

From ‘Exhumation’ to ‘Exigency’

Bringing *Arie Antiche* —and My Dissertation Poster—to the 2024 Junge Musikwissenschaft Symposium

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Introduction

I participated in the Symposium der Jungen Musikwissenschaft at the annual conference of the *Österreichische Gesellschaft für Musikwissenschaft* (ÖGMw), which took place in Mozarteum University, Salzburg (18 October 2024), with a poster presentation on my dissertation project.¹ The conference offered a rich environment for academic exchange across diverse musicological disciplines. My goal was to introduce my research to a broader scholarly audience, increase awareness about the origins of musicological scholarship during the late 19th-century Risorgimento, explore the historical dimensions of vocal pedagogy, and examine the history of canonizing repertoire within a pedagogical context.² Through this presentation, I sought to engage in critical dialogue with colleagues working in related fields, such as music historiography, reception studies, and performance practice.

While I did not receive direct feedback during the poster session, the experience of presenting and creating a visual representation of my research proved to be an invaluable opportunity. It allowed me to sharpen my argumentation, refine my research focus, and contextualize my work within broader historical and pedagogical frameworks.

Project Overview: Dissertation Topic

My dissertation, provisionally titled “From ‘Exhumation’ to ‘Exigency’: A Historical Perspective on the Intention Behind Alessandro Parisotti’s *Arie Antiche* and Its Reception in Vocal Pedagogy”, examines the historical function and later reception of the widely used *Arie Antiche* anthology compiled from 1885 to

1 See Hazal Akyaz, “From ‘Exhumation’ to ‘Exigency’: Historical Perspectives on the Intention Behind Alessandro Parisotti’s *Arie Antiche* and Its Reception in Vocal Pedagogy”, Poster Presentation at the Symposium der Jungen Musikwissenschaft, Salzburg 2024, <<https://oegmw.at/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Akyaz-Poster.pdf>> (02.09.2025).

2 Regarding the context of Risorgimento and early music revival as a part of educative canon in late 19th century Italy see Laura Basini, “Verdi and Sacred Revivalism in Post Unification Italy”, in: *19th-Century Music* 28/2 (2004), pp. 133–159, here pp. 145–147.

1898 by Italian composer and musicologist Alessandro Parisotti (1853–1913).³ While these three volumes are now standard material in vocal training for beginners, especially since the early 20th century, their original context suggests different motivations—rooted more in the revival of early music than in pedagogy.

The project explores the cultural and institutional influences behind Parisotti's editorial decisions, particularly his ties to the *Accademia di Santa Cecilia* and figures such as his teacher Salvatore Meluzzi (1813–1897)—an advocate for sacred music revival—as well as composers from the so-called Roman school, including Ettore Pinelli (1843–1915), Stanislao Falchi (1851–1922), and Giovanni Sgambati (1841–1914).⁴ Although all were engaged in early music revivalism, their primary focus remained composition and its teaching rather than vocal pedagogy. This environment suggests that *Arie Antiche* was conceived as a cultural homage to early Italian repertoire, not as instructional material for novice singers.

To investigate the discrepancy between the anthology's original intention and its later pedagogical use, I combine primary source research with a historical-hermeneutic approach. My aim is to situate the anthology within three interwoven frameworks: first, the history of vocal pedagogy; second, the turn-of-the-century musical taste; and third, early Italian musicology. This approach is necessary in part because Parisotti remains a relatively obscure figure in the scholarly literature, often overshadowed by better-known contemporaries. Moreover, current musicological studies tend to critique his editorial work as a Romantic-era distortion of Baroque music, while largely overlooking the anthology's subsequent pedagogical afterlife.⁵

I therefore seek to clarify Parisotti's possible intentions by examining his biography, professional career, and intellectual environment, as well as his editorial approach to Baroque repertoire and the limited sources to which he may have had access.⁶ In parallel, I investigate the history of vocal pedagogy and late 19th-century musical taste by analysing both contemporary pedagogical treatises and the repertoire widely appreciated by the public during this period.⁷

3 See Alessandro Parisotti, *Arie Antiche*, 3 Vol., Milan: Ricordi 1885–1898.

4 Regarding Salvatore Meluzzi and Parisotti's collegial environment at the Academy of Santa Cecilia see Antonio Rostagno, "La 'nuova scuola' musicale a Roma: da insegnare una professione a educare all'arte", in: *Il Conservatorio di musica di Palermo nel contesto italiano ed europeo*, ed. by Giuseppe Collisani et al., Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore 2022, pp. 119–195, here pp. 120–147.

5 See, for example, Michael Talbot, *The Chamber Cantatas of Antonio Vivaldi*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press 2006, p. 21; and Margaret Murata, "'Wo die Zitronen blühn...': Re-Versions of Arie antiche", in: *Historical Musicology: Sources, Methods, Interpretations*, ed. by Stephen A. Crist and Roberta Montemorra Marvin, Rochester, NY: Univ. of Rochester Press 2004, pp. 330–355, here p. 332.

6 Primarily foreign editions of early Italian songs and miscellaneous manuscripts at the Academy of Santa Cecilia and national libraries of Florence and Venice. For another study which mentions Parisotti's sources for the first volume see again Murata, "'Wo die Zitronen blühn'" (like fn. 5) p. 350.

7 In the late 19th century, the decline of belcanto had been an issue discussed frequently by significant singing teachers such as Enrico delle Sedie (1824–1907), Liberio Vivarelli. See Marco Beghelli, "I trattati di canto. Una novità del Primo Ottocento", in: *Analecta Musicologica. Veröffentlichungen der Musikgeschichtlichen Abteilung des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom*, Vol. 50, Rom: Deutsches Historisches Institut 2013, pp. 121–132, here pp. 123–124.

This project thus aims to bridge the gap between Parisotti's musicological milieu and the subsequent misinterpretation of his edition's function in vocal instruction—especially in a context where late 19th-century vocal pedagogy relied primarily on exercises and inherited performance traditions, rather than on a historically grounded or canonized repertoire that was organized in a hierarchically structured manner.



Figure 1: Cover of the first book of Parisotti's *Arie Antiche*, published in Milan in 1885 (like fn. 3).

ORDINE DEL VOLUME		
FASCICOLO PRIMO.		
	Completo	Fascicoli
Gian Giacomo Carissimi (1604 (?) - 1674). Cenni biografici	Pag. 1	1
<i>Vittoria, vittoria!</i> Cantata	2	2
Marco Antonio Cesti (1620 - 1669 (?). Cenni biografici	7	7
<i>Intorno all'idol mio</i> . Aria	8	8
Giovanni Legrenzi (1625 - 1690). Cenni biografici	11	11
<i>Che fiero costume</i> . Arietta	12	12
Giovanni Maria Bononcini (1640 - 1703). Cenni biografici	17	17
<i>Deh più a me non v'ascondete</i> . Arietta	18	18
Alessandro Scarlatti (1659 - 1725). Cenni biografici	21	21
<i>O cessate di piagarmi</i> . Arietta	22	22
<i>Se Florindo è fedele</i> . - Arietta	24	24
<i>Son tutta duolo</i> . Aria	28	28
<i>Spesso vibra per suo gioco</i> . Canzonetta	31	31
<i>Se tu della mia morte</i> . Aria	34	34
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FASCICOLO SECONDO.		
Antonio Vivaldi (16... - 1743). Cenni biografici . . . . .	37	1
<i>Un certo non so che</i> . Arietta . . . . .	38	2
Antonio Lotti (1667 - 1740). Cenni biografici . . . . .	43	7
<i>Pur dicesti, bocca bella</i> . Arietta . . . . .	44	8
Antonio Caldara (1671 - 1763). Cenni biografici . . . . .	49	13
<i>Sebben crudele</i> . Canzonetta . . . . .	50	14
<i>Selve amiche</i> . Arietta . . . . .	54	18
<i>Come raggio di sol</i> . Aria . . . . .	57	21
Domenico Scarlatti (1683 - 1757). Cenni biografici . . . . .	59	23
<i>Consolati e spera</i> . Aria . . . . .	60	24
Giorgio Federico Händel (1684 - 1759). Cenni biografici . . . . .	65	29
<i>Affanni del pensier</i> . Arietta . . . . .	66	30
<i>Ah mio ben schernilo sei</i> . Aria . . . . .	69	33
Benedetto Marcello (1686 - 1739). Cenni biografici . . . . .	73	37
<i>Quella fiamma che m'accende</i> . Recitativo e Aria . . . . .	74	38
Leonardo Leo (1694 - 1745). Cenni biografici . . . . .	79	43
<i>Dal tuo soglio luminoso</i> . Duetto . . . . .	80	44
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Figure 2: Content of the first book of Parisotti's *Arie Antiche*.

Content and Structure of the Poster

I structured my poster in two horizontally divided blocks, offering a concise visual overview of the dissertation. The content was organized into three thematic sections:

1. Historical Background and Editorial Context
2. Main Research Questions and the Disjunction Between Intention and Reception
3. Preliminary Findings and Implications for Vocal Pedagogy

The first section presented Parisotti's biography and intellectual environment, highlighting his work not as a vocal pedagogue but as a composer and musicologist. Attention was given to his studies with Meluzzi and his collaboration with chamber composers and scholars of the Roman school. I also included musicologists such as Oscar Chilesotti (1848–1912) and Luigi Torchi (1854–1925), whose scholarly editions of early music shaped the broader discourse of the time.⁸ These references served to position *Arie Antiche* within a historiographic and revivalist tradition, rather than a didactic one.

The second section raised two guiding questions:

1. What might have been Parisotti's motivations in compiling the anthology, given his background and the cultural context?
2. How were those motivations received—or misunderstood—within early 20th-century vocal pedagogy?

To illustrate the shift in function, I highlighted how *Arie Antiche* entered conservatory curricula largely stripped of its historical context. The term "*exhumation*" derives from Parisotti's own preface, in which he describes his aim to revive "forgotten" early Italian songs. The word "*exigency*" also appears in the preface to the third volume, where Parisotti uses it in reference to the demands of public taste.⁹ By reintroducing this term in the context of vocal pedagogy, I aim to emphasize the shift in its meaning—from an appeal to contemporary audience preferences to a reflection of institutional needs for accessible early repertoire in singing education.

The third section reflected on the editorial and pedagogical implications of this transformation. For example, I included a table of contents from the anthology showing frequent misattributions and 19th-century categorizations applied to Baroque material. I also noted the dedication of all three volumes to Margherita di Savoia, the first Queen of Italy and an amateur singer, which suggests a social and salon-oriented function. Respectively Parisotti, especially in the first volume, republished a repertoire that had already been widely performed in salon and society concerts across Germany, France, and England, presenting this European canon without acknowledging its prior transnational circulation, and framing it instead as a forgotten body of work newly rediscovered in the Roman archives.¹⁰

Based on this preliminary inquiry, I argue that *Arie Antiche* was likely compiled for salon performance and amateur use, not formal vocal instruction. However, its later incorporation into conservatory education coincided with renewed interest in early Italian vocal ideals, particularly in reaction to the

8 Being the leading researcher and collectors of the early Italian musicological scholarship, Oscar Chilesotti and Luigi Torchi published transcriptions of 16 and 17th-century vocal and chamber music in collections such as *Biblioteca di rarità musicali* (1883–1915) and *L'arte musicale in Italia* (1898–1907). For further information see Alberto Basso, "Luigi Torchi e la musicologia italiana del suo tempo", in: *Recerca Musicologica* XI–XII (1991–1992), pp. 231–241, here pp. 236–237.

9 In the preface to the first volume, Parisotti describes his work as follows: "I collected the arias from old manuscripts and editions that had long been forgotten, and I must admit that in this exhumation work a great deal of material was offered to me" [transl. by the author] Parisotti, *Arie Antiche* (like fn. 3), Vol. 1, 1885. By the third volume, his aim appears to have shifted: he intended to "provide new materials to scarcely attended or ignored salon music, whose absence was widely felt", seeing it as worthwhile "to make use of the old works, adapted to the exigencies of our days, until the deficiency of modern pieces could be remedied" [transl. by the author] Parisotti, *Arie Antiche* (like fn. 3), Vol. 3, 1898.

10 See Murata, "'Wo die Zitronen blühen'" (like fn. 5), p. 332.

decline of *bel canto* and the rise of *verismo*.¹¹ Despite clear mismatches between Parisotti's editorial practice and pedagogical demands, his editions became canonical for beginner singers from the final decades of the 19th century onward.

Refining the Project Through Presentation

Preparing the poster compelled me to distil the core of my dissertation into a format accessible to a general musicological audience. This process clarified the framing of my central research question and highlighted areas that needed greater precision, particularly regarding the theoretical use of the terms "exhumation" and "exigency". It also helped me articulate the historical gap between Parisotti's motivations and the later reception of his collection.

The synthesis of visual and textual materials drew my attention to the editorial and material dimensions of the anthology. This led me to consider a future chapter focused on paratextual and visual strategies, such as title pages, prefatory texts, and performance indications in reprints. Although often seen as peripheral, these elements are crucial for understanding the evolving context and reception of the anthology.

While no formal feedback was recorded during the session, the act of designing the poster and anticipating scholarly engagement contributed significantly to the ongoing refinement of the dissertation's structure and focus. It also inspired new ideas for presenting Parisotti's editorial changes more concretely. For example, I could contrast melodic and harmonic alterations with later pedagogical markings or compare his editorial style to that of contemporary vocal pedagogues. Finally, the informal exchanges with colleagues reaffirmed the relevance of my topic for current debates on historically informed performance and the evolution of voice curricula.

Outlook

This poster presentation represented a significant step in the early dissemination of my dissertation research. The process of distilling complex source material and historiographical questions into a coherent visual format helped sharpen the conceptual contours of the project and clarified its interdisciplinary scope. The experience also opened several avenues for further development.

First, I intend to broaden the methodological framework of the dissertation by incorporating a more systematic approach to reception history and editorial theory. In particular, I aim to include a paratextual analysis—examining prefaces, editorial markings, and typographic features in both early and later editions of *Arie Antiche*—as a means of tracing shifts in pedagogical function and historical perception.

Second, I plan to conduct a comparative study of early 20th-century vocal pedagogy treatises, with a focus on how anthologies such as *Arie Antiche* were framed, legitimized, and integrated into institutional teaching. From the late 19th century onward, treatises by prominent voice teachers began

11 See Marco Beghelli, "Il 'do di petto'. Dissacrazione di un mito", in: *Il Saggiatore musicale*, 3/1 (1996), pp. 105–149, here p. 128.

to incorporate early Italian songs, which suggests changing pedagogical values. Analysing these sources will help clarify the mechanisms through which Parisotti's editions were reinterpreted for didactic purposes that diverged from his original intentions.

Third, I aim to develop a publishable article focused on the editorial strategies and cultural motivations underlying the selection and alteration of arias in the anthology. Such a contribution would engage broader scholarly discussions on historical editions, canon formation, and the construction of vocal repertoire.

In the longer term, I plan to present aspects of this research at academic conferences dedicated to historical performance practice, music editing, and vocal studies. These forums may also offer opportunities for collaboration with scholars working at the intersection of archival research, pedagogy, and performance.

In summary, this poster presentation helped me develop new perspectives on the three core components of my methodology. It also reaffirmed the importance of integrating artistic and scholarly approaches in my work. As both a singer and a musicologist, I intend to continue examining how *Arie Antiche* circulates in contemporary vocal pedagogy and performance—and how a historically informed understanding of its origins might reshape interpretive and educational practices today.

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This report reflects the author's experience of composing and then presenting a poster presentation about her dissertation project at the Symposium der Jungen Musikwissenschaft in Salzburg, 18 October 2024.