

Il Crociato in Egitto

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Melodramma eroico in due atti

Poesia di
Gaetano Rossi

Musica del Signor Maestro
Giacomo Meyerbeer

Edited and Introduced by

Robert Ignatius Letellier

CAMBRIDGE
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P U B L I S H I N G

Il Crociato in Egitto Melodramma eroico in due atti, Edited and Introduced by Robert Ignatius Letellier

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Costume design for the Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes (Paris, 1825)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	ix
Act 1	
1. Pantomima e Coro d'Introduzione	3
2. Cavatina e Duetto con Coro nell' Introduzione "I doni d'Elmireno"	19
3. Coro con Ballo "Urridi vezzose".....	35
4. Scena e Duetto "A! Non ti sen più caro"	43
5. Coro dello Sbarco "Vedi il legno"	57
6. Scena e Cavatina "Queste destre l'acciaro di morte"	66
7. Scena e Gran Duetto "Va, già varcasti indegno"	83
8. Scena, Romanza e Terzetto "Giovenetto Cavalier"	108
9. Coro di Sacerdoti e Cavalieri "Gran profeta"	125
10. Scena e Finale Primo	132
Act 2	
11. Scena e Rondo "Ah! ch'io l'adore ancor"	175
12. Scena ed Aria "D'una madre disperata"	188
13. Coro dei Congiurati "Nell' silenzio"	204
14. Scena, Quartetto e Quintetto "Oh cielo clemente"	212
15. Scena ed Inno di Morte "Suona funerea"	243
16. Recitativo ed Aria "L'acciar della fede"	253
17. Scena e Coro degli Emiri e Cavalieri "Udite or alto arcano"	268
18. Duetto finale "Ravvista qual alma"	275

INTRODUCTION

Il Crociato in Egitto

Melodramma eroico in due atti [heroic melodrama in two acts]

Text: Gaetano Rossi, after Jean-Antoine-Marie Monperlier's *mélodrame*
Les Chevaliers de Malte (1813).

First performed: Teatro La Fenice, Venice, 7 March 1824

Palmide	Enrichetta Méric-Lalande
Armando	Giovanni Battista Velluti
Adriano	Gaetano Crivelli
Felicia	Brigida Lorenzani
Aladino	Luciano Bianchi
Osmino	(Signor) Boccaccio
Alma	(Signora Bramati)
Giacomo Meyerbeer (conductor)	

Origins

A letter Meyerbeer wrote to the famous bass Nicholas Levasseur on 5 July 1822 revealed the direction of his artistic thinking.

...I can assure you that it would be even more glorious to have the honor of writing for the French Opéra than for all the Italian stages. (I have indeed, given my works in all the major Italian houses.) Where else, therefore, but in Paris can the vast resources be found which the French offer to an artist who wants to write truly dramatic music? Here, there is a lack of good libretti, and I know your unbiased public welcomes all types of music, if allied to genius.

The recent failure and the lack of proper libretto threw Meyerbeer's long relationship with Rossi into some critical perspective. When, however, Adolfo Bassi, the impresario of the Teatro Communale in Trieste, asked the composer for "a spectacle superior to any other in Italy," this stimulated the composer into action, and the collaborators were soon at work again. In a letter from Rossi in Verona, of 26 September 1822, we learn that the librettist was preparing a text *Il Cavaliere di Rodi* for Meyerbeer. Rossi new text, *Il Crociato in Egitto*, was again chosen from a French *mélodrame*, this time by Jean-Antoine-Marie Monperlier, *Le Chevaliers de Malte* (1813). Five weeks later, he was writing to Meyerbeer from Bologna (where he was working on the text for Rossini's *Semiramide*), asking if the composer had received the verses he had sent. Indeed, although Meyerbeer's letters to the librettist have not survived, their long correspondence (28 November 1822 to 6 December 1823) about their next common venture gives a detailed insight into the creation of the opera, and represent the single most important series of letters

about the creation of an Italian opera in the nineteenth century before Verdi. Meyerbeer's concerns can easily be construed from Rossi's 75 letters which have survived intact, and they take one into every aspect of the creation of a libretto, with analysis of dramatic and musical problems, and demonstrate the composer's deep concern with the effectiveness of opera as drama. The extremely striking *Inno di Morte* in this opera, for example, was to provide the librettist with a special challenge. On 30 March 1823, writing from Verona, he complained that the piece was driving him crazy, and by 8 April the whole text was completed, apart from the hymn ("...I will send it to you altogether. But this Hymn of Death will be my death!"). Rossi was deeply involved in the casting of the opera and in negotiations with the management of the opera house. On 22 June he informed the composer that the news from Adolfo Bassi in Trieste was not good: the production of what was now *I Cavalieri di Rodi* would have to be postponed until the autumn of 1824.

Within the next four days Meyerbeer had decided to offer the opera to La Fenice in Venice for the spring of 1824, but was discouraged by the need to find a role in the new opera for the second soprano of the company, Brigida Lorenzani. Rossi sought to solve the problem by expanding the role of Felicia, and added that "because it is a religious opera, indeed the triumph of religion, it can be done in Lent". Meyerbeer was still hesitant, and received several encouraging letters from Rossi, like the one on 17 June pointing out the special beauties like the sublime first act duet for the Gran Maestro and Armando, the trio of benediction, the terrible and tender situations of the scenario ("You have not been heard for two years, you need a triumph. ...and no occasion more propitious than this will turn up... Your *Cavalieri* triumph will be your greatest triumph"). And so it turned out to be. On 26 June he was again pressing the anxious composer, and predicted that the trio "Giovenetto cavalier" would provoke a furore. And again he was to be proved right. By 5 August he had obviously succeeded in persuading the composer: "You already have the first act of the *Cavalieri*, of the second I have no more than a sketch of the lyric pieces with the changes that have been made." By 28 August the changes made to accommodate a fuller characterization of Felicia were taking positive shape:

I am very pleased you found beautiful and theatrical the idea of the child, making use of your idea of a real Provençal romance. The trio, in the opinion of this old theater person, is the finest piece in the opera for the impression it will make on the public, a complete original music-theater situation—first a romance for the contralto, then a duet...then comes Velluti,,angry, the two ladies uniting a *deux*....Everyone in Venice—in Europe—will be taking about the novelty of three white voices unnoted in this manner...a triumph!

By 2 September he could write, "Here is the trio...here is *the* piece of the opera. It seemed to me that I was inspired...struck by your idea which you presented to me in your letter of 25th....The metre and verses are of the same measure of your favorite, introduced for the first time in *Almanzorre*." The correspondence continued, and by 2 December Rossi could tell Meyerbeer that "I will carry the words to the censor and pray the licence will be granted."

The opera was to have its unique niche in history as being the last celebrated work to use a *castrato* in the heroic eighteenth-century mode. The principal role was written for Giambattista Velluti (1781-1861), regarded as the last example of this kind of singer, and renowned for his powers of ornamentation.

The Opera

The plot is set after the Sixth Crusade in the Saracen sultanate of Egypt between 1200-1218 when Aladino, the brother of the famous Saladin, was ruler. Armando d'Orville, a knight of Rhodes, is assumed dead in the Crusade; but under the name of Elmireno he has become the confidant of the sultan. He has fallen in love with Palmide, Aladino's daughter, and has secretly converted her to Christianity. Their secret liaison has resulted in a son who is concealed in the harem. Adriano, the Grand Master of the Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem, who is also Armando's uncle, arrives to sue for peace, but Elmireno's true identity is discovered, and he and the other captured Christians are sentenced to death. Armando, however, is able to save the sultan's life after a plot to overthrow him. A peace treaty is signed, and Armando and Palmide are reunited.

Once again motives and situations familiar from the earlier Italian operas are repeated. The *Crociato* presents a strange anomaly, since on the one hand it maintains practices of the eighteenth century, long since superceded, like high-voiced hero, the *secco* recitatives, the simple *romanza* type of aria, the unadorned cadenzas left for the singer to embellish. The most famous number of the score is a simple love song of nostalgic recall, sung by Felicia, and taken up by Armando

and Palmide. The verse presents a clear and charming picture, a romance of past times, balladic in its narrative element and simple but vivid imagery (errant lovelorn knight, sunset and willow, heart and hand) emotionally charged in the nostalgic nocturnal mood, with a pleasingly reassuring rhyme scheme (ababcc).

*Giovinetto cavalier,
Di bel giorno al tramontar,
Colla dea de' suoi pensier
Sotto un salcio s'arrestar.
Tacque un po' – su lei fissò,
Poi lo sguardo e sospirò.
La sua mano portò al cor
E qui, disse, qui v'è amor...
Non fidarti, o giovin cor,
Dell'accento dell'amor...*

[A youthful knight,
At the close of a beautiful day,
Paused beneath a willow tree
With the goddess of his thoughts.
He was silent a moment – then he fixed
His gaze upon her and sighed.
He placed his hand upon his heart.,
“And here,” he said, “here is love...”
Do not trust, O naïve heart,
Such words of love...]

This score is indeed full of dynamic experimental features that prefigure later operatic developments. Indeed, one could say that the opera, building on the novel elements in *L'esule*, is the transitional stage leading to a new era in Meyerbeer's creativity. While the external shape is still determined by conventional forms, absolute melody is no longer all-pervasive. The exigencies of the drama are more and more pressing, so that routine concepts mingle freely with much of deeper worth.

As in *L'esule*, there is a completely new approach to the introduction. The melancholy prelude is now the accompaniment to a pantomime where the Christian slaves are depicted at their wearisome labors. The sad harmonies give way to a tumultuous surge of energy that leads right into the opening chorus expressing the pain of captivity.

*Patria amata! oh! tu il primiero
De' miei fervidi desiri,
Fra catene, fra sospiri,
A te vola il mio pensier,
A te anela il mesto cor...
Fier destin ci rese schiavi
Mare immenso ci separa...
Ma tu ognor ci sei più cara,
Tu ci sei presente ognor.*

[O beloved homeland! You, the foremost
Of my fervent desires,
My thoughts fly to you,
My sad heart pines for you
Here, amidst chains and sighing...
Cruel destiny has made us slaves.,
An immense ocean separates us...
But you are ever dearer to us,
You are always present in our thoughts.]¹

The chorus is also used as an essential dramatic element. Rossi provided a series of excellent situations for expression of communal resolve, to which the composer responded with enthusiasm. Each act is punctuated by particularly rich and imaginative choruses: of Christian prisoners, Egyptians, imams and priests, Knights of Rhodes in act 1: of conspirators, emirs and condemned Knights in act 2.

The frequent ensembles also reveal careful workmanship, and attain a new importance. This particularly the case with the huge finale to act 1. Here the increased size of the orchestra is innovative, and is bound up with a sense of scenic vastness. The arrival of the flotilla of the Knights of Rhodes and the ensuing tableau of conflict is the great spectacle of act 1. The Prison Scene, the *Inno di Morte*, is the extended and visionary heart of act 2, a vast aural mural of despair, prayer and exultation, a threnody of grief and affirmation of faith using a spectrum of vocal timbres and instrumental colors in achieving the grandiose highpoint of

¹LGM, 3: 10-13.

Meyerbeer's operatic writing to that point. Rossi provided pared verses of impressively minimal power, in artfully cumulative arrangement, the emphases falling on the key words of destiny (*incomprensibile, l'eternità*), the aspiration underpinned by the chiasmus linking hope and mercy (*speriamo, pietà*):

<i>Suona funerea</i>	[The hour of death
<i>L'ora di morte;</i>	Tolls mournfully;
<i>Dell'uom la sorte</i>	The fate of man
<i>Si compie già</i>	is now accomplished.
<i>Incomprensibile.</i>	Eternity,
<i>Fra auguste tenebre</i>	shrouded in darkness,
<i>A noi presentasi</i>	Appears to us
<i>L'eternità.</i>	incomprehensible.
<i>Speriamo in te, Signore,</i>	We hope in you, o Lord,
<i>De' figli tuoi pietà.</i>	Have mercy on your children.]

Rossi's use of verse shows more structural malleability and imagistic sensitivity than warranted by his reputation for "crude and unfeeling" language.

In a scenario where plot is still inclined to take precedence over characterization, music provides an evocative means of setting individual scenes, by establishing a flow of moods, or by breaking up the set patterns of arias to achieve a more coherent or unified dramatic action. All these features already point to the developments to come in French *grand opéra*. The huge success of the *Crociato* would soon carry it around the world, and its influence can be discerned in many works. Take for example Halévy's *La Juive* which both textually and musically has many similarities with the scene in which Armando confesses he is a Christian, to the fury of Aladino who threatens him with a dagger; Palmide, however, protects him from her father's fury.

The story is another contribution to the Oriental themes so recurrent in the operatic literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and already touched upon with colorful verve in *Wirt und Gast*. Rossi's scenario is typical of the contemporary Western attitudes underlying the various types of Orientalist discourse of the age. The Islamic world, for all its magical evocation in this score, is characterized by the usual representative figures or tropes, as embodied preeminently in the monochrome and severe sultan. Of the Egyptians, only the enterprising Palmide has an independence of mind and action that uses the religious metaphor to express her spiritual resolution and liberty. In this she does indeed look forward to Scribe's Rachel (*La Juive*), and even more significantly for Meyerbeer, to Valentine (*Les Huguenots*). Eventually it would be these collaborators' final opera (*L'Africaine*) in which both the Oriental and religious issues would find new exploratory consideration and deeply-felt reflection. As with Palmide, this comes in the person of the enterprising heroine, the slave-queen Sélîka with her mystical perception of self-sacrifice and spiritual freedom.

More than hardly any other opera of the first third of the nineteenth century, *Il Crociato in Egitto* appears as work standing between the epochs. In its engagement with the traditions of the *melodramma*, Meyerbeer exploited here to the full all the possibilities offered by the form, without actually questioning its nature. Whereas Rossini in his Neapolitan operas had undertaken a transformation of the genre, moving it in the direction of French grand opera, Meyerbeer on the one hand continued a heightened development of the generic tendencies, while on the other affecting a deliberate resumption of older forms, already obsolete at this time (like simple romance structures and the use of *recitativo secco*, especially to mark the closure of scenes). The disparate medium of presentation spans isolated individual numbers and highly integrated tableaux of solo and chorus, traditional lyrical virtuosity and the dramaturgy of modern instrumental colour, melodic models from the eighteenth century, and anticipation of middle Verdi, integrated only by the strongly imprinted force of the individual style. Even more than in *Margherita d'Anjou* and *L'esule di Granata*, the *Crociato* opens up to the historical opera. The personal conflict still determines the dramaturgy, but this is projected onto historical circumstances and given a philosophical component through the figure of the religious fanatic Adriano. Throughout the whole opera, the antagonism between the Crusaders and the Egyptians, until their final magnanimous reconciliation, is depicted in contrasting dramatic terms as the confrontation between two cultures and religions. The formal structures for such a dramaturgy also shapes the tableaux in this opera.

In their detailed collaboration, Meyerbeer and Rossi had planned that every move on the stage should be dramaturgically motivated, every entry carefully

considered, especially in connection with the forty-four-year-old castrato, Velutti, one of the last of a dying tradition. He needed an entry of brilliant virtuosity which would nonetheless relate to his performing abilities and not tire him too early. The other figures are grouped around him with similar entries and demands made upon them. Big ensemble scenes were carefully put into place. The dramatic flow was not to be sacrificed to the interests of the singers, as was all too often the case at the time in Italian opera. Great, subtle concern was taken to lend the work dramatic truth that would leave Meyerbeer space for the unfolding of his ever-expanding musico-dramatic ideas.

The introduction was especially developed in a most personal manner. It occurred to the composer that the first scene retained the dramatic potential of presenting the subject in such a way that the social context of the action could emerge out of and over any depicted private conflict—with considerable possibilities for local and historical colour adding to the theatrical context. This procedure can be understood as the preliminary stage of the expository dramaturgy of his later grand operas, where the entire first act is conceived as an introduction. In this respect the composer was, even then, regarded as an innovator—borne out in a comment by Rossi who in a letter of 28 October 1822 reported to his colleague that he had written an introduction *alla Meyerbeer* for Rossini's *Semiramide* (1823), where the various entries of the characters are highlighted in the context of a *quadro imponente* (imposing scene).

As in the big introductions to *Margherita* and *L'Esule*, the chief female protagonists become the dramatic focal points of the tableau. The same applies in the *Crociato* with Palmide. Here also the private conflict is fixed in an historical panorama that gives credibility to the religious and political motivation of the action (the forced labour of the Christian slaves at the court of the Sultan). These events are not only depicted chorally, but also visually as pantomime, in which the music minutely illustrates the prescribed movements of groups and individuals busy with their labours, exchange of news among the prisoners, activities of the overseers. One of the principal ways in which this new dynamic dramatic plasticity was implemented was through the large number of scenic directions, prescribing entries and placements precisely—something most unusual in an age of relatively unregulated movement on stage. The singularity of the undertaking is evident from the very beginning of the opera:

All is still at the break of dawn. Shortly after one hears three trumpet calls. Guards come and open the cells for the slaves from the different European nations; they emerge, eyes raised to heaven, greeting each other, embracing, and then going about their labour. Some drag huge blocks, others work on pillars and pediments, and erect columns. A youth helps his aged father who suffers from the weight of the chains. A guard mistreats the old man because he is not working properly. The youth offers to take his father's place. The latter falls on his knees, blessing his noble son with tears. One of the slaves steals a moment of rest, pulls a little portrait from his garments, stares at it, kisses it, and secretes it quickly, fearing to be discovered. Another reads and kisses a letter, pressing it to his breast. The guards withdraw, and on the instant the slaves gather hurriedly in groups, and begin to sing powerfully [of their homesickness and captivity].

There is no overture: the work begins with this *Pantomima e Coro d'Introduzione*. The violins intone a two-part song—a dream of freedom—that is roughly broken by the trumpet calls before the plight of the slaves is depicted in a rushing bass line and powerful chords. An serene melody for the clarinets distils pathos and prayerful hope. Some five different musical ideas are unfolded before the chorus comes in with great power. This plenitude of ideas is what distinguishes the introduction from comparable works of other composers and from Meyerbeer's earlier achievements. Here is manifested a tendency discernible throughout the opera: a theory of effective contrast, to elevate the drama and the vitality of musical forms in a hurried succession of contrasting elements.

The plastic conception of the scenic proceedings is supplemented by the sonic extension of the stage space. For example, the fanfares towards the end of the introduction that announce the arrival of ship carrying Knights of Rhodes are positioned in no less than four different positions (six trumpets in the formation 1-1-2-2, with two in the orchestra). In the first finale, Meyerbeer handles the three drums in a similar manner: their sounding makes the highpoint of the confrontation between the Egyptian and Crusader forces. Each party is further identified tonally by an appropriate band (the Egyptian one made up of shrill Janissary instruments). The *stretta* combines both bands with the regular orchestra, the soloists and the chorus, and, in spite of the massed sounds, is characterized by tonally clarity (“All’armi vi chiama la gloria, la fede”) (glory and faith call you to arms). The finale can be understood as a theatrical transformation, for very large forces, of a four-movement classical symphony. Rossini but also Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven can be discerned in its contents and construction. (Beethoven's *Wellington's Victory* symphony was an influence here: at the premiere in 1813, Meyerbeer had played the bass drum.) In the directness of dramatic attack and the steeliness of the

musical structure, this finale heralds a new era in opera. By contrast, the most extraordinary passage in the ensemble is "Sogni ridenti" which combines canonic writing with subtle chromatic harmony and displays Meyerbeer's assured technique of juxtaposing a *cappella* vocal timbres with instrumental ones.

The *bel canto* tradition, moreover, is triumphantly epitomized: the demands on the virtuosity of the singers is carried to the heights. Lyricism and drama are brought into a proportioned relationship, the borders of both extended outwards. Drama is strengthened by a wealth of contrast, while lyricism sometimes exceeds even Rossini in luxuriousness. The work is built around the soloists, from whom much is demanded. Indeed, vocal accomplishment was the prerequisite condition of the structure of the new aria with its elegiac beginning and virtuoso cabaletta. The developed thematic-motiv work that Meyerbeer learned from the Abbé Vogler was not possible in this type of aria, and he replaced it with exquisite orchestration, often entailing demanding solo contributions.

Meyerbeer devised a singular dramatic resolution for the central scene in act 1 where Armando meets his two women in the trio "Giovinetto cavalier". This piece turns the story of a tragic love in the past into the story of the present. First Felicia affirms her former love (first strophe, solo) as she sings the romance to Palmide, which Armando, whom she believes dead, once performed for her in Provence, and which stretches even further back into the past since it is a song recounting the story of a faithless knight. Her new friend Palmide joins in the song (second strophe, duet) since her heart was also captured in the same way by a strange knight singing this very song. Suddenly one hears his very voice, and right afterwards he himself appears (third strophe, trio). Armando, once Felicia's lover and now Palmide's, is the incarnation of that faithless lover from the romance. The musico-dramatic realization of the story entails the interaction of four different levels of time (the knight of the romance, Armando and Felicia's love, Armando and Palmide's relationship, and then Armando, Felicia and Palmide all together in the present). Narrated time and the present coalesce in the timelessly fulfilled moment which captures the memory in actual time. The melody of the romance which made its way through all the salons of Europe, sustains an aura particularly by means of a *concertante* ensemble of seven instruments (cor anglais, clarinet, horn, harp, violin, cello and doublebass). It was apparently inspired by the romance "Ov'è la bella vergine" from act 2 of Mayr's *Alfredo il grande, re degli anglo-sassoni* (Bergamo 1819, libretto by Bartolomeo Merelli). The solo instruments combine with the three female voices in a sublime amalgam of sound, in which the barcarolle melody of the romance strophes trails away in an alienating *sfumato*.

Melodic patterns are frequently cut to eighteenth-century models, even if in new formal or harmonic contexts. So in the act 1 duet for Palmide and Armando ("Ah! non ti son più cara") (ah you must no longer love me), the overflowing of feeling in the dramatic situation unfolds from the overlapping linearity of the voice parts, the movement as a whole, however, subjected to the supposedly modern montage principle, evident in the truncated cabaletta. Palmide's big act 2 aria ("D'una madre disperata") (of a despairing mother) begins as an exaggeratedly virtuoso paraphrase of "Fuor del mar" from Mozart's *Idomeneo* (1781), but dissonant orchestral accents soon superimposed on the demisemi-quaver scales lend an additional dimension of expression to the whole context. Conversely, other elements look forward to later developments in Italian opera. Take, for example, the virtuoso female duet, introduced by Rossini into *Tancredi* (1813), and used by Meyerbeer in *Romilda e Costanza* and *Semiramide riconosciuta*. He developed this even further in the *Crociato*, as in the middle section of act 1 duet for Palmide and Armando ("Non v'è per noi più speme") (there is no more hope for us) where it assumes a whole new specific sound dimension which Bellini could later develop in similar pieces.

Adriano's Dungeon Aria ("Suona funerea l'ora di morte") (the hour of death tolls mournfully) in act 2 created the prototype of the big tenor scene that would remain statutory until middle Verdi; the three-part unfolding of form, with the decisive arch of emotion rising from the dark minor to the soaring major ("Speriamo in te, Signore") (we hope in you, o Lord), would become the model for innumerable slow arias of Donizetti and Verdi. Further, in the act 2 Conspiracy Chorus of the emirs ("Nel silenzio fra l'orrore") (silently, here in the darkness) the *Crociato* provided the model for many choruses in Risorgimento operas with its characteristic melodic *slancio* of dancing-like tension.

The attention Meyerbeer devotes to the chorus is new and forward-looking in his creative work. The chorus to date had invariably served as a scaffolding for the soloists, usually to strengthen the harmonic background for their coloratura displays, but here, building on the developments in *Emma*, *Margherita* and *Esule*, the chorus receives a precise dramatic role as slaves, emirs, Crusaders and conspirators. While the emirs sing in a light, friendly and attractive tone, realized in chromatic half-tones, the Crusaders, on their numerous entries (as with the arias of their leader Adriano) always begin on a piercing brass and drum devise, like soldiers marching on the turn of C and G major. Nothing less than a military machinery is set in place, something maintained throughout the opera. The reveilles of Berlin must have found their enduring resonance in the composer's memory. The *banda*, so much a part of the Italian operatic tradition, finds a sort of apotheosis in

Meyerbeer with his intuitive Prussian background. In both *Margherita* and *L'esule* the stage band occupied an increasingly important role: in *Crociato* two are used at the same time.

Among those works that supposedly made a strong impression on Meyerbeer, two pieces by Rossini that appeared in 1819 should be mentioned. First *Ermione*, an attempt at producing an Italian *tragédie lyrique* after Racine's *Andromache*. This work was never produced outside of Naples, and was not plundered by Rossini for other works. Rather, this self-imposed task, both in tonality and theme, was a carefully involved musical tragedy of conscientious workmanship rarely found in Rossini. Second was the *azione sacra*, *Mosè*, which accorded the chorus an unusually large role. The first appearance of the slaves in the *Crociato* is modelled on that of the captive Hebrews in *Mosè*. These were high compositional standards by which Meyerbeer rightly wanted to measure himself.

Reception

Meyerbeer was known in Italy as the *maestro-dilettante* since he composed without professional necessity: now he experienced the greatest triumph of his career. At the première and the following performances he was feted in the midst of a brilliant ensemble, with Velluti (Armando), Henriette Méric-Lalande (Palmide), Brigida Lorenzani (Felicia), and Gaetano Crivelli (Adriano). The enthusiasm with which the opera was received everywhere was described a few years later by Heinrich Heine: "If ever I saw human madness, it was at a performance of the *Crociato in Egitto* when the music suddenly changed from soft melancholic tones into exultant sorrow. In Italy such madness is known as *furore*" (*Reisebilder*, 3. Teil: *Reise von München nach Genua* [1823], Kapital 27).

Adaptations

The enthusiastic reception of the *Crociato* did not keep Meyerbeer from undertaking many adaptations in the period following. Some of these changes related to new demands of casting, others, however, had effects on the dramaturgical structure of the work itself.

1) In the production for the Teatro della Pergola in Florence on 7 May 1824 (with Velluti as Armando, Tosi as Palmide, Domenico Reina as Adriano), the entrance of the protagonists in act 1 was newly ordered. Armando's arrival in scene 2 was moved (his aria and the following duet with Palmide falling away) to scene 3 (with a new *sortita*, "Caro mano dell'amore" [dear hand of love] with chorus and ballet in place of Felicia's entrance aria). For the advent of the Crusaders with Adriano and Felicia (minus her aria), a new fourth scene (the equivalent of act 2 scene 3 in Venice) was inserted. In what was now the fifth scene (the earlier fourth), the romance trio was arranged in a new version. In act 2 scene 1 the aria of Felicia was exchanged for one by Alma ("D'un genio che l'ispira" taken from *Semiramide*, and written for Teresa Ruggieri); in act 2 scene 2 Palmide's aria "D'una madre disperata" was made tauter; the whole of the fourth scene in the dungeon was missing. In the closing fifth scene, Armando's final aria was reduced to the introductory recitative and the *tempo d'attacco* part of the double chorus of Egyptians and Crusaders, and replaced with a final duet for Armando and Palmide ("Ravvisa qual alma") (behold what virtue).

2) Meyerbeer arranged the work differently for the production in Trieste on 10 November 1824 which placed Nicola Tacchinardi as Adriano at the centre (with Bassi Manna as Armando and Katharina Wallbach-Canzi as Palmide). Armando's entry was shifted back to act 1 scene 2, and the duet with Palmide restored (but not his aria). Adriano's new aria compensates for this: his entry in act 1 scene 3 is given sharp profile by a new heroic aria with *banda* ("Queste destre l'acciaro di morte") (these hands the murderous sword), and supercedes the new fourth scene devised for Florence. In scene 4 the older structure of the romance trio is restored. Act 2 scene 1 is transferred to the inside of the palace, and the aria removed; scene 4 in the dungeon is restored, and through a new version of Adriano's cabaletta gains in lyrical as well as dramatic impact. To add to the complication, and as concessions to the singers, various substitutions were made for arias that had been cut: Palmide's aria in scene 2 was replaced by "Dolce albergo di pace" from *Margherita d'Anjou*; Armando's final aria was substituted by either "Oh! Come rapida" from *L'Esule di Granata* or "Col piacer la pace scenda" from *Semiramide* (Bassi's choice). Despite a certain lack of unity, these changes collectively resulted in

shift of emphasis from a private to the political-religious conflict, especially the demotion of Felicia and the revaluation of Adriano within the hierarchy of roles. This strengthened a tendency already present in the work. Although Meyerbeer himself thought the work benefited immeasurably by these interventions (see his letter to Heinrich Baermann of 6 March 1828), he never actually fixed the final form of the *Crociato*. He undertook an attempt at this when he began revising the work as a grand opera for Paris, before his interest was taken up with other matters, most especially *Robert le Diable* (1831).

Later performance history

In the meantime the *Crociato* was performed on many stages, usually in unauthorized mixed editions. There was particular historical significance in the 1825 productions in London and Paris, cities that in the future would become centres of Meyerbeer's fame. In the King's Theatre in London Velluti appeared again, with the young Maria Malibran as Felicia, and Rosalbina Caradori-Allan, Alberico Curioni and Ranieri Remorini. At the Théâtre-Italien in Paris, where Meyerbeer had been invited by the director Rossini, success was guaranteed by the exceptional cast of Giuditta Pasta, Ester Mombelli, Adelaide Schiasetti, Domenico Donizelli and Nicolas-Prosper Levasseur. Outstanding productions in Italy in 1826 were in Milan (Bassi Manna, Teresa Melas, Crivelli), Naples (as *Il cavaliere Armando d'Orville*, with Lorenzani, Méric-Lalande, Winter), Bologna (Francesca Festa, Santina Ferlotti, Tacchinardi), and in 1827 in Venice (with Tosi, Crivelli). In 1826 the *Crociato* appeared in Dresden (Schiasetti, Matilde Palazzesi, Alfonso Zezi, conducted by Francesco Morlacchi), with a new production in 1828 London (at Covent Garden, with Velluti, Henriette Sontag, Marietta Brambilla, Curioni, Carlo Ottolino Porto) and at the Théâtre-Italien (with Pisaroni as Armando), 1829 in Vienna (in the German text of Josef Kupelweiser, with Amalie Haehnel as Armando), again in 1838 (with Sabine Heinefetter), 1832 in Berlin at the Königstädtischen Theater (Haehnel, Katharina Kraus-Wranitsky). In Prague the opera was first performed in 1828 (as *Der Ritter von Rhodus*, with Katharina Pohorsky, Marianne Katharina Ernst, Sebastian Binder, Josef Wolfgang Kainz) and again in 1836 when it was brilliantly produced as a festival opera for the coronation of Emperor Ferdinand I as king of Bohemia (with Wilhelmina Schröder-Devrient, Jenny Lutzer, Friedrich Demmer, Josef Pöck).

Until the middle of the century the work was frequently performed in Europe and overseas (Havana 1826, Mexico 1837) before falling in the shadow of Meyerbeer's French operas. The opera was revived at La Scala Milan in 1859 (with Barbara Marchisio) and in the Théâtre-Italiens in 1860 (with Adelaide Borghi-Mamo), but by then not even these illustrious interpreters could conjure up the former magic. The disappearance of Rossini's serious operas from the stage meant that these performances, given against Meyerbeer's wishes, served simply as reminiscences of a bygone era.

Only in recent decades have a series of concert performances brought the historical significance of the *Crociato* back into consciousness: Queen Elizabeth Hall, London 1972 (Opera Rara with Patricia Kern, Janet Price, William McKinney, Christian du Plessis, conductor Roderick Brydon); Carnegie Hall, New York 1979 (with Felicity Palmer, Yvonne Kenny, Rockwell Blake and Justino Diaz, conductor Gianfranco Masini); Montpellier 1990 (Radio France, with Martine Dupuy and Rockell Blake, conductor Massimo de Bernart); London 1991 (Opera Rara, with Diana Montague, Yvonne Kenny, Bruce Ford and Ugo Benelli, conductor David Parry), a bicentennial performance that was recorded—the original 1824 score and all the other variants; Dresden and Ludwigsburg 1991 (with Ning Liang, Elena Brilova, Rockwell Blake/Ken Hicks, Volker Horne, conductor Jörg-Peter Weigle).

The first full production in modern times, using the original score, was at La Fenice, Venice, 14-21 January 2007 (with Florin Cezar Ouatu, a counter-tenor, Patrizia Ciofi, Laura Favaron, Fernando Portari, Marco Vinco, and Emmanuel Villaume conducting). Pier Luigi's staging was minimal but true to the dramatic intentions of the scenario.

By 1836 *Il Crociato in Egitto* had been produced some 30 times: on all the big Italian stages, in London, and in Paris. The *Crociato* raised Meyerbeer to the foremost representative of Italian opera after Rossini. It is interesting to speculate what further developments in the genre would have occurred if Meyerbeer had further pursued in Italy the course laid out in this opera. However, reform of the Italian opera was not his aim, but rather Paris, which, from the beginning of his career, had seemed to him the very Mecca of dramatic music.

IL

Crociano in Gatto

Grand'Opera

Del Sig.^{ro} M.^o Giacomo Meyerbeer

Riduzione completa

per Canto con Accomp.^{to}

DI FORTE PIANO

Del Sig.^{ro} M.^o

Luigi Ricci

Proprietà dell'Editore

N.^o

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<i>Personaggi</i>	<i>Attori</i>
<i>Aladino Soldano</i>	Dig. ^e Bianchi BASSO
<i>Palmide di lui figlia</i>	Dig. ^a Sallande SOPRANO
<i>Adriano di Montfort Gran-Mas.^e dell'Ort.^e de Cav. (di Rodi.)</i>	Dig. ^e Civelli TENORE
<i>Felicia sua Nipote</i>	Dig. ^a Sorcianni CONTRALTO
<i>Armando d'Erville Cavalier di Rodi Sotto nome d'Elmireno.</i>	Dig. ^e Celluli, MEZZO SOPRANO
<i>Emine Visire</i>	Dig. ^e Soccomini TENORE
<i>Alma</i>	Dig. ^a Bramati SOPRANO

<i>Atto 1.^o</i>	<i>Giudice de' pezzi</i>	<i>Atto 2.^o</i>
1 Pantomima e Coro d'Introduzione		41 Scena e Rondò <i>Ah ch'io l'adoro ancor</i>
2 Cavatina e Duetto con Cori nell'Introduzione <i>I doni d'Elmireno.</i>		42 Scena ed Aria <i>D'una Madre disperata</i>
3 Coro con Ballo <i>Urridi Vellote</i>		43 Coro de congiurati <i>Nell' silenzio frà l'orrore</i>
4 Scena e Duetto <i>Ah non te son più caro</i>		44 Quartetto e Quintetto <i>Oh Cielo elemente</i>
5 Coro con Ballo <i>Vedi il legno</i>		45 Scena ed Inno di morte <i>Suona funerea</i>
6 Cavatina <i>Queste destre l'acciaran morte</i>		46 Aria <i>L'acciar della fede</i>
7 Duetto <i>Va già varcasti indegno</i>		47 Scena e Coro degli Emici e de Cavalieri <i>Udite or alto arcano</i>
8 Romanza e Terzetto <i>Giovinetto Cavalier</i>		48 Duetto finale, <i>Ravvisa quell'alma</i>
9 Coro di Cavalieri <i>Gran Profeta</i>		
10 Scena e Finale 1. ^o		

Antomina e
Coro d'Introduzione
Nell'Opera

Proprietà dell'Editore N.º 2156. Deposta all'I.R. Bibli. Prezzo F.

IL CROCIATO IN EGITTO
Del Sig. Maestro

Giacomo Meyerbeer

Metronomo di Mälzel ♩ 120

Molto moderato

PIANO-FORTE Sotto voce.

f Spalio di Trombe da lontano) *Piu presto*

M FIRENZE Presso GIO. RICORDI GRUA & C.º 2456 MILANO Presso GIO. RICORDI

4. Corni
dol. marcato
4^o Tempo

dimin. Cres. n. f.

(Si alza il sipario.) Più Presto
Il Custode apre le porte

delle Prigioni) (I Schiavi sortono, s'abbracciano con tristezza) (Si accingono ai lavori)

Lavori dei Schiavi del Porto che strascinano pesi, alzano le Pietre per le fabbriche)

2136

2

Handwritten musical score for piano and voice, consisting of five systems of staves. The score is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The vocal line is written in the soprano clef and includes the following lyrics: *occhi di scarpello, di altri schiavi, che scannano le.* The score includes performance markings such as *Colorato*, *ff*, and *diminuendo*. The page number 2456 is printed at the bottom center, and the number 5 is printed in the bottom right corner.

4

p (Un giovinetto le catene sostiene del vecchio suo padre, che alle fatiche mal regge, Il Custode maltratta il vecchio perchè non lavora

f

albastana. Il ragazzo si offre di prendere le catene pel suo padre)

molto dolce e con espressione
(Clarinetti)

(Il vecchio cade a ginocchio e

singhiozzando, benedice il pio figliuolo.)

(Un Schiavo cava dal seno un ritratto, lo bacia, e lo ripone, tremando di essere scoperta)

sfz *ffz*

4

2136

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation. It consists of four systems of music. The first system is a piano introduction with a treble and bass clef, marked 'p' and 'f'. The second system includes a clarinet part marked '(Clarinetti)' and 'molto dolce e con espressione'. The third system continues the piano accompaniment. The fourth system features a piano introduction with a treble and bass clef, marked 'sfz' and 'ffz'. The lyrics are in Italian and describe a scene from an opera. The page number '2136' is at the bottom center, and the number '4' appears in the top left and bottom left corners.

Handwritten musical score for piano accompaniment, featuring four systems of music. The score includes dynamic markings such as *cres. dim.*, *f*, *ff*, *stringendo*, and *più stringendo*. It also contains performance instructions like *Un altro legge una lettera dalla patria e la comunica ai compagni, che la leggono piangendo.*, *(Tocchi di scalpello dei Schiavi che scanelano le Colonne)*, *(Il Custode)*, and *si allentano: i Schiavi lo rimarcano, osservano se è lontano per cessare i loro lavori, poi si riuniscono in gruppi, e con impeto prorompano nel seguente Coro)*. The page number 2456 is visible at the bottom center, and a small number 5 is in the bottom right corner.

(con impeto doloroso)
Pa - - tria a - ma - ta Pa - - tria a - ma -

Tempo Primo

ta ob tu il primie ro de miei fervidi de - si - ri

(marcato) fra cate ne fra sospi - ri a te aue - - la a

(Ricominciano i lavori) fra cate ne fra sospi - ri a te vola il mi pensier a te aue - - la a

(Vasale)

6 G 2456 T

ne - la il mes - to cor fra - cate ne fra sospi - ri
ne - la il mes - to cor fra - cate ne fra sospi - ri a te vol il mio pensiero te ane -
a te ane - - la il mesto cor *ff* fier desti - ni re se schia - vi mare im - men - so ci se -
la a - - ne - la il mesto cor
pa - ra ma tu ognormi sei più ca - ra tu mi sei presente ognor

G 2456 T

8 Tenori I.^{mi} dolce
Tenori II.^{di} Ca - - ri og - - getti cari oggetti del mio co - - re
Bassi *dolce voce e staccato* Ca - - ri og - - getti del mio co - - re

tr.
molto dolce
diminuendo
sempre dolce
crec.

più ve - - dervi più veder vi non po - tro' frai sospir d'un tristo amor più pe -
più ve - - dervi non po - - tro' *sempre dolce* frai sospir d'un tristo amor

G 2456 T

nar lan - guir do - vrò penar più pe - - nare più pe -
penar *sotto voce* più pe - nare più pe -

ppp

languir

cres. *pp* *cres.* *f*

tr *s*

pp *f*

Tenori Un Primo Tenore solo Un Secondo Tenore solo

nar mo - rir do - vrò (*con espressione dolorosa.*) ah Sposa! oh fi-gli!

Bassi

G 2456 T 9

40 *Tutti* *(singspiessando)*
pa - tria amici fi - gli a - mi - ci più ve -
spo - sa pa - tria pa - tria più ve -
cred. *più cred.* *f* *fff*
der - ti non po - trò e da voi lun - gi mori - - - - - rò da voi
cred. *più cred.* *f* *fff*
der - ti non po - trò e da te lun - gi mori - rò da te
cred. *più cred.* *f* *fff*
lun - gi mo - ri - rò patria a - mi - ci ah!
lun - gi mo - ri - rò

40 G 2436* T

Metr. di Mälzel $\frac{2}{2}$ 92
(con disperazioni)

Allegro molto mosso **ff^o** Ces - si o - mai si a cer - ba vi - ta cangi o - mai si orribil sor - te si orribil sorte

Allegro molto mosso **ff^o**

ff^o O . . . o pie - to - sa tronchi morte così barbaro do - lor così barbaro do - lor cessi
ces - si

questa acer - - ba vi - - ta cangi questi or - ri - - bil sor - - te o . pie
ces - - si que - - sta vi - - ta o pie

2436



13

molto marcato

to - - sa o pie - to - - sa tron - - chi mor - - te que - - sto bar - - ba - ro do -

molto marcato

lor que - - sto bar - - ba - ro do - - - lor . . . tron - -

ff

tutta forza

chi mor - - te ah pie - to - sa tron - chi mor - te que - sto

12 2456