only for the curious relationship it would have with its genetic twin. This would be a very odd affair: to all intents and purposes *Malvina di Scozia* with a libretto by Salvatore Cammarano was a work in another dimension - a world apart - announced to the press portentously on 1 October, followed on 8 November by another notice stating that composition had been completed, *Malvina's* wilful overlap with *Zaffira* - an utterly incomprehensible dichotomy - was an epitome example of Pacini's compositional sophistry out of reach of any musical philosophy then, and indeed now.

A commitment to Verdi and *Il trovatore* must have been the real reason that Cammarano decided to save time and energy and revamp his anti-establishment *Ines de Castro* set by Giuseppe Persiani in 1835 for an enthusiastic Pacini, in this way bringing back to life a banned tale of royal conspiracy and blood-letting that never failed to charge its audience with extremes of emotion most especially when under permanent ukase by the censorship. With a change of setting from a torrid Portugal to a placid Edinburgh, its title-role role now Malvina, her powerful rival now become Morna, Princess of Ireland and (with the aid of Varesi's discarded kilt and baritone timbre) recreating her distraught husband as Prince Arturo son of an unidentifiable King Malcolm of Scotland,^v he was able to re-launch a severely

dramatic confection not only avoiding sanction but supplying a favoured maestro with an argument in complete contrast with *Zaffira* and its modest train of domestic abuse. From conception *Malvina di Scozia* was a mega-score with all sorts of challenges, its *Introduzione* with a *banda approaching from afar* - a *ballabile* – Celtic harps twanging and covey of women banging tambourines and clansmen skirling bagpipes (inherited too from *Allan Cameron*) not only attention grabbing but setting the scene in the most scenically imposing way imaginable and more-or-less mandatory in view of the taste for antiquarian kitsch on the part of the “*Signor maestro Comm. Pacini.*” That bagpipes were improbably in existence in ninth-century Scotland was unlikely to trouble the audience at the S. Carlo (only their din and unholy distraction) but a more-or-less essential factor for the maestro.

Cammarano proposed other novelties too and also from the start. Arturo’s *entrata* was a *brindisi* - a pair of bipartite strophe with a choral bridge passage: ‘Se voce rimbomba’ and ‘Se in armi s’avanza’ each divided and concluded by the refrain:

‘Libiamo alla Scozia
Libiamo al suo Re!’

underpinned by an ensemble of Bards.

This *tragedia lirica* went even further than Pacini’s previous essay in folkloric excess with Highland dress obligatory, an orchestration relying upon innovative instrumentation and all its roles put to premium acting skills far beyond the norm (thus militating against easy revival). In complete contrast with the streetwise *Zaffira* the *pseudo-arcadian* versifying of *Malvina di Scozia* was a feature: a bold coro for example opens *Atto terzo* with Cammarano’s lapidary

Nefando eccesso, empio inaudito!
I tardi posteri fremer farà.
Da questa Reggia inorridito
Il nuovo sole fuggir dovrà.

set magisterially by the composer, and the act coming to a dramatic climax with as verbose a scene of despair, dismay, and sheer lachrymose indulgence as anything to be expected of any other terminating *quadro* of the decade. As in *Ines di Castro* its heroine has been given a *veleno* but *Malvina*’s demise is much more extravagant than that of *Ines*, her farewell as protracted, discursive and formidable a showpiece as any to be heard at that date. Opening with the declamatory ‘Ove m’aggiro? Fra gli estinti?’ followed by the cantabile ‘Giorno

di gioja è questo' and then by no less than *two cabalette* set wide apart: first the violent 'Oh qual tremenda furia' after which cathartic outburst, Malvina – discovered by the courtiers in a dying condition – caps the whole (after the stretch of dialogue that is a regular feature of Cammarano *cabalette*) by an exceptional slow cabaletta:

Quelle lagrime scorrenti
Versa qui...sul petto mio...(ad Arturo)
Questo amplesso...e questo addio
Serbi ognora...il tuo pensier

Ti conforta...I miei tormenti
Lascio in terra...e un fragil velo
Ma non moro, vado il Cielo
I miei figli a riveder...

whose accents might well serve as the actual farewell of the poet himself.

Irrespective of such literary felicities and the tragic scene above, in a bizarre *jeu d'esprit* the impish composer seems to have deliberately underlined - *played games* is certainly the term. - with those aspects of *Zaffira* that could be crossed with those of *Malvina di Scozia* - two operas conceived for theatres, audiences, and a material reality with quite different implications.

Zaffira has been incarcerated by her gloomy husband; Malvina has been poisoned by a jealous courtier, both emerge in distress from a "luogo sepolcrale" or "camera sotterranea" in dishevelled attire: "pallida, si avanza lentamente" in the case of the former "si avanza correndo" in the case of the latter. In the most surprising way, however, and presumably for his own entertainment, not only has Pacini endorsed their comparable fates with a similar setting but has found a cynical concordance between the two heroines *parodying* his own music to do so (!)

Quasi-frivolous *désinvolture* of this kind is, perhaps, in a final analysis, the most enduring quality of the so-called *catanese*. An independence of mind, a solemn disbelief in the portentous role of composers of a kind that enabled him to keep his head in a brutal operatic round that obliged a Donizetti to rail against his fate, destroyed a Bellini and brought a Verdi into acrimonious dispute with his money-minded sponsors.

This *Malvina di Scozia* represents something of a *statement* both for its terminally-ill poet and its capricious composer. Staged for the opening of the

carnevale at the S. Carlo on 27 December 1851 with an unexpected cast with no *primo tenore*, *Malvina di Scozia* was a tremendous success. An indomitable Adelaide Cortesi (*Medea* many times over) carried everything before her; Adelaide Borghi-Mamo (as Morna) and Achille De Bassini (as Arturo) were no less than stupendous and the opera surged confidently into the following year. Cammarano died in July 1852. This opera would be the last of the major offerings for a stage he dominated the poet was actually to witness - yet this collaboration with one his most prominent *maestri* has not yet been revived in a viable form - only long ago in Malta and Brazil.^{vi} It would seem that even now a major Italian romantic melodrama without a tenor remains unthinkable a prospect

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The first mention of the work that would emerge two decades later – a Pacinian *postscript* or so it is described – the so-called “*posthumous*” *Niccolò dei Lapi*^{vii} emerges on 16 July 1852 the day before Cammarano died.

It is in a letter that announces one of the most protracted examples of lyrical regeneration ever recorded in which the composer shows himself to be as good a culinary manipulator as the *pesarese* in reheating operatic dishes according to the appetite of the audience concerned. The letter was from Rossini

“Tu sai che solo dopo le tue sollecitudini ho indotto Niccolino ad eccettare le condizioni le più discrete che sia possibile. Il tenore non ha calcolato che il piacere di riprendere la sua carriera con un opera tua e da te stesso posto in scena; più ancora si è ritenuto fortunate di aggiungere al suo repertorio un tuo nuovo lavoro, come che edificherebbo anche un macigno. Io ti prego adunque di preparare con Niccolino batterie inespugnabile, affine trionfi il vero merito. Io ho diretto di contare sul tuo senno e sul tuo genio; non dimenticare che è un tuo costante ammiratore e amico che ti prega.”^{viii}

The tenor in question was his beloved protégé Nicola Ivanoff (sometimes *Niccolò*, more usually *Nicolino*, but this time *Niccolino*) who had been having a vocal crisis but now had been induced by one or another of these *maestri* – almost certainly the former - to accept a contract to sing at Palermo in the coming season.

The “*batterie inespugnabile*” to be written by Pacini was to have concerned a new opera with a starring role for Ivanoff called *Rodrigo di Valenza* that would never see the light of day.^{ix} All sorts of unwelcome complications would

intervene. In the first place the impresario of the Teatro Carolino of Palermo was the cantankerous retired tenor Giovanni-Battista Verger who promised to make difficulties from the start: Rossini had already shown doubts about “*Verzè*” (almost no Italian of the day was able to spell his name properly) and within a week of Pacini’s arrival a bitter conflict came to light that would end in *Rodrigo*’s abandonment. There were three possible explanations for this: Verger did not relish the Pacini/Rossini/Ivanoff consortium that could threaten his autonomy; he was not convinced (and a retired tenor would probably be almost impossible to convince) that Ivanoff had recovered his form;^x or that he did not like the proposed libretto (Stefano Fioretti or whoever it was given as poet, was no Cammarano).

Both Pacini and Ivanoff had duly arrived in Palermo in October. Ivanoff won applause on one evening only after which he was “*voiceless*.” Much of the season was under threat as a result. By the beginning of December Rossini was writing to calm his incensed Niccolino who promptly departed. At the start of 1853, *Rodrigo* “*già quasi ultimato*”^{xi} or so Pacini says - was officially withdrawn and the composer began to revamp or re-model its music to a new text called *Lidia di Brabante* (with a soprano as its star). To what extent it was indeed a *brand-new text* is now hard to determine: *Lidia di Brabante* too contains a *Rodrigo* and it is probable that the earlier project - both text and music - were simply subsumed into the later score. What is certain, however, is that this “*Lidia di Brabante*” (in cursive on the only extant manuscript of which Atto I survives^{xii} that Pacini left behind with his friend conte Lucchesi-Palli) would be the first tangible item in an operatic daisy-chain that would end up as *Niccolò dei Lapi* six years after his death.

As far as Pacini’s memoirs are concerned this was the end of the matter.^{xiii} Another project of the same place and date proved equally inconclusive. During this Palermo visit and quite out of the blue, he was approached by his birthplace to write a *cantata sacra* for the mid-August Catanese festival of S. Agata, an “*Ester*” being proposed with a text by Mario Torrisi. In the event, he would write a *Giuditta* with verses by his friend Giuseppe Raffaele Abate whose text he had in his portfolio and seems to have offered to Catania as a practical alternative. For undisclosed reasons *Giuditta* fell victim to serious objections and was rejected.^{xiv} But though a notably discarded initiative of this miserable year

Pacini's *Giuditta* would have a posthumous destiny - unperformed until after his death in 1869 it was staged in the Piazza Università of Catania and like *Saffo* would become one of the very few works by the composer to survive into the twentieth century. The last performance of *Giuditta* was in 1926.^{xv}

Once returned to the mainland after this abortive visit he threw himself into a project that had been simmering since *Malvina*. To add to his annoying Sicilian experience this would end in unmitigated disaster! A disaster all the more disturbing since this year of 1853 would demonstrate unconditionally that Verdi was taking Italy by storm.^{xvi}

With a *scrittura* for La Scala scheduled for March and with that gilded caravansera in one of its far-from-infrequent interludes of institutional chaos Pacini discovered that he had no idea what opera he would be composing even as late as two months before its scheduled *prima*. He was contracted to write an opera in a vacuum.

How did he get into such a situation? Only a proudly vaunted reliance upon *superior inventive powers* could explain his uncomplaining acceptance of an absurd and unrealisable timetable but as a result of La Scala's bad faith he was left with *two weeks only* to compose *Il Cid* whose music – inevitably - would have to be culled from all sorts of discarded and forgotten scores.^{xvii} Achille de Lauzières had been preparing its libretto for more than a year (the preface to the printed text which spells the poet's name incorrectly - is dated "*Firenze 1852*")^{xviii} but this was no compensation as it was not in his hands. Luckily neither the plot nor the dramatic structure of *Il Cid* offered any real surprise but in a competition for sheer incompetence *Il Cid* would win first prize.

Because of the disorder the cast he was given was a mixed bag with no real star; at the *prima* no one - neither vocal star nor orchestral musician - knew their music. The composer supplied a score in time but with rehearsal barely begun the opera was thrust on stage on 12 March 1853 in a blaze of confusion in front of an outraged audience. *Il Cid*, in spite of Pacini's desperate recycling emerged as a shrieking mockery inaudible in a cacophony of barracking. The glorious *marcia-trionfale* of its *finale primo* was nothing of the kind; the fatal first act entitled "*L'insulto*" was taken at its word. Only this part appeared before the indignant spectators - Pacini refers to *Il Cid* as "*il disgraziatissimo.*" He had

shaken-off the dust of Milan during the shambles leaving his unwanted child to fend for itself and it succumbed to whistles.^{xix}

1853 would be a year when everything failed. The shelved *Elnava* proposed or re-proposed for Venice did not materialise.^{xx} He passed a bitter summer in the bosom of his family at Viareggio then went to Naples in the autumn to stage his *Romilda di Provenza* which had benefitted from an unwonted genesis – the sole positive benefit of all the preceding failures. But his evil star remained in the ascendant. The librettist for *Romilda*, Gaetano Micci, was in no way an asset, indeed a very dubious choice - a text supplied to Francesco Chiaromonte the year before by Micci, *Giovanna di Castiglia* (1852), had enjoyed a truly memorable dismissal:

“*Scene inverosimili, lunghe, senza interesse e senza passione, caratteri con poco verità e condotto poco felice*”^{xxi}

a rebuke that would have deterred anyone but this particular maestro. It says something for Pacini’s stoicism (or cynicism) that he could contemplate writing music with such a blighted poet at his side.

He had sent a vocal score of *Romilda* to Teresa De Giuli-Borsi in advance, she returned it with a touching note to say that she had just had a failure with Verdi’s *I Lombardi* and did not wish to be the cause of a second fiasco. This did not dissuade the maestro. Pacini was greatly moved by the humility of the great Verdian soprano and persuaded her to keep her contract with the S.Carlo. She won his gratitude, *Romilda di Provenza* had earned his full attention and it did in fact contain some exceptionally brilliant music – unusually elaborate and considered music compensating for an unpromising text; the instrumental interludes in *Romilda* are highly dramatic and effective and the three acts give the impression even – and very unusually - of having been composed in one single breath with a through-composed drive that evaded the audience on first hearing. There was a full house at the S.Carlo on 8 December 1853. The first act went flawlessly, the *finale primo* in the form of a duetto sung by Gaetano Ferri and Teresa De Giuli was cheered to the echo with the composer and everyone else called out of stage. A *furor* seemed to be on its way but Acts II and III became subject to a law of diminishing returns, the audience response tailed-off and was progressively feebler and feebler with a sort of spreading disenchantment that flattened any impulse to respond. Pacini had made a similar

miscalculation with other operas written for this particular stage where novelty was received with surprised incomprehension. Though there was no scarcity of vocal pyrotechnics throughout he inserted an instrumental subtlety in the place of the pounding resonance then bringing Verdian audiences to their feet. He had, even essayed a “*finale nuovo*” in this opera (a 6/8 larghetto instead of the anticipated “*rondò*”) which simply disconcerted his admirers who trailed off glumly into the night. Most of the reviews complained of failed expectations. *La Fama* insisted that too much singing took place *off-stage*.^{xxii} *Romilda di Provenza* was compared not only unfavourably with *Il trovatore* that had captivated Naples understandably but also with *Saffo*, *La fidanzata corsa* and *Bondelmonte*: “*La musica non è tale da farci scordare essere parto della stessa mente*” was an especially wounding jibe. That it was never revived might imply that this opera was a failure; in fact it was nothing of the kind. On the second evening before a less superficial audience the house rallied, “*barbaramente eseguita*” at the *prima*, *Romilda* was now hugely praised. Pacini was called before the curtain after each of the acts. True Gaetano Fraschini was ill-at-ease (“*freddo e non canto con amore*”) but his highly enjoyable extinction to the sound of a lute ballad *off-stage* was affecting and inspirational and there was overwhelming applause for De Giuli’s singing in the *primo tempo* of the (earlier) disdained *finale ultimo* - which on the second night brought the house to its feet. Pacini had made brutal cuts.^{xxiii} Alas it did not save the opera which vanished forthwith.^{xxiv} Why did he never attempt to revive it? He had made huge efforts to write music that would endure. Other operas have had unhappy receptions but survived as Verdi would witness. Was his wasteful *throw-away* behaviour a species of resignation or protest at the malign destiny of composers - which view - after such a year might well be the case? Until these operas are brought again before the public no one will have an answer.

To follow came a further check - quite as unjust a check - in respect of the quality of the music he offered. His outrage (understandable enough) at the evaporation of the 4000 lire proposed for an ephemeral *Elnava* did not prevent La Fenice from proposing a Pacinian return to its famous stage. Piave put himself out to help. There was no special reason for their joint project to give any trouble. The opera was destined for the carnevale of 1854 a contract having been signed in August 1853. He had selected the subject himself: Sir Walter Scott’s ‘The

Pirate' of 1822 whose heroine, impossible in Italian called "Ulla" – a *Norn* (soothsayer) referred-to in the Scott novel as "Norna" - and thus impossible for this composer had been given short shift by the maestro and she was re-baptised Cora immediately "*cambierò il nome di Norna in quello di Cora...*" he said extremely promptly.

But the *La donna delle isole* that emerged - set in stormy waters around Scotland with a neat text by Francesco Maria Piave - hit an unexpected reef. With its music copied, parts prepared and rehearsals begun, with its libretto approved by the Venetian censors on 18 November 1843 the contracted *primadonna* Augusta Albertini refused flatly to sing the title role. Finding that she would be obliged to be the *mother* of the "Pirate" in question (the oddly-named Clemente Cleveland) to be sung by Raffaele Mirate who was old enough to be her father she declined to take part. With no time to lose Pacini resigned himself to conjuring up another opera to take its place. *La donna delle isole*, despite the pain and expense of composition and preparation with some attempts at resuscitation the following year, was abandoned for good. ^{xxv}

The replacement - which Pacini referred-to in his memoirs as "*questo mio nuovo lavoro*"^{xxvi} or equally unreliably as "*espressamente composta*" was a *lavoro* new in the sense only that it was new to performance. It was none other than *Lidia di Brabante* extracted from limbo in Palermo and given the more pungent title of *La punizione* - with the Florentine disorder of Massimo D'Azeglio's 'Niccolò de'Lapi' switched for the time being to Brussels. At this early stage in the evolution of the daisy-chain of operas, *La punizione* is a complex and vehement showpiece filled with the classic situations of pathos, despair, rage and injustice upon which Pacini would hang a lifetime of operatic endeavour.

It is impossible to know how much of the music of the dismantled *Rodrigo di Valenza/Lidia di Brabante* survived after arie and ensembles had been extracted for *Il Cid* but *La punizione* is now in three acts. There is a claim that Piave was the librettist for this new version but all that is certain is that Piave (who was paid for the libretto and acted as *direttore della messa in scena* a role he could never expect in his Verdian guise) extended the text and gave it a more compelling form. The change of title may have been simply a matter of theatrical *convenienze*: in the *Fondo Pacini* at Pescia there is a autograph note of its cast

with Rodrigo, Lidia, Arminio, Brenno, Paolo, Montosino, Maser and Amalia and stating quite clearly that it is the personaggi of “*Lidia di Brabante, dramma lirico da rappresentarsi nel Gran Teatro della Fenice nel carnevale 1853-54*”

Nor did this version have a brilliant *prima* on 8 March 1854. Framed by two Verdi operas and unable to benefit by any such context, some of *La punizione* sounded overfamiliar (according to the critics), no one except Augusta Albertini had a warm reception and everyone else seemed subdued. Albertini’s strident behaviour may not have endeared her to the rest of the cast but the torrent of arias of really incredible substance of this opera must in any real context ensure survival. Despite fractured genesis *La punizione* is an especially important and complete music drama offered to posterity. Its heroine’s brief recapitulation of a childhood song giving an indelible touch of sublime horror to the heartrending conclusion. Anticipating the Verdian *Otello*, in Act II Scene 2, Lidia – alone in her chamber – preparing for bed kneels for her prayer to the Virgin and sings a *canzone* to herself ‘Dormi, su via, bell’angelo/ E chiudi al sonno il ciglio’ a lullaby in two quatrains ^{xxvii} a touching moment of childhood calm brutally scattered by sounds of insurrection outside and her frightened cabaletta ‘La tua tremenda folgore’ that Pacini set with great skill.

In the horrific final scene of the opera, however, as her father is led to the scaffold and embraces his child for the last time, the by-now demented Lidia responds to his farewell by repeating her simple *canzone* with an eerie dramatic frisson that is not only shockingly surrealist but stands out as an unforgettable marker among all the acclaim for a Verdian apotheosis.

A revival in Rome in February 1857 marks yet a further evolution and adds yet another poet to the list of those who may or may not have had a hand in this snowball of an operatic dimensions: this is Giuseppe Cencetti named in the printed libretto as *Poeta Direttore di scena*. By this time Albertini has become Augusta Albertini-Baucardé and is singing with her husband Carlo Baucardé as Arminio who has a new cabaletta, a new stretta with his wife, a new duetto with Rodrigo and some sympathetic extras by the maestro. ^{xxviii} The opera is growing. But in the interim there had been another version which is even more provocative. Following a plea by the Empress Teresa Cristina of Brazil, born princess of the Two Sicilies, daughter of Maria Isabella and known to Pacini since her childhood when he taught music to her and her sisters ^{xxix} he had sent a score to her husband,

Dom Pedro II. ^{xxx} Intended to be the opening commission for a proposed new Opera House in Rio, a grandiose structure to be built by Wagner's celebrated architect, Gottfried Semper. Now titled unequivocally "*Niccolò De Lapi*" the score is dated 1855 and inscribed "*Dramma lirico diviso in un Prologo e tre Atti dedicato a Sua Maesta L'Imperatore del Brasile in signo di profonda venerazione dal maestro...*" From this evidence it can be seen that *La punizione* has been yet again extended. This opera was never performed.^{xxx} Nor, alas, did the Semper



opera house materialise.^{xxxii}

Teresa Cristina Delle Due Sicilie, Imperatriz (Empress) of Brazil

The summer of 1854 saw convivial evenings with Rossini who was taking the waters at the Bagni di Lucca – protracted suppers that led at his instigation to an invitation to Pacini to take over the Direction of the Palermo Conservatorio following the departure of Pietro Raimondi. This Pacini rejected on the grounds of his prior commitment to the Court of Tuscany and his beloved school but his close contacts with Palermo were far from over as we shall see. ^{xxxiii} In the meanwhile another Emperor, this time Napoléon III, had made a figurative appearance in Pacini's Tuscan retreat. Apparently the sovereign had confessed to Lancellotti - then manager of the Théâtre-Italien in Paris of his emotion on falling prey to homesick nostalgia in the audience of of *Gli arabi nelle Gallie* in unhappy exile in Rome. His wish was a command. A Gallic invitation to stage

the opera was swift to follow with the result that Pacini's holiday was spent on a momentous Parisian *rifacimento* of an opera that had never left the stage since its 1827 début. Extensive changes and additions to the text were commissioned from Achille de Lauzières (a Gallic exile himself^{xxxiv}) in which a host of unctuous religious sentiments unknown to the original were inserted to please the Empress Eugénie. No less than seven new pieces were added to a score in which every single item had been revised, replaced or retouched over two decades. Each item was given a new gloss. This Imperial version was imposing as never before: more grandly orchestrated, more martial, more sentimental, a *grand-opéra* manqué more triumphal and heroic with every lachrymose situation reinforced to honour of the Imperial couple who would preside in State at the première. With a few favorites surviving intact for the august patron including the celebrated *duetti* 'Va menzogner' and 'La mia destra all'armi usata' firmly in place,' the Merovingian prince-turned-Arab-warrior Agobar retaining his celebrated cavatina 'Non è ver che sia diletto'^{xxxv} reserved for the Emperor's delectation. Pacini arrived in the French capital in November 1854 and had a warm welcome from Gallic confrères including Adolphe Adam, Daniel Auber and Fromental Halévy and found himself with a cast that was outstanding

The term may be taken literally. Staged on 24 January 1855 Adelaide Borghi-Mamo who was singing the musico role of Leodato - the heroic Gallic general with manly moustaches and strong resistance to foreign intrusion – was found to be pregnant. A wonderfully elegant audience was overcome by giggles whenever she waved her sword and with the baby threatening to make its début - despite the opera's warm reception it was taken off after only four appearances.^{xxxvi} With the grandiose, witty and spiteful notices to be expected this ultimate *rifacimento* of *Gli arabi nelle Gallie*^{xxxvii} was a success. Angiolina Bosio scored as Ezilda, Carlo Baucardé – the tessitura of his Agobar lowered and strengthened and thus more imposing than ever made a moving impression. Napoléon III took the *enceinte generalissima* in his stride and on the third evening presented Pacini with a diamond-studded *tabatière* with his cipher.

Though it would be a last truly high-profile *apotheosis* of this opera so long a staple of the repertory Pacini enjoyed himself in Paris for the first time, was welcomed tearfully by Giulia Samoyloff and his daughter Amazilia (both resident there since 1848) and less tearfully but with open arms by the Bonaparte family

(who regarded him as a Saint for his dutiful services to Paolina). He made his way back to Pescia early in February with well-earned satisfaction and the Legion d'Honneur.

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It was on his return for what would prove a fallow year that he determined to set-up his own theatrical agency. To market his own operas and act as his own impresario. The Verdi cartel, the ruthless control of the repertoire by increasingly powerful publishers impelled him to order his own affairs. He could have had no illusions about such an undertaking but the actual mechanics of his stage at Viareggio having opened his eyes and awareness to exploitation (among his surviving papers is much documentation) that encouraged him to take a step of this kind. ^{xxxviii} It lasted for some five years and had the unfortunate effect of preventing the survival of some later works, which, well-received on first hearing, were never heard-of again. Obligated to negotiate with the composer - impresarios simply did not bother, they were not prepared to share their *expertise* – their handouts and hard-headed monetary manipulation - with the author!

He had intended to set an opera for the S.Carlo called *Alboino e Rosmunda* this year with a libretto by Domenico Bolognese^{xxxix} who held the post of *Poeta concertatore de'Reali Teatri di Napoli* but the *censura* had rejected the project while he was in Paris as a letter sent to him from Bolognese on 17 January 1855 makes clear. It threw him into utter confusion, the poet was furious at what he considered to be a dismissal of his text for perfectly trivial reasons. As a result *when* precisely the alternative choice of *Margherita Pusterla* was alighted upon remains a mystery. That Pacini chose the subject himself rather than Bolognese is certain, the plot had been under his nose since as early as 1845 when an opera with this Florentine subject by Domenico Maestrini had been given at the Teatro Alfieri in the Tuscan capital just one week after the prima of *Bondelmonte*.^{xl} But neither the poet nor maestro appears to have been seriously committed to the project even at this very late date and tinkering with the music continued well into the autumn. The persuasion of Pacini that operas for Naples needed sparking-up – a mindset all too evident in most of his scores for the S.Carlo - seems to have impelled him to take the stately plot at its face value and he not only supplied music with a Florentine *tinta* (which meant unusual instrumentation) but also

with “*alcuni cori, formandomi un concetto dei canti del XIV secolo*” which might have succeeded anywhere else but certainly not in Naples.

Experiments were still continuing in December 1855 when he received an imperative letter from the *Sovrintendente* telling him that his opera would go on, not in Lent 1856 (for which he was contracted) but during the carnevale leaving no time to bring his compositional sorties to an adequate conclusion.^{xli} Pacini did delay *Margherita Pusterla* long enough to ensure that his score had *some* credibility but preparation was incomplete when it was staged on 25 February 1856 so that - in memory of the blighted *Il Cid* - none of the cast knew their roles and few of the orchestra were quite sure what they were playing.

It was yet another fiasco, the house whistled blissfully almost all the time and the medieval polyphony fell on deafened ears. Though over three later evenings it went rather better the opera was doomed. As the score remained his own property *Margherita Pusterla* was never revived.

Begun so inauspiciously 1856 was a year of mixed fortunes. During a visit to Rome to revive *Medea*, Cencio Jacovacci not only offered to stage *La punizione* but commissioned no less than three further operas, they would emerge as *Il saltimbanco* (1858), *Gianni di Nisida* (1860) and *Il mulattiere di Toledo* (1861) all three of which would offer more evidence of his eagerness – if such evidence was needed - to renew himself. *La punizione* proved the happiest of auguries for these Roman projects; Augusta Albertini-Baucardé excelled herself and Pacini made note of further improvements he could make to the score. The city was always close to his heart; he wrote an oratorio *Sant’Agnese* with a text by Prinziavalli which he dedicated to Pius IX whose popularity was seeping away; he appears to have determined upon a further restorative offertorio and his summer at Bologna to supervise a *Bondelmonte* at the Teatro Comunale with Fanny Salvini-Donatelli witnessed yet another tribute to His beleaguered Holiness, a cantata in his honour sung in Bologna on 7 June 1857 with Antonio Poggi as its soloist. Pacini and Poggi each were awarded a gold medal, and Pacini in addition not only got a gold watch but was made a *cavaliere* of the Papal Order of San Gregorio Magno which he capped with a *miserere* for voices and strings sung at the Palazzo Governativo accompanied by a peon of praise from the press. The clouds having opened - from now on he wrote more and more for the church. Rome was worth more than one Mass.

Il saltimbanco would be as near this cynical maestro could get to an affecting score, a gentle tale, and the other side of the coin from the bloodbaths of more recent facture and only rivalled in his oeuvre by *Luisetta o La cantatrice del molo* of a decade earlier. Giuseppe Checchetelli had derived the plot from a *ballo di mezzo carattere* by Giovanni Casati set in seventeenth century France and a streetwise French comedy, far-fetched, compassionate, and even though well beyond his usual chosen range Pacini responded both with style and flair and showed himself to be a credible storyteller. With bizarre foresight he had changed its original title from *Il pagliaccio* to *Il saltimbanco* while Jacovvacci with an equally deft move changed the venue from the Teatro Apollo to the far more elegant Teatro Argentina,^{xliii} delaying production so that the composer had the opposite situation to that which had led to the Naples fiasco giving him the chance to dash back to that city in the Spring with *Il saltimbanco* not yet rehearsed.

The excuse was a revival of *Lorenzino de' Medici* at the S. Carlo in a *rifacimento* so extensive that it counts almost as a new opera. With Piave's text partially rewritten (reputedly by Domenico Bolognese but Pacini certainly had a hand in it) *Rolandino de' Torrismondi* began as Piave had intended and then became progressively changed - most notably at the end of the opera where instead of boldly imbibing her poison poor Elisa (as she is now called) reads the letter revealing that she has been betrayed while taking little sips of the fatal concoction almost as an aside, without histrionics (no tormented gasp or interpolated *acuto*) as a result more poignant and compelling, a refinement capped by her expiry with one musical "sigh." Pacini, here, bowing to the new need for a realism unreasonably attributed to "the Verdian years" and now making great strides^{xliii}.

That same realism was the most compelling feature of *Il saltimbanco* whose last minute *lieto fine* - after so much sadness and despair - proved actually to find its spectators in tears. At once carnivalesque, fantastic and tragic, with more than an echo of the *Belfegor*^{xliv} he had been writing earlier, a plot both snobbish and noble, the roles of Guglielmo and Lena were seriously touching. Elena Kenneth (the Scottish soprano Helen Kenneth – Pacini calls her "Kennet") had a personal triumph in this *Saltimbanco* as the "noble orphan" who has married a clown to the horror of her ducal father. A role which, though she herself repeated

once only (in Madrid) attracted a remarkable range of *primedonne* in a long series of revivals, including Fanny Salvini-Donatelli, Giuseppina Medori, Maria Lafon, Angelina Ortolani-Tiberini and Luigia Ponti dall'Armi. Pacini's own nephew, Pietro Giorgi-Pacini ^{xlv} sang the role of Guglielmo Belfegor at Cadiz the year following the prima.

His uncle generally had astounded his critics with this score, not only finding the *mot juste* for such colourful music, memorable tunes, and extraordinary choral writing, but with the whole opera replete with waltzes, circus ditties, and a riotously discordant *finale primo* among unexpected items as though he had recovered the form of the Monti *farse*. Those people who thought they knew his limits had a shock. At its prima in the Teatro Argentina in Rome on 24 May 1858 the press praised his “*genio*” at this truly unexpected addition to the repertoire, the whole cast was praised and applauded. *Il saltimbanco* was revived in most of the cities of Italy ^{xlvi} and had a joyous circuit almost everywhere it reached but not in Milan – wherever Ricordi presided it was not staged - and it failed too in Naples where his music now had few friends. But *Il saltimbanco* flourished under wider skies: especially in Portugal, Argentina, Corfu, Malta, Peru, Cuba, Russia and Turkey. Pacini had sold the score to Ricordi's publishing rival Francesco Lucca who “placed” the score without difficulty worldwide.

It is completely in character that Pacini dropped the wry, touching mood of *Il saltimbanco* immediately. Two months later he was putting all his energies into the realisation of one of his most wide-ranging religious works with nothing in common with his Roman triumph except for its *primadonna*. The initiative for the three-part opera/oratorio *La distruzione di Gerusalemme* seems to have come, appropriately enough from the Grand Ducal court in Florence - itself so soon to be destroyed. Stefano Fioretti had intended it to be an opera (the manuscript libretto in the *Fondo Pacini* at Pescia describes it as a *dramma tragico in tre atti*)^{xlvii} but the dénouement may have dissuaded the composer – Romans, Arabs and Syrians vaunt their victory over the Jews but the latter pray for heavenly assistance and the Temple bursts into flames - the city of Jerusalem collapses into a pile of rubble, crushing the conquerors and ending at once far too prophetically for the Grand Duke as well as much too reminiscent of his *L'ultimo giorno di Pompei*.

In any event Fioretti had supplied him with a new text (in 1857) this time in the form of an oratorio, thus a religious *La distruzione di Gersalemme* was heard at the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence on 27 June 1858 in *due atti* only, its morning concert performance in aid of the *Società di muto soccorso* may have been the result of political discretion diluting its apocalyptic message. The editor of the 1875 edition of *Le mie memorie artistiche* gives the impression in a footnote^{xlviii} that Pacini had not composed a third part, but the autograph score reveals that all three parts had been composed by 19 August 1857. At Florence the oratorio ended with lamenting Jews, while the condition of the manuscript reveals that Part Two was the last section to be set to music!^{xlix} Whatever religious *convenienze*, however, this oratorio was clearly tailored to alert his Florentine sponsors.

It was not the only religious offering to bloom this year, he revived *Il trionfo della religione* of 1838 as *Il trionfo della fede*^l at Lucca, he composed a *Magnificat* for the *Grandi feste a Grotta di Castro*, he wrote a *Salve Regina* especially for the baritone Emilio Bianchi, and a full scale *Messa a quattro voci* for Leopoldo II^{li}. Something more than simple withdrawal in the face of operatic mischance is indicated by this change of tack, especially as he became very close to the Abate Fioretti at this time, a priest who turned easily to the stage when circumstances beckoned.

This latter came now again to the fore. It was Fioretti, probably, who supplied additional verses when *Lidia di Brabante* re-emerged as *Lidia di Bruxelles* at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna on 21 October 1858 with an epitome rebuff as chaotic as any in the ever extending daisy-chain to which the opera belonged. The printed libretto is in an unbelievable state of disarray with blanks throughout (no *personaggi* and needless to say no librettist) the printing awry and there are crude signs of censorship - it may well have been that the text was under review until the very moment the curtain rose.^{lii} It is unclear what music was played in any event; maybe it was a conflation of *La punizione* with that version of *Niccolò dei Lapi* which went to Rio. Montosino is now called both Montesino or Montorino, a part of the text is missing, there is a new cabaletta in Act I Sc.9 while some verses have clearly been borrowed from the Roman edition of *Lidia di Brabante*. Pacini seems to have been able to foist this work on Bologna as “new” in a repetition of his Venetian claims for *La punizione*; possibly he had

supplied enough new music for this *Lidia di Bruxelles* to persuade Lanari of his good faith? No doubt Fioretti's cassock stood both composer and librettist in good stead in this Papal sub-capital. The cast was exemplary at least, the *primadonna soprano* was Antonietta Frietsche [Neri-Baraldi] soon to become an Austrian star of great vocal accomplishment ^{liii}(Pacini calls her “*eletta giovane cantante signora Fricci*” and reports her earlier success in *Semiramide*) . At the age of eighteen she seems to have carried all before her, but even so, the opera vanished promptly and was never heard again under that title - in the composer's lifetime that is.

ⁱ Conati op cit 278. This rare accolade measures Pacini's reputation in the period when almost all the pioneers of the *melodramma romantico* had gone or were about to go. Neither Mercadante or any similar high-profile aspirant was in the running, the pecking-order of composers to whom contracts should be offered was headed by Verdi, failing Verdi, Pacini should be approached, failing Pacini then Federico Ricci, then Mazzucato, then Muzio and then Pedrotti. A fascinating compilation of those composers then currently regarded as being in the swim

ⁱⁱ She died in childbirth and could be counted as one of the casualties of the 1848 insurrection. In 1849 the overturning of the Republican Government in Tuscany saw Pacini taking-up once more his civic duties as Gonfaloniere at Viareggio (he never makes it clear *when* he became commander of the Civic Guard or why he was ousted during the republican interregnum) a post which continued until 1853. At the same time the restored Grand Duke of Tuscany nominated him for the post of Director of the Music School of Florence then a part of the *Reale Accademia delle Belle Arti*, as well as awarding him the cross of Santo Stefano which Pacini noted with amusement entitled him to call himself “Don Giovanni” (but it was improbable he was thinking of Mozart, he may have been alluding nostalgically to his *Il convitato di pietra*). He took his duties only too seriously but was no *fiorentino* and as a result encountered an inevitable resistance from all the established teaching staff. After three years of strife the Grand Duke tactfully re-nominated him Honorary-Director and soothed his feelings by giving him yet another cross - this time of that of San Giuseppe (by the end of his life Pacini had been endowed with the chivalric orders of all the more reliable Saints). Their sacred propensity supplies a clear explanation for their immediate withdrawal after reunification

ⁱⁱⁱ By then in Paris

^{iv} The opera appears to parody - with a great deal of dialogue in Neapolitan dialect at least *some* of the plot of *La prigioniera di Edimburgo* of Federico Ricci - but now with a happy ending. Its undoubted star was Raffaele Casaccia (c1805-c1890) as Gillotto, latest representative of a celebrated dynasty of *bassi buffi*

^v Achille De Bassini (1819-1881)

^{vi} Kaufman op cit 146-7

vii *Niccolò dei Lapi* melodramma tragico con danze analoghe in tre atti with a libretto by Giovanni Pacini, Cesare Perini and others was given its first official performance in the Real Teatro Pagliano of Firenze on 29 October 1873

viii Massimo Milo preface: *Rossini lettere* (Passigli Editore Firenze nd) Letter No.202, 206

ix Pacini was to go to Palermo to restage his *Maria regina d'Inghilterra* (on 30 October 1852) in which Ivanoff would repeat his Fenimore as at its *prima* in the Teatro Carolino so many years before. He was also contracted to write a new opera which Rossini wanted to favour his protégé. In the event Ivanoff sang one Fenimore brilliantly on the first evening but on every other occasion was "voiceless" [*Non è più accolta con furore*] observed Pacini tactfully]. Thus the *Rodrigo di Valenza* in which Ivanoff should have sung the title role was changed to *Lidia di Brabante* (with its soprano lead).

x "*Verzè*" was not mistaken of course

xi Pacini op cit 110. Pacini adds "*ma avendo il Werger sciolto dal contratto il più volto rammentato Iwanoff, pel quale aveva scritta la parte di Rodrigo, senza darmene avviso, scritturando altro tenore...non poteva eseguire ciò che avevo composto...*" All this was very depressing for Pacini, evidence of his state of mind is cited [in] Bianca Maria Antolini *Lettere nel Fondo Farrajoli della Biblioteca Vaticana* [in] *Ottocento e oltre: Scritti in onore di Raoul Meloncelli* Ed.Izzo and Strecher (Rome 1993), 92 "*...affermo di aver passato un periodo di tristezza e desolazione, pensieri sul giorno dei morti*"

xii But it has been crossed-out and replaced by "*Niccolò de'Lapi*" (by Pacini?) This manuscript is now in the library of the Palermo Conservatorio.

xiii In fact it was the beginning. Cammarano had suggested that *Niccolò de'Lapi* might be a good subject for Verdi in 1848. In 1850 Marianna Barbieri-Nini (letter dated 22 October 1850. *Fondo Pacini*, Pescia. Letter No.1157) had written to Pacini expressing an interest in singing a *Niccolò de'Lapi*. Her letter makes it clear that either the maestro had proposed the subject to her or that it was common knowledge that he had shown a willingness to set it as early as 1850 (which Cammarano's earlier interest in the subject no doubt confirms). Certainly the plot was in the air. Ulderico Rolandi in his *Musica e Musicisti in Malta* (Livorno 1932) confidently asserts that a *Niccolò de'Lapi* (sic) by Pacini was performed at the Teatro Manoel in Malta in the season 1850-51. There is, no doubt, the composer being what he was, a remote possibility that he could have been the composer of this opera but more plausibly Rolandi was mistaking Pacini's then posthumous score for that of Giovanni Bracciolini (1808-1852) whose *Niccolò de'Lapi* had first been staged at Pistoia (on Pacini's doorstep) in 1846, and which could well have been revived on the Mediterranean island - a well-known site for the exhumation of operatic corpses. The opera by Bracciolini may be nothing but a red-herring, its librettist, however, was the Abate Stefano Fioretti who was a crony of Pacini and will appear shortly as the librettist of his 1858 dramma tragico *La distruzione di Gerusalemme*. There may be more than a fortuitous link between all these people; as his printed libretto makes clear. Poor Bracciolini had taken great care to protect his libretto from rival composers which he reserved exclusively for himself. Possibly Pacini had planned to evade his proscription a fact of which Barbieri-Nini may even have been aware. As Bracciolini died conveniently in 1852, could this not in fact somehow have set-off what would become a snowball rolling towards a posthumous destiny? There is even the possibility that Pacini and the Abate Fioretti together had conspired to evade Bracciolini's rights by extracting a version

of his text as “Rodrigo di Valenza” (though the verses and plot of the various Pacini operas that would ensue differ notably from that of Bracciolini).

But this kind of dubious ploy is surely the reason why not one of the various versions of “*Niccolò dei Lapi*” that follow actually put a name to its librettist? In the end, however, it was probably Ivanoff’s vocal collapse that put a spoke in their villainous machinations.

It was not the only codicil to this confused stay in Palermo. After Pietro Raimondi had given up his post as Director of the Palermo Conservatorio on 8 February 1853 the job was offered to Pacini, he refused on the grounds that “all his interests were in Tuscany” but indicated that he might accept if he could spend just six months of each year there, the authorities countered by suggesting *eight months*: but the offer lapsed. Later Mercadante suggested a list of composers including the *fratelli Ricci* but neither of these brothers was approached it seems. Eventually, in 1861, the post went to Pacini’s pupil Pietro Platania who was appointed by a commission headed by his former teacher!

Cfr Ottavio Tiby Il Real Teatro Carolino e L'Ottocento musicale palermitano (Firenze 1957)n44, 159

xiv The subject of Judith and Holophernes was claimed to be symbolic of a desire to extract revenge after the depredations of the 1848 revolt and was consequently banned. One of the reasons advanced was that the “*célèbre maestro disdains to return to his native land.*” Was Pacini making a political stance? The biblical heroine Giuditta was openly taken to symbolise popular retaliation against a powerful oppressor, in this case it seems, against Carlo Filangieri, *principe* di Satriano who had combined ruthlessness with a fervent loyalty to the dual monarchy at the time of the Sicilian uprising of 1848. He was openly identified with the “*Oloferne*” in question. Whether Pacini quite realised this politicising of his oratorio until the last moment is open to question but it may have explained his “diplomatic” absence as well as the suppression of *Giuditta* in 1853. Later, *Giuditta* may have been appreciated both on musical as well as on patriotic grounds. He was offered a gold medal in compensation for its original banning which he refused asking that its value should be given to an orphanage

xv Having been revived in Catania repeatedly: in 1878; 1881; 1898; and 1906

xvi With *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore* and *La Traviata*

xvii Including some small sections perhaps from the abandoned Iberian *Rodrigo di Valenza* (Il Cid had the baptismal name of Rodrigo as it happens) and the opera was set in Andalusia

xviii De Lauzières had originally derived a plot from Corneille’s *Le Cid* for Luigi Savi in 1834 (Teatro Ducale, Parma, for Pacini he had patched-it-up with some small “improvements” including an unwarranted tranquil dénouement) but he had taken the trouble to read Corneille’s original

xix It should not be supposed that the score has no merits. An examination of *Il Cid* reveals many moments of lyrical beauty and it may well be a candidate for revival in retribution

xx La Fenice had made out pecking order of composers to whom contracts should be offered for 1852-3: it was headed by Verdi; failing Verdi, Pacini; then Federico Ricci; then Mazzucato; Muzio; and lastly, Pedrotti. In the belief that Verdi would not accept Pacini was contacted and offered 4000 lire for a new score; he returned to *Elnava* and rewrote several small sections but Verdi decided to fulfil his prior place; Pacini withdrew *Elnava*, and Verdi wrote *La traviata* with the results we all know. At least *Bondelmonte* opened the Fenice carnevale, and had twenty-one repetitions. *La traviata* had six

xxi *Gazzetta di Genova* 12 February 1852

xxii *La Fama* 104 (Milan 29 December 1853)

xxiii “Extensive modifications” were reported in *La Moda* of Naples (which added to the *La Fama* review): “*Seconda sera: Modificazioni alla lunghezza delle spartito; esecuzione migliore. Applausi alla De Giuli, Ferri, la Borghi - chiamata del maestro del primo, secondo e terzo atto. I pezzi piaciuti sono il duetto finale del primo atto (Ferri e la Borghi), la cavatina della De Giuli al secondo, e il primo tempo del finale, l’aria finale di Ferri al terzo atto e il duetto delle due donne (De Giuli e Borghi)*”

xxiv Kaufman op cit 147. *Romilda di Provenza* had the same fate as *Il Cid* it vanished in a way that is quite inexplicable

xxv Cfr Bianca Maria Antolini *La collaborazione tra Piave e Pacini nelle lettere della Biblioteca Nazionale di Roma* [in] *Intorno a Giovanni Pacini* ed. Capra (Pisa 2003).195-202

xxvi Albertini may herself have decided the choice of opera to replace *La donna delle isole*: “*La somma Albertini, cantante, il cui accento scende soavemente all’anima, fece in questo mio nuovo lavoro prodigi di valore, e sostenne, ad onor del vero, essa sola il successo dell’opera*”. Pacini op cit 113. From this remark alone it may be deduced that he considered the score to be scarcely more than a project at this stage.

xxvii This was unmistakably noted by Verdi. Pacini’s recapitulation of the *canzone* in Atto III, Scena ultima, trumps the later Verdian emulation

xxviii Baucardé was high in his favour after his starring Agobar in the revamped *Gli arabi nelle Gallie* for Paris of 1855

xxix The Empress Teresa Cristina Maria (1822-1889) was the seventh daughter of Francesco I Delle due Sicilie and sister of Ferdinando II. Pacini had given her music lessons in his Neapolitan years. As a father with many children he was especially beloved by the princesses in respect of his gaiety and propensity for making jokes. A very singular piano teacher obviously! It is thanks to her that he was made a Cavaliere of the *Ordine della Rosa* of Brazil in 1852 in respect of the birthday cantata she had commissioned for Dom Pedro II - *L’Alleanza* - which had been sung at the Imperial palace of Petrópolis some thirty miles or so from Rio a year earlier

xxx Dom Pedro had wide musical interests, at least to the extent of having had as his mistress (for a short time only) the redoubtable Rosine Stoltz - Donizetti’s contentious super-star in *La Favorite*

xxxi The manuscript of this *Niccolò De Lapi* (sic) was exhibited at Rio in 1962. In two volumes, it was shown in the exhibition “*Musica no Rio de Janeiro Imperial 1822-1870, Biblioteca Nacional, item No. 23*”. Appended is the following comment: “*não nos constatenha sido representada no Rio de Janeiro*” (“but it does not seem to us that it was presented in Rio de Janeiro”). No librettist is indicated. Some of Pacini’s operas had been performed in Rio, notably *La regina di Cipro* in 1852 and *Merope* in 1853, but the theme of *Niccolò de’ Lapi* concerned as it is with insurrection and political execution may not have been welcome in the capital in view of the contrary state of monarchies in Latin America. According to Tom Kaufman, however, who quotes a Brazilian source: “*The opera had to be cancelled owing to the departure of the prima donna Rosina Laborde*”

xxxii Various authorities including Chilesotti and Grove VI have reported that Pacini also composed an *I portoghesi nel Brasile* (with a text by de Lauzières) in this period and given a prima at Rio in 1855-6. This opera is non-existent. [Cfr Kaufman op cit 149 n17]. It is not impossible that Pacini may have been invited to write such an opera but nothing further supports the claim. The confusion may well be with his honorific cantata ‘*L’Alleanza*’ [P94] whose content may be interpreted as dealing with this topic. Dom Pedro never had enough money to build the opera house of his dreams, and refused help from the rubber traders whose reliance upon slavery he was determined to terminate

xxxiii Pietro Raimondi had given up his post as Director of the Palermo Conservatorio on 8 February 1853; according to Ottavio Tiby *Il Real Teatro Carolino e L’Ottocento Musicale palermitano* (Firenze 1957), 159 n44. Pacini had refused the post as “all his interests were in Tuscany” but suggested - in mitigation - that he could accept the post if he could spend six months of each year there only. The authority countered by proposing eight months, this Pacini rejected so the offer lapsed. Later Mercadante – assuming Rossini’s mantle - suggested a list of alternative composers including both Luigi and Federico Ricci neither of whom were actually approached it would seem. Eventually, in 1861, a commission headed by Pacini appointed Pietro Platania, a *catanese* maestro and his former pupil

xxxiv Achille de Thémènes, *marquis* de Lauzières et Thémènes (1818-1894) was descended from a noble family exiled during the eighteenth century revolution who had stabilised in the Bourbon Kingdom of Naples. Apart from many libretti he wrote reviews under the pseudonym of “Elias de Rauze” - an anagram of his name (and used several similar disguises). He eventually returned to France and died in Paris. Cfr Alexander Weatherson *Un exilé lyrique* [in] Donizetti Society Newsletter 115 (London, February 2012) 10-18

xxxv Cfr Giuseppina Mascari *La revisione parigina degli Arabi nelle Gallie di Pacini e le fonti manoscritte della Biblioteca comunale di Pescia* [in] *Intorno a Giovanni Pacini* op cit 161-176

xxxvi The baby was born in the next opera - when its mother was singing Azucena. It was a girl when a boy would have been more appropriate

xxxvii A few sources, some of them normally reliable, report that the title of the Paris version of the opera was “*L’ultimo de(i) Clodovei*” (Stieger for example with an incorrect date) but this appears to have been the heading of a leading article in the press. In fact it was staged at the Théâtre-Italien under its original title of *Gli arabi nelle Gallie*

xxxviii He had printed a letter-head proclaiming his “Agency” copies of which appear on letters and documents in the *Fondo Pacini* at Pescia. He used this letter-head until about 1860 and perhaps beyond but as with this composer, it was not maintained consistently, and seems to have fizzled-out in the disenchantment of the new decade

xxxix Domenico Bolognese (1819-1881)

xl Domenico Maestrini’s *Margherita Pusterla*, with a libretto by a “D.Zuccagnini” had been staged at Pistoia in 1844

xli The composer, indeed, was even threatened with undisclosed sanctions if he did not supply his score in advance of the contractual time [Cfr John Rosselli *The opera industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi* Cambridge 1984) 87 and np 192] a very commonplace abuse at the time but scarcely conducive to success on the stage

xlii The contract for “*Il pagliaccio*”, signed on 29 August 1857 stipulates the Teatro Apollo but both theatres were at the disposition of the longtime Roman impresario and devotee of innovative operas: Vincenzo (“Cencio”) Jacovacci (1811-1881)

xliii Both *Stella di Napoli* and *Romilda di Provenza* ended in a dramatic diminuendo, Verdi had not been needed in any way. Such “*realism*”, if only relative in such melodramatic plots, usually manifested itself by cutting-short the florid transports of the prima donna - especially at the end of the opera - hence the predictably amended *finali* of Donizetti’s *Lucrezia Borgia* and *Caterina Cornaro*. [Nothing in *real* life actually justified such a tabloid pruning]. But if this was the *rationale*, Pacini generally elected to repeat the formula first essayed in his *Carlo di Borgogna* where the aria finale is not so much curtailed as shunted-back to an earlier stage in the plot and thus out of audience earshot leaving the stage free for a brutal termination. This was the case with his transformation of *Lorenzino de’Medici* into the retouched *Rolandino de’Torrisoni* (which had its prima at the S.Carlo): Act I saw few changes except for a new aria [and a quartetto which was an amplification of a former duetto] but Act II is completely changed, re-paced, re-orchestrated, though some of the original text remains there is a new *scena* for Rolandino who had a cabaletta added at the very last moment according to the manuscript score used for the performance, a new *concertato*, a new aria for Elisa, and the whole is capped by the hugely transformed *finale ultimo*. These changes were far from ensuring success in Naples

xliv The name of the *Saltimbanco* hero is Guglielmo Belfegor

xlv Pietro Giorgi-Pacini (1826-1882) was the son of Pacini’s sister Giuseppina, he had a successful baritone career, his grand-daughter, Regina Isabel Luisa Giorgi-Pacini (1871-1965) would become the most remarkable scion of the family: a celebrated lyric soprano in the Latin-American and Iberian world between 1895 and 1905, singing in Milan, Rome, Naples, Warsaw, Madrid, Lisbon and St. Petersburg as well as in London at Covent Garden, she eventually through her marriage to Marcelo Torcuato de Alvear, became the wife of the President of Argentina (in 1922). Her repertoire, alas, did not reflect her neglected forebear, she sang Mozart and Massenet with great success and was a fine actress with a superb limpid lyric soprano.

xlvi Pacini’s *Saltimbanco*, in the 1858-9 season, had the honour of being the last opera to be staged at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice before its unification with Italy.

xlvii It had been in the composer’s hands for two years, apparently awaiting a suitable moment for setting to music, Fioretti had sent it to him on 10 December 1856.

xlviii Pacini (1875 ed) op cit n121

xlix Simple avoidance of the technical problems of staging the third part of the *dramma tragico* may have been responsible. Factually, Parts I and III of the autograph score of *La distruzione di Gerusalemme* in the *Fondo Pacini* at Pescia are in oblong folio; Part II is in upright folio - while this last is dated 19 August 1857 - almost a year before the Firenze prima. It is curious that another of his opera/oratorios: *Il carcere Mamertino* of 1867, should have gone through a very similar - if not quite identical - series of changes

¹ It was subsequently extended orchestrally into two parts (Ms copy dated 1859) Cast: Demonio (basso); S. Agnese (soprano). Chorus of Angels and Demons

li Autograph: Biblioteca del Seminario di Lucca

lii A copy in the library of the Bologna Conservatorio reads as follows:

LIDIA
DI BRUXELLES
MELODRAMMA IN 3 ATTI
PER MUSICA
DEL CAV. COMMENDATORE
GIOVANNI PACINI
DA RAPPRESENTARSI
NE GRAN TEATRO COMUNALE
DI BOLOGNA
L'autunno 1858
Bologna, Tip delle Belle Arti
A SPESE DELL'IMPRESA

Page 2 has a copyright notice (by Lanari), but pages 4,5 and 6 are blank. Otherwise the text of the libretto is not lined-up, omitting words and leaving gaps, and contains frequent “blacked-out” passages - some of them apparently due to an ongoing censorship in preparation for performance. A further copy in the Bertocchi collection (362) has pages 4 and 6 blank but page 5 now has the cast including Luigi Walter as Rodrigo, Anonietta Fricci as Lidia and Giuseppe Limberti as Arminio and dates the plot as: “nel 1425” the setting as: “in Bruxelles e suoi dintorni”

liii Antonietta Fricci (Frietsche) though well known under her married name Neri-Baraldi (1840-1912) was unmarried at the time of *Lidia di Bruxelles* [she married in 1863]. She was famed for singing both soprano and mezzo-soprano roles