

— Dag Hedman, »Alcina rediviva. Transformations of an Enchantress in Early Librettos«

— A B S T R A C T —

The aim of this study is to follow the transformations in eighteen librettos of the enchantress Alcina from Ludovico Ariosto's popular chivalric epic *Orlando furioso* (1516–1532). The librettos used were printed in Austria, France, Great Britain and Italy 1609–1782. The texts encompass different genres like ballets, *drammi per musica* and *feste teatrali*. There are several reasons for the popularity of Alcina in the theatre of the Baroque Age, among which are her contrasting moods and the possibility of spectacular scenic effects due to the frequent occurrence of magic. The study shows that whereas there is an impressive variety in the librettists' approach to Alcina's personality and the plots in which she is involved, there is no clear development of the topic.

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■—ALCINA REDIVIVA. Transformations of an
Enchantress in Early Librettos—■

■— According to Lorenzo Bianconi and Thomas Walker, Publius Ovidius Naso's (43 B.C–17/18 A.D.) role as one of the main sources of inspiration for the earliest Italian librettists was soon taken over by Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533) and Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), who in their turn were replaced in the middle of the seventeenth century by historical sources. A few Ariostan librettos were written in France in the 1680s, however, and soon Ariosto had a revival in Italy, which lasted a bit into the eighteenth century.¹ This development, outlined by Bianconi and Walker, has been challenged by David J. Buch, who shows that the use of the two sixteenth-century Ferraran authors' famous epics by librettists was more or less constant throughout the period in question.²

The aim of this study is to follow the transformations through eighteen librettos of one of the colorful characters in Ariosto's popular chivalric epic *Orlando furioso* (1516–1532), the enchantress Alcina. The librettos consulted were printed in Bologna, Dresden, Ferrara, Florence, London, Oedenburg, Paris, Parma, Rome, Turin, Venice, and Vienna between 1609 and 1782, and encompass plays with *intermedi*, ballets, *drami per musica* and *feste teatrali*.³ The materials used for this essay consist of scanned librettos in the collections of libraries and archives, accessible on Internet.⁴ Since there are haphazard lacunae in the material I have used, it is impossible to assess how representative the texts and the results derived from studying them are. This question will be addressed once again in the final part of the essay.

The Alcina episodes in *Orlando furioso* are found in stanzas 6:17–8:21 and 10:35–57.⁵ Here we meet three sisters, Alcina, Morgana and Logistilla, who are fairies and enchantresses. The first two are wicked and the third one is good. They live on an island in the Atlantic Ocean not far from the Strait of Gibraltar. The hero Ruggiero, a Saracen warrior, lands on the magical island, where he is warned by the English prince Astolfo, one of Alcina's former lovers, whom she has turned into a myrtle bush, that she transforms all her discarded lovers – and they are counted in the thousands – into beasts, plants, rocks, springs, etc. Nevertheless, Ruggiero forgets his betrothed Bradamante when he meets the enchantress. He and Alcina fall passionately in love, and live in bliss until the benevolent sorceress Melissa gives him a magical ring, which shows him reality as it is, and

not as Alcina's magical powers make it appear. He sees that the island is a ragged, desert-like rock, not a lush garden, and that Alcina is a repulsive hag, many centuries old.⁶ Once more, the hero's heart burns for his faithful Bradamante. He escapes to Logistilla's part of the island, and Alcina is devastated. No lover has ever left her before. Melissa restores all of Alcina's former lovers to their human form. »On Alcina's island preconceptions are unreliable, appearances are misleading and traditional interpretative keys are useless«, as Ita Mac Carthy writes.⁷

Ariosto clearly conceived Alcina as a modernised version of the wicked enchantress Circe in Homer's *Odysseia*. In book 10 of *Odysseia*, we find more or less the same story as in Ariosto's Alcina episodes. It is understandable that Circe and Ulysses were popular among librettists.⁸ But Ariosto also alludes to Publius Vergilius Maro's (70–19 B.C.) *Aeneis* (29–19 B.C.), book 4, in which the hero Prince Aeneas comes sailing from Troy and lands in Carthage. He and Queen Dido fall passionately in love, and they live in bliss until Mercury, sent by the other gods, reminds Aeneas of his obligations to Fate, i.e. to establish a Trojan diaspora in Italy. He leaves Dido, who commits suicide.⁹ The story of Dido and Aeneas was also a popular topos among librettists.¹⁰

Clearly, the subject of Alcina belongs to a plot tradition that involves an attractive mixture of adventure and romance. Since Alcina is a sorceress, there are ample possibilities for creating effects of *il meraviglioso*, or *le merveilleux*, which was such a fundamental poetological concept in Baroque theatre. The awe and wonder of spectacular stage effects was something sponsors and audiences expected in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and early librettos abound with »scenographical occurrences«. ¹¹ Gods, allegorical figures, wizards and other supernatural beings would hover in mid-air above the stage on clouds or in wagons pulled by hippogryphs, dragons or enormous snakes. Ships were wrecked, palaces exploded, demons, monsters and elephants appeared, and complete stage sets were changed within seconds in view of the audience, so called *changements à vue*. Since Baroque theatregoers also loved mass effects, early librettos tend to include mass scenes, in which color, arrangement, song, dance, and instrumental music would bombard the senses of the audience.¹² A story like the one of Alcina, in which the protagonist performs magic on stage, such as transforming her former lovers into alien shapes and later changing them back into their human form, and in which Ariosto's description of Alcina's court gave librettists opportunities for grand-scale scenes that involved dancing, singing and instrument-playing on stage, was bound to be popular. In this essay, we will follow the portrayal of Alcina as we find it in musical dramas that were written as court entertainments or for performance in commercial theatres.

The following summaries are not synopses of the entire plots, but only of the parts that involve Alcina. The essay is about texts, not music. If the names of composers do emerge, it is only in relation to their possible or confirmed activities as librettists or in titles of, or quotations from, secondary sources.

—The first text discussed here is Sebastiano Martini's (dates unknown) *Alcina. Favola Maritima Regia* (Ferrara, 1609; Alcina. A Maritime Pastoral Play), which consists of the main drama and five *intermedi* with allegorical figures, which comment on the plot.¹³ The action is set on Alcina's island, but apart from the enchantress, who is given the epithet »Regina Maga« (»Queen Sorceress«) in the list of »Interlocutori« (»Characters«), there are no characters from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* in Martini's libretto, and there is no hint of its courtly atmosphere.¹⁴ The main action begins with Alcina declaring her love to the fisherman Clorindo and trying to seduce him, urging him to accompany her to her palace, with »baci amorosi« (»passionate kisses«) as the promised reward. There is a frankness relating to sensual matters, which differs from later treatments of the Alcina theme. Clorindo is uninterested, however, since he is already in love with Idalba, a fisherman's daughter, »Core di mille Amanti, / Vita di mille cori / Alma di mille vite, / E fiamma di mill'alme« (»Heart of a thousand lovers, / Life of a thousand hearts, / Soul of a thousand lives, / And flame of a thousand souls«). Alcina cannot believe her senses: no such thing ever happened before. (In adaptations of Ariosto, such lines usually refer to the enchantress.) The situation gets even worse, however: at the end of the scene, Clorindo unmasks her »finte bellezze, / Che son opra d'Incanto, e di Demoni« (»fake beauties, / Which are the work of Enchantment, and of Demons«), and he ends the scene by declaring that she has dyed her white hair and that the beauty of her face is mere makeup (I:1).

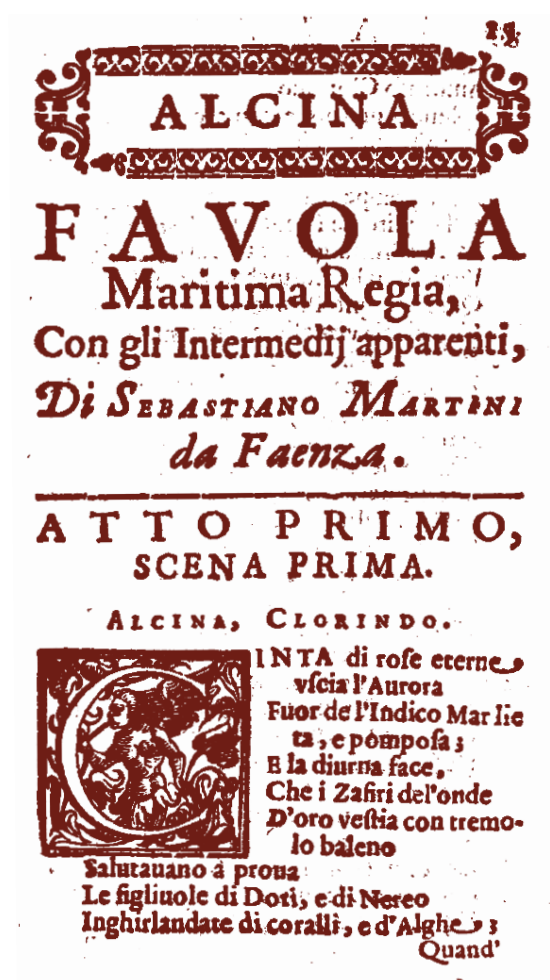
After this, there is much plotting from both sides, and the higher powers of the *intermedi* involve themselves in the plot (the libretto is 201 pages long, by far the most extensive Alcina drama), but since everybody is against the sorceress (who is portrayed consistently as the villainess and nothing else), the end corresponds to the beginning: even Palemone, who has been hopelessly in love with Alcina for seven years (II:1–2), joins her enemies in the end (V:5).¹⁵ Alcina, who wants to send her rebellious subjects to the netherworld (V:5), is deposed in a revolution, and Clorindo and Idalba are declared king and queen of the island (V:7). The political theme is underlined by Concordia and Dispregio (Scorn), who in the fifth intermedium describe Alcina as a tyrant, thus legitimizing the cause of the insubordinate people. Alcina's last words on stage prepare the end of her reign: she wants the world to be annihilated in a sea

of flames, and eternal darkness day and night due to the disappearance of all stars and planets; in the event she actually calls for the end of the universe (V:5). It comes as no surprise when we learn that Alcina has set her palace on fire (V:6). When she has taken flight, her island and her disloyal subjects can finally live in peace (*Intermedio V*). Some ideas in this drama have been borrowed from Ariosto, e.g. the huge sea monster that is about to devour Idalba as a punishment (III:2), her miraculous salvation (III:4), and the magical ring that counteracts Alcina's magical powers (V:2, V:4, V:6), as well as her fruitless attempts to mobilise the powers of darkness (V:5).

To sum up: The villainess of Martini's *Alcina* is wicked, wily, spiteful, fickle, and peevish. The only time she tries to be nice (I:1), she is rejected.

Schematically, you could describe the love interest, which generates the action in the drama, in the following way:

Palemone → Alcina → Clorindo → Idalba



The first page of Sebastiano Martini's *Alcina. Favola Maritima Regia* (Ferrara, 1609).

— The year after Sebastiano Martini's *Alcina*, the *Ballet de Monseigneur le Duc de Vandosme* (1610), on an anonymous libretto, was produced as a court entertainment in Paris.¹⁶ This is the only known Alcina libretto in which love is not at the centre of the action. Nevertheless, we are now firmly situated in Ariosto's world. Alcine Magicienne makes her entrance from an enchanted forest, playing the lute and singing, accompanied by her Nymphes, who play »plusieurs instrumens« (»different instruments«) and dance. They march in procession up to King Henry IV of France (1553–1610), who was seated in the hall where the performance took place. The sorceress delivers a soliloquy, in which she – like the famous enchantresses Medea and Armida – reveals a disposition to megalomania: she commands Heaven, Hell, and the Earth as well, »Rien ne s'oppose à mes lois« (»Nothing opposes my will«). However, when she admits to having transformed her lovers into beasts and plants because they were losing interest in her (not she in them, which is the usual procedure), she also admits to a weakening or wearing off of her sensual attraction, which is unique among the examined texts. Alcina and her entourage return to the forest, and she commands the beasts to emerge, after which she and her ladies-in-waiting vanish among the trees, and different Crotiques (Grotiques) appear: first, two moving towers and two neat young ladies, followed by two enormous flower pots and two owls, and later by two viola da gambas and two windmills. After dancing, they disappear into the woods and are followed by Douze Nymphes Transformees (Twelve Transformed Nymphes), who dance and then vanish into the forest. Alcina's eight dwarves perform an equilibristic dance, after which the furious Alcina reappears with her retinue, running to and fro »sans ordre & sans mesure« (»without order and without manners«). They all have new costumes in new colors, and are playing new instruments. Alcina now steps forward, and accompanying herself on a pandora (a lute instrument), she invokes the powers of darkness, with the assistance of her maidens. After this they all return to the forest, which vanishes and is replaced by Alcina's »Palais enchanté« (»Enchanted palace«), in the garden of which there are twelve statues standing in niches. These are Alcina's transformed ex-lovers, who, at a sign from His Majesty the King of France, are transmogrified while Alcina's palace vanishes and the voices and instruments of the sorceress' ladies-in-waiting can be heard, disoriented at the disappearance of their habitat.¹⁷ During their song, the twelve lovers make their reverence to the king and line up for the »Grand Ballet de douze Chevaliers desenchantez« (»Grand Ballet danced by twelve disenchanted Cavaliers/Knights«). They form different esoteric positions shown in the illustration below.

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Après ces huit figures bien formées & bien distinctement représentées. Les susdits violons sonnoient d'un nouuel air la troisieme & derniere partie dudit Ballet. Et les douze Chevalliers changeans aussi d'un nouueau pas, venoient differemment à former la neufuiesme figure, representant un caractère dudit Alphabet, lequel signifoit



HEVREUX DESTIN.

Puis tomboient tousiours dançans en ceste dixiesme, dont le caractère signifoit



AIME' DE TOVS.

En après ils venoient marquer ceste vnziesme, signifiant



COVRONNE DE GLOIRE.

Et puis avec vne grauité superbe, ils formoient ceste derniere figure, marque du

Choreographical notations for the »Grand Ballet de douze Chevaliers desenchantez« in the finale of the *Ballet de Monseigneur le Duc de Vandosme* (Paris, 1610).

The twelve Chevaliers then choose dance partners from among the ladies in the audience »qui leur plaisoit« (»who please them«), and they perform the finale, accompanied by other courtiers, who invite ladies to join the dance, which goes on until it »pleust à sa Majesté de se retirer« (»it pleases His Majesty to retire«). The whole event ends in a total mixture of stage and audience, of fiction and reality.

The Alcina of this ballet is a passionate, self-opinioned practitioner of black magic.

—The Florentine courtier, poet and soldier Ferdinando Saracinelli (1587–c. 1640) wrote the libretto for *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'Isola d'Alcina* (The Liberation of Ruggiero from the Isle of Alcina), a *festa teatrale* performed at the Villa Imperiale just outside of Florence on 3 February, 1625, during the visit of the Polish Crown Prince Władysław Wasa to Toscana.¹⁸ With Saracinelli, we once again find ourselves in the world of Ludovico Ariosto's knights and sorcerers in *Orlando furioso*. In the Prologue, Nettuno promises us that we will see »come Ruggiero / Gl'amori abbandonò dell'empia Alcina« (»how Ruggiero / Left the love of the wicked Alcina«). The benevolent sorceress Melissa, approaching Alcina's island on the back of a dolphin, calls her »L'ingannatrice Maga, et omicida« (»The deceitful and murderous Sorceress«). While Alcina is

frequently accused of being deceitful, she is not described as a murderess in any of the other librettos examined for this essay. In the next scene, Alcina is assured by her lover, the warrior Ruggiero, that he lives only for her, after which Ruggiero takes a walk along the coast, where a Siren lulls him to sleep with her lilting song. This scene recurs in several librettos from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Melissa, disguised as the sorcerer Atlante, wakes Ruggiero up and castigates him for his softness and indifference to duty, and for dallying with the »sozza« (»filthy«) and »iniqua Maga« (»wicked Sorceress«). Ruggiero responds obediently, and the two are about to leave for adventures on the battlefield when they are interrupted by the complaints of the former lovers of Alcina, transformed into plants. Back at the court, Alcina has premonitions about impending disaster, and when the messenger Oreste tells her about the meeting of Ruggiero and Melissa, which he has observed, she knows that her instincts were right. Learning that Ruggiero once again loves his betrothed Bradamante, Alcina's strategy is clear: Ruggiero is to be brought back to her, and she will win him back by seducing him. A few moments later, Ruggiero stands in front of her, and a clash between the two ensues, in which Ruggiero remains aloof while Alcina tries to appeal to his conscience by showing her grief and reminding him of their fonder past. Ruggiero recognizes Alcina as the »putrid, barren and corrupt«¹⁹ old woman and her enchanted Island of Love as the *locus terribilis* that they really are. The libretto does not explain how this is possible, but in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* it was done by Melissa giving Ruggiero a magical ring, so the same was probably done in *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'Isola d'Alcina* as well, though this is not actually mentioned in the libretto. After this, Alcina calls on the forces of darkness to eliminate her empire in a vast conflagration (see illustration below).

Alcina flees from the chaos she has created, a Coro di Mostri singing in the waves around her. The last we see of her is when her whalebone boat is transformed into a winged sea monster, on which she flies away, leaving her island a barren crag.

To sum up, Saracinelli shows Alcina in a spectrum of roles: as a loving and abandoned woman, a scheming enchantress, a furious witch, and an abominable monster.

Schematically, you could describe the love interest, which generates the action in the drama, in the following way:

Alcina ↔ Ruggiero [↔ Bradamante]

It is unusual and therefore interesting, that Bradamante is physically absent from the drama, but even then influences its progression.



»Isola d'Alcina ardente. Terza muta delle scene.« (»Alcina's island on fire. Third change of scenery.«) Alfonso Parigi's (1606–1656) copperplate of his father Giulio Parigi's (1571–1635) drawing of the scene which shows the destruction of Alcina's island and her flight on a boat made of parts of a whale's carcass, surrounded by sea monsters, in Ferdinando Saracinelli's festa teatrale *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall' isola d'Alcina* (Florence, 1625).

—The five-act libretto *L'isola di Alcina. Tragedia posta in musica* (Modena, 1626; *Alcina's Island. A Tragedy Set to Music*) by the Modenese civil servant, diplomat, and poet Count Fulvio Testi (1593–1646) was possibly inspired by Saracinelli's Florentine music drama from the previous year.²⁰ The prologue is sung by Ariosto, who tells the audience that the theatre will resound with Alcina's sighs and sobs, and that we should learn from Ruggiero's bad example.²¹ We recognize four of the names in the list of »Interlocutori« from Ariosto: Alcina, Ruggiero, Melissa, and Astolfo, all of whom had appeared in Saracinelli's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* as well. Three minor characters have been added by Fulvio Testi: Lidia, cameriera d'Alcina (Alcina's maid); Idraspe, ammiraglio d'Alcina (Alcina's admiral); and Nunzio (the equivalent of Saracinelli's Oreste). The ballet and chorus have the roles of »Le sirene« (»Sirens«), »Coro di Cavalieri trasformati da Alcina« (»Chorus of Cavaliers/Knights transformed by Alcina«) and »Coro di Damigelle d'Alcina« (»Chorus of Alcina's Maids«) – all of these are found also in Saracinelli's libretto. The composer Francesco Saccati (1605–1650), who possibly adapted Testi's libretto for the second production (Bologna, 1648),²² called Alcina »questa infelice« (»this unhappy woman«) in his dedicational preface. Indeed, that is the impression we get already from the first scene of the drama: Alcina does not feel sure of Ruggiero's fidelity. In the opening scene, her chambermaid Lidia asks her: »Qual flagellando l'agitata mente / Ti sollecita

il piè cura, ò pensiero?» («What concern or thought plaguing your agitated mind / Is stimulating your feet?») Alcina's reply shows that she, indeed, both loves and despairs: when Ruggiero is not present, even if only for a moment, she feels she is suffering a thousand deaths. Lidia can comprehend that her mistress loves such a wonderful hero and warrior, but she cannot understand her frenzy. Alcina explains that she has heard an inner voice saying: »Alcina il tuo Ruggiero / Ti lascia, e t'abbandona« («Alcina, your Ruggiero / Will leave you and desert you»). Lidia tries to comfort her, arguing that love and worry are natural companions, born simultaneously. Besides: where would Ruggiero go? The castle and the island are kept under strict surveillance by Idraspe and his spies. (Idraspe's title is »ammiraglio«, but he rather seems to be the chief of police in the well-organised totalitarian state of which Alcina is the undisputed despot.) It would be impossible for anybody to flee without Idraspe and Alcina knowing. Moreover, Lidia concludes, the beauty of Alcina's face always works wonders with men: one glance, one smile, and Ruggiero will be her slave once more (I:1). In I:2, Ruggiero and Alcina engage in conversation, and she tells him about her pangs («miei martiri», «miei sospiri», «Qual tormento, qual duolo», «mio morire») («my torture», «my sighs», «What agony, what grief», «I am dying»). Ruggiero tells her that he wants to go on a trip of the island, which almost causes her to break down. He makes light of his trip and she overdramatizes it. In the end you might suspect that she only wants to prevent Ruggiero from roaming around, because he might see things she wants to keep secret from him. On the other hand, as we have seen in I:1, Alcina is a desperate and insecure woman. In I:3 we see Ruggiero wandering along the island's coast, where he encounters three blond, naked sirens swimming in the water, whom Ruggiero describes as »lascive«. They have probably been sent there by Alcina or her faithful servant Idraspe to keep Ruggiero from straying too far. In II:2, Alcina then tells Idraspe that she is afraid her lover will leave her («un gelato incognito sospetto / Sento rodermi il petto»; »I feel an ice-cold, unknown suspicion / Gnawing in my breast«), and she makes clear that, if necessary, she will resort to physical force to keep Ruggiero in place. Idraspe is therefore ordered to keep his men ready and maintain surveillance of the realm, especially of the coast and its harbors. Idraspe assures Alcina that nobody moves by air or by sea without his knowledge.

The crisis approaches in III:1, when Melissa gives Ruggiero the magical ring.²³ In III:3 Ruggiero meets Astolfo, in the form of a myrtle bush, and the »Coro di Cavalieri trasformati da Alcina« who enlighten him about Alcina's habit of transforming her former lovers into animals and inanimate objects. In IV:2, Alcina learns that Ruggiero is nowhere to be found, and she

declares: »ch'io vò lagrimar, ch'io vò morire« (»I want to cry, I want to die«). After learning in IV:3 that Ruggiero has not been caught in Idraspe's net, she experiences a total breakdown in IV:4, which is a soliloquy lamento *scena*, certainly inspired by Apollo's and Arianna's lamento scenes in Ottavio Rinuccini's (1562–1621) seminal *La rappresentazione di Dafne* (Florence, 1594) and *L'Arianna* (Mantua, 1608). The line »Se Ruggiero è partito, Alcina è morta« (»If Ruggiero has left, Alcina is dead«) occurs three times. Desperation and aggression alternate, until the latter prevails, and Alcina fantasises about his naked, bleached bones withering away on a distant shore: »Mora, mora Ruggiero« (»Ruggiero shall die, shall die«) she says twice, at intervals. In the end she repents and modifies her statements: if only Ruggiero returns to her, he will be forgiven. This is the first time a lover has left Alcina, and she is shocked. Lidia comforts her in V:2: it would be impossible for Ruggiero to flee from the traps that Idraspe has set up. By now, however, Alcina is a nervous wreck: »I' temo, / Misera, i' gelo, i' tremo.« (»I am afraid, / Poor me, I freeze, I tremble.«) Idraspe is forced to admit that his espionage machinery has failed this time: Ruggiero has fled to Logistilla's realm. Alcina is devastated. She resorts to a device that was to become one of the *topoi* of Baroque opera: the evocation of the powers of evil. In Testi's *L'isola di Alcina* and in Ottavio Tronsarelli's (?–1641 or 1646) *La catena d'Adone. Favola boschereccia* (Rome and Venice, 1626; Adonis' Fetters. Pastoral Drama), Act IV, we find the first known examples of this device. The incantation scene was popularised through numerous Medea and Armida librettos.²⁴ It is quite likely that the idea derived from Seneca's (4 B.C.–65 A.D.) *Medea* (50 A.D.), which may also be the source of the topos of the sorceress as a commander of the elements (I:1). Alcina is interrupted by Melissa, and in V:3 she acknowledges her defeat. In one of the verses of the concluding grand ballet, the »Coro di Cavalieri«, after returning to their human form, observe:

Folle quell'Alma,	So weak the mind
Che crede a calma	Which hopes to find
Di femminile amore.	In woman's love a voyage fair;
In un momento	One moment sees
Veste il contento	The smiles of peace
Abito di dolore.	To frenzy turn'd, or dark despair. ²⁵

In spite of the rejoicing and the impending reunion of Ruggiero and Bradamante, Fulvio Testi rather surprisingly described his text as a »Tragedia«. In fact, apart from V:4 (the grand ballet), the whole text is pervaded by a claustrophobic, sinister atmosphere, and the protagonist loses her power, her love, her existence.²⁶ This is a tragedy with a forced *lieto fine* (happy ending), in the manner of the *tragicomedy*.

To sum up: Testi's Alcina is an insecure, tormented soul, desperate for constant confirmation of her lover's devotion, and frantic as soon as he is not in the same room. She is also a sorceress who gives the audience an example of her powers in an invocation scene.

Schematically, you could describe the love interest, which generates the whole action in the drama, in the following way:

Alcina ↔ Ruggiero [↔ Bradamante]

Just as in Saracinelli's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'Isola d'Alcina*, Bradamante is physically absent from Fulvio Testi's *L'isola di Alcina*, but influences its progression from III:1.

—In the synopsis of *Bradamante. Drama per musica* (Venice, 1650) in the preface (»Argomento«) to the libretto, Count Pietro Paolo Bissari (1595–1663) does not even mention Alcina.²⁷ In fact, she figures as number fourteen in the list of characters. L'Ombra di Merlino (Merlin's Spirit), who introduces the plot in the »Prologo«, only refers to Alcina's incantations in passing.²⁸ II:10–14 is the only portion of the text that is set in Alcina's realm (»Delicie d'Alcina«), and the sorceress herself is only present in II:11, in II:13–14 and in III:2. However, Bissari's libretto deserves consideration here. He uses some surprising twists in his treatment of the unfortunate villainess. In II:11, Alcina and Ruggiero share the stage and the air with a troop of Papagalli (Parrots) that fly around, sing and dance. Alcina is a happy woman at her lover's side. This is one of few examples of a genuinely happy Alcina found in the examined material. Furthermore, it is not she, but he who utters the standard phrase »Moro, se parti« (»I will die if you leave«). In the next scene, however, Ruggiero is out for a walk on the coast, and immediately encounters a siren (II:12). Trying to rouse his interest, she promises that Alcina will not mind, but he becomes so drowsy that he can hardly articulate (»alle--tate«, »son--no« and so forth; »at--tract«, »sle--ep«), which indicates that she is not his type (but that Alcina definitely *is*, hence his exhaustion).²⁹ Melissa enters with a magical shield, and when Ruggiero gazes into it, the spell is broken (II:13). Quite unusually, Bissari presents the audience – not just Ruggiero – with the consequences of this: the next time we meet Alcina, at the end of II:13, she is an old hag: »Quai veggio horride forme?« (»What horrible appearance do I see?«) is Ruggiero's disgusted reaction at her appearance, after which he flees. This is the only example in the examined texts where Alcina is shown on stage in her true appearance. Alcina, »vecchia, e deforme« (»old and deformed«), has a soliloquy in II:14, in which she gives vent to her sorrow and reproaches. She admits that her kingdom of pleasure and

beauty is but »I duri scogli, e le deserte arene« (»The hard cliffs and the abandoned shores«). Strangely, the libretto does not mention any changes of scene until III:1 (Countryside). Indeed, the only possible *locus terribilis* among the sets for *Bradamante* would be »La Grotta di Merlino« (»Merlino's Cave«) for the prologue, but since it is an interior, it would be difficult to replace an exterior scene like the »Delicie d'Alcina« (mentioned in the list of scenes at the beginning of the libretto and in II:10) with it. On the other hand, it would be awkward to have Alcina complaining about »I duri scogli, e le deserte arene« if the stage were still the »Delicie d'Alcina«.³⁰ In the end the sorceress hurries onto a Dragon, utters threats against Emperor Carlo (Charlemagne), and flies away. Fantasma (Apparitions) appear on stage and in the air, and the Act concludes with a ballet. In contrast to other treatments, the unfortunate Alcina returns at the beginning of the last Act to conspire against the Emperor with his enemies: Leone, the son of the Byzantine Emperor, and his servant Ali (III:2).³¹ That is the last we see or hear of Alcina in Bissari's *Bradamante*.



Frontispiece to Pietro Paolo Bissari's *Bradamante*. *Drama per musica* (Venice, 1650). The virtuous and dull, but in love and in war ultimately victorious heroine, stands in front of the naked and fettered Queen of Cathay, Angelica, threatened by a sea monster (lower left corner), and Ruggiero on his hippogryph (middle right), hurrying to rescue the fair maiden.

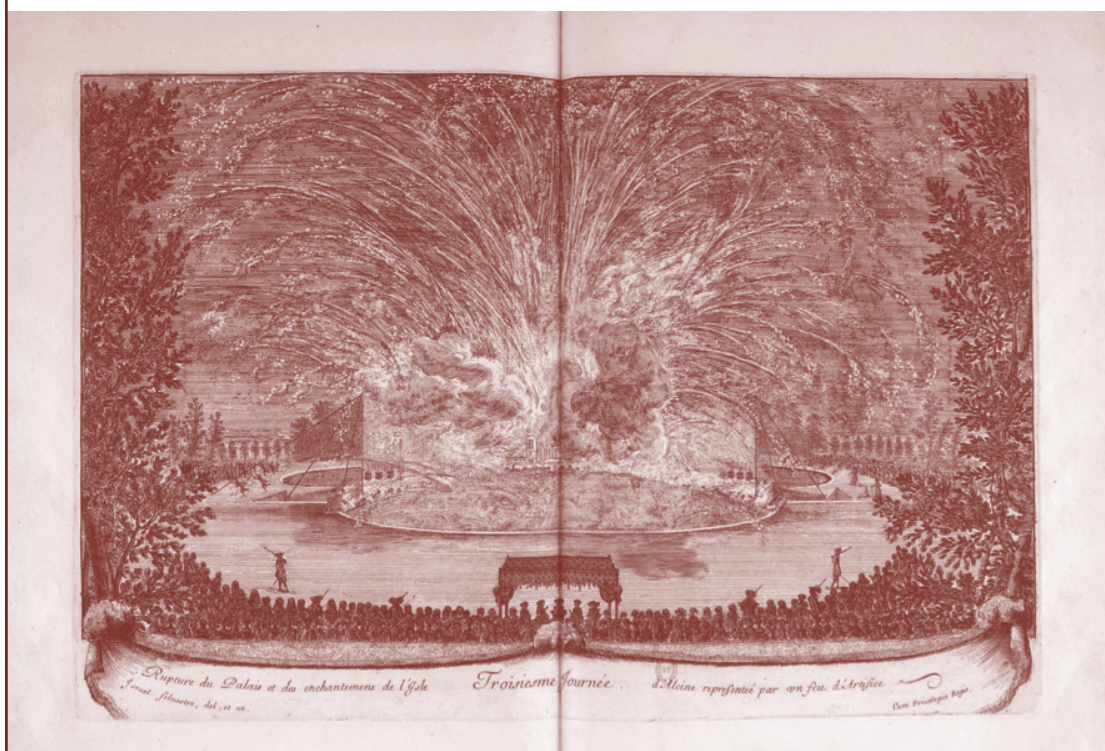
In sum, the enchantress plays a marginal role in Bissari's story. However, his portrayal differs from the standard treatment of the topos; it is painted more in black-and-white: in her first scene, she is completely happy and in her two last appearances she is deprived of her fake beauty and shown as a witch. Her conspiring against the Emperor is also unique in the discussed texts.

—In 1664, a lavish one-week spectacle took place at Versailles, from 7 to 13 May, under the auspices of King Louis XIV (1638–1715). It was called *Les Plaisirs de l'isle enchantée* (The Pleasures of the Enchanted Island), and it included a carrousel, four plays by Jean-Baptiste Molière (1622–1673; *La Princesse d'Élide*, *Les Fâcheux*, *Le Mariage forcé* and the first version of *Tartuffe*), interludes,³² instrumental and vocal music, fireworks, lotteries, banquets, and balls. The opening carrousel involved an allusion to the Ariostan theme, as the king played the role of Roger (Ruggiero), fighting for the magical ring of Angélique (Angelica).³³ On the third day (9 May, 1664), Isaac de Benserade's (1612/13–1691) *Ballet du palais d'Alcine* was performed on three artificial islands in the great canal of Versailles.³⁴

Alcine's entrance is spectacular: she arrives on the back of a huge sea monster to make sure that her army will defend her fortress from the advancing troops of Melisse, Bradamante and Roger.³⁵ However, she tells her ladies-in-waiting Célie and Dircé that there is no hope: she has had a dream, in which a spectre announced Heaven's veto against the powers of darkness helping Alcine. This will be her last day. She dreads the moment when her prisoners will be released, and her »milles amans, par mon art transformez« (»thousands of lovers, transformed by my art«) will turn against her and attack her, which she acknowledges to be a »juste dessein«. Célie tries to reassure her, while Dircé confesses that she has had the same dream. Célie now suggests a new stratagem: they will appeal to the mercy of Queen Anne of Austria (1601–1666) and her son, King Louis XIV (both attending the performance as members of the audience). Alcine agrees, but Dircé has her doubts: the dowager queen may have heard of their »douces erreurs« (»sweet blunders«) and refuse to side with them. Alcine is displeased with Dircé's pessimistic remark, but seems to realize that her only hope is to revert to strengthening the defence system and fighting to the bitter end. She produces four »démésurées« (»huge«) giants and four dwarfs, whose efficiency is said to exceed even that of the giants, to guard the entrance of the fortress. This constitutes the first of six Entrées du Ballet. The next five are performed respectively by eight of Alcine's Moors; by six of her knights and six attacking monsters who vanquish

the knights; by a number of agile demons invoked by Alcine; and by another troop of demons; the sequence ending with a pantomime in which Alcine tries to win Roger over to her side, but is thwarted by Melisse who places the magical ring on the hero's finger, whereby the spell is broken and Alcine's palace reduced to cinders in a spectacular pyrotechnical display.

Given the distance to the audience, for security reasons, it is understandable that no nuanced portraying was possible in Isaac de Benserade's *Ballet du palais d'Alcine*. We simply meet a despot at the end of her reign who knows what is coming and that she stands no chance against powers much mightier than herself. Alcine is more of a function than a person. This is emphasized by the explosion that wipes out her world.



Alcine's Island is destroyed. »Troisième Journée. Rupture du Palais et des enchantemens de l'Isle d'Alcine représentée par un feu d'Artifice« (»Third Day. Destruction of the Palace and the pleasures of Alcine's island, shown in a fireworks«). Illustration in the publication of Isaac de Benserade's text for *Les Plaisirs de l'isle enchantée*, day 3 (Versailles, 9 May, 1664). Etching by Israël Silvestre (1621–1691). It seems clear that news of Pietro Paolo Bissari's *Medea vendicativa. Drama di Foco* (Munich, 1662; The Vindictive Medea. Fire Drama), performed on an artificial island on the river Isar in celebration of the birth of the Bavarian Crown Prince Max Emanuel, had reached Paris. In the peaceful arms race of lavish ceremonies and representation, the courts of Munich, Paris and Vienna made it their business to know exactly what was going on at the other courts, and if possible to outdo them.



An island and its fortifications are destroyed. The finale of Pietro Paolo Bissari: *Medea vendicativa. Drama di Foco* (Munich, 1662). Etching by Melchior Küsel (1626–1684) after a drawing by the Bavarian court painter Caspar Amort (1612–1675). The sets were designed by Francesco Santurini (1627–1682). The similarity with the finale to Ferdinando Saracinelli's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'Isola d'Alcina* and with Isaac de Benserade's *Les Plaisirs de l'isle enchantée* is obvious (cf. above p. 80).

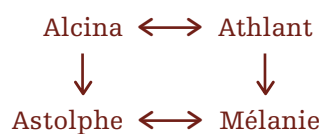
—In her last speech in the prologue of Antoine Danchet's (1671–1748) *Alcine, Tragedie* (Paris, 1705), La Gloire tells the audience/reader that the following drama will be about heroes kept spellbound by the »Art magique« of Alcine, and later liberated by Mélisse, who also punishes the heroine.³⁶ This sounds familiar, but appearances deceive. There is no Roger and no Bradamante in this opera. In the list of »Acteurs de la Tragedie«, we find their stand-ins Prince Astolphe of England and Mélanie, an Icelandic princess, who are in love (they have been borrowed from *Orlando furioso*). The setting is the magical island of Alcine. Danchet begins the drama with an unexpected scene: »Le Théâtre représente un Desert écarté, plein de Rochers, & de Precipices.« (I:1–3; »The stage represents an isolated desert with cliffs and precipices.«) There is no delightful *locus amœnus* here, but a *locus terribilis* instead. What is normally the *dénouement*, is the vantage point in Danchet's libretto. It is not clear whether Alcine, as a consequence, is shown as the ancient and decrepit being she actually is. Probably not, since it is said in I:3 that »Le Théâtre commence à s'embellir. [...] Le Théâtre change entierement, & au lieu des rochers on voit paroître

le Palais enchanté d'Alcine« (»Gradually, the stage becomes more beautiful. [...] The stage changes completely, and instead of cliffs Alcina's enchanted palace is seen«), but no reference is made to her changing from decrepit to lovely. In I:1 she confesses to her *confidante* Nérine that she has fallen in love with a half-dead warrior whom she has nursed back to life.³⁷ In fact, this is Prince Astolphe, who wants to commit suicide, since he has been separated from his love, Princess Mélanie of Iceland. After an unsuccessful attempt to soothe him in I:3–5, Alcine starts raving in I:6, accusing him of ingratitude, ending Act I with the words: »Dépit, Rage, Fureur, vous aurez vôtre tour« (»Spite, Sage, Fury, your turn will come«). Act II begins with Athlant – a knight and a sorcerer who was once Alcine's lover, but who is disgusted with her habit of transmogrifying her lovers – falling in love with Mélanie at first sight (II:1–3). There is a show-down between Alcine and Athlant because of this (II:4). Alcine cannot accept that a former lover of hers has fallen in love with someone else, even after she herself has fallen in love with another person. Athlant cannot understand this: »Si vous ne m'aimez pas, pourquoy vous allarmez?« (»If you are no longer in love with me, why worry?«) They join in a pact to achieve their hearts' desire and couple with the English prince and the Icelandic princess respectively. If this does not work, they swear to persecute the two young lovers mercilessly. The third Act is set in the »Labirinthe d'Amour«. Unrecognized by Mélanie, who simply takes her for »Une Nymphé«, the jealous Alcine feigns friendship and tells her that Queen Alcine is her worst enemy and wants her dead. Mélanie must flee and never see her beloved Astolphe again (III:2). When she has entered the Labyrinth of Love, the Icelandic princess is told by Nérine that Astolphe adores Alcine and that they will be united in marriage (III:3), whereupon Mélanie breaks down (III:4). In this moment Athlant enters and declares his love to the princess, who rejects him (III:5). The disappointed magician realizes that he cannot bear to honor his part of the pact with Alcine. Instead, he ends the Act by conceiving a plan to deceive the sorceress (III:6). A scene of clarification and reunion between Astolphe and Mélanie (IV:3) is interrupted by Alcine and Athlant who end the Act by invoking the powers of darkness (IV:4–5). Act V opens with Alcine's soliloquy, in which she is torn, in characteristic fashion, between fury and love, just like Athlant in Act III. »Quelle indigne pitié voudroit se faire entendre! / Est-ce à moy d'épargner ces Amants trop heureux? / Fureur, Amour, Tirans trop rigoureux, / Que je sçache du moins à qui je dois me rendre.« (V:1; »What an unworthy pity wants to make itself heard! / Is it my duty to spare these too happy Lovers? / Fury, Love, too harsh Tyrants, / At least I know to whom I must surrender.«) When Athlant enthusiastically envisions how he is going to murder Astolphe, Alcine confesses that an »indigne

tendresse« (»shameful tenderness«) forces her to waive her revenge: »L'Amour parle pour luy; puis-je luy resister?« (»Love speaks for him; can I resist him?«) The sight of her rival Mélanie awakens her wrath temporarily (V:2), but when Athlant tries to murder Astolphe, she prevents him. Athlant now suggests a compromise: he will abstain from killing Astolphe if she will let the prince and Mélanie marry. Alcine is now so frantic, that she tries to murder her rival. The benevolent sorceress Mélisse is heard approaching, and Athlant abandons Alcine, delivering her to Mélisse's superior power (V:3). Alcine is now desperate. Mélisse arrives together with Alcine's former lovers, who have regained their original form. Alcine's prison disappears into the ground, and her enchanted forest is replaced with another set (we are not told which). The Dark Powers do not heed Alcine's incantation, and she declares herself defeated. She implies that she might commit suicide (V:4).

In sum, Alcine is once again shown as an unbalanced, concupiscent sorceress, who is ruled by her passions.

Schematically, you could describe the love interest, which generates the whole action in the drama, in the following way:



ALCINE,

TRAGEDIE;

REPRE'SENTE'E POUR LA PREMIERE FOIS
PAR L'ACADEMIE ROYALE
DE MUSIQUE,

Le Quinzième jour de Janvier 170



A PARIS,
Chez CHRISTOPHE BALLARD, seul Imprimeur du Roy
pour la Musique, rue S. Jean de Beauvais, au Mont-Parnasse.

M. D C C. V.

Avec Privilège de Sa Majesté.

LE PRIX EST DE TRENTE SOLS.

Title page of Antoine Danchet's *Alcine, Tragedie* (Paris, 1705).



ACTE TROISIÈME.

Le Théâtre représente le Labyrinthe
d'AMOUR.



SCÈNE PREMIÈRE.

M'ELANIE seule.



*E trouve à chaque pas sur ces heureux rivages
Tout ce que la Nature a de plus précieux !
Les plus brillantes fleurs s'y présentent aux yeux,
J'entends retentir ces Bocages
Des chants les plus harmonieux !*

*Parmittant de plaisirs mes yeux versent des larmes.
En vain de toutes parts j'ay cherché mon Amant ;
S'il venoit d'un regard dissiper mes allarmes,
Ah ! que mon sort seroit charmant !*

*Cher Objet de mes feux, vien, l'Amour favorable
Veut réunir nos tendres cœurs :*

*Quel plaisir de pouvoir dans ce Séjour aimable
Après mille perils goûter mille douceurs !*

The first page of Act III of Antoine Danchet's *Alcina*, *Tragedie* (Paris, 1705).
The illustration has music as its theme – eleven instruments are shown.³⁸

—In his »Argomento« for *Angelica vincitrice di Alcina. Festa teatrale* (Vienna, 1716; *Angelica, Alcina's Vanquisher. A Festa Teatrale*), the Caesarean Poet Pietro Pariati (1665–1733) describes *Orlando furioso* as Ariosto's »ingegnosissimo Poema« (»most ingenious poem«) but nevertheless introduces several novelties into the libretto: Alcina is an Indian enchantress, and the African Medoro, who is well known to the reader of Ariosto as the lover of Queen Angelica of Catajo/Cathay, is now under the spell of Alcina along with Ruggiero.³⁹ The drama begins in a spectacular setting, with Alcina's »Reggia magnifica« (»Magnificent palace«) brightly lit and glistening with gold and gems (see illustration below). The enchantress is merely ceremonial here, but she gives everyone to understand that she is not to be trifled with: whoever tries to do so will be punished. Bradamante (disguised as Astolfo) and the sorcerer Atlante (disguised as Orlando) are present, observing court life. When Angelica arrives with her retinue, Alcina is supercilious, formal, and insincere towards her, instinctively knowing that a rival has arrived, and fearing that her own male entourage might now become less attentive due to the presence of the young and beautiful Chinese queen. Angelica says that she wants to marry Medoro, which arouses Ruggiero's jealousy (I:1). Alcina plays along with this request, but has secret ideas about how to thwart it.



»Veduto del PROSCENIO nella Festa Teatrale intitolata *ANGELICA VINCITTRICE di ALCINA*.« (»View of the PROSCENIUM in the Festa Teatrale entitled *ANGELICA, ALCINA's VANQUISHER*.«) This is the setting for Act I. Copperplate by an unknown artist after a drawing by Guiseppe Galli Bibiena (1696–1757).⁴⁰ The sets were by him and his father Ferdinando Galli Bibiena (1657–1743).

Act II is set on two frightful prison islands inhabited by Alcina's former lovers in the shape of monsters and savages (see illustration below). Alcina's slyness and cruelty are immediately apparent: Angelica has not been allowed to marry Medoro but is taken in fetters to one of the islands where she is chained to a rock.⁴¹ The Coro di Spiriti make clear that the sorceress sees the fair Queen of Catajo as a rival who has to be eliminated (II:1–2). We see Alcina as the cruel persecutor of whoever goes against her will (II:2–3). Medoro is brought in chains to the other island. Alcina summons a huge sea monster, and gleefully describes how it is going to devour Angelica while Medoro is watching, unable to interfere. Here she shows her self-important side (»sappi, / Quant' è possente Alcina«; »you should be aware of / How powerful Alcina is«), and she makes clear that she will not tolerate treachery of any kind. We now have a scenario that has since become a topos within suspense fiction from Nick Carter to James Bond. Since neither the author nor the audience or readers wish for the drama to end with II:4, i.e. with the sea monster's meal, it is necessary that the story evolve in the following way instead:

the crook has constructed an elaborate death-machine and the victim is trapped, but in the last second, instead of savouring the moment and triumphantly witnessing the destruction of her enemy, Alcina leaves, thus making it possible for the story to continue. Bradamante and Ruggiero arrive with warriors by boat, Bradamante brandishes a magical ring, the savages surrounding Medoro are paralyzed, and when Ruggiero shows his magical shield, the monsters that guard Angelica are petrified. Bradamante and Ruggiero set the prisoners free. The sea monster falls in two parts, which are transformed into ships when Atlante arrives (II:5–8). None of this would have been possible or achieved so easily with Alcina present.



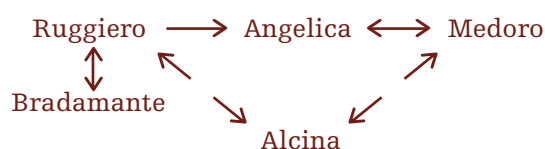
»ISOLE orride, e disabitate occupate da diversi Mostri per incanto di ALCINA.« (»Horrible and deserted ISLANDS occupied by several monsters, due to ALCINA's spell.«) This is the *locus terribilis* setting for Act II. Copperplate by Elias Schaffhauser (1684–1738) after a drawing by Guiseppe Galli Bibiena.

The third Act begins with Alcina in a vengeful mood, which is hardly surprising given the circumstances. We are now in her own enchanted »sensual paradise«⁴² (*locus amoenus*), but with a threatening *locus horribilis* looming on the backdrop (»orrída Rocca d'Alcina ad uso di prigionero«; »the horrible fortress of Alcina, used as a prison«). The haughty sorceress is in a vengeful mood, hoping to make Medoro die by Ruggiero's hand (III:1).⁴³ Later, while she is still in the same mood, Alcina has a solo incantation scene, in which she waves her magical wand to summon the powers of darkness only to acknowledge that they do not obey. She does not give up, though: »son' anche Alcina« (III:3; »I am indeed Alcina«). When the sorceress returns, at the end of the libretto, she is her old defiant self, but when she learns that her enemy Atlante has freed all her prisoners, and when the backdrop with the fortress is replaced with one with laurel trees, she feels her empire and her powers waning. Uncharacter-

istically, she breaks down and becomes complaisant. In spite of all her magical power, she was not able to see though Atlante's disguise as Orlando, just as she did not understand that Astolfo was actually Bradamante. Alcina gives up Medoro, and when Bradamante flashes the magical ring everybody understands who she is, and Ruggiero, who has been enamoured of Angelica, falls in love with Bradamante, to the chagrin of the powerless Alcina who thought that »Astolfo« (=Bradamante) was in love with her (III:2). Alcina is vanquished and wishes for her own death, but Queen Angelica, who is indeed the »vincitrice di Alcina« of the title, even on the moral level, concludes: »No, Alcina: Ove fiorisce il Lauro eterno / Sol regna la Clemenza: Alcina, vivi« (III:9; »No, Alcina: Where the eternal Laurel blossoms / Only Mercy reigns: Alcina, you may live«).

To summarise, Alcina in Pietro Pariati's *Angelica vincitrice di Alcina* is not so much the loving woman as the reigning queen, ceremonious, self-assured, haughty and spiteful.

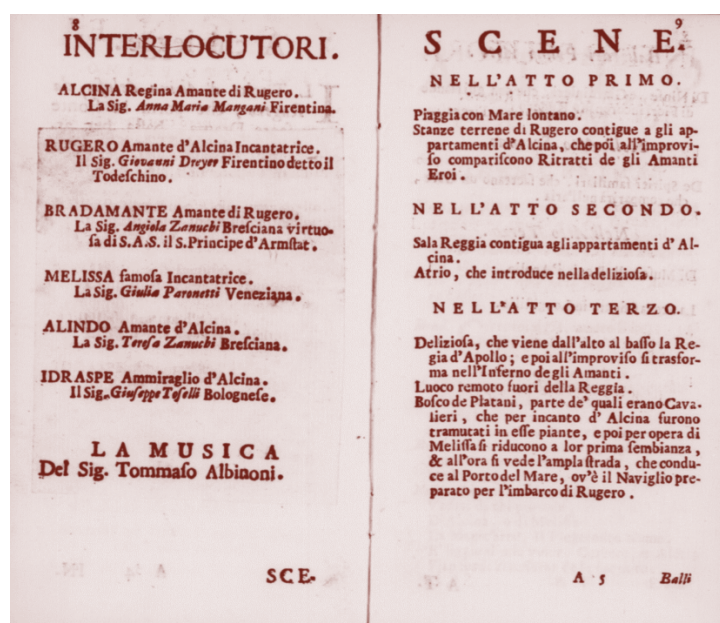
Schematically, you could describe the love interest, which generates the whole action in the drama, in the following way:



Complications arise from the fact that the exact relations between Alcina and Medoro, and between Alcina and Ruggiero, are never stated in the drama, and are only mentioned in passing in the »Argomento« (hence the interrupted double arrows in the graph above). The attentive reader of the libretto would have gathered this information, which a spectator would not unless it was made clear by the performers. An indication would be that Alcina does not tolerate Medoro's and Ruggiero's interest in Angelica of Catajo, but this might be for status and not for jealousy.

— In his preface »A chi legge« (»To the reader«) in *Alcina delusa da Rugero. Drama per musica* (Venice, 1725; *Alcina Forsaken by Rugero. A Musical Drama*), Antonio Marchi (dates unknown) assumes that the readers know Ariosto, the »Principe de' Poeti« (»Prince of Poets«).⁴⁴ The *interlocutori* are Alcina, Rugero, Bradamante (disguised as Argaste), the sorceress Melissa, Alcina's admiral Idraspe (whom we remember from Fulvio Testi's *L'isola di Alcina*, 1626), and a new character, Alindo, Alcina's lover. The action takes place in Longistille, a geographical location the name of which is derived from the name of Alcina's sister Logistilla in *Orlando furioso*. The drama begins with Bradamante and Melissa arriving by ship to

Alcina's kingdom with the intention of rescuing Rugero from the influence of the enchantress (I:1). Alcina immediately appears together with Alindo and Idraspe. She is in uproar, »Spoglia il sen, sciolto il crin« (»Her breasts uncovered, her hair untied«), because she cannot find Rugero, »l'anima mia« (»my soul«).⁴⁵ A single moment without him is like dying a thousand deaths. Alcina is seriously worried that he has abandoned her, but she is reassured by Idraspe (who just like his earlier incarnation in Testi's *L'isola di Alcina* has the title of admiral, but actually seems to be the chief of police in Alcina's totalitarian state): who would be able to flee from such a well-guarded realm? (I:2–3) Idraspe mentions his »Antenne«; he is not merely a warrior, but a collector of information as well.⁴⁶ Although Alcina tries to assert her powers over the elements and the forces of darkness, and even to command the universe,⁴⁷ she has misgivings about the future. Bradamante, disguised as a warrior, arouses Alcina's erotic interest, which the all-seeing Idraspe immediately notices (I:3–4). Meanwhile, the restless Rugero dreams of military adventures, but after Alcina's reproaches and tears he is soon reined in by the wily enchantress using a display of *il meraviglioso*. Mirroring his dreams of warriors and heroes, such as Pompey, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Hercules, Alcina shows paintings of heroes from mythology and history, who embrace their beloved instead of engaging in warfare: Jupiter and Calisto, Jupiter and Danaë, Mars and Venus, Hercules and Iole, Pompey and Flora, Alexander the Great and Rosanna, Mark Antony and Cleopatra, Massinissa and Sophonisba, Augustus and Livia, Nero and Poppaea, Appius Claudius and Virginia. Do as these heroes, Alcina tells him. Rugero succumbs to the seduction: »T'amo, o cara« (I:8–9; »I love you, my darling«).



Cast, composer, and sets in Antonio Marchi's *Alcina delusa da Rugero* (1725).

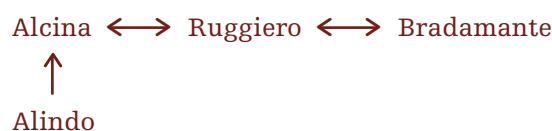
Such notions of heroes/warriors shown as ardent lovers were in vogue in the *galante* seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This erotisation of heroic topics is prominent in Jean Racine's (1639–1699) dramas, but also in innumerable *drami per musica*, such as Francesco Buti's (1604–82) *Ercole amante* (Paris, 1662), Giacomo Francesco Bussani's (1640?–after 1680) *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (Venice, 1676) and Ortensio Mauro's (1634–1725) *La superbia d'Alessandro* (Hanover, 1690), in which historical or mythological heroes from antiquity, like Orestes, Hercules, Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great, earlier of renown for their military and political careers, are recast as lovers governed by their emotions.⁴⁸

In Marchi's *Alcina delusa da Rugero*, Alcina muses on her lovers (Alindo and Rugero), but decides to seduce Argaste (=Bradamante) as well. When Argaste does not respond to her advances as she expected, Alcina deduces that he is jealous of Rugero (II:3). In the following scenes, the flirting goes on as first Alindo and then Rugero join them (II:4–5). In her exit aria, the enchantress fires off invitations in three directions (II:5). An extraordinary incident occurs later in the Act. Alcina is spending time with Rugero, when »Si frapone Bradamante in furia, separando Ruger d'Alcina.« (»Bradamante intervenes infuriated, separating Ruger from Alcina.«) This is a completely new physical aggressiveness on the part of Bradamante in a libretto, and her insolence is duly punished: Alcina waves her wand and transforms her rival into a fountain (II:9).⁴⁹ The Act ends with some more *meraviglie*. The stage is empty, when a heart surrounded by flames appears from above, carrying the inscription: »D'Alcina l'idol mio la fiamma è questa.« (»This is the flame of Alcina, my idol.«) Two Amorini perform a pantomime in which they dance and pierce the heart with their arrows, upon which the inscription changes to: »Riedo ferito ancor per Bradamante.« (II:13; »I am wounded by Bradamante again.«)⁵⁰ We understand that this is an emblematic summary of the libretto. The third Act begins with another unique feature: a *divertissement* in the French style, with song and dance. The Sirens, whom we often find in Alcina librettos (Saracinelli, Testi, Bissari), are reduced to entertainers here. They are followed by Rugero who descends in a cloud dressed as Apollo, surrounded by a collection of musical instruments, and Alcina dressed as Erato, the Muse of erotic poetry, with the eight other muses sitting four on each side in the descending cloud machinery. They both sing of their love and there is more singing and dancing by the chorus. Suddenly there is a *change-ment à vue* and the *locus amœnus* is transformed into a *locus terribilis*: the Inferno of Lovers, where a frightened Rugero converses with a disembodied Voice (Voce; III:2). Melissa now appears in the guise of Atlante (as in Saracinelli, Testi, Bissari) and makes things clear to Rugero, but without using the

magical ring or shield. She restores the hero's weapons to him, and he is able to vanquish the fire-spitting Cerberus and three »Furie Infernali« (»Infernal Furies«) who try to prevent him from leaving Hell (III:3). This scene is new and shows Marchi's (or his employer's) penchant for *il meraviglioso*. Next, Bradamante falls for the temptation to murder her rival Alcina in her sleep, but she is prevented at the last moment by Melissa from committing a clearly unchivalric deed (III:5–6). Alcina wakes up alone and is frantic about losing Rugero (III:7). When Alindo and some other men enter and confess that they have no idea of the whereabouts of Rugero, she breaks down: »Son morta; il Core / Non fù buggiardo, / Nel presagir le sue sciagure. [...] io vò lacrimar, io vò morire« (III:8; »I am dead; my Heart / Did not lie, / When it predicted its misfortunes. [...] I will cry, I will die«). When Idraspe tells Alcina that Rugero has vanquished her soldiers, she is mortified (III:10–11). She now resorts to another *topos*: black magic (cf. Testi, Bissari, Danchet, Pariati). She wants »Mille Gorgoni, e furie« (»A thousand Gorgons and furies«) to find her beloved – not to punish him, but to bring him back to her loving heart (III:11). It is not until the last scene of the opera that Alcina understands that Argaste is in fact Bradamante. She summons the elements to prevent the two lovers from fleeing by ship. A storm gathers, but to Alcina's dismay it is allayed by Melissa. When Idraspe declares that his warriors stand no chance against Rugero's blinding shield, she desperately turns to Alindo for help, but he has had enough of her and deserts her. Melissa restores the former lovers to their human form (as in Saracinelli, Danchet, and Pariati), and they all embark on Rugero's ship. Alcina, »delusa da Rugero«, is left alone on stage to lament her failures. There is no grand ballet, no chorus, no *lieto fine*, and no epilogue to put things into perspective; just a lonely figure at the centre of the stage (III:12).⁵¹

In spite of her magical powers, the heroine of Antonio Marchi's *Alcina delusa da Rugero* is frantic, insecure, vulnerable, and in the end utterly lonely.

Schematically, you could describe the love interest, which generates the action in the drama, in the following way:



Title page of the anonymous *Alcina Maga*.

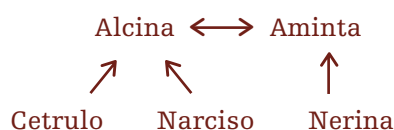
The earliest known parody of the Alcina theme is the anonymously published *Alcina Maga. Trattenimento Boschereccio per Musica* (Bologna, 1726; *Alcina the Sorceress. A Musical Pastoral Entertainment*).⁵² The characters in this drama are all new except the eponymous protagonist, and her spirits and monsters: we meet Nerina, Alcina's lewd nurse; Aminta, a dim-witted Arcadian shepherd; Cetrulo, a clumsy Neapolitan; and Narciso, a Bolognese lout. The action is set on the island of Zodis. Alcina opens the opera in a light tone, but she soon grows more severe: her reign is founded on horror and terror; inflicting pain and taunting is her delight (I:1). This sounds like typical Alcina, but given the surroundings – a craggy fishpond – it is hardly surprising when the sorceress reacts negatively to Aminta's love-making in the next scene: a mere shepherd is nothing for the likes of Alcina, she lets him understand (I:2). However, she lets us know that she (of all beings!) is incapable of love. The spoofing continues when Alcina is alone again and reacts to Aminta's vows of love with a parodically disproportionate, high-strung *scena*: an aria (»Furie spietate / Del cieco Averno«; »Ruthless Furies / Of dark Avernus«), which ends

with thunder, lightning and havoc (I:3). The enchantress lies down on the ground and pretends to sleep. Narciso, entering, disturbs her rest, which makes her swear that she fears neither the »Cielo irato« (»Wrathful heaven«) or »L'ire di Giove, e delle stelle infeste« (»The wrath of Jupiter, and of the inauspicious stars«), which is once again typical for the queen-sorceress of Ariosto's epic and of other librettos, but comical here, since it is simply out of proportion with the failings of Narciso. The Bolognese boor woos Alcina in barely understandable dialect, but she summons her spirits who throw him into the fishpond (I:4; this scene is paralleled in I:11, with Cetrulo substituting for Narciso). Alcina states that such treatment awaits any man who dare speak to her about love (I:5). However, when Narciso later wants to drown himself in the fishpond (II:3), Alcina stops him (II:4). When Narciso and Cetrulo, rivals for Alcina's love, want to duel (II:7), Alcina first petrifies them with her magical wand, then revives them, giving them a good telling-off, over-calibrated as usual in *Alcina Maga*: »Regnerà nel petto mio / Sdegno, strage, ira, e furor« (»Resentment, slaughter, wrath, and fury / Will reign in my breast«; II:8). Another parodic moment occurs when the lecherous old nurse Nerina tries to make her ward interested in men (III:5).⁵³ Alcina is uninterested in the subject of love, since men's hearts are so fickle, which is a trait traditionally associated with Alcina herself. When she hears Aminta singing about »Alcina mia crudel, crudele Alcina« (»My cruel Alcina, cruel Alcina«), and he tries to stab himself, she stops him, finally confessing that she indeed loves him. They go off to her cottage (!) to fetch her book of incantations and her wand (III:6), which are duly destroyed in the finale of the opera. Alcina declares that she is done with sorcery, and Aminta suggests that they leave for Arcadia. The *trattenimento boschereccio* ends in happiness and harmony (III:7).

The text has an unmistakable flavor of the seventeenth-century librettos, with the wanton nurse, Tasso's Arcadian shepherd,⁵⁴ the clumsy, down-to-earth clowns, the singing in dialect, and the juxtaposition of high and low elements.

The heroine of *Alcina Maga* is not what we have learnt to expect, and when she is, she is at odds with her surroundings: a healthy shepherdess with the ego and the language of a *drama per musica* tragedienne.

Schematically, you could describe the love interest, which generates the action in the drama, in the following way:



The anonymous libretto *L'isola di Alcina. Drama* (Rome, 1728; Alcina's Island) was the source of a group of texts, which will be discussed now. The dedication in *L'isola di Alcina* is signed by Giuseppe Pulvini Faliconi (1673–1741), a well-known Roman theatrical entrepreneur who might also have written the libretto.⁵⁵ According to Anthony Hicks, the traditional attribution of the text to an otherwise unknown Antonio Fanzaglia⁵⁶ is incorrect: Fanzaglia was responsible for revising the libretto for the production in Parma in 1729, where it was given the title *Bradamante nell'isola d'Alcina. Drama*.⁵⁷ He has indeed signed the dedication in the 1729 libretto.⁵⁸

Umiliſſ., Devotiſſ., Oſſequioſiſſ., ed Obligatiſſ. Servitore
Giuseppe Pulvini, Faliconi.

Umiliſſ., Devotiſſ., Oſſequioſiſſ., ed Oblig. Servitore
Antonio Fanzaglia.

Giuseppe Pulvini Faliconi's and Antonio Fanzaglia's signatures in the imprints of *L'isola di Alcina* (1728) and *Bradamante nell'isola d'Alcina* (1729). Since they both appear in the same place in the text (after the dedicatory preface), it is unclear why Fanzaglia's signature has been regarded as proof of authorship, while Faliconi's has not (cf. footnote 58).

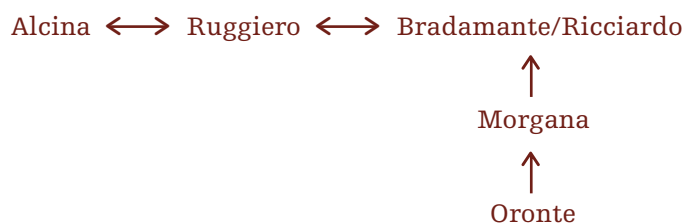
In the Roman version of 1728, *L'isola di Alcina*,⁵⁹ the author gives his source as Ariosto, cantos 6, 7, and 8, and specifies the place of the action as »Isola d'Alcina potentissima Incantatrice« (»The Island of Alcina, powerful Enchantress«). Since the production was staged in Rome, where the authorities might not accept a lewd subject like this for public entertainment, the author provided an allegorical-didactic interpretation of the action in an »Avvertimento agli Spettatori« (»Preface to the Audience«): Ariosto has offered instruction on the »varie passioni« (»different passions«) which fight with »la forza del concupiscibile appetito l'Uomo« (»the strength of the lustful appetite of Man«), using the »scelleratezza della sua Alcina« (»wickedness of his Alcina«) as well as the other characters as *exempla*. We meet Alcina, Ruggiero, Bradamante, Morgana, and Melissa in their customary roles, with the addition of Oronte (in love with Morgana) as an equivalent of Fulvio Testi's and Antonio Marchi's Idraspe (1626 and 1725), and with the same function of admiral/chief of police, although Oronte's exact position is never specified. Bradamante and Melissa, using the assumed identities of Ricciardo and Melisso, land on Alcina's island and encounter Morgana (who immediately falls in love with Ricciardo; I:1). Alcina and Ruggiero make their entry. The enchantress is calm and happy (I:2). After Oronte has kindled Ruggiero's jealousy out of pure spite, telling him that Alcina now burns for Ricciardo (I:8), Ruggiero accuses Alcina, but she remains calm (I:9). When Ricciardo/Bradamante enters,

Ruggiero demands that he be dispelled from the realm. Alcina tries to soothe him, which makes him even more jealous (I:10). We do not meet Alcina again until II:4, when she has an incantation *scena*, set in a part of her enchanted garden which features a statue of Circe transforming men into beasts. Alcina is about to do the same to Ricciardo in order to pacify Ruggiero, but she is interrupted by Morgana. When Ruggiero arrives, he unites with Morgana, since he has been enlightened about Ricciardo's true identity after receiving Angelica's magical ring from Melisso (II:2). Ruggiero declares that he wants to go hunting on the island, which Alcina allows (II:5).⁶⁰ In the next scene, Oronte declares that Ruggiero is a traitor and is preparing to escape from Alcina's realm. Her reactions oscillate between sorrow (»Ah, mio cor! schernito sei«; II:6; »Oh, my heart, you have been mocked«) and anger (»Resti, o muora, / Peni sempre, o torna a me«; »Stay or die, / Suffer forever, or come back to me«). The next time we meet Alcina, she is in a subterranean cave where she performs her second incantation *scena*. However, her power has been broken by Melissa (»Ombre pallide«; »Pale shadows«). Alcina knows that the spirits of darkness are listening in the shadows, but they will not obey her, and she takes her angry leave, flinging her wand to the ground, after which they actually do appear and dance the ballet of the Act finale (II:12). Oronte now assures Alcina that Ruggiero cannot escape. She tells him: »tutto osserva« (»observe everything«), because she cannot survive without her absconded lover (III:2). As in a nightmare or a drama by Racine, the person they are speaking of immediately enters, creating embarrassment for all. Alcina is jealous of Bradamante and tries to make her former lover feel guilty by showing her grief. At the end of the scene, she threatens him: »Ma quando tornerai / Di lacci avvinto il piè« (»But when you return / Your feet will be tied with fetters«), but she softens and tries to open for a reconciliation (III:3). In her third incantation *scena*, which consists of one single recitative, Alcina is forced to recognize that she has no contact with the powers of darkness, and she decides to prepare for battle (III:7). Oronte informs her that all efforts are in vain, however, and that Ruggiero's attack on her realm has been victorious: he is in possession of the blinding magical shield that we already encountered in Pietro Pariati's *Angelica vincitrice di Alcina* (1716) and in Antonio Marchi's *Alcina delusa da Rugero* (1725). Devastated, Alcina begs to die, but since she is a fairy, she cannot (III:8). The scene now changes to a *locus amœnus* with trees, statues, obelisks, trophies, cages with wild animals, and an urn which contains the queen's magical power, on a dais placed at the center of the stage. Alcina begs Ruggiero to take pity on her, and mentions the prophecy of the sorcerer Atlante, predicting that Ruggiero will die on the battlefield, which she regards as the reason why Atlante took him away from the war

to her island (III:10). Alcina now tries to explain to Bradamante why Ruggiero must stay on her island. When Bradamante is unimpressed with her explanation, Alcina declares herself willing to cede her power over the realm to the two lovers, if only they will stay. They refuse. In a *terzetto*, she assures them: »Non è amor, nè gelosia / È pietà« (III:11; »It is neither love nor jealousy / It is pity«), but she is rebuffed: »Indegna taci. [...] Iniqua menti.« (»Nefarious villain, be quiet. [...] Vile wretch, you lie.«) When Ruggiero tries to destroy the urn, Alcina stops him (III:14). In the next scene she vainly tries to arouse his sympathy, but she is once again rejected by him and Bradamante (III:15). Bradamante tries to smash the urn, but she is stopped by Morgana. In the end, Alcina tries to buy time by offering to transmogrify her ex-lovers (III:16), but Melissa has had enough of talking, and requires urgent action: by smashing the urn Ruggiero will restore the unfortunate ex-lovers into their former shape. »O noi perdute« (»Oh, we are lost«) is the last we hear of Alcina and Morgana, after which they hide (»si nascondono«), whether on or off the stage is not indicated. In a last display of *il meraviglioso*, Ruggiero finally smashes the urn; the *locus amœnus* is engulfed by the sea and the scene returns to the *locus terribilis* from Act II: the subterranean cave, with rocks that now turn into men. They sing a subdued chorus (»Dall'orror di notte cieca«; »From the horror of the dark night«) and dance the final ballet (III:17).

The Alcina of Rome 1728 is a charming person in the beginning who even gives a successful proof of her magical powers in the first *changement à vue* (I:2). After this, she does not have much luck with her incantations, these having been nonplussed by the magic of Melissa. This coincides with Ruggiero's betrayal of her and leaves her a miserable, pitiable woman instead of a frightening foe.

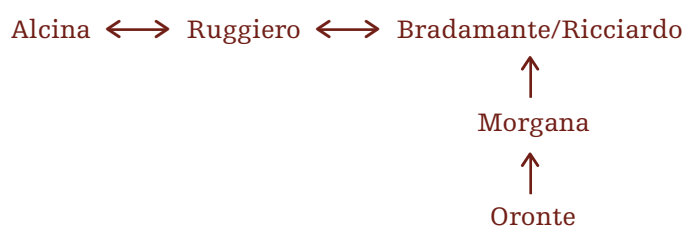
Schematically, you could describe the love interest, which generates the action in the drama, in the following way:



—The 1729 version of this libretto for Parma, *Bradamante nell'isola d'Alcina. Drama*, is essentially the same story. An unknown author, possibly Antonio Fanzaglia, added a redundant role, Barsina »confidente d'Alcina« (Alcina's confidante), certainly to accommodate the singer, Catterina Cesari.⁶¹ The

differences from the 1728 libretto – we will henceforward call the two texts »Rome 1728« and »Parma 1729« – are numerous, consisting of cuts, substitutions, rewritings, and additions (e.g. all of the material for Barsina), but many scenes were left unchanged.⁶² A substantial difference between Rome 1728 and Parma 1729 is found at the end of Act II. Where Rome 1728 ends the Act with Alcina's angry exit, flinging her wand to the ground, upon which evil spirits appear to dance a ballet, Parma 1729 has no appearing spirits and no ballet. After Alcina has thrown her wand to the ground and left, there is a whole *scena* for Morgana instead, which ends with the aria »Stà nell' ircana« (II:13), which was sung by Ruggiero in Rome 1728 (III:4). Before the final chorus, there is no last change of scenes in Parma 1729; instead the statues fall to the ground and men crawl forth from the rubble (III:16). The solutions in Parma 1729 probably worked well but meant less *meraviglioso* in the form of magic. The picture the reader or viewer gets of Alcina in Parma 1729, however, is identical to that of Rome 1728.

Unsurprisingly, the love interest in *Bradamante nell' isola d' Alcina* is the same as in *L' isola di Alcina*:



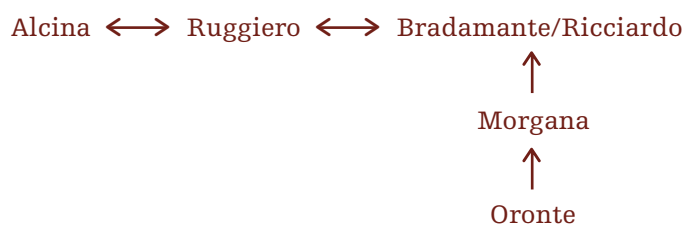
—The 1735 London version of this libretto, *Alcina. An Opera*, was based on Rome 1728 without any tangible influence from Parma 1729, and it may have been revised by George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) who composed the music.⁶³ This is by far the best-known of the librettos mentioned in this essay. The end of the introductory »Argument« modifies Rome 1728 and Parma 1729: »The Story is taken from the sixth and seventh Cantos of Ariosto, but partly alter'd for the better conformity of Drama.«⁶⁴ In this version, the Melissa from Rome 1728 has changed her sex and become Melisso (posing as Atlante), and we also meet a new character, Oberto, the son of Astolfo. As in the Parma version, there are numerous cuts, substitutions, rewritings, and additions (e.g. all the material for Oberto) in the London version, and fewer scenes are left unchanged when compared to Parma 1729.⁶⁵ The cuts are substantial and occur in practically every scene. An unknown hand revised the text for the revival in London in 1736, involving new cuts, rewritings and substitutions. The most important difference is the new ending of Act I. In 1735, I:15 consisted of Morgana's aria »Tornami a vagheggiar« (»Return to me to languish«).⁶⁶ In 1736, a new

recitative was inserted before the aria, and the whole *scena* was sung by Alcina.⁶⁷ As a consequence, the relation between Alcina and her lover is more in focus in the second London version than in the first one. On the whole, the picture we get of Alcina in both London versions is identical to that in the Roman text of 1728. There is one important difference, though. In her scenes with Oberto in the two London texts, the sorceress is insincere, sly, mendacious and treacherous, a sign of her growing despair (II:7, III:6). She even tries to trick the young man into slaughtering his own father who has been transformed into a lion by Alcina (III:6).⁶⁸

As David Kimbell has noted, »Alcina was not an 18th-century lady, but a wicked enchantress, and she did not need to come to a good end. When passion threatens to overwhelm her, she does not need to step back from the brink; without surrender, without compromise, Alcina abandons herself to her passions until they do destroy her, and in doing so the enchantress becomes, paradoxically, one of the most vulnerable and fully human of Handel's operatic creations«.⁶⁹

To sum up, the London Alcina of 1735 and 1736 is characterized in the same way as the one in Rome 1728 (and the one in Parma 1729), but she is also false, mendacious, and treacherous.

The love interest in *Alcina* is identical to that in *L'isola di Alcina* and *Bradamante nell'isola d'Alcina*:



—The list of »Persone, che cantano« (»Characters who sing«) in Saxon court poet Stefano Pallavicini's (1672–1742) *Le Fate. Dramma per musica* (Dresden, 1736; *The Fairies. A Musical Drama*) explains the title: the fairies mentioned are »Alcina, Fata« (Alcina, a Fairy) and »Melissa, altra Fata« (Melissa, another Fairy).⁷⁰ The story revolves around the power struggle between the two. We encounter Ruggiero, Bradamante, Astolfo, and a new character, Doro, Alcina's dwarf.⁷¹ Doro is the Lustige Person⁷² of the drama, but he also has a function similar to that of Idraspe (in Fulvio Testi's *L'isola di Alcina* and Antonio Marchi's *Alcina delusa da Rugero*) and Oronte (in the four related texts for Rome 1728, Parma 1729, and London 1735 and 1736): he is Alcina's chief of police. Rather unusually, it seems that only one set was used throughout the performance: »la parte esteriore de' Giardini della Fata: in lontano sontuoso Palagio« (»the exterior

part of the Gardens of the Fairy: at a distance, a luxurious Palace«). The drama begins much like Marchi's *Alcina delusa da Rugero* and the Rome/Parma/London texts with Bradamante and Melissa arriving to Alcina's island (though this time they come by dragon, not by boat). Alcina herself does not appear until I:5, when she and Ruggiero share a familiar scene: he longs for adventure and warfare; she cannot understand »Questa sete di sangue« (»This bloodthirst«): he has everything he could wish for in her company. In the end Ruggiero is overcome by her charms: »Sol brama languire, / Morire / D'amore.« (»I only crave to languish, / To die / For love.«) In a soliloquy, the enchantress gives vent to her concerns about having Warfare as her rival (I:6). She summons Doro and gives him her magical wand – the most powerful of all wands, »Che arresta il Sole, e cui Pluton rispetta« (»Which stops the Sun, and which Pluto respects«) – as a token of his new position as her chief of police: he is to protect the realm by surveying the coast, as well as all foreigners and vessels (I:6).⁷³ Melissa learns that Doro is in possession of Alcina's wand, and that her rival is disempowered, and she begins to plan her downfall (II:2). Alcina and Ruggiero have another conversation about their relationship:

Alcina:

T'annoiò così tosto
Dell' armoniche corde il dolce suono,
Che passeggiar eleggi
Questa del regno mio romita parte?
E pur la music' arte
Non abborri quel vostro Achille, e spesso
Di sua cetra ai concerti
Dell' antro di Chiron suonar le volte.

Ruggiero:

Ma non la cetra, il fè la spada Eroel.]

(*Alcina:*

Did the sweet sound of the harmonious strings
Bore you so soon
That you prefer strolling
In this remote part of my reign?
Even that Achilles of yours did not abhor
The art of music, and often
The vaults in the cave of Chiron echoed
With the sound of his lyre.

Ruggiero:

It was not his lyre, but rather his sword which made him
a Hero.)

As in Ferdinando Saracinelli's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'Isola d'Alcina* and in the *L'isola di Alcina* of Rome 1728,

the sorceress now tries to make Ruggiero feel guilty, and in the end she feigns a swoon, after which Ruggiero gives in: »Alcina, Alcina, / Qui vedimi al tuo piede: apri, idol mio, / Quell' adorate luci, / Apri il bel labbro« (»Alcina, Alcina, / See me here at your feet: open, my idol, / Those adorable eyes, / Open your wonderful lips«). When she fails to respond, he calls for a servant (II:6). Doro arrives and whispers to Alcina that he has important news, after which she 'revives', and pulling him aside she hears of a foreign warrior (i.e. Bradamante) whom Doro has taken prisoner. The dwarf describes the warrior as an Adonis, and Alcina's erotic appetite awakens. While Ruggiero is confused and repentant, Alcina envisions an alternative to the complicated relation with Ruggiero (II:7). The third Act begins with Melissa declaring her intention of taking Alcina's wand from Doro, which she succeeds to do after putting him to sleep with the help of a Ballet of Fauns who give him wine (III:2). After Melissa has reveled in her triumph (III:3), Doro tells Astolfo that Alcina is in love with the foreign warrior (III:4). Alcina now encounters Bradamante and resolves to change lover. Bradamante takes advantage of Alcina's infatuation, encouraging her and flirting with her. When departing, she even kisses the sorceress' hand as a token of her love (III:5).⁷⁴

When Ruggiero appears, Alcina hopes that he has seen her flirting with his rival. She taunts him, and he is frustrated (III:6–7). After Bradamante and Ruggiero have reached an understanding (III:8), the final scene (III:9) shows »la scellerata Alcina« (»the wicked Alcina«, as Astolfo had branded her in I:3). She realizes that she has been deceived by Ruggiero and Bradamante. Melissa shows her that she is now in possession of her wand. When Ruggiero makes an attempt to reconcile with her (»e tu perdona Alci - -«; »and you forgive, Alci - -«), Alcina interrupts him fiercely:

Ch' io perdoni? ch' io soffra? ah, non peranche
Tutte obbliò l' arti crudeli Alcina.
Sovvertirò l' Abisso,
Sconvolgerò natura: eterna vostra
Persecutrice, e furia, Affrica, e Francia
Delle vendette mie
Teatro renderò! Vieni, le pene
Tu pur mi pagherai, servo malnato,
Nel profondo del mar precipitato.

(Should I forgive you? Should I suffer this? Ah,
Alcina has not forgotten all her cruel arts yet.
I will subvert the abyss,
I will subvert nature: as your eternal
Persecutor and Fury, I will make Africa and France
The theater of my revenge!

Come here, doomed servant,
You will also pay for my sufferings,
After falling into the depths of the sea.)

Forgetting that she is powerless without her wand, she resorts to the megalomaniacal rhetoric of Medea and Armida. After this verbal explosion, Alcina rushes offstage, leaving everybody else to rejoice in the triumph of Love over evil magic (III:9).⁷⁵

In sum, Pallavicini's Alcina for Dresden 1736 shows the same characteristics as in many other texts, i.e. she is a loving, caring, concerned woman in her relation with Ruggiero, and she is a fury in the end when she is cornered and scorned. However, she differs from the others in several respects: she does not perform any *meraviglioso* whatsoever (she leaves that to Doro and Melissa), she gives her wand on her own initiative to her steadfast dwarf, and she leaves Ruggiero for the disguised Bradamante.

Schematically, you could describe the love interest, which generates the action in the drama, in the following way:



There are secondary love plots, unrelated to the primary ones, in other librettos as well (e.g. the Rome/Parma/London texts), but they do not influence the main action. In *Le Fate*, Doro's infatuation with Melissa – disguised as the shepherdess Dori – is crucial to the development of the plot: it would not have been easy for Melissa to obtain Alcina's wand otherwise.

**L' ISOLA,
DI ALCINA**
DRAMMA GIOCO SO

Per Musica •

DA RAPPRESENTARSI

NEL TEATRO DI S. A. SERENISSIMA

**IL SIGNOR PRINCIPE
DI CARIGNANO**

Nell' Autunno dell' Anno 1772.



IN TORINO.

Presso ONORATO DEROSI Libraj della Società
de' Signori Cavalieri sotto i primi Portici
della Contrada di Po verso il Regio
Teatro.

The title page of the libretto for a revival of Giovanni Bertati's popular *L' isola di Alcina* in Turin 1772.

—Giovanni Bertati's (1735–1808) parody *L'isola di Alcina. Drama Giocoso Per Musica* (Venice, 1771; Alcina's Island. A Musical Comedy) is set on »un' Isola dell' Oceano dove soggiorna la Fata« (»an Island in the Ocean where the Fairy lives«).⁷⁶ Among the eight names of the »Attori«, only Alcina's is taken from Ariosto. Lesbia and Clizia are »Damigelle d'Alcina« (Alcina's maids) and Il Barone di Brikbrak, la Rose, Brunoro, James, and D. Lopez are travellers from Germany, France, Italy, England, and Spain, respectively. When the gentlemen have disembarked on the island (I:1), they meet Lesbia who informs them that this is Alcina's island.

Jam[es]. Alcina!
la R[ose]. Diable!
D[on]. L[opez]. Alcina dell' Ariosto?
 Ove Astolfo, ove tanti
 Famosi Paladini
 Trasformati restaro in quercie, o in pini?
 [...]
la R[ose]. [...]
 Ed Alcina v' è ancora?
 Sarà in pittura, o in scheletro:
 Oppure come fanno gli Speziali
 Di qualche bestia, o di qualche bambino
 Conservata nel spirito di vino? (I:3)

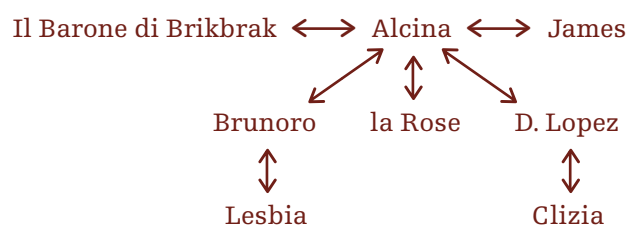
(James. Alcina!
la Rose. Damn!
Don Lopez. Ariosto's Alcina?
 By whom Astolfo, by whom many
 Famous Knights
 Were transformed into oaks or pines?
 [...]
la Rose. [...]
 And Alcina is still around?
 She must be a painting or a skeleton:
 Or has she – just as the pharmacists do
 With some beasts and children –
 Been preserved in alcohol?)

Lesbia replies that fairies never grow old and die, and that Alcina still looks exactly as she did a thousand years ago. The only thing that has changed is that Alcina no longer uses her powers for evil purposes, only for good ones (I:3). Don Lopez suggests to his travel companions that they leave: everybody knows from tradition that Alcina is a wicked, wanton witch who transforms her former lovers into beasts and plants. Beautiful – yes. Good – no. But the others want to see the famous sorceress, not unlike a group of tourists discussing

(III:3; »a decrepit woman«) and calls her »la vecchietta« (»the old lady«) and »quella vecchia« (»that old woman«). Alcina's entreaties to the Baron only cause embarrassment, and Lesbia rounds off by telling her mistress that she is going to leave the island together with Brunoro, and Clizia with Don Lopez; the other gentlemen will be leaving the island as well. The scene ends with a *terzetto*, in which the two women squabble and the Baron makes clear how tired he is of women (III:3). The final scene mirrors the first one: a ship is seen approaching the island, and everyone embarks, except Alcina. The tourists leave, taking the two ladies-in-waiting with them as souvenirs. Alcina is left alone, as in Antonio Marchi's *Alcina delusa da Rugero*, but she is not defeated. After some complaining, the 'normal' woman of Giovanni Bertati's *dramma giocoso* turns into the traditional Medea- or Armida-like figure, and she swears that the traitors will not reach their destination safely. She summons her wagon-pulling dragons and describes the terrors that await her victims. Her last words are: »Miseri, quanti siete, / Tremar io vi farò.« (»Poor you; as many as you are, / I will make you quiver.«) She flies away to hunt the ship down. (III:4)⁷⁹

Bertati's Alcina is really two Alcinas. La Rose is quite right to state that »Alcina è una bellissima coquette« (II:6; »Alcina is a gorgeous coquette«), but neither he nor the reader/spectator is quite prepared for the surprising end of *L'isola di Alcina* when the author leaves the mode of parody and returns to tradition, with Alcina becoming the commanding, menacing and vengeful villainess.

Schematically, you could describe the love interest, which generates the action in the drama, in the following way:



Like many others before him, Vittorio Amedeo Cigna-Santi⁸⁰ draws attention to the fact that his subject is taken from Ariosto, in his preface to *Alcina, e Ruggero. Dramma per musica* (Turin, 1775).⁸¹ The list of »Personaggi« reflects the tradition: the three sorceresses Alcina, Morgana and Melissa (posing as the warrior Forbante), Ruggero, Alcina's general Idreno (who is in love with Morgana), Prince Astolfo, and the sorcerer Atlante. There is also a chorus and a ballet. The setting resembles Sebastiano Martini's *Alcina. Favola Maritima Regia* (Ferrara, 1609), discussed above on p. 69 f. We are on the coast of Alcina's island, where fishing boats are moored. Alcina arrives with her ladies-in-waiting and guards in a »bellissimo

naviglio« (»beautiful boat«), with Amori for mariners and the fishermen dancing on the shore, holding their day's catch, which they offer to Alcina (I:2–3). She and Ruggero rejoice at seeing each other again (I:3). Melissa arrives on the back of a whale, and when she greets the enchantress as Forbante and kisses her hand, Ruggero becomes jealous in spite of Alcina's neutral manner towards the new guest (I:4). Astolfo, who was once transformed into a myrtle by Alcina, but has now regained his liberty, is still infatuated with her (I:6; in I:9–10 Morgana confesses that she is in love with Astolfo). Alcina sings of her thousand lovers (I:7) and Melissa does not give the magical ring to Ruggero, but to Astolfo, who now recognizes her and promises to be her catspaw (I:11). A fish banquet, attended by the whole court, is suddenly interrupted by thunder and lightning, and we hear the voice of Atlante, summoning Ruggero. Alcina immediately declares herself »perduta« (»lost«), but her sister Morgana shows more fighting spirit (I:12). Left alone, Alcina and Ruggero quarrel: he wants to pursue glory on the battlefield and return to Alcina later; she will hear nothing of this: »Voglio morir.« (»I want to die.«) In the end, he gives in: »Sei l'alma del mio sen.« (I:13; »You are the soul in my breast.«) In her »Gabinetto di cristalli« (»Cristal dressing room«), Alcina later describes a bad dream, which has made her uncertain about Ruggero's intentions (II:4). For this scene there is a cancel leaf bound into the libretto, with the whole scene rewritten: the stage directions are new, as well as all of Alcina's text.⁸² Instead of merely waking up in an agitated



Title-page of the first edition of Vittorio Amedeo Cigna-Santi's *Alcina, e Ruggero*, presented in Turin at the Royal Theatre during the Carnival of 1775 in the presence of the King and Queen of Savoy.

mood, as in the first version, Alcina now rushes madly around the stage, and she begins the scene with an excited aria (»Larve infauste e dispietate«) (»Inauspicious and ruthless ghosts«). She finally collapses completely and tells Idreno, Morgana and her retinue of »Negromanti« about her dream: their sister Logistilla has taken Ruggero from her by force, she feels threatened by Atlante and Logistilla, and she is not sure of her lover:

Ruggero temo in Ruggero, e questo, ah! lassa!
M' affretta a lui per discoprir, se lice,
Ciò che si passa entro il suo cor. (II:5)

(I fear Ruggero in Ruggero, and this, alas!
Makes me rush to him to see if it is possible
To find out what is in his heart.)

Morgana tries to comfort her, but Alcina is now so frantic that she commands Idreno to murder all strangers he finds, presumably hoping to get rid of Atlante if he should dare to enter her realm (II:6). Alcina is forlorn, but Ruggero calms her: he is still faithful. Alcina now gets a new idea: she wants to marry Ruggero and rule the kingdom together with him. He agrees, and she is ecstatic with delight. He has to promise to be at her side always (II:7). Morgana then tells her sister that she is going to marry Astolfo (II:8). When Idreno reports that he has carried out his orders and that Alcina need not worry about foreigners anymore, she tells him of the planned double wedding. After the sisters have left, Idreno vents his frustration at not finding his emotions for Morgana reciprocated (II:9). After a *changement à vue*, we find ourselves in front of an enormous statue of the Goddess Volupia (Pleasure, Ecstasy) »in figura di bellissima Donna« (»as a stunning Woman«) in her Temple, where the double wedding is to take place. The stage is filled with a grandiose *comparsa*⁸³ when everybody enters and the ceremony begins. It is interrupted by sudden darkness and lightning, however, and everybody tries to flee in panic. The darkness is dispelled and Atlante descends on a cloud, denouncing the cult of Volupia and displaying his magical powers by causing a rain of fire to consume the statue of the goddess. The two bridegrooms become restless and the brides insecure. Astolfo gives Ruggero Melissa's magical ring, and the enchantment is broken.⁸⁴ The Act ends with the two wicked sisters in a state of abandonment (II:12–16). Act III begins with Alcina hoping for Ruggero to return, and Idreno hoping for Morgana to reward his steadfastness and reliability with her affection, which she refuses (III:1). Morgana and Alcina encourage each other (III:2), after which there is a confrontation between Alcina and Ruggero; he is now her well-guarded prisoner (III:3). This whole scene is unique in the context of

the Alcina librettos discussed in this essay, and it is possible that it was inspired by a passage in Alcina's aria in the *L'isola di Alcina* of Rome 1728, appearing at the same place in the plot: »Ma quando tornerai / Di lacci avvinto il piè.« (III:2; »But when you return / Your feet will be tied with fetters.«) Alcina's fantasy in the earlier libretto became reality in Turin in 1775. Alcina urges on, but Ruggero remains unimpressed. In the end she grows angry, but in her exit aria she is still ambivalent.⁸⁵ She is still angry when later strolling in a beautiful landscape together with her sister and her Necromancers (III:9). When Idreno enters and tells them that Ruggero has escaped to Logistilla's realm, dejection reigns. Alcina rallies, though, and furiously commands: »Alle navi, alle navi« (III:10; »To the ships, to the ships«), an admonition heard in many Baroque librettos. They are halted by Melissa, Astolfo and a Coro de' Geni, and Melissa now reveals her true identity. Morgana breaks down, while Alcina reviles her vanquisher:

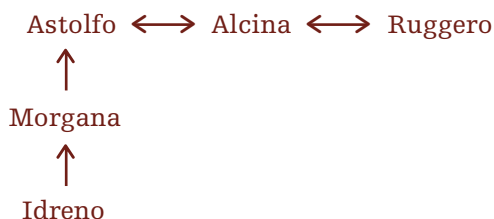
Vanne superba, sì, poichè fu il Cielo
 Teco sì liberal, con noi sì avaro:
 Ma nè il Ciel, nè tu stessa
 Farai però, che si rallenti il corso
 A quello sfogo, a cui più d'altra brama
 Disperato dispetto ora ci chiama.

(Be proud, yes, for Heaven
 Was so liberal towards you, so mean towards us:
 But neither Heaven nor you
 Will cause my outpouring to slow down
 To which a desperate spite, rather than any other desire
 Is now calling us.)

She parts furiously with her entourage (III:11). In the last scene, Alcina's »Reggia lusinghiera« (»charming Palace«) is destroyed by Melissa while the Coro di Geni sing the final chorus: »Mentre si cantano questi versi rovina la Reggia d'Alcina, e sopra le rovine della medesima si vede sorgere il Tempio maestoso della Gloria, con darsi principio dagli Amanti disincantati ivi raccolti al Ballo, che termina lo spettacolo.« (III:12; »While these verses are being sung, the Palace of Alcina fades away, and upon its ruins the majestic Temple of Glory rises, as the disenchanted Lovers gather for the Dance and put an end to the show.«)

Vittorio Amedeo Cigna-Santi's Alcina is a heterogenous creature: sometimes rational and well-organized, sometimes diminished and frightened. In the end, though, she goes down with flags flying.

Schematically, you could describe the love interest, which generates the action in the drama, in the following way:



Bradamante is conspicuously absent.⁸⁶

—We now come to a cluster of parodies. Carlo Francesco Badini's (1715–1810) *Le Pazzie d'Orlando, a new Comic Opera* (London, 1771; performed and printed in Milano, 1773, as *Le pazzie di Orlando. Dramma giocoso; The Follies of Orlando. A Comedy*) was thoroughly revised by Nunziato Porta (dates unknown) for a revival in Prague in 1775, in which it was given the title *Orlando Paladino. Dramma Eroico Comico*, which was in its turn slightly revised by Porta for a revival in Vienna in 1777. Five years later, Porta further revised his revision as *Orlando Paladino. Dramma Eroicomico* (Esterhàza, 1782).⁸⁷ The four first versions have not been accessible to the present writer, but the last one has been published several times.⁸⁸ In the 1782 version, the characters are Alcina, the Queen of Cattai Angelica, her lover Medoro, the paladin Orlando, his adversary King Rodomonte of Barbaria, Orlando's squire Pasquale, and the shepherdess Eurilla.⁸⁹ Caronte and the shepherd Licone are minor characters. The text combines the story of Orlando's madness in cantos 23–24 of Ariosto's epic



The list of »Attori« from the Esterhàza version of Nunziato Porta's *Orlando Paladino* (1782). »Alcina Maga« can be found in the lower left part of the square.

with the character Alcina. She first materializes onstage in I:3, summoned by Angelica, with the help of spells from a book of magic in her possession. Angelica wishes for someone to help and protect her, and Alcina responds to Angelica's wishes. The situation is very different from that in Pariati's *Angelica vincitrice di Alcina* (1716), to give just one example.⁹⁰ Alcina is now Angelica's helper. This does not mean that she has been domesticized and become predictable, though. Situations occur in which she still needs to exert her powers. At one wave of her wand, Orlando is locked inside an iron cage (I:13). This parodies the cages with wild beasts found e.g. in the London librettos of 1735 and 1736. Alcina transforms Rodomonte into rock (I:12), and Orlando as well (II:13; she then changes him back in II:14). All these punishments are meted out for protective reasons. Already from the beginning, the sorceress displays the kind of megalomania that we encountered in the *Ballet de Monseigneur le Duc de Vandosme* (1610) and Antonio Marchi's *Alcina delusa da Rugero* (1725), and can be compared to Medea's and Armida's self-image. According to her first aria, Alcina commands the heavens, earth, sea, Cerberus, the furies of hell, the Fates, and Minos with just »un guardo à un cenno, solo« (I:3; »a glance, only, a sign«).

Whenever Angelica needs her, Alcina turns up with a cheerful word (»Scacciate la tema / Vi giubbili il core / Alcina v' assiste, / E vano il timore«; I:12; »Get rid of your fear / Let your heart rejoice / Alcina is on your side, / And there is no reason for fear«). The temporary restraining of Rodomonte and Orlando gives Alcina opportunities for performing magic and manifesting *il meraviglioso* on stage; indeed, that is probably the real reason why Carlo Francesco Badini transplanted her into the Orlando story, and why Nunziato Porta retained her.⁹¹ After she has warned Orlando against chasing Angelica (II:9), he has a *scena* in which he encounters monsters and a dragon, beasts that are associated with Alcina in earlier librettos (II:10). She has just left the stage, but are we to understand that she is standing offstage, frightening Orlando with her magic? Or are these just the figments of Orlando's overheated imagination, steps in his mental breakdown? Alcina's traditional role as a fairy in contact with the dark powers is parodied in her showdown with Orlando, in which he calls her »D' averno furia ultrice« (»Avenging fury of hell«), »Cruda Megera, Aletto« (»Vicious Megaera, Alecto«) and other things that remind the reader or viewer of the traditional Alcina (II:13). When the others beg her to return Orlando to his human shape, after she has petrified him the first time, she waves her wand accordingly, but she does so while issuing a warning about new transformations if he does not behave properly. Orlando responds by chasing her to the back of the stage where he is swallowed up by the cave wall (II:14). *Meraviglia!* Alcina leads the others

in the cheerful Act finale (II:14). Act III begins with Alcina going to Hades to restore Orlando's sanity with the help of the ferryman Caronte. This is a parody of Astolfo's trip to the moon to find Orlando's wits in a bottle in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, canto 34. Furthermore, Alcina restores his magical weapons to him, which she would never have done in any of the earlier librettos, since magical weapons were the regular means with which to defeat her and her troops. When she induces him to bathe in Lethe, the river of oblivion, she does what is best for all involved, whereas her normal line of behavior would be to induce a state of oblivion on her lovers, so they forget time and space and only live for her. In the opera's finale, Alcina sums up her position: »in virtù della magia / Ciascun lieto sen vivrà« (III:7; »thanks to magic / Everyone will live happily«).

In *Orlando Paladino*, Alcina is not involved in any amorous relation, a twist which we have only seen in the *Ballet de Monseigneur le Duc de Vandosme* before.⁹² Of course, this is also a part of the parody: the voracious Venus of tradition has now become a protector of true monogamous love, resulting in marriage and a *lieto fine* for the amorous couple, Angelica and Medoro.

—Apologies are due for having overtaxed the reader's patience with many and lengthy plot summaries. Since these texts are not currently read (with the exception of the London *Alcina* 1735) and detailed summaries are not known to have been published (except for Saracinelli, London 1735 and Porta), there was no simple way of avoiding this.

One of the central doctrines of social behavior in the *galante époque* centered on the disciplining of the passions, especially at court. Knowing how and when to dissemble was seen as necessary for anyone who wanted to achieve success in high society. In the *corpus* of texts examined in this essay, control of feelings is a central theme (Pariati, Marchi, Rome 1728, Parma 1729, London 1735 and 1736, Pallavicini, etc.). The librettos in which this theme is absent were either written before the *galante* worldview became dominant (e.g. the *Ballet de Monseigneur le Duc de Vandosme*) or they were parodies (e.g. Bertati's *L'isola di Alcina*). In the context of affect control, and of music drama as both entertainment and didactic instrument, an unbalanced and passionate character such as Alcina made a perfect cautionary example. As already mentioned, this is what the author (Giuseppe Pulvini Faliconti?) wrote in his preface to *L'isola di Alcina* (1728). It is worth pointing out here, however, that there is a certain tension in the period between the display of passions on stage with the aim of transmitting them to the spectator, on the one hand, and the advocacy for the disciplining of the emotions, on the other.

One could also point to the *vanitas* element in the *Alcina*

topos. Melissa's soliloquy at the end of Ferdinando Saracinelli's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'Isola d'Alcina* (1625) explores this theme.⁹³ In several of the texts discussed in this essay, Angelica's ring reveals Alcina as »an ancient and malevolent seductress«⁹⁴ and her lush island as a *locus terribilis*, barren and forlorn. Here the reader/viewer is reminded of the transitoriness of appearances and of existence itself, which places these texts in a long tradition of didactic literature.

Indeed, the transformations of Alcina – her falls from the pinnacle of beauty, sensuality, luxury, power, and social status to a state of total physical and mental destitution, which was shown again and again with great success in music dramas from different genres for more than two hundred years – are a manifest example of *horror vacui*, the horror we might experience if we delve into who we really are and what reality really is. Horror for pleasure.

The present essay has shown that the primary sources can be divided into different categories: Ariostan/semi-Ariostan/non-Ariostan on the one hand, and serious treatments or parodies on the other. The examined texts are extremely diverse, and it is not possible to identify a clear development of the Alcina theme in the serious cluster: we find non-Ariostan versions in 1609, 1705, 1726, and 1771, semi-Ariostan in 1610, 1664, 1771[–1782], and 1775. On the other hand, there is a clear development in the comic cluster: no parodies from the seventeenth century were found, they were few in number, and they did not turn up until 1726 and 1771–1782.

With the results in hand, it is possible to take up the thread from the introduction and address the question of representativity once again. The material used may not be representative, but concerning the first cluster that would be surprising, given its clearly diversified profile. As for the second one, there is need for caution: it is possible that there are seventeenth-century Alcina parodies hidden in the vaults of European or American libraries and archives (or, indeed, somewhere in cyberspace). If or when they surface remains to be seen.

But it is time to sum up. The aim of this essay has been to follow Alcina's transformations in a selection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century librettos. It is clear that Alcina is the kind of villainess that readers and viewers love to hate. She is in fact a »putrid, barren and corrupt«⁹⁵ being, looking like an extremely attractive woman, but her artificiality gives her a kinkiness that is simply irresistible in its context, and certainly attracted the audiences and readers of the Baroque era, with their taste for an aesthetics of artificiality.⁹⁶ Alcina also offered the poets and the composers of the period opportunities to pursue another central poetological aim of the Baroque: *diversity* (Alcina's contrasting moods, the displays of *il meraviglioso* by the magic that she and the other fairies perform).⁹⁷

The study shows that Alcina has been depicted in many ways: as commanding, despondent, tragic, comic, human, super-human, sensual or unsensual. In some of the texts, one of these modes dominates, while they are mixed in others. This applies to the whole period in question. Whereas there is an impressive variety in the librettists' approach to Alcina's personality and the plots in which she is involved, there is no clear development of the topic. ■

■ — ENDNOTES — ■

Thanks are extended to Giada Brighi, Universität Mainz, who has kindly translated Italian quotations and titles into English, and to Ingmar Söhrman, University of Gothenburg, who has kindly translated French quotations and titles into English. Many thanks are also due to Giada Brighi and to the Editor of the present volume, Magnus Tessing Schneider, for their extensive work on ameliorating the text.

1 Lorenzo Bianconi & Thomas Walker: »Production, Consumption and Political Function of Seventeenth-Century Opera« in *Early Music History* 1984:4 p. 250; cf. also p. 255.

2 In *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests. The Supernatural in Eighteenth Century Musical Theater* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2008) David J. Buch mentions »at least twenty-three« seventeenth-century librettos based on Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* and twelve seventeenth-century librettos based on Tasso's Armida and Erminia episodes alone (p. 21); the equal distribution during the century can be collected from Buch *passim*. See also »Appendix C. Operas Based on Ariosto & Tasso, 1700–1791« (*idem* pp. 376 ff) which lists 44 Ariosto-based and 41 Tasso-related librettos (but only those that include supernatural material, so there are actually more), equally distributed over the eighteenth century.

3 Alcina operas were performed and new ones were written during the nineteenth century. Among the librettos that were written and published after 1782, one might mention Ludwig von Baczko (1756–1823): *Rinaldo und Alcina* (Königsberg, 1794) and Giacomo Cordella (1786–1847): *L'isola incantata. Farsa per musica* (Naples, 1809). The present study discusses the development of the Alcina theme up to the time of the other essays in the present issue of *LIR.journal*. A general survey of the field can be found in Renate Döring: *Ariostos Orlando furioso im italienischen Theater des Seicento und Settecento (Hamburger Romanistische Dissertationen 9 [Romanistisches Seminar der Universität Hamburg: Hamburg, 1973])*. – *Intermedi*: musical spectacles performed between the acts of spoken plays at Italian courts in the Renaissance and Baroque. *Drami per musica* (seventeenth century)/*Drammi per musica* (eighteenth century): staged musical dramas. *Feste*

teatrali: musical dramas performed at ceremonial occasions at court during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

– It was standard procedure for audience members to seek allegorical references to the ruler and to topicalities in politics and morals in feste teatrali. For information on this, cf. Margret Dietrich: *Goldene Vlies-Opern der Barockzeit. Ihre politische Bedeutung und ihr Publikum* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften: Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Publikumsforschung 1. Vienna, 1975) *passim*; see especially pp. 473 and 512.

4 Texts that were not found on the Internet at the time of publication of this essay, are not included in this discussion. Among these are Anonymus: *Ruggiero liberato* (Bologna, 1620; an equestrian ballet), S. Martinelli: *Alcina* (Trent, 1649), Anonymous: *Libertà di Ruggiero* (Modena, 1651), and Pietro Dolfin: *Alcina* (Venice, 1675). Others will be mentioned below. Please note that there are also librettos based on the Alcina cantos of *Orlando furioso*, such as Giovanni Tamagni: *Il Ruggiero. Drama musicale* (Parma, 1699) or Pierre-Charles Roy: *Bradamante. Tragedie* (Paris, 1707), which do not involve Alcina.

The following system for text orientation is used in this essay: Act I scene 1 is given as I:1 and so forth. Since most of the librettos are unpaginated, page numbers have not been included. Strokes indicate line breaks. Orthography was unregulated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indicating orthographical and grammatical divergences from modern standard, using [!] or [sic], would not facilitate reading, so no such indications have been used. The only standardizations used are »s« for »ſ« and that the letters »U/u« and »V/v«, which were used as allographs in French and Italian imprints of the discussed period, are used in accordance to modern spelling to facilitate legibility. The name of Alcina's and Bradamante's lover is spelled Roger, Rugero, Ruggero, and Ruggiero in different texts.

5 In part, they were inspired by Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441–1494): *Orlando innamorato* (1483–1495), book 2, canto 13, stanzas 54–64.

6 The dichotomy 'lovely landscape – horrifying landscape' is the equivalent of the topoi *locus amœnus* and *locus terribilis*. For a discussion of these tropes, cf. Ernst Robert Curtius: *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Berne, 1948), chap. 10, »Die Ideallandschaft«.

7 Ita Mac Carthy: *Women and the Making of Poetry in Ariosto's Orlando furioso* (Leicester: Troubador, 2007) p. 25.

8 E.g. Giacomo Badoaro: *L'Ulisse errante* (Venice, 1644), Ascanio Amalteo: *Ulisse nell'isola di Circe. Dramma musicale* (Brussels, 1650), Charles Davenant: *Circe* (London, 1677), Aurelio Aureli: *Circe Abbandonata da Ulisse. Drama per Musica* (Venice, 1697), Donato Cupeda: *La Costanza D'Ulisse. Drama*

per Musica (Vienna, 1700). Cf. David J. Buch: *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests* p. 19 n. 68 for further titles.

9 Alcina is explicitly compared to Dido in *Orlando furioso*, canto 10, stanza 56.

10 E.g. Giovanni Francesco Busenello: *La Didone* (Venice, 1641), Vincenzo della Rena: *La Didone* (Piacenza, 1655), Antonio Franceschi: *La Didone delirante* (Venice, 1686), Nahum Tate: *Dido and Aeneas* (London, 1689), Pietro Metastasio: *Didone abbandonata* (Naples, 1724), and King Gustavus III of Sweden & Johan Henric Kellgren: *Æneas i Carthago* (Stockholm, 1782; performed there in 1799).

11 The term is borrowed from Astrid von Rosen: »Scenografera Sillgateteatern. Ett spel mellan kropp, bild och språk« in Randi M. Selvik et al (eds.): *Lidenskap eller levebrød? Utövande kunst i endring rundt 1800* (Bergen: Fagboksforlaget, 2014) pp. 324 f. This kind of showiness was criticized by classicists already in the seventeenth century, e.g. Charles de Marguetel de Saint-Denis, seigneur de Saint-Évremond (1610–1703; »Lettre sur les Opera à Monsieur le Duc de Buckingham«, undated [1677/78]), and Nicolas Boileau (1636–1711; *Satire X*, 1692/93). Both discuss the *tragédie en musique* genre as if it were a subcategory of spoken drama, i.e. tragedy, instead of a cultural form with its own shape and set of rules. Cf. Edward A. Lippman: *A History of Western Musical Aesthetics* (Lincoln, Nebr. & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994 [orig. 1992]) pp. 47–50. Bernhard Jahn: »L'Adelaide und L'Heraclio in Venedig, Breslau und Hamburg. Transformationen zweier Bühnenwerke im Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Musik- und Sprechtheater« in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 68 (1994) shows how this artificial differentiation has persisted in the theoretical genre discussions of the following centuries, in spite of the fact that it did not correspond to general practice (p. 651). According to Stijn Bussels & Bram van Oostveldt: »'One Never Sees Monsters Without Experiencing Emotion'. *Le merveilleux* and the Sublime in Theories on French Performing Arts (1650–1750)« in Caroline van Eck et al (eds.): *Translations of the Sublime. The Early Modern Reception and Dissemination of Longinus' Peri Hupsous in Rhetoric, the Visual Arts, Architecture and the Theatre* (Leiden & Boston: BRILL, 2012), it was the choice of the term *tragédie en musique* by the normative creators of the genre Philippe Quinault (1635–88) and Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–87) which was the cause of Saint-Évremond's and Boileau's mistake (p. 155).

12 Cf. Alessandro Giudotti: preface to Agostino Manni: *La rappresentazione di Anima et di Corpo* (Rome, 1600).

13 The text is quoted from the facsimile of the original edition, which can be accessed at <https://books.google.se/books?id=IkIEv7lyY4MC&pg=PA90&lpg=PA90&dq=Sebastiano+Marti>

[ni:+Alcina&source=bl&ots=fjo8PlmERO&sig=wL3H5FbgMUknRyaQggP_bJyRmJM&hl=sv&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj-2OTf9YbYA-hUHIpokHdFWBA4Q6AEIQjAE#v=onepage&q=Sebastiano%20Martini%3A%20Alcina&f=false.](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/54000/54000-h/54000-h.htm)

14 Ira Amorosa (»Amorous Wrath«) gives a sketch of the plot in the Prologue.

15 For this reason, Alcina declares that »cavarò gli occhi, / La lingua ti trarò, t'aprirò il core« (V:5; »I will scratch your eyes out, / I will pull out your tongue, I will tear your heart open«), and she wants »Piover sangue dal ciel« (»Blood to fall from the sky«), in words that echo Renaissance tragedies. Martini's Alcina is definitely not a part of the galant court society that was to become standard in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and which would influence later librettos about her.

16 The ballet is not subdivided into acts and scenes, but *entrées*. The text is quoted from the facsimile of the original edition, accessible at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57447347>.

17 At this point the libretto lists the names of the noblemen that danced the roles of the twelve lovers, first and foremost the Duke of Vandosme.

18 The text is quoted from the transcription in Francesca Caccini: *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall' isola di [!] Alcina. Opera in Three Acts* (ed.: Brian Clark. N.p., 2006). Caccini wrote the music to Saracinelli's text. The opera is not divided into acts and has no scene numbers in the original. – Prince Władysław seems to have been pleased with the event, since the opera was performed again in Warsaw in 1628. – For details about Saracinelli's and Caccini's project, cf. Renate Döring: *Ariostos Orlando furioso im italienischen Theater des Seicento und Settecento* (pp. 39–52) and Christine Fischer (ed.): *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina. Räume und Inszenierungen in Francesca Caccinis Ballettoper (Florenz, 1625)* (Zürich, 2015). A full synopsis is given in Fischer pp. 19 f. The opera is discussed in detail and in relation to its historical context in Suzanne G. Cusick: *Francesca Caccini at the Medici Court. Music and the Circulation of Power* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2009) pp. 191–246.

19 Ita Mac Carthy: *Women and the Making of Poetry in Ariosto's Orlando furioso* p. 30.

20 The title is given as *L'isola d'Alcina. Tragedia* in the reprints in *Poesie Liriche Et Alcina Tragedia Opera Nova Del' Signor' Conte Fulvio Testi* (Rome, 1636), *Opere dell'Conte Testi* (Venice, 1663), *Opere Del Sig. Conte Don Fulvio Testi* (Venice, 1663), and *Poesie liriche del Conte D. Fulvio Testi* (Venice, 1672). These versions can be accessed at <https://books.google.se/books?id=q2NpAAAACAAJ&pg=RA1-PA239&lpg=RA1-PA239&dq=Poesie+Liriche+Et+Alcina+Tragedia+Opera+Nova&source=bl&ots=5tD-KvkXJb&sig=eje8Wnmn96HU3iQxpSRVuA5NVk0&h>

[l=sv&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiZs8eKhNDYAhXnK5oKHTcdC2UO6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=Poesie%20Liriche%20Et%20Alcina%20Tragedia%20Opera%20Nova&f=false; https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=VGUOAAAAOAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=sv&pg=GBS.PA320](https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=VGUOAAAAOAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=sv&pg=GBS.PA320); at https://books.google.se/books?id=32xivqYS4OUC&pg=PA314&lpg=PA314&dq=il+negato+sentier&source=bl&ots=vgrwf3A0HDx&sig=7_SkaR25qonxbseayShfkk8Xdxo&hl=sv&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiltavvptfXAhVp46QKHbCeAICQ6AEIPjAF#v=onepage&q=il%20negato%20sentier&f=false; and at <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=Hgwwl8nCpYYC&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=sv&pg=GBS.PA3>. Saverio Franchi: *Drammaturgia romana. Repertorio bibliografico cronologico dei testi drammatici pubblicati a Roma e nel Lazio. Secolo XVII (Sussidi Eruditi 42)*. Rome, 1988) explains why there is no print from 1626: due to the death of the Modenese Crown Princess Isabella of Savoy, the performance was cancelled (p. 213).

21 There is a transcription with modernized spelling at <http://www.librettidopera.it/isoalcina/isoalcina.html>. This site also includes an alternative prologue from a production in 1648, where Testi's original was substituted for one with the allegorical characters La Notte, L'Alba and L'Aurora (Night, Morning and Dawn). This was a clear step back to convention, since allegorical prologues were standard at the time, whereas letting an author sing the prologue to a drama that was based on one of his texts had only been done once before, it seems: by Ottavio Rinuccini in *La rappresentazione di Dafne* (Florence, 1594), where Ovid was the speaker of the prologue as well as the source for the libretto. For a discussion of persons in early seventeenth-century *drama per musica* prologues, cf. Dag Hedman: *Politik och underhållning. Nedslag i 1600-talslibrettots historia och formvärld* (Gothenburg: LIR.skrifter, 2018), chap. 1. Cf. also Renate Döring: *Ariostos Orlando furioso im italienischen Theater des Seicento und Settecento* pp. 53–66.

22 Cf. Sacrati's preface to the reader. According to Fulvio Testi's preface from 1626 (quoted in Andrea Garavaglia: *Sigismondo d'India »drammaturgo«* [Turin, 2005] p. XIV), the composer of the original setting was Sigismondo d'India (c. 1582–1629).

23 This ring produces quite some confusion on stage in the numerous texts where it appears. It only makes *its wearer* see things as they are. As soon as there is someone else on stage, this leads to confusion, since they simultaneously see different things. And even when the wearer is alone on stage: why should the audience see what *the hero/heroine* sees? Often they probably did not, for practical or other reasons. But the switching between the *locus amœnus* and the *locus terribilis*, which could be effected easily, efficiently and convincingly on the Baroque stage with its advanced machinery,

was certainly something indispensable to the production of an Alcina text.

24 E.g. Giacinto Andrea Cicognini: *Il Giasone. Drama Musicale* (Venice, 1649), Thomas Corneille: *Médée* (Paris, 1693), Simon-Joseph Pellegrin: *Médée et Jason* (Paris, 1713) and Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter: *Medea* (Leipzig, 1775); Philippe Quinault: *Armide. Tragédie lyrique* (Paris, 1686), Giovanni Ambrogio Migliavacca & Giacomo Durazzo: *Armida. Azione teatrale* (Vienna, 1761), Marco Coltellini: *Armida. Dramma per musica* (Vienna, 1766) and Jacopo Durandi: *Armida. Opera seria* (Milan, 1772).

25 Translation in A Member of the Arcadian Academy in Rome (pseud. for Joseph Cooper Walker): *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (London: E. Harding, 1799) p. 186.

26 She does not, however, lose her life. According to Ariosto, fairies cannot die, although Alcina certainly wishes she could (canto 10, stanzas 55–56).

27 The text is quoted from the facsimile of the first edition, which can be found at <https://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=raZ02kJpFIwC&pg=GBS.PR1>. Cf. Renate Döring: *Ariostos Orlando furioso im italienischen Theater des Seicento und Settecento* pp. 108–127.

28 The Prologue was inspired by *Orlando furioso*, canto 3.

29 There is no indication that he is lulled to sleep by her song, as he was in Saracinelli's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'Isola d'Alcina*.

30 Possibly the backdrop »Scogli di Mare deserti« (»Deserted sea cliffs«) from I:2 was used again at this point. In II:10 a backdrop with a maritime view (»Marina«) is mentioned, but to respond to the situation, the set for the rest of the stage would have to be changed, too.

31 The contents of this scene is derived from Ariosto's *Cinque canti* (posthum. publ., 1545), especially canto 1, stanzas 29–31, 34, 107 and 109.

32 *Interludes*: sung entertainments between the acts of a play in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the Baroque form of the Renaissance *intermedi* (cf. note 3).

33 *Carrousel*: a joust, often with a given theme, where the object is to spear e.g. a ring or a head, or display skill in throwing darts, spears etc. or shooting, all done from horseback. For further information on the carrousel genre, cf. Julius Bernhard von Rohr: *Einleitung zur Ceremoniel-Wissenschaft Der großen Herren* (1729; quoted from New Ed., Berlin, 1733), part 4, chapter 4 (»Von Carousellen, Ring=Rennen und Roß=Balletten«).

34 The orchestra was located on one of the islands. The text is quoted from the facsimile of an edition printed in Paris, 1673 (according to the title page) or 1674 (last page of the publication), at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8626216h/f118.item>.

35 Already in Ferdinando Saracinelli's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina*, the sorceress summoned »spaventose Orche, e Balene« (»terrifying Killer whales, and Whales«) at the climax of the *fiesta teatrale*.

36 The text is quoted from the facsimile of the first edition, which can be found at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5449341t>.

37 This theme is borrowed from *Orlando furioso* canto 19, stanzas 20–41, where the lovers, however, are Angelica and Medoro.

38 A cluster of texts, which require examination, and which fit into the chronology of the essay here, begins with Grazio Braccioli's (1682–1752) *Orlando* (Venice, 1713; revised versions 1714 and 1727), which according to a table published on <http://corago.unibo.it/opera/Z000030191> is the source for three libretti with the title *Orlando furioso*, by Georg Caspar Schürmann (1672–1751) (Braunschweig, 1722), Antonio Bioni (1698?–after 1739) (Kuks, Bohemia, 1724), and Orazio Pollarolo (1695–1765) (Mantua, 1725). According to information at <http://corago.unibo.it/opera/>, Alcina can be found in all these texts as well as Ruggiero, Bradamante, Orlando, Angelica, Medoro, and Astolfo. Since none of these texts except for the 1727 version for Venice – possibly revised by Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) – have been found on the Internet, this will have to wait for future research. (There is a summary in German of the 1727 version on Wikipedia.)

39 The exact relations between Alcina and Medoro, and between Alcina and Ruggiero are not clear from the libretto, but they can be inferred from Pariati's introductory »Argomento«. The text is quoted from the facsimile of the original edition at https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_jIRMJLmhtfIC. As was customary in Viennese librettos from around 1700, this edition does not only include a synopsis and a list of »Attori«, but also lists the names of the author, the composer, the two stage designers, and the choreographer, as well as of the composer of the music for the ballets, and indeed the names of the dancers themselves. In addition, we find catalogues of »Comparse« (»Processions«), »Mutazioni di scene« (»Changes of scenery«), »Altre apparenze, e machine« (»Other appearances and machines«) and »Balli« (»Dances«).

40 In the libretto his first name is given as Gioseffo.

41 This is what happens in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, canto 10, except that Alcina has no part in the proceedings.

42 Ita Mac Carthy: *Women and the Making of Poetry in Ariosto's Orlando furioso* p. 30.

43 We have to remember that Bradamante and Ruggiero are incognito and feign to be in an alliance with Alcina.

44 Performed again as *Gli evenimenti di Ruggiero* in Venice, 1732. The text is quoted from a facsimile of the first edition,

which can be found at <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=b2bOyIDLXxUC&rdid=book-b2bOyIDLXxUC&rdot=1>. A summary of the plot (with minor errors) is given at https://operabaroque.fr/ALBINONI_ALCINA.htm. Cf. also Renate Döring: *Ariostos Orlando furioso im italienischen Theater des Seicento und Settecento* pp. 245–251.

45 The enchantress' appearance might give the spectator various associations, especially regarding Alcina's notorious love life. However, the beginning of the opera is set at sunrise, so her *déshabillé* might simply be a consequence of the early hour: she has not yet given herself time for hairdressing and proper clothing – Rugero is much more important to her. Of course, this ambivalence was intentional on the part of Antonio Marchi.

46 However, in Marchi's libretto Idraspe is not the chilling figure that we meet in Testi's *L'isola d'Alcina*, but a benevolent character (cf. II:9–10).

47 As mentioned on pp. 71 and 85, we also find this in earlier texts, e.g. in the *Ballet de Monseigneur le Duc de Vandosme* (1610) and in the second Act of Pietro Pariati's *Angelica vincitrice di Alcina*.

48 »Immer sind die Hauptpersonen Prinzen und Prinzessinnen des 17. Jahrhunderts, gleichviel ob sie der antiken Sage oder gar der Mythologie entnommen sind. [...] So empfinden und handeln sie auch nicht heroisch, sondern agieren galant.« (Willi Flemming [ed.]: *Die Oper [Deutsche Literatur. Sammlung literarischer Kunst- und Kulturdenkmäler in Entwicklungsserien. Reihe Barock. Barockdrama* 5. Leipzig, 1933] p. 36; »The main characters are always princes and princesses of the seventeenth century, even if they are taken from the stories of antiquity or even from mythology. [...] Thus, they do not feel and act heroically, but gallantly.«)

49 Bradamante is given her human shape back by Melissa in II:12.

50 Sarah McCleave: *Dance in Handel's London Operas* (Rochester, N.Y. & Woodbridge: University of Rochester Press, 2013) discusses this part of Marchi's libretto on pp. 171–173.

51 This finale may have been inspired by Pietro Metastasio's (1698–1782) *Didone abbandonata*, which was performed in the previous year (Naples, 1724).

52 The text is quoted from the facsimile of the original edition, accessible at <https://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=7bIQonXLNVQC&pg=GBS.PA3>.

53 We recognize this from many seventeenth-century librettos, such as Nicolò Minato's (1627–1698) *Scipione Affricano. Drama per Musica* (Venice, 1664).

54 The name Aminta is clearly an allusion to Torquato Tasso's popular *Aminta. Favola Pastorale* (Ferrara, 1573), which inspired many early operas.

55 His surname is given as »Polvini Falliconti« in the dedication of the anonymous *Statira. Dramma per Musica* (Rome, 1726), accessible at https://books.google.se/books?id=I_aRZl4KZBcC&pg=PA15&lpg=PA15&dq=Statira,+dramma+per+musica,+da+rappresentarsi+nel+teatro&source=bl&ots=E1g4Paekz2&sig=mv7UH8ECxFOH1hUkoWxtLmuZjDA&hl=sv&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwinqnfj8_9HYAhXGjSwKHRhQC3UO6AEIPjAE#v=onepage&q=Statira%2C%20dramma%20per%20musica%2C%20da%20rappresentarsi%20nel%20teatro&f=false; as »Polvini Faliconti« on the title page of *L'Amor generoso. Drama per Musica* (Rome, 1727), accessible at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/musschatz.18911.0/?sp=3>. It is curious that the 1728 *L'isola di Alcina* production's composer, stage architect, set designer, costume designer, and choreographer are mentioned on p. 7, but not the author – perhaps because he had already signed the dedication on p. 4. – Anthony Hicks: »Alcina, an Introduction« in the booklet to the commercial recording of George Frideric Handel: *Alcina* (EMI, 1986; product no. EX 27 0388 3) rejects the idea that Pulvini Faliconti was the author, though without offering any evidence for his claim: »there is no reason to suppose he wrote the libretto« (p. 3 col. 2). Moreover, Hicks is contradicted later in the booklet, where a transcript of the 1735 libretto version with modernized spelling initially states (in four languages) that it is based on a libretto by »Giuseppe Pulvini, Faliconte« (p. 15; the comma is a printing error from the 1728 edition, maintained in 1986). Reinhard Strohm: »Händel und seine italienischen Operntexte« has another idea: »vielleicht ist er [=der Textdichter] in Florenz zu suchen, wegen der Widmung der Erstfassung« (*Händel-Jahrbuch 1975/1976*. Leipzig, 1977; »maybe one must look for him [=the librettist] in Florence, considering the dedication of the first version«) p. 140. Strohm is alluding to the fact that the libretto is dedicated to Violante Beatrice of Bavaria, Dowager Crown Princess of Tuscany (1673–1731). The libretto was indeed printed in Florence.

56 E.g. in Renate Döring: *Ariostos Orlando furioso im italienischen Theater des Seicento und Settecento* p. 258 et passim.

57 Anthony Hicks: »Alcina, an Introduction« p. 3 col. 2.

58 It is peculiar that Anthony Hicks accepts the signature of Antonio Fanzaglia under the 1729 dedication as proof of his authorship, while he does not regard Giuseppe Pulvini Faliconti's signature under the 1728 dedication as proof of his (*ibid.*; cf. illustration above). If indeed Siegfried Flesch is correct in his »Vorwort« in Georg Friedrich Händel: *Alcina. Opera in tre atti* (ed.: Siegfried Flesch. *Hallsche Händel-Ausgabe Serie II: Opern*, vol. 33. Kassel etc., 2009) when stating that Fanzaglia was a theatrical entrepreneur (p. IX n. 9), the parallels between him and Pulvini Faliconti were so obvious that it is difficult

to understand the scholarly indifference towards the latter. Orietta Sartori avoids discussing this matter in »Nomen omen. Giuseppe Polvini Faliconi impresario del Settecento romano« in *Recercare. Rivista per lo studio e la pratica della musica antica* 2017:1–2, the most extensive work on Pulvini Faliconi published to date, in which *L'isola di Alcina* is discussed on pp. 118–120. Winton Dean is cautious in *Handel's Operas, 1726–1741* (Woodbridge & New York: Boydell Press, 2006): in connection with the 1728 version, he writes about »an unknown author« (p. 315); he does not mention the Parma version at all. Thus he avoids referring to either Faliconi or Fanzaglia.

However, there are two axiomatic propositions, which seem not to have been considered by scholars: 1. The fact that Giuseppe Pulvini Faliconi is known to have been an impresario does not mean that he could not have written or revised librettos. 2. The fact that it is not known if Antonio Fanzaglia was an impresario does not mean that he wrote or revised librettos.

59 The 1728 version is quoted from the facsimile of the original edition, accessible at <http://www.internetculturale.it/jmms/iccuviewer/iccu.jsp?id=oai%3Abid.braidense.it%3A7%3AMI0185%3AMUS0006179&mode=all&teca=Braidense>. It is strange that it was printed in Florence for sale in Rome, but this was also the case with the anonymous *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, also signed by Pulvini Faliconi in the same year. Orietta Sartori mentions this in passing in »Nomen omen. Giuseppe Polvini Faliconi impresario del Settecento romano«, but she does not discuss the matter (p. 120 n. 79). Saverio Franchi: *Drammaturgia romana II (1701–1750)* (Ediz. di Storia e letteratura: Rome, 1997) states that the printer, Michele Nestenus, was trusted by the Tuscan Dowager Crown Princess Violante Beatrice of Bavaria, to whom the libretto was dedicated (p. 233). Renate Döring discusses *L'isola di Alcina* in her dissertation *Ariostos Orlando furioso im italienischen Theater des Seicento und Settecento* pp. 258–261.

60 There is an important printing error at the end of II:5: it looks as if the exit aria »Mio bel tesoro« (»My lovely darling«) is sung by Alcina, which makes no sense; it is actually sung by Ruggiero.

61 The Parma version can be accessed at <http://www.urfm.braidense.it/rd/02178.pdf>. The libretto has a new dedication, but the »Argomento« (»Preface«) and the »Avvertimento agli Spettatori, e Protesta« (»Preface to the Audience, and Introductory Remark«) are identical with the ones in the version from the previous year. – It would seem that the theatre in Parma did not have the same technical equipment as the one in Rome: in the original libretto, there were three sets in each act; in Parma there are only two, which indicates that there were fewer flat slides in the latter theatre, since there are no obvious dramatic reasons for this reduction.

62 There is an important printing error in I:2, where the incipit to the fourth speech is »Mel[issa].«, but should be »Alc[ina].«.

63 Winton Dean: *Handel's Operas, 1726–1741*: »We do not know who [Handel's] literary collaborator was, if indeed he had one. He always took the lead in such matters, and it is not impossible that he did the whole job himself.« (p. 315 n. 8) In an earlier version of the text, »The Making of *Alcina*« in Iain Fenlon & Tim Carter (eds.): *Con che soavità. Studies in Italian Opera, Song, and Dance, 1580–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), Dean is even more emphatic (p. 313). According to Siegfried Flesch: »Vorwort« in Georg Friedrich Händel: *Alcina. Opera in tre atti*, Handel may have known both the 1728 and the 1729 versions of the libretto, since he stayed in Rome in April 1729 and in Parma in May (p. IX col. 2). If this is so, it is interesting that the Parma version did not leave any traces in the London text of 1735.

64 Rome 1728 and Parma 1729 mention canto 8 as well.

65 Winton Dean: *Handel's Operas 1726–1741* gives a detailed account of the transfer of arias from one place in Rome 1728 to other places in the London text as well as of other changes (pp. 315 ff). An important difference is the end of the opera, where London 1735 does not end with the rather depressed chorus of Rome 1728 and Parma 1729, but has a second chorus after the *Ballo*, which provides the libretto with a much happier ending (»Dopo tante amare pene, / Già proviam conforto all'alma«; »After so many bitter sufferings, / The soul now takes comfort«). The assertion in Reinhard Strohm: »Händel und seine italienischen Operntexte« that London 1735 is »auffallend wenig verändert« (»conspicuously unchanged«) is surprising (p. 140).

66 The 1735 text is quoted from the facsimile of the original edition in Georg Friedrich Händel: *Alcina. Opera in tre atti* pp. XXIX–XLII.

67 The 1736 text is quoted from Georg Friedrich Händel: *Alcina. Opera in tre atti* pp. 175–192. Winton Dean: »The Making of *Alcina*« calls the I:15 of 1736 »this dramatically inferior version«, with no other comment than that Handel had a less accomplished singer as Morgana in 1736 (p. 318; cf. also Winton Dean: *Handel's Operas 1726–1741* p. 324). If the singer had been the only reason, Handel would only have needed to substitute the incipit »Morgana« before the aria with »Alcina«. Instead, a new recitative, in which Alcina shows genuine concern for Ruggiero's jealousy and reiterates her true love for him, was inserted at the beginning of the scene. Surely this indicates an ambition to straighten up the *plot*, not to improvise one's way out of a *musical* difficulty.

68 Winton Dean: »The Making of *Alcina*« writes about II:7: »Alcina (unless she is being duplicitous) shows a kindlier side to her nature« (p. 317). The whole point is that her duplicity in

II:7 cannot be gauged until after III:6. When Dean writes that the part of Oberto »is strictly superfluous« (*ibid.*) he shows that he has not understood the function of Oberto, which is to give Alcina opportunity to show new facets of her personality. Also Reinhard Strohm: »Händel und seine italienischen Operntexte« has obviously misunderstood the function of Oberto: he dismisses III:6 as an »intermezzoartige Szene« (p. 141; »intermezzolike scene«), i.e. a scene without connection with the main plot.

69 David Kimbell: »Handel's Ariostan Heroines: With Particular Reference to Ginevra, Principessa di Scozia« in *International Journal of Scottish Theatre*, vol. 3, 2002:1 (June) pp. 4 f, which can be accessed at http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/scotlit/asls/ijost/Volume3_no1/4_kimbell_d.htm.

70 The text is quoted from the facsimile of the original edition, which can be accessed at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/musschatz.21377.0?st=gallery>, supplemented with a facsimile of the manuscript score, which is accessible at <http://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/df/80629/1/>. The printed version does not have a date, whereas the score gives »Anno 1736« on the title page. When the wording or the scene numbers differ between the libretto and the score, which frequently occurs, the libretto has been quoted, if not otherwise stated.

71 The name is obviously derived from »Medoro« in *Orlando furioso*.

72 *Lustige Person* (Funny/Merry person or Clown): typically a servant, who delivered cynical and tart comments about the other persons in the play and their actions, and made satirical allusions to topical events and phenomena in real life. He (the Lustige Person was mostly a man) sang drinking songs and popular street ballads. The Lustige Person was not only there for the sake of comedy, but also served as a contrast to the mythological, royal and noble characters in the cast. In sum, he maintained the tradition from Plautus, Terence and Venetian seventeenth-century opera. – For further information on the Lustige Person, cf. Hellmuth Christian Wolff: *Die Barockoper in Hamburg (1678–1738)*, vol. 1 (Wolfenbüttel: Mösel, 1957 [orig. diss. Kiel, 1942]) pp. 132–182 and Reinhart Meyer: »Hanswurst und Harlekin oder Der Narr als Gattungsschöpfer. Versuch einer Analyse des komischen Spiels in den Staatsaktionen des Musik- und Spechtheaters im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert« in *Théâtre, nation et société en Allemagne au XVIIIe siècle* (J.-M. Valentin & R. Krebs [eds.] [Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1990]) pp. 13–39.

73 The first example of *il meraviglioso* in Pallavicini's libretto occurs when Doro tries out being »d' Alcina principale, / E Vicario infernale« (»Alcina's deputy, / And infernal stand-in«) by using the wand to summon spirits who then round

off the Act by performing an extensive ballet, specified in the score as a »Ballo di Demoni in figura orribile« (»Ballet of Demons with horrible appearance«), which frightens Doro, and then a »Ballo di Demoni in figura di Donne« (»Ballet of Demons with Female appearance«), which pleases him (I:8). Later on, the dwarf arrives on stage riding a monster, puts Bradamante to sleep, and carries her off (II:5).

74 This is a unique scene in the librettos examined in this essay. In a world where everybody dissembles, Bradamante is always treated as the one person who is honest and who threatens to expose herself and Melissa by revealing their identity. She is dull and lacks imagination, playfulness or sensuality. What Ruggiero can possibly see in her is a complete mystery to the reader/viewer, but then again, we are supposed to appreciate her high morals and steadfastness. The Bradamante of Stefano Pallavicini turns out to be a completely new creature: she has depth of character and capacities unknown in earlier versions: here she dissembles and even seems to enjoy the situation.

75 This scene can be accessed in a staged version from Schlosstheater Ekhof, Gotha, 2014, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpCG_G3PAiA. – There is no military action at the end of Pallavicini's *Le Fate*. Since Melissa has the enemy's wand, this simply cannot occur.

76 The text is quoted from the facsimile of the libretto for the production at Turin, 1772, which can be accessed at https://books.google.se/books?id=agBEAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=sv&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false. The opera seems to have been popular: it was performed in several European cities, including Bologna (1772), Turin (1772), Dresden (*Die Insel der Alcina*, 1773) and London (*Alcina*, 1776).

77 Indeed, even Lesbia knows a French aria. This inspires Alcina to sing »Nella lingua Veneziana« (I:12; »In Venetian dialect«).

78 There is parodying of opera clichés in several other passages (e.g. II:5) and of Ariosto (II:8).

79 It seems likely that Giacomo Cordella (1786–1847): *L'isola incantata. Farsa per musica* (Naples, 1809) was inspired by Bertati's *L'isola di Alcina*, since the two librettos have several traits in common: the international group of modern 'tourists' – of which one gentleman spices his Italian with French words and expressions – who arrive on Alcina's island and are amazed at how old she must be; Alcina's lady-in-waiting who falls in love with one of the men; the men's anti-love pact; their succumbing to Alcina's charms; the gentlemen's flight from the island together with Alcina's lady-in-waiting; the enchantress' summoning of her dragon for transportation, in the final scene. Cordella's text is no mere plagiarism, however, but is full of original ideas.

80 His dates vary considerably in the sources: »1725–1785«, »1728–1799«, »1730?–1795?«.

81 The text is quoted from the facsimile of a later issue of the first edition, which can be accessed at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/musschatz.17630.0/?sp=4>.

82 Normally, the cancel leaf would have *replaced* the cancelland (the leaf intended to be replaced). Luckily, the cancel leaf has merely been bound into this issue without the removal of the cancelland.

83 Literally: appearance, walk-on. A parade or procession of people (and animals, mostly horses) on- or offstage, mostly with some kind of theme; cf. Julius Bernhard von Rohr: *Eingleitung zur Ceremoniel-Wissenschaft Der großen Herren* (1729; quoted from New Ed., Berlin, 1733), part 4, chapter 2 (»Von Aufzügen«).

84 Since Astolfo has been the ring-wearer for some time, he has presumably seen Morgana and her sister as the hideous hags they really are. Nothing is mentioned about this in the libretto, however.

85 It is typical for this libretto, in which Morgana has a larger and more important role than in any of the other examined texts, that the next scene is an incantation scene in which Morgana calls for »Furie tremende« (»terrible Furies«) to punish Ruggero; these promptly enter together with »altri Mostri infernali« (III:4; »other infernal Monsters«). The torturing of the hero is shown while a part of the Furies and Monsters »danza orribilmente« (III:5; »dance horrifyingly«) around him.

86 Melissa refers to her once in passing as »d'Amon la figlia« (I:1; »the daughter of Amon«), which indeed calls for expert readers and viewers to be understood.

87 The relations between Porta's and Badini's texts have been elucidated in Anthony van Hoboken: »Nunziato Porta und der Text von Joseph Haydns Oper 'Orlando Paladino'« in Friedrich Wilhelm Riedel & Hubert Unverricht: *Symbolæ historiæ musicæ. Hellmut Federhofer zum 60. Geburtstag* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1971) pp. 170–179. Cf. also Karl Geiringer's »Vorwort« in Joseph Haydn: *Orlando Paladino. Drama eroicomico*, vol. 1 (Munich & Duisburg: Henle, 1972) pp. [VII] col. 2–VIII col. 1 and p. X col. 1, and Geiringer's untitled introductory essay in the booklet of the commercial recording of Joseph Haydn: *Orlando Paladino* (Philips, n.d. [1977]; product no. 6707 029) p. 2. Haydn wrote the music to Porta's text. The opera was successful and according to Geiringer 1972 it was performed in Pressburg, Prague, Brünn, Vienna, Budapest, Mannheim, Donaueschingen, Frankfurt am Main, Cologne, Graz, Nuremberg, Berlin, Hanover, Bremen, Leipzig, Munich, Augsburg, Königsberg, Hamburg, Dresden, Breslau, and Saint Petersburg in the period 1782–1813 (p. IX col. 2).

88 The text is quoted from the facsimile in Joseph Haydn:

Werke. Reihe XXV, vol. 14: *Libretti der Opern Joseph Haydns* (ed.: Silke Schloen. Munich: Henle, 2015) pp. 177–193. Anthony van Hoboken: »Nunziato Porta und der Text von Joseph Haydns Oper 'Orlando Paladino'« gives summaries of the plots in Badini's and Porta's texts, but they are not detailed enough to allow for any discussion of the Alcina character. It is clear, though, that the enchantress is to be found in all the librettos.

89 Pasquale and Eurilla are typical comical servants from seventeenth-century *drami per musica*; they belong to the same category as Alcina's dwarf Doro in Pallavicini's *Le Fate*. Pasquale is also the *Lustige Person*, the Funny Person, in the show, with typical characteristics: he is always on the look-out for food and drink, he is a coward, he even says a phrase in French (Act II), which is typical of the servants of seventeenth-century librettos (cf. Dag Hedman: *Politik och underhållning. Nedslag i 1600-talslibrettots historia och formvärld* pp. 345 f and 392). According to Bruce Alan Brown: »*Le Pazzie d'Orlando, Orlando Paladino, and the Uses of Parody*« in *Italica* 64:4 (1987:4), Porta enhanced the comic traits in the lower-class characters, compared to Badini (p. 593).

90 For a study dedicated to aspects of parody in the Badini-Porta librettos, cf. Bruce Alan Brown: »*Le Pazzie d'Orlando, Orlando Paladino, and the Uses of Parody*« pp. 583–605 (pp. 599–602 are, however, irrelevant to the subject in question).

91 According to Bruce Alan Brown: »*Le Pazzie d'Orlando, Orlando Paladino, and the Uses of Parody*«, »Alcina became more awe-inspiring at her appearances« in Porta's versions than she was in Badini's (p. 593).

92 This is a characteristic of Porta's texts, whereas Badini had her in love with Rodomonte, according to Karl Geiringer's untitled essay, p. 2 col. 1, mentioned in footnote 87 above.

93 Francesca Caccini: *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall' isola di [!] Alcina. Opera in Three Acts* (ed.: Brian Clark. N.p., 2006) pp. 53 f.

94 Ita Mac Carthy: *Women and the Making of Poetry in Ariosto's Orlando furioso*, p. 36.

95 Ita Mac Carthy: *Women and the Making of Poetry in Ariosto's Orlando furioso* p. 30.

96 Cf. Dag Hedman: *Politik och underhållning* pp. 28–32.

97 Cf. David Kimbell: »Handel's Ariostan Heroines: With Particular Reference to Ginevra, Principessa di Scozia« pp. 2 and 4 f.