

How to become a renowned writer:

Francesco Algarotti (1712-1764) and the uses of networking in
eighteenth-century Europe

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Abstract

Venetian polymath Francesco Algarotti (1712-1764) was an internationally-renowned intellectual in his time. In 1737, he published a wildly successful popularization of Newtonian science for women entitled *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, or *Newtonianism for the Ladies*. The fame he acquired after its appearance continued to increase over the course of his career, with the result that he was invited to join the court of Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia, and subsequently that of Augustus III of Saxony-Poland. In addition his sojourns at their respective courts in Berlin and Dresden, Algarotti travelled to and lived in many other European cultural centres, including Venice, Bologna, Rome, Paris, London, and St. Petersburg. Over the course of his travels, he forged friendships with many of the leading thinkers of the period, including Eustachio Manfredi, Francesco Maria Zanotti, Laura Bassi, Voltaire, Emilie du Châtelet, Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, Lord Hervey, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Antioch Cantemir. These contacts, and the numerous others he would come to form, would prove to be indispensable in the pursuit of his intellectual and financial goals. Algarotti's ambition was to become an internationally renowned writer. In a century in which scholarship was becoming increasingly international, and the market for, and reach of, printed material was considerably widened, aspiring writers faced both increased opportunities for fame and greater competition in securing the financial support they needed in order to pursue their art. Algarotti's example illuminates both the structures

behind these conditions, and the strategies that could be employed in order to negotiate them, in a pan-European context. As an examination of his activities reveals, the formation, expansion, and maintenance of one's networks was crucial to one's intellectual success in eighteenth-century Europe.

Résumé

Le penseur vénitien Francesco Algarotti (1712-1764) était un intellectuel de renommée internationale à son époque. En 1737, il a obtenu un franc succès en publiant un ouvrage de vulgarisation de la science newtonienne destiné à un public féminin, intitulé *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, ou *Le Newtonisme pour les dames*. La notoriété qu'Algarotti a acquise avec cette publication a continué d'augmenter tout au long de sa carrière, et il fut conséquemment invité à rejoindre la cour de Frédéric II (Le Grand) de Prusse, puis celle d'Auguste III de Saxe-Pologne. En plus de ses séjours aux cours respectives de Berlin et de Dresde, Algarotti a voyagé et vécu dans plusieurs autres centres culturels européens, y compris Venise, Bologne, Rome, Paris, Londres et Saint-Pétersbourg. Au cours de ses voyages, il a forgé des amitiés avec plusieurs des grands penseurs de son temps, parmi lesquels Eustachio Manfredi, Francesco Maria Zanotti, Laura Bassi, Voltaire, Émilie du Châtelet, Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, Lord Hervey, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu et Antioch Cantemir. Ces relations, ainsi que de nombreuses autres qu'il sera amené à développer, s'avèreront indispensables dans la poursuite de ses objectifs intellectuels et financiers. L'ambition d'Algarotti était de devenir un écrivain internationalement reconnu. Ce dernier a vécu au cours d'un siècle où le savoir devient de plus en plus international, un savoir à plus grande portée qui fait l'objet d'un marché, et dans lequel le monde de l'imprimé s'est considérablement développé. Les aspirants auteurs étaient confrontés, d'une part, à ces opportunités accrues d'acquérir la gloire, et d'autre part, à davantage de

compétition afin de dénicher le support financier nécessaire à la poursuite de leur art. L'exemple d'Algarotti met en lumière les structures qui sous-tendent ces conditions, de même que les stratégies qui pouvaient être employées afin de les négocier, dans un contexte pan-européen. Ainsi que le révèle une analyse de ses activités, la formation, l'expansion et le maintien de ses réseaux était cruciale afin d'assurer son succès intellectuel dans l'Europe du dix-huitième siècle.

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All translations from French and Italian to English are mine, unless otherwise indicated. All errors, either typographical or factual, are also my own.

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List of Abbreviations

Biblioteche Comunali di Treviso:	BCT
Museo Biblioteca Archivio di Bassano del Grappa:	MBAB
Museo Civico Correr:	MCC
World Biographical Information System:	WBIS

Introduction: Algarotti's place in the history of eighteenth-century Europe

When the gay Sun no more his Rays shall boast,
And human Eyes their Faculty have lost;
Then shall these Colours and these Opticks die,
Thy Wit and Learning in Oblivion Lie;
England no more record her Newton's Fame,
And Algarotti be an unknown name.

-Lord Hervey, 1739¹

As Lord Hervey's words make plain, Venetian polymath Francesco Algarotti (1712-1764) was an internationally-renowned intellectual in his time. The initial catalyst for this fame was the publication in 1737 of his wildly successful popularization of Newtonian science for women entitled *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, or *Newtonianism for the Ladies*.² Newtonian science was a central topic of debate in the learned circles of Europe at this time, and Algarotti's work was among the first popularizations of Newton's principles to appear on the Continent. The *Newtonianismo* has been described as one of the most famous books in the eighteenth century.³ Translated into Russian before it was even published, and into English, French, Swedish, German, and Portuguese shortly thereafter, by 1812, it had also gone through sixteen Italian-language editions. The renown Algarotti acquired after its appearance only continued to increase over the course of his career, with the result that he was invited to join

¹ In Francesco Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame, ovvero dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione. Novella edizione emendata ed accresciuta* (Naples: Giambattista Pasquali, 1739), pages unnumbered.

² ———, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame, ovvero dialoghi sopra la luce e i colori* (Naples, 1737).

³ Franco Arato, *Il secolo delle cose: scienza e storia in Francesco Algarotti* (Genova: Marietti, 1991), 55.

the court of Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia, and subsequently that of Augustus III of Saxony-Poland. In addition to these, Algarotti travelled to and lived in many other European intellectual centres, including Venice, Bologna, Rome, Paris, London, and St. Petersburg. He was well-received by scholarly circles in all the places to which he travelled, something that was perhaps facilitated by his ability to speak several languages, including Italian, French, English, and Greek. Over the course of his travels, he forged friendships with many of the leading thinkers of the period, including Eustachio Manfredi, Francesco Maria Zanotti, Laura Bassi, Voltaire, Emilie du Châtelet, Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, Lord Hervey, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Antioch Cantemir. These friendships, many of which he maintained throughout his life, would prove to be of indispensable use in the pursuit of his intellectual and financial goals.

Algarotti's ambition was to become an internationally renowned writer, a goal that he achieved. Over the course of his career, he wrote thirty-eight works on a wide array of topics, including Newtonian science, the fine arts, poetry, linguistic theory, military strategy, and history.⁴ Given the fame he acquired, an analysis of his activities can reveal a great deal about intellectual and cultural conditions in eighteenth-century Europe, all the more so because he lived and operated in so many different cities. Examining how he came to gain the renown that he did offers an opportunity to learn how intellectuals went about making international careers for themselves. Indeed, Algarotti's life provides an excellent example of the conditions faced by aspiring authors in eighteenth-century Europe,

⁴ Number based on the Table of Contents for Francesco Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1791-1794).

and the strategies that could be used to negotiate these conditions, both in the context of the Italian peninsula and of other European centres.

Historiography of Algarotti

In a letter written to Frederick II in 1742, Algarotti speculated on what kinds of studies would be undertaken about him by future historians: “What kinds of things will be said about me, and what kinds of research will be undertaken on me? My name will always be known to men; my name will live on next to that of Your Majesty...”⁵ However, contrary to Algarotti’s expectations, the extent to which he has been studied by historians is not commensurate to the renown he had in his lifetime. He has been the subject of articles and book chapters. The vast majority of these deal with either his scientific activities, particularly in relation to his *Il Newtonianismo per le dame* and its place in the history of eighteenth-century science,⁶ or with the ideas he expounded on in various fields

⁵ “Quels commentaires et quelles recherches ne ferait-on sur moi? Je serais perpétuellement dans les bouches des hommes; mon nom vivrait à côté de celui de V[otre] M[ajesté]....” Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1851), 46, Francesco Algarotti to Frederick II, Dresden 2 May 1742.

⁶ Franco Arato, “Minerva and Venus: Algarotti's *Newton's Philosophy for the Ladies*.” In *Men, Women, and the Birthing of Modern Science*, edited by Judith Zinsser (De Kalb, IL: Illinois University Press, 2005), 111-120; Sarah Hutton, “Women, Science, and Newtonianism: Emilie du Châtelet versus Francesco Algarotti.” In *Newton and Newtonianism: New Studies*, edited by James E. and Sarah Hutton Force (Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 183-203; Massimo Mazzotti, “Newton for Ladies: Gentility, Gender and Radical Culture,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 37, no. 2 (2004): 119-46; Moira R. Rogers, *Newtonianism for the ladies and other uneducated souls: the popularization of science in Leipzig, 1687-1750*, Women in German literature; vol. 6. (New York: P. Lang, 2003); Andrea Cannas, “Francesco Algarotti tra scienza e letteratura,” *Annali della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell'Università di Cagliari: nuova serie* 57, no. 2 (2002): 41-62; Philippe Hamou, “Algarotti vulgarisateur.” In *Cirey dans la vie intellectuelle : la réception de Newton en France*, edited by François de Gandt, (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2001), 73-89; Gian Franco Frigo, “Newton per le dame: il contributo di Francesco Algarotti alla diffusione della scienza nel settecento.” In *Giuseppe Tolado e il suo tempo nel bicentenario della morte. Scienze e lumi tra veneto e europa. Atti del convegno*.

of art.⁷ Other articles have dealt with his relationships with illustrious people⁸ and his travels in Russia.⁹ Articles comparing his contemporary fame to that he had achieved in the eighteenth century have also been written, although the most recent of these was published in 1950.¹⁰

Algarotti has been the subject of relatively few monographs. Only two full biographies of Algarotti have ever been written, one appearing in 1770, the other, in 1913. A handful of monographs dealing with specific aspects of his work appeared in the twentieth century, but these are mainly concerned with

Padova, 10-13 novembre 1997, edited by Luisa Pigatto (Cittadella: Bertinocello Artigrafiche, 2000), 521-541; Marta Féher, "The Triumphal March of a Paradigm: A Case Study of the Popularization of Newtonian Science," *Tractrix* 2, (1990): 93-110; Mauro de Zan, "La Mesa all'Indice del Newtonianismo per le dame di Francesco Algarotti." In *Scienza e letteratura nella cultura italiana del settecento* edited by Renzo Cremante and Walter Tega (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984), 133-147; L. Bailo, "I manoscritti di Francesco Algarotti e i prismi di Newton," *Bibliofilo* 5, no. 2 (1884): 23-24.

⁷ Jaynie Anderson, "Count Francesco Algarotti as an Advisor to Dresden." In *Il Collezionismo a Venezia e nel Veneto ai tempi della serenissima*, edited by Bernard Aikema. (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 2005), 275-286; Lucia Faedo, "Francesco Algarotti conservateur à Dresde avant Winckelmann: remarques sur un parcours intellectuel." In *Entretiens de la Garenne Lemot. Winckelmann et le retour de l'antique. (Actes du colloque 9 au 12 juin 1994)*, 153-71; Michael Levy, "Two Paintings by Tiepolo from the Algarotti Collection," *The Burlington Magazine* 102, no. 687 (1960): 250-255, 257; Emil Kaufmann, "At an Eighteenth Century Crossroads: Algarotti vs. Lodoli," *Journal of the American Society of Architectural Historians* 4, no. 2 (1944): 23-29; Guido Ludovici, "Algarotti e la critica," *Ateneo Veneto* (1939): 198-203.

⁸ Maria Grazia Dongu, "How Far the Madding Crowd? Gray, Algarotti, and the European Republic of Letters." In *"Better in France?": the circulation of ideas across the Channel in the eighteenth century*, edited by Frédéric Ogée (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), 252-68; Ivana Miatto, "Alcuni documenti inediti sullo stretto sodalizio tra Francesco Algarotti e Giambattista Tiepolo," *Ricerche di storia dell'arte* no. 61 (1997): 93-101; Haydon Trevor Mason, "Algarotti and Voltaire." In *Mélanges à la mémoire de Franco Simone : France et Italie dans la culture européenne*, vol. 2 (Geneva: Editions Slatkine, 1980), 467-80; Aurelio Lepre, "Federico il Grande e l'Algarotti," *Belfagor: Rassegna di varia umanità* XVI (1961): 284-97; Carlo Calcaterra, "Madama du Boccage e Francesco Algarotti: *La Colombiade*: Tradotta da undici accademici trasformati." In *Il Barocco in Arcadia e altri scritti sul settecento* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, editore, 1950).

⁹ Robert Bufalini, "The Czarina's Russia Through Mediterranean Eyes: Francesco Algarotti's Journey to Saint Petersburg," *MLN* 121, no. 1 (2006): 154-66; Giorgio Maria Nicolai, "Francesco Algarotti." In *Il Grande orso bianco: viaggiatori italiani in Russia* (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1999), 180-96.

¹⁰ Carlo Calcaterra, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della nascita." In *Il Barocco in Arcadia e altri scritti sul settecento* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, editore, 1950); Marco Padoa, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della sua nascita," *Ateneo Veneto* Anno XXXVI-Vol11- Fasc 1 e 2, gennaio-aprile, (1913): 5-23.

analysing the contents of his works rather than with analysing the circumstances that surrounded their production. No English-language monograph having Algarotti as its primary subject has ever been written.

The first biography of Algarotti was Domenico Michelessi's 1770 *Memorie intorno alla vita ed agli scritti del Conte Francesco Algarotti, Ciambellano di S.M. il re di Prussia e Cavalier del Merito ec.*¹¹ Published only six years after Algarotti's death, Michelessi states this his aim in writing the biography of this "valiant philosopher and Venetian poet who was the ornament of his homeland in his time" was to provide readers, particularly those of future generations, with an example to emulate.¹² Indeed, Michelessi thought highly of Algarotti, noting that he did not presume to be able to add to Algarotti's reputation with his work because it was already so great.¹³ Michelessi's desire to provide a role model for readers in Algarotti naturally influenced his work, both in terms of content and in terms of the manner in which this content was conveyed. The work consists of an account of all the accomplishments and activities for which Michelessi thought Algarotti should be considered admirable. Every aspect of Algarotti's life, including his personality, is described in the most positive light possible. Issues of objectivity aside, while this work provides numerous details on Algarotti's activities, it does not provide an analysis of their significance in terms of the history of the eighteenth century.

¹¹ Domenico Michelessi, *Memorie intorno alla vita ed agli scritti del Conte Francesco Algarotti, Ciambellano di S.M. il re di Prussia e Cavalier del Merito ec.* (Venice: Giambattista Pasquali, 1770).

¹² "...un valente filosofo, e poeta Viniziano, ch'è stato a' giorni nostri l'ornamento della sua patria..." Ibid., IV.

¹³ "...il che non fo [sic] già per presunzione di aggiungere cosa alcuna alla riputazione di quell'uomo distinto" (Ibid., V).

The second, and only other, full biography of Algarotti to be written is Ida Frances Treat's 1913 *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle: Francesco Algarotti*.¹⁴ Treat's biography takes a different approach to Algarotti's life than that of Michelessi. As she states in her introduction, the goal of her study was to create a bank of biographical information on Algarotti.¹⁵ As a result, her work is, for the most part, descriptive rather than analytical. In discussing her motivations for undertaking this study, she notes that she considers Algarotti to be representative of his age.¹⁶ While she does provide some background information on intellectuals in Italy with a view to demonstrating that Algarotti was representative of these,¹⁷ she does not show explicitly how this is the case. However, true to her intentions, her account does provide a wealth of details on Algarotti's activities.

These two biographies aside, a handful of works, all of them published in the twentieth century, deal with specific aspects of Algarotti's life. Although they differed in terms of the material they dealt with, many of these studies, particularly those written in the earlier part of the century, had a common goal: to reinstate Algarotti as a renowned eighteenth-century intellectual. Following the appearance of Michelessi's book, with the exception of two of articles,¹⁸ no study of Algarotti or his work was published for over one hundred years, a trend that early twentieth century scholars of Algarotti hoped to reverse.

¹⁴ Ida Frances Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle: Francesco Algarotti* (Trévoux: Imprimerie Jules Jeannin, 1913).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁸ Achille Neri, "Francesco Algarotti diplomatico," *Archivio storico italiano, serie IV* (1886).; L. Bailo, "I manoscritti di Francesco Algarotti e i prismi di Newton," *Bibliofilo* 5, no. 2 (1884).

The first book dealing with a specific aspect of Algarotti's life to appear in the twentieth century was Margherita Siccardi's 1911 *L'Algarotti critico e scrittore di belle arti*.¹⁹ In its introduction, Siccardi expresses her dismay that Algarotti had become so little known, and announces her hope that his fortunes would experience a turn-around.²⁰ For Siccardi, Algarotti's most important contributions were those he made in the fields of aesthetics and art criticism.²¹ The principle aim of her work is to describe how Algarotti came to acquire his artistic taste.²² Accordingly, her work consists of an account of Algarotti's activities, and a brief examination of his works, in the field of fine arts. Although Siccardi's work reveals a great deal about the reception of Algarotti's various works on this subject and demonstrates how they fit into the eighteenth century world of aesthetics, she does not explain their significance in the context of the larger intellectual culture of the period.

Thirteen years later, in his *L'estetica di F. Algarotti*,²³ Aldo Ambrogio also dealt with the topic of Algarotti's views on aesthetics. Like Siccardi, Ambrogio lamented the fact that Algarotti no longer enjoyed the fame he once had.²⁴ Similarly to Siccardi, Ambrogio felt that Algarotti's greatest contributions were those he had made to aesthetics, and chides historians and philosophers in this field for not recognizing the Venetian's importance.²⁵ However, his study goes beyond that of Siccardi in that it is a comprehensive analysis of Algarotti's

¹⁹ Margherita Siccardi, *L'Algarotti critico e scrittore di belle arti* (Asti: Paglieri & Raspi, 1911).

²⁰ Ibid., I.

²¹ Ibid., 2.

²² Ibid., 2.

²³ Aldo Ambrogio, *L'estetica di F. Algarotti* (Siracusa: Stab. Tip. Cav. S. Santoro, 1924).

²⁴ Ibid., 31.

²⁵ Ibid., 31.

aesthetic views in several fields, ranging from art to poetry to language. He also provides an account of how Algarotti's aesthetic views compared to those current in the 1920s.

An entirely different aspect of Algarotti's life was dealt with by historian Francesco Viglione in his 1919 work, *L'Algarotti e l'Inghilterra (dai manoscritti del British Museum)*.²⁶ Viglione shared Siccardi's and Ambrogio's dismay at Algarotti's loss of renown, and marveled at the lack of attention Algarotti had received from historians.²⁷ Motivated by his belief that Algarotti preferred England to all the other places to which he had travelled,²⁸ Viglione focuses on Algarotti's English experiences. In addition to providing an account of Algarotti's activities in England, Viglione deals extensively with Algarotti's views on English life and literature. Viglione also discusses at length the friendships Algarotti formed with various English men and women. However, rather than analyzing how he came to form these friendships, and what they meant in terms of Algarotti's career, he focuses on the details of them, and the feelings each party involved felt for the other.

Following this, no monograph making Algarotti its primary focus was published until 1991, when Franco Arato's *Il secolo delle cose: scienza e storia in Francesco Algarotti* appeared.²⁹ In the interim, Algarotti did pique the interest of some Italian students, who carried out extensive research on him. Arato's book

²⁶ Francesco Viglione, *L'Algarotti e l'Inghilterra (dai manoscritti del British Museum)* (Naples: Nicola Jovene, 1919).

²⁷ Ibid., 1.

²⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁹ Franco Arato, *Il secolo delle cose: scienza e storia in Francesco Algarotti* (Genova: Marietti, 1991).

was born of his 1989 doctoral dissertation on Algarotti, entitled "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)."³⁰ In 1994-1995, Ivana Miatto completed a *tesi di laurea* on Algarotti, entitled "Francesco Algarotti: ritratto di un dilettante cosmopolita attraverso il suo epistolario."³¹ Arato's focus, both in his thesis and book, was Algarotti's work in science and history. In contrast, Miatto's thesis dealt with what she considered to be the most significant episodes of Algarotti's life, particularly those relating to his work and activities in the world of art.³² While both provide a wealth of details on Algarotti's activities, their analyses focus primarily on the contents and literary context of those of his works with which they are most concerned rather than on his place in the intellectual history of eighteenth-century Europe.

In addition to works dealing primarily with specific contributions of Algarotti's, some comparative studies involving Algarotti have also been undertaken. The first, Robert Buffalini's 1990 doctoral dissertation, "To the Eastern Edges of Europe: The Travels of Francesco Algarotti, Ruggerio Boscovich, and Saverio Scrofani," deals with Algarotti's views on Russia as compared to those of Boscovich and Scrofani.³³ The second, Emilio Mazza's *Falsi e cortesi: pregiudizi, stereotipi e caratteri nazionali in Montesquieu, Hume e Algarotti*, examines each thinker's thoughts on the origin of national

³⁰ Franco Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)" (Dottore di ricerca dissertation, Università degli studi di Torino; Università degli studi di Genova, 1989).

³¹ Ivana Miatto, "Francesco Algarotti: ritratto di un dilettante cosmopolita attraverso il suo epistolario" (Tesi di laurea, Università degli studi di Venezia Ca'Foscari, 1994-1995).

³² *Ibid.*, 8.

³³ Robert Bufalini, "To the Eastern Edges of Europe: The Travels of Francesco Algarotti, Ruggerio Boscovich, and Saverio Scrofani" (PhD Dissertation, Brown University, 1990).

characteristics in comparison with that of the others.³⁴ While these works do provide insight into how Algarotti's thoughts on these particular subjects compare with those of his contemporaries, they do so at the expense of examining how Algarotti fit into the larger picture of eighteenth-century intellectual culture.

Why study Algarotti?

As noted in a recent article by Mary Terrall, studying a person's life can give insight into the structures within which that person operated, and the larger trends of which he or she was a part.³⁵ In recent years, historians of science have increasingly been making use of the lives of individuals who are not well known today as a lens through which to examine larger issues in the history of science. In her 1996 study of Jean-Jacques Dortous de Mairan, Ellen McNiven Hine examines her subject's correspondence with a view to shedding light on the importance of correspondence in eighteenth-century intellectual life, and on the scientific debates of the period in which he lived, while simultaneously providing details on his personal contribution to the history of science.³⁶ Terrall accomplishes a similar aim in her 2002 study of mathematician and man of letters Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis.³⁷ In addition to providing an account of Maupertuis's activities in the intellectual world of eighteenth-century Europe, her

³⁴ Emilio Mazza, *Falsi e cortesi: pregiudizi, stereotipi e caratteri nazionali in Montesquieu, Hume e Algarotti* (Milan: Editore Ulrico Hoepli, 2002).

³⁵ Mary Terrall, "Biography as Cultural History of Science," *Isis* 97 (2006): 307.

³⁶ Ellen McNiven Hine, *Jean-Jacques Dortous de Mairan and the Geneva Connection: Scientific Networking in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1996), 4-5.

³⁷ Mary Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth: Maupertuis and the Sciences in the Enlightenment* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

study also illuminates the larger issues of that world, particularly in terms of how one could become a scientist, and what it meant to be a scientist, in this period.³⁸

In his 2007 study of mathematician Maria Gaetana Agnesi, Massimo Mazzotti aims to provide biographical information on Agnesi while at the same time using her life as an example through which to examine the larger themes and issues connected with the Catholic Enlightenment in Italy.³⁹ Paola Bertucci takes a similar approach in her 2007 *Viaggio nel paese delle meraviglie: scienza e curiosità nell'Italia del Settecento*, in which she examines the experimental physicist Abbé Jean Antoine Nollet's seven-month trip to Italy in 1749.⁴⁰ By investigating this specific part of Nollet's life, she is able to illuminate larger issues behind the culture of experimental science in Italy in the eighteenth century.⁴¹

Many of the scholars who wrote on Algarotti make a point of stating that Algarotti's life provides an excellent example of that of an eighteenth-century thinker.⁴² However, none of these authors devotes much space to demonstrating why this is so beyond discussing how he fit into the specific fields with which

³⁸ Ibid., 3, 10.

³⁹ Massimo Mazzotti, *The World of Maria Gaetana Agnesi, Mathematician of God* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), xiii.

⁴⁰ Paola Bertucci, *Viaggio nel paese delle meraviglie: scienza e curiosità nell'Italia del Settecento* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2007).

⁴¹ Ibid., 18-21. For more examples of this type of work, see Judith P. Zinsser, *La dame d'esprit: a biography of the Marquise Du Châtelet* (New York: Viking, 2006); L.W.B. Brockliss, *Calvert's Web: Enlightenment and the Republic of Letters in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Anita Guerrini, *Obesity and Depression in the Enlightenment: The Life and Times of George Cheyne* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000); Dora Weiner, *Comprendre et soigner: Philippe Pinel (1745-1826), le médecin de l'esprit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

⁴² Arato, *Il secolo delle cose: scienza e storia in Francesco Algarotti*, 9; Miatto, "Francesco Algarotti: ritratto di un dilettante cosmopolita attraverso il suo epistolario," 7-8; Viglione, *L'Algarotti e l'Inghilterra (dai manoscritti del British Museum)*, 2; Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle: Francesco Algarotti*, 8.

they are concerned. By examining Algarotti's life in light of the example provided by McNiven Hine, Terrall, Mazzotti, Bertucci, and others, rather than focusing on his work in a specific field, it quickly becomes evident that his case can illuminate a great deal about the means by which, and the structures within which, one could become a renowned author in eighteenth-century Europe.

Intellectual glory: what Algarotti wanted

Following the publication of his *Il Newtonianismo*, Francesco Algarotti wanted to capitalize on his rising renown by travelling to England in search of financial support, either in the form of patronage or that of a salaried position of some kind, so that he could pursue his career as a writer. However, his brother Bonomo, whose financial support Francesco required in order to undertake this venture, envisioned another future for him, one in which he would settle down in Venice and marry. In an effort to convince Bonomo to finance his travels, Francesco told his brother that, if his ventures were unsuccessful, he would happily accept “to tranquilly spend the rest of my life enjoying that mediocrity” that Bonomo had in mind for him.⁴³ Clearly, after the attention he had received for his *Il Newtonianismo*, the idea of a quiet life in Venice had become unacceptable to Francesco. Encouraged by the recognition he had gained, he wanted to make every effort to increase his fame, and would continue to do so for the remainder of his career.

⁴³ “...a passare tranquilmente il resto della mia vita godendo di quella mediocrità...” Biblioteche Comunali di Treviso MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 13 March 1738.

The eighteenth century brought with it increased opportunities for fame. Prior to this time, fame, or the state of being known outside of one's family and class, had been a distinction usually reserved for monarchs and ruling aristocrats.⁴⁴ However, the major economic, political, and social changes that took place in Europe during this century resulted in a greater democratization of fame.⁴⁵ Because societies were no longer as rigidly divided along class lines as they had been, the possibility of becoming famous became open to a much larger number of people. That fame is very closely tied to publicity also contributed to this increase in possibilities for fame in the eighteenth century. The media through which one could publicize one's self, such as books, pamphlets, and portraits, were more rapidly, and more widely, available, both geographically and socially, than ever before.⁴⁶

Algarotti wanted to achieve lasting fame through his writing. However, most could scarcely make a living, in the financial sense, as a writer in the eighteenth century,⁴⁷ and Algarotti was no exception. Because the cultural authority of the economic elite was waning in this period, seeking the support of a wealthy patron, the traditional path of those seeking to pursue such a career, was

⁴⁴ Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 14, 371. Many studies dealing with fame, particularly in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century, have been undertaken in recent years. See, for example, Tom Mole, ed., *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850* (Cambridge & New York : Cambridge University Press, 2009) and Claire Brock, *The Feminization of Fame, 1750-1830* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁴⁵ Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 7, 14.

⁴⁶ Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 3, 7, 14, 377. This increased circulation of forms of publicity gave rise to a new type of audience: the fan, who, rather than passively admiring the famous individual, plays an active role in defining that person's renown by, among other things, commenting on their achievements (Ibid., 380-381).

⁴⁷ Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 3.

becoming an increasingly less viable option.⁴⁸ Accordingly, most writers were required to seek employment of some kind in order to pursue their art.⁴⁹ Some taught at universities or academies or worked in aristocratic or institutional libraries. Others took positions within the church.⁵⁰ The need for financial support was a constant impediment to Algarotti's career, and the search for it strongly influenced his decisions regarding where to take up residence throughout his life.

Money aside, Algarotti had other factors to consider in his quest for lasting international fame. One of these was the need to prove his intellectual abilities in order to gain access to the circles of the intellectual and cultural elite. Indeed, credentials of this kind were essential to any person with his agenda.⁵¹ Another was the provision of services to other scholars. Not only could doing this gain one the favour of the intellectuals assisted, it could also contribute to one's renown.⁵² Helping other erudites could be as significant a contributing factor to one's reputation as illustrious as the written works they produced.⁵³ As an examination of the strategies Algarotti made use of in order to advance his career and increase his fame demonstrates, these considerations were ever-present in his mind.

⁴⁸ Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 363.

⁴⁹ Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*, 3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵¹ Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 11.

⁵² Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*, 153.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 152-153.

The importance of networks: the tactics Algarotti made use of in trying to achieve his goals

Algarotti employed numerous different tactics in his attempts to increase his fame and advance his career.⁵⁴ In studying these, it becomes evident that he considered networks to play a crucial role in this process.⁵⁵ Indeed, networks played an important role in the establishment of a reputation for one's self in the eighteenth century scholarly world. Establishing a network could enable one to obtain information of an intellectual nature as well as secure recommendations that would help them obtain a paying position, or at least establish a relationship with someone who could provide them with such a position.⁵⁶ The boost to the reputation that came from being known to be an associate of a well-recognized individual could do a great deal to multiply one's chances of success in intellectual endeavours, as well as to increase one's opportunities for securing financial backing of some kind.⁵⁷ Certainly, the acquisition of renown is closely related to the building of networks. In fact, the two are almost synonymous: the more extensive one's networks, the greater their renown. As a correlate, the

⁵⁴ Many of the tactics that Algarotti would make use of were also employed by several other scholars, both men and women, in trying to advance their careers. However, given that women faced greater restrictions than men did in trying to establish scholarly careers for themselves, they had to adapt these strategies in order to suit the conditions they faced. For an account of the tactics used by an Italian woman contemporary of Algarotti's in trying to establish her scholarly career, see Paula Findlen, "Science as a Career in Enlightenment Italy: The Strategies of Laura Bassi," *Isis* 84, no. 3 (1993).

⁵⁵ For an account of how women of letters formed networks in the eighteenth century, and of how they made use of them, see Susan Dalton, *Engendering the Republic of Letters: Reconnecting Public and Private Spheres in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

⁵⁶ Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, "The Universal Republic of the Freemasons and the Culture of Mobility in the Enlightenment," *French Historical Studies* 29, no. 3 (2006): 411.

⁵⁷ Daniel Roche, *Humeurs vagabondes: De la circulation des hommes et de l'utilité des voyages* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 706.

greater one's renown, the greater the ease with which they could expand their networks. All the strategies that Algarotti employed in order to make a name for himself involved, or hinged on, the expansion of his networks. This being the case, an examination of his activities can reveal a great deal about the mechanics of networking among intellectuals in the eighteenth century: how networks were formed, how they were maintained, and what benefits networks could bring to their members.

Algarotti made use of his networks at every stage of his career in two principle ways: as intermediaries through which he could be introduced to new contacts and as intermediaries through which to advertise his knowledge and talents both in published works and through letters. Indeed, networks played a crucial role in his ability to make a name for himself, and he expended a great deal of energy expanding the base of contacts who could help him achieve his goals. To this end, Algarotti employed several tactics, which he adapted to fit the different conditions he faced in the various places to which he travelled. These tactics fell into three categories. These, broadly defined, are association, print, and travel. Although many of the tactics he employed fell into more than one of the above categories, examining them in the context of these categories is a useful way to clarify how he made use of them.

Association, in the sense of collaboration, was an important aspect of anyone's career in the Republic of Letters. Scholars regularly made use of their contacts in order to exchange information, collaborate on various projects, and be introduced to other scholars who could help them with these two things, as well as

help them to advance their careers.⁵⁸ By helping associates in these ways, one could expect similar services in return. Providing each other with assistance of this kind helped to foster a sense of community among scholars,⁵⁹ thereby increasing the desire to provide mutual aid. In addition to this, association had another, more direct impact on the careers of scholars in the eighteenth century. The broader one's network of contacts, the greater the status accorded to that person as an intellectual.⁶⁰ Indeed, the networks one had managed to form with other scholars were an important determinant of one's reputation.⁶¹

Algarotti made use of association in order to expand his networks and increase his renown in a number of ways. The first was to make use of the people he knew as intermediaries through which to make the acquaintance of, and procure assistance from, others. Scholars often employed the services of intermediaries who were more well connected, and more renowned, than themselves to these ends.⁶² Direct benefits (ie the receipt of the assistance requested via the intermediary) aside, making use of intermediaries had another advantage for scholars. By making use of a more renowned scholar to secure favours, lesser-known intellectuals could demonstrate that they had a relationship with this person, suggesting that they themselves had some scholarly merit.⁶³ This perception would be further strengthened by the intermediaries themselves, who would usually provide an account of the intellectual qualities of the scholar

⁵⁸ Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*, 12-19.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 21, 25.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 30.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 31.

on whose behalf they acted to the person from whom the service was sought. Acting on behalf of another scholar could benefit the intermediary as well. By procuring assistance for a lesser-known intellectual, the intermediary could strengthen the tie between his or herself and that scholar. Interceding on someone's behalf also enabled the intermediary to strengthen his or her ties with the person from whom they requested the service.⁶⁴

Algarotti made use of his associates in this way by having introductions made on his behalf both in person and via letters of recommendation. In his *Pensieri diversi*, Algarotti stated that, "the merit of travellers is in inverse proportion to the letters of recommendation that they bring with them."⁶⁵ Despite this view, or perhaps because of it, Algarotti made use of letters of recommendation when he travelled early on in his career. Once he achieved a greater level of fame, he perpetuated this custom by fulfilling numerous requests for letters of recommendation on behalf of less well-known scholars and artists planning to travel.

Another way that Algarotti made use of association to attract the attention of people he wished to get to know was to highlight his relationships with people of note. One manner in which he did this was to make his association with certain groups, particularly learned academies, evident. Learned academies flourished in the Europe of the eighteenth century, with over seventy in existence by 1789.⁶⁶ In

⁶⁴ Ibid., 31-32.

⁶⁵ "Il merito delle persone che viaggiano sta nella inversa delle lettere di raccomandazione che portano." Francesco Algarotti, "Pensieri diversi," in *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 7* (Livorno: M. Coltellini, 1764-65), 37.

⁶⁶ Stéphane Van Damme, "'The World is too Large': Philosophical Mobility and Urban Space in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Paris," *French Historical Studies* 29, no. 3 (2006): 390.

order to increase their prestige, academies sought to add well-known travelling scholars to their membership.⁶⁷ Foreigners made up fifty seven percent of the membership of the Académie des sciences; for the Royal Society in London, this number was seventy percent, and for the Berlin Academy, sixty percent. Conversely, becoming a member of a learned academy enabled scholars to gain increased recognition.⁶⁸ Becoming a member of an academy could have monetary benefits as well. Academies could provide funding to their members, both in terms of regular salaries and of financial backing for specific projects. For Algarotti, the potential for income was among the greatest advantages that membership to an academy had to offer. In his *Pensieri diversi*, he noted that no great invention or classic work had come out of an academy, citing the examples of Copernicus and Kepler, who were not members of academies, and of Newton, who would not have been invited to join the Royal Society had he not made the discoveries he had.⁶⁹ However, he remarks, without the support of the Académie des sciences, Maupertuis would never have been able to undertake his trip to Lapland.⁷⁰

In spite of this opinion, Algarotti does not appear to have received financial backing of any kind from a learned academy over the course of his

⁶⁷ Roche, *Humeurs vagabondes*, 710.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 712. For information on the role of academies in the seventeenth century, see David Lux, "Societies, Circles, Academies, and Organizations: A Historiographical Essay on Seventeenth-Century Science," in *Revolution and continuity: essays in the history and philosophy of early modern science*, ed. Peter Barker and Roger Ariew (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1991).

⁶⁹ "Di niuna grande invenzione, di niuna opera classica siamo debitori all'Accademie... Il Copernico e il Keplero non furono già membri di veruna Accademia; il Neutono non entrò nella Società Reale di Londra se non dopo fatte su scoperte..." Algarotti, "Pensieri diversi," 24.

⁷⁰ "Ma è forza confessare che senza l'Accademia di Francia, il Maupertuis e il Bouguer non sarebbero andati quello al polo, questi sotto la linea a determinar la figura della Terra..." Ibid., 25.

career. However, his relationships to certain academies did bring him other benefits. His association with the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna, where he studied, and the Royal Society in London, of which he was a fellow, enabled him to make the acquaintance of other, more illustrious intellectuals. Algarotti's inclusion in these groups would have suggested to outsiders that their members thought his intellectual abilities equivalent to their own. This being the case, Algarotti's membership to these groups would have led admirers of them to become interested in making his acquaintance.

Algarotti also sought to draw attention to his relationships with various illustrious individuals, with the same aims in mind, and with similar results. Because the opinions of the renowned were accorded a great deal of value, association with them could give one the reputation of being a noteworthy scholar.⁷¹ Early in his career, being known as an associate, and favourite, of Francesco Maria Zanotti and of Eustachio Manfredi, helped him to expand his network of contacts in Italy. Similarly, the contacts he formed in France, such as that with Maupertuis, and in England, such as that with Antioch Cantemir, enabled him to meet other illustrious people. This trend continued throughout his life. Being a member first of the court of Frederick II, and later, of that of Augustus III of Saxony-Poland, also brought him a great deal of renown, enabling him to meet new people with greater ease. As was the case with his association with academies, highlighting his association with various illustrious people would lead admirers of these people to consider him worth getting to know.

⁷¹ Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*, 166.

Given that Algarotti's ambition was to be a writer, what he wanted to be best known for were his published works. That print was a medium through which intellectuals could increase their renown is obvious: by recording their thoughts and theories in print, intellectuals greatly expanded the potential audience for these ideas. In addition to this straightforward approach, Algarotti made use of print in various other ways in order to expand his networks and increase his fame. Many of these were closely tied to his use of association. One manner in which he made use of his networks in conjunction with print was to have his associates vouch for his work. In some instances, his associates would write introductory chapters for his works, such as was the case with his 1733 *Rime*,⁷² for which well-known Bolognese artist Giampietro Zanotti wrote the introduction. In others, he would have his associates send copies of his works to other illustrious scholars on his behalf, demonstrating that his associate, who would be known to the illustrious scholar in question, thought his work worth reading.

Another tactic Algarotti employed that involved both print and association was to use print in order to highlight his relationships with more renowned people. One of the ways in which he did this was to collaborate with influential people on works, either by preparing their works for publication, or by having his own work prepared for publication by them. In both cases, by having his name associated with that of the more illustrious person in print would demonstrate to the reader that Algarotti had a relationship with the other person in question, a

⁷² Francesco Algarotti, *Rime* (Bologna: Stamperia de L. dalla Volpe, 1733).

relationship that the other person valued enough to have it made manifest to the literate world in print.

Another manner in which Algarotti made his association with renowned people plain through print was to dedicate things to them. In the eighteenth century, particularly in Italy, dedications were a significant aspect of literary culture.⁷³ The first effort of this kind that he made was to write poetry in honour of his illustrious friends, some of which was published in his 1733 *Rime*. By publishing poetry of this kind, Algarotti was effectively advertising his friendships with them. At the same time, he was attracting a wider readership, as people who admired the dedicatees of his poems would be more likely to read poetry written in honour of the person they admired. He employed a similar tactic with the non-poetry books he wrote as well. Every book he wrote was dedicated to someone of note, often someone with whom he was already acquainted, such as Francesco Maria Zanotti, to whom he dedicated *Saggio sopra la durata de' regni de' re di Roma* in 1745,⁷⁴ and Frederick II, to whom he dedicated his 1750 *Dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione*.⁷⁵

⁷³ However, because they are often taken, correctly or incorrectly, to be insincere, dedications have not been the subject of many in-depth historical studies. See Maria Antonietta Terzoli, "Premessa," in *I margini del libro: indagine teorica e storica sui testi di dedica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Basilea, 21-23 novembre 2002*, ed. Maria Antonietta Terzoli (Rome; Padua: Editrice Antenore, 2004), VII-IX. For more on the place of dedications in Italian literary and cultural history from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, see Maria Antonietta Terzoli, ed., *I margini del libro: indagine teorica e storica sui testi di dedica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Basilea, 21-23 novembre 2002* (Rome; Padua: Editrice Antenore, 2004).

⁷⁴ Francesco Algarotti, "Saggio sopra la durata de' regni de' re di Roma," in *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 4* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1791). For more on dedications in the French context, see Roger Chartier, "Patron et dedicace," in *Culture écrite et société: L'ordre des livres (XIV^e-XVIII^e siècle)* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1996).

⁷⁵ Francesco Algarotti, *Dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione* (Berlin: Nella Reale stamperia di Gio: Goffredo Michaelis, 1750).

Algarotti also made use of print to attract the attention of those people he wished to meet. Many scholars sought to demonstrate their admiration of those more powerful and renowned than themselves in hopes of gaining their favour and financial support.⁷⁶ Dedicating a work to someone was one means of expressing one's esteem to that person in order to achieve these ends.⁷⁷ Dedicating a printed work to someone whose acquaintance he wished to make offered Algarotti the possibility of complimenting the dedicatee in a somewhat public forum. In cases where this attempt at flattery was successful, the dedicatee would be more likely to pay close attention to the work itself, as well as its author. In cases where gaining the attention of the dedicatee in this manner were unsuccessful, others, who were admirers of the dedicatee, would be more likely to read the work as a result. By dedicating his works to people who most intellectuals would have been sure to have heard of, he increased the size of the audience to which he could expose his abilities.

The ways in which Algarotti made use of travel in order to expand his networks and increase his renown were closely related to the ways in which he made use of association and print. In the eighteenth century, people travelled for a multitude of reasons, ranging from the desire to communicate in person with intellectuals and scientists to the desire to make money.⁷⁸ Both of these were motivations for Algarotti during his extensive travels.

⁷⁶ Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*, 166.

⁷⁷ Paolo Rambelli, "Autori e lettori nel secondo Settecento: il caso di Antonio Piazza," in *I margini del libro: indagine teorica e storica sui testi di dedica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Basilea, 21-23 novembre 2002*, ed. Maria Antonietta Terzoli (Rome; Padua: Editrice Antenore, 2004), 241.

⁷⁸ Margaret C. Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 12.

The eighteenth century saw an increase in international travel, and this increase in travel led to the development of the cosmopolitan ideal.⁷⁹ A cosmopolitan, or “citizen of the world,” was someone who actively sought out, and enjoyed, the company of people culturally different from themselves, and felt at home wherever they travelled.⁸⁰ Algarotti’s travels throughout Europe enabled him to build a reputation as a cosmopolitan while discussing his ideas, talents, and works in person with the intellectuals he met in the centres to which he travelled.

Travel also provided Algarotti with the opportunity to expand his networks. Scholars travelled for a number of reasons, including in order to collect material for a book, to purchase books, or to see libraries or collections of antiquities.⁸¹ The desire to meet other scholars in person was also a great motivation for international travel.⁸² In a voyage known as the Grand Tour, young nobles would spend time travelling internationally within Europe as a supplement to their educations.⁸³ The itinerary of this trip usually involved visits to Paris, Rome, Venice, Florence, and Naples.⁸⁴ One of the many reasons that young nobles undertook such a tour was to form international contacts that might

⁷⁹ While people who travelled extensively were known as “cosmopolites” as early as the sixteenth century, it was not until the second half of the eighteenth century that the word “cosmopolitan” and the ideal behind it became commonly recognized. Ibid., 1-2, 12.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 2.

⁸¹ Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*, 4.

⁸² Ibid., 4.

⁸³ Roche, *Humeurs vagabondes*, 682-683.

⁸⁴ For more on the Grand Tour in the British context, see Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992). For an account dealing specifically with British women and the Grand Tour, see Brian Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour: British Women in Pursuit of Enlightenment and Adventure in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001). For information on the Grand Tour in the Venetian context, see Bruce Redford, *Venice and the Grand Tour* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996).

be of use in their future careers.⁸⁵ Although Algarotti was not of noble origins, travelling provided him with similar opportunities to expand his networks. Travelling enabled Algarotti to meet internationally renowned thinkers in person, forming lasting contacts with them while making a name for himself in the intellectual circles in which they operated.

Yet another reason Algarotti undertook his travels was to find a source of income. By travelling to courts and other centres where intellectuals were valued for their abilities Algarotti increased his chances of finding a position. Intellectual conditions and the employment prospects that went along with them differed from place to place. By travelling, he could seek out locations more congenial to his needs and wants.⁸⁶

Scholarly conditions in Italy

An examination of the scholarly conditions in Italian cities, particularly those in Venice, Rome, and Naples, can help to explain why Algarotti did not wish to establish himself in Italy. In the English-speaking world, the eighteenth century is perhaps one of the least studied periods of Italian history.⁸⁷ The

⁸⁵ Roche, *Humeurs vagabondes*, 685.

⁸⁶ For more information on general intellectual conditions during the Enlightenment, see G. J. Mallinson, ed., *The eighteenth century now: boundaries and perspectives* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2005); Lorraine Daston, "The Ideal and the Reality of the Republic of Letters in the Enlightenment," *Science in Context* 4, no. 2 (1991): 367-86; Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: an interpretation* (New York: Knopf, 1966); Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*. Translated by Fritz C.A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951).

⁸⁷ Paula Findlen, "Introduction: Gender and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Italy," in *Italy's Eighteenth Century: Gender and Culture in the Age of the Grand Tour*, ed. Paula Findlen, Wendy Wassying Roworth, and Catherine M. Sama (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 14.

reasons for this are several. Because it is preceded by the Renaissance and immediately followed by the Risorgimento, the eighteenth century is often seen as cultural low point in the history of Italy. This perception has led scholars of the eighteenth century to conclude that Italy did not contribute as much to the development of Enlightenment ideals as France, England, and Germany. That many of the extensive studies on this period conducted by European, and particularly Italian, scholars have yet to be translated into English has contributed to the perpetuation of this misconception.⁸⁸

Because Italy was a major stop on the Grand Tour, many Grand Tourists wrote accounts of their experiences there.⁸⁹ Many of these accounts describe Italy as a paradise for tourists. They also portray it as a place both defined by, and trapped in, its past. This perception led many Grand Tourists to conclude that their countries of origin were superior to Italy. Because so many accounts of this type were written, there has been a tendency to see Italy through the eyes of these travellers, and to define conditions there, and its contributions to the eighteenth century, accordingly.⁹⁰

Certainly, the 1730s constituted a low point in the political, economic, and intellectual history of Italy.⁹¹ The governments of many Italian cities collapsed in the first half of the eighteenth century.⁹² With the exception of Venice and Florence, most of the major Italian cities were drawn into the War of the Polish

⁸⁸ Ibid., 14.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 6-7.

⁹¹ Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore: da Muratore a Beccaria*, Biblioteca di cultura storica, 103 (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1969), 3, 272.

⁹² Findlen, "Introduction: Gender and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Italy," 9.

Succession, which began in 1733.⁹³ The political problems that Italian cities faced were exacerbated by economic depression, which was only made worse by the war of the Polish succession, participation in which was costly.⁹⁴ Indeed, Algarotti's words appear to confirm that Italy had fallen from international grace in the eighteenth century:

Italians have conquered the world with their weapons, illuminated it with their sciences, polished it with their arts, and have governed it with their intelligence. It is true that, at present, Italians are not cutting a very fine figure. But it is natural for those who have worked very hard to sleep a little during the day when they have risen so much earlier in the morning than everyone else.⁹⁵

However, these problems were the catalyst for significant changes.⁹⁶ Indeed, the political, economic, and social transformations that Italy underwent in the eighteenth century were profound.⁹⁷ Many of these changes were similar to those which took place in other European countries at this time. Indeed, the strongest proponents of reform in Italy based their ideas on what they learned from foreign scholars, by reading their books, corresponding with them, and meeting with them in person during travels to England and Northern Europe.⁹⁸

Italy was not a united nation at this time. Rather, its various cities and regions constituted separate political entities, many of which were under foreign

⁹³ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore: da Muratore a Beccaria*, 3-5.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁹⁵ "Gl'Italiani hanno conquistato il mondo con le armi, lo hanno illuminato con le scienze, ripulito con le buone arti, e lo hanno governato con l'ingegno. Non fanno al presente, egli è vero, una gran figura. Ma egli è ben naturale che si riposi ancora colui che ha faticato dimolto, e che dorma alcun poco fra giorno chi si è levato prima degli altri di gran mattino." Algarotti, "Pensieri diversi," 42.

⁹⁶ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore: da Muratore a Beccaria*, 3.

⁹⁷ Findlen, "Introduction: Gender and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Italy," 8.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

control.⁹⁹ While Italy's leading citizens sought to overcome regional differences in order to create a better, stronger, and more unified Italy, political, economic, cultural, and even linguistic differences continued to persist.¹⁰⁰ As a result, conditions faced by intellectuals varied from city to city.

In comparison to most European cities of the time, the Republic of Venice offered a great deal of personal liberty to its inhabitants.¹⁰¹ This freedom extended, to a degree, to the intellectual scene. Scholars travelling to the city often received a warm reception.¹⁰² Members of learned academies openly expressed ideas considered dangerous by the Church at their meetings, and their right to do so was protected by the ruling class.¹⁰³ Padua, which was subject to the rule of Venice at the time, had an academic tradition built on strong international communication and free debate. This academic culture figured prominently in the larger intellectual culture of Venice. Intellectual freedom extended to print culture as well. Works of all kinds were allowed to circulate freely in Venice. The Venetian publishing business, which was one of the most significant in eighteenth-century Europe, published works on all number of topics, contributing to the wide variety of intellectual works available to be read in Venice. A large number of the books published in the city were written by non-Venetians, which provided scholars in the city with access and exposure to ideas

⁹⁹ Ibid., 14.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁰¹ Volker Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano alla fine della Repubblica 1646-1797: Demografia, famiglia, ménage*, trans. Benedetta Heinemann Campana (Rome: Jouvence, 1997), 13.

¹⁰² Venturi, *Settecento riformatore: da Muratore a Beccaria*, 24.

¹⁰³ Vincenzo Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione: mondo newtoniano e cultura italiana nel primo Settecento* (Naples: Jovene, 1982), 238.

being developed elsewhere in Europe.¹⁰⁴ Venetian scholars contributed to the circulation of ideas through print in the city as well through, among other things, the *Giornale de' letterati d'Italia*, a periodical published from 1710 to 1740 which, following the model of the French *Journal des sçavans*, provided summaries of works by Italian authors and biographies of well-known Italian intellectuals.¹⁰⁵

The reason that Venetian scholars and publishers enjoyed so much intellectual freedom was that the Republic of Venice was opposed, both politically and culturally, to the views of counter-Reformation Rome.¹⁰⁶ As a result, Venetian Republic sought to create a cultural alternative to the Catholic model offered by Rome.¹⁰⁷ However, this did not mean that all representatives of Rome living in Venice shared the views of the Venetians. On the contrary, the Inquisition and the Jesuits continued to monitor the activities of Venetian intellectuals to a degree these scholars found oppressive.¹⁰⁸

Adding to the difficulties presented to scholars by this extensive surveillance by representatives of the Church was the lack of financial opportunities presented to those who were not members of the ruling class. Several Venetian nobles had faced bankruptcy in the eighteenth century,¹⁰⁹ with the result that they could not be counted on to provide support to scholars. Therefore, the majority of those who wished to make careers for themselves as

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 237-238.

¹⁰⁵ Brendan Maurice Dooley, *Science, Politics, and Society in Eighteenth-Century Italy: The Giornale de' letterati d'Italia and its World* (New York: Garland Pub., 1991), 1.

¹⁰⁶ Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione*, 237.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 237.

¹⁰⁸ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore: da Muratore a Beccaria*, 24.

¹⁰⁹ Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano alla fine della Repubblica*, 16.

writers would have to seek employment (for example, as a teacher or book publisher) in order to support themselves, a prospect Algarotti appears to have wished to avoid.

Scholars in Rome had various forums in which to discuss their ideas. One of these was *conversazioni*, or salon-style gatherings, attendance at which was a significant part of the social life of the educated classes in the city.¹¹⁰ While discussions at several of these *conversazioni* consisted largely of gossip, other *conversazioni* gatherings were dedicated solely to the pursuit of intellectual matters. These, known as learned *conversazioni*, enabled older scholars to share information they may not otherwise have had access to, and provided younger scholars with the opportunities to gain entry into learned circles. Learned *conversazioni* experienced their greatest success in Rome in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. There were also more formal, though not necessarily official, learned academies of literature, linguistics, and sciences, where scholars could meet to discuss ideas. Like the learned *conversazioni*, these more formal academies played a significant role in the intellectual life of Rome.¹¹¹

Of all the Italian cities, Rome was the first where Newtonian science made headway among scholars. In the early eighteenth century, a group of scholars (all of whom were connected to the Church) headed by Celestino Galiani held regular gatherings at which they discussed new scientific ideas, and performed

¹¹⁰ Hanns Gross, *Rome in the Age of Enlightenment: The Post-Tridentine Syndrome and the Ancien Regime*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History. (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 247.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 247-248.

experiments found in scientific works.¹¹² Making use of their international contacts, this group obtained copies of Newton's *Opticks* and *Principia* in the first decade of the eighteenth century.¹¹³ Galiani wrote a summary of the ideas contained in the *Principia* in 1714, entitled *Epistola de gravitate et Cartesianis vorticibus*.¹¹⁴

Despite this, and despite the existence of numerous venues in which to discuss ideas, owing to the presence of the Vatican in the city, scholars in Rome did not enjoy the same level of intellectual freedom as did their Venetian counterparts. Fearing the reaction of the Inquisition, Galiani never published his *Epistola de gravitate et Cartesianis vorticibus*, instead circulating it privately among Roman scientists.¹¹⁵ In fact, Galiani would never publish anything of his own authorship for this reason.¹¹⁶ Attitudes to Newtonian science in Rome would begin to change when Cardinal Lambertini, proponent of Newtonian physics, became Pope Benedict XIV in 1740.¹¹⁷ At Benedict's encouragement, a reform of Roman universities was undertaken in 1748 in which the number of science courses taught was increased. In an effort to attract the attention of the public to scientific matters, scientists increased the number of public demonstrations of scientific phenomena they gave in the 1740s.¹¹⁸ Prior to this time, however, Rome was not an ideal place for a writer, particularly one who wrote on Newtonian science, to make a career.

¹¹² Ibid., 252-254.

¹¹³ Ibid., 252-254.

¹¹⁴ Vincenzo Ferrone, *Una scienza per l'uomo: illuminismo e rivoluzione scientifica nell'Europa del Settecento* (Turin: UTET libreria, 2007), 137.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 138.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 139.

¹¹⁷ Bertucci, *Viaggio nel paese delle meraviglie*, 217.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 217.

Scholars in Naples also managed to circumvent the restrictions imposed by the Church in order to gain access to works dealing with prohibited ideas. In the 1710s, a secret publishing house, operated by Lorenzo Ciccarelli, with the protection of Enlightened Catholics in Rome and Florence, provided Neapolitan scientists with access to scientific works dealing with new scientific theories, including those of Newton.¹¹⁹ Newtonian ideas were debated in Naples throughout the 1720s. In 1732, a group of Neapolitan intellectuals, including Celestino Galiani, who had taken up residence there as the city's Chaplain Major in 1731, founded the *Accademia delle scienze*, or Academy of Sciences, of Naples.¹²⁰ The academy was intended as a forum in which the principles of philosophy, geometry, astronomy, and mechanics could be discussed.¹²¹ Galiani also spearheaded a reform of the university, particularly of the way in which the sciences were taught, in the early 1730s.¹²²

The founding of the Academy of Sciences met with resistance, however. In 1733, just a few months after the academy had opened, another academy, known as the *Accademia degli Oziosi*, or the Academy of Men of Leisure, was founded.¹²³ The founders of this academy were opposed to Galiani's program of reform. That same year, Rainiero Simonetti, nuncio in Naples, had reported to secretary of state in Rome monsignor Banchieri that Galiani had founded the Academy of Sciences as a vehicle through which to spread Lockean ideas. This

¹¹⁹ Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione*, 466-467.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 486, 496-497, 502.

¹²¹ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore: da Muratore a Beccaria*, 23. The Chaplain Major was a chief minister to the King in Naples. One of the duties involved in this position was the overseeing of all scholastic activity in Naples.

¹²² Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione*, 521-523.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 525.

prompted an investigation of Galiani by Roman officials. Lockean ideas had in fact been discussed within the Academy, but thanks to the intercession of Galiani's friends who were well connected in the Church, this inquiry did not result in any kind of punishment.¹²⁴

Galiani's case demonstrates the difficulties that an aspiring writer who wished to write about Newtonian science might face in Naples in the 1730s. Although Galiani did not have to face the Inquisition in the end, his espousal of Lockean ideas had prompted an investigation of him, and he had only managed to escape serious punishment due to the intercession of his friends. By the mid-eighteenth century, interest in experimental science had taken a firm hold in Naples, attracting the attention of the Académie des sciences in Paris.¹²⁵ However, when Algarotti began writing his *Il Newtonianismo per le dame* in the mid-1730s, Galiani's brush with the Inquisition may have been too fresh in his memory for him to contemplate establishing himself in Naples.

The reasons that Algarotti did not establish himself in Italy when seeking to launch his career as a writer may be clarified by examining how three other Italian intellectuals, Antonio Conti (1677-1749), Celestino Galiani (1681-1753), and Giuseppe Baretti (1719-1789), dealt with the conditions they faced there.

Born in Padua, Antonio Conti was a Venetian noble.¹²⁶ Although he began his career in the Church, a change in his religious views led him to give up

¹²⁴ Ibid., 504-505, 507-509, 525.

¹²⁵ Bertucci, *Viaggio nel paese delle meraviglie*, 222-224. For more on Naples during the second half of the eighteenth century, see also Venturi, *Settecento riformatore: da Muratore a Beccaria*, 523 ff.

¹²⁶ Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione*, 265. For more on Conti, see Rebecca Messbarger, "The Very Fibre of their Being: Antonio Conti's Materialist Argument for Women's Inferiority," in *The*

his priestly duties in 1708.¹²⁷ Interested in philosophy and mathematics, he travelled abroad in order to meet and form connections with other intellectuals, spending time in France, England, and Holland from 1713 to 1726.¹²⁸ Following this, he returned to Venice, where he spent most of his time until his death in 1749.¹²⁹ He disseminated his extensive knowledge of French and English culture he had gained during his travels through essays and philosophic and scientific treatises.¹³⁰ A volume of his work, entitled *Prose e poesie*, appeared in 1739; a second volume appeared in 1756, seven years after his death.¹³¹ Like Algarotti, Conti was a scholar and a writer. Throughout his career, Algarotti would have to balance his ambitions against his need for a source of income. Although this may have not been a problem for Conti (being of noble birth meant he had access to government positions in Venice; it may also have meant that his family had a great deal of money), he chose the same path later taken by Algarotti, spending several years abroad. Certainly, Conti's travels may have constituted a supplement to his education in the same way that travelling to Italy was considered to be essential to the formation of the nobles who undertook the Grand Tour. However, that Conti felt the need to travel outside of Italy in order to

Century of Women: Representations of Women in Eighteenth-Century Italian Public Discourse (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

¹²⁷ He remained a priest in name, however, because Holy Orders were not reversible. Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 90.

¹²⁸ Umberto Renda and Pietro Operati, "Conti, Antoinio," in *Dizionario storico della letteratura italiana* (Turin: Paravia, 1959). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dc5> (consulted July 26, 2010).

¹²⁹ Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters; A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1980), 318-320.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 318-320.

¹³¹ Renda and Operati, "Conti, Antoinio." WBIS online.

achieve his ambitions and satisfy his intellectual curiosity also suggests that conditions in Venice were not conducive to these purposes.

Galiani dealt with the conditions he faced in a different manner. Being a churchman in Rome and who was at the same time interested in Newtonian science presented a problem for Galiani. He circumvented this problem by circulating the scientific texts he had written privately among the scientists of Rome. In 1731, he made use of his networks within the church in order to secure his nomination to the position of Chaplain Major of Naples.¹³² Perhaps thinking conditions in Naples to be more favourable to the open discussion of Newtonian and Lockean principles, he founded the Academy of Sciences there in order to provide a forum in which these ideas, and others, could be debated. While the Academy was able to remain operational despite opposition from some elements of Neapolitan society, Galiani very nearly faced being tried by the Inquisition for his espousal of Lockean principles. By joining the church, Galiani was able to form connections with people placed higher within its organization. It was in large part these connections that enabled him to accomplish what he did. However, although he wrote various scientific treatises, because of the restrictions imposed by the Church in the places where he lived, he never published them.

In establishing his literary career, writer Giuseppe Baretti tried to make a name for himself both in Italy and abroad. After spending some time in Milan and Venice, in 1751, at the age of thirty-two, he travelled to London, where he

¹³² Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione*, 487.

found employment as a teacher of the Italian language.¹³³ Following travels in Spain, Portugal, and France, he returned to Italy in 1760, where he established himself in Venice. While there, he launched a periodical in which he subjected Italian authors to harsh criticism.¹³⁴ The publication of the journal, entitled *Frusta letteraria*, was banned by the Venetian government in 1764.¹³⁵ Shortly thereafter, he returned to England where, with the exception of a few short trips, he remained until he died, having obtained a position as secretary responsible for foreign correspondence at the Academy of Fine Arts.¹³⁶ Baretti's view of the intellectual accomplishments of Italians was not entirely negative. In fact, he defended these achievements vigorously in a work entitled *Gli Italiani*.¹³⁷ However, his desire for freedom of expression not being met in Italy, as evidenced by the Venetian government's prohibition of the publication of *Frusta letteraria*, he chose to make his career outside of Italy.

Like Conti and Baretti, Algarotti's ambitions and desire for intellectual freedom in carrying them out led him to travel outside of Italy in pursuit of his goals. Algarotti lacked high-ranking connections in Italy of the kind that Galiani had. As a result, he could not be assured of the type of protection that Galiani enjoyed in pursuing his intellectual objectives. Even if he had benefited from a level of protection from ecclesiastical authorities similar to that of Galiani, this

¹³³ Giuseppe Caverzan, "Giuseppe Baretti," in *I nostri grandi: piccole biografie di scrittori, artisti e letterati* (Milan: Vita scolastica, 1933). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dc2> (consulted July 26, 2010).

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Cesare Resmini, "Baretti Giuseppe," in *Enciclopedia delle vite illustri* (Milan: De Vecchi, 1962). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dc2> (consulted July 26, 2010).

¹³⁶ Caverzan, "Giuseppe Baretti." WBIS online.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

protection would not have saved him from prosecution by the Inquisition for the contents of his published work, as Galiani's decision to refrain from publishing indicates, and this was not conducive to the achievement of his literary ambitions. Finances were also a concern for Algarotti. Although his family was wealthy, as his constant arguments with his brother over money demonstrate, their savings were not sufficient to sustain him indefinitely. Just as the desire to find a paying position would be one of Baretti's motives for travelling abroad, so Algarotti hoped that his chances of procuring financial support would be greater outside of Italy. Similarly to both Conti and Baretti, two of the places in which Algarotti hoped his intellectual and monetary needs would be more satisfactorily met were France and England.¹³⁸

Scholarly conditions in France

Paris was the intellectual and cultural capital of Europe in the eighteenth century, both in the opinion of Parisians and in that of many foreigners.¹³⁹ The city was seen as the encapsulation of civilized life.¹⁴⁰ There were many reasons that foreigners travelled to Paris in the eighteenth century. Among them was the

¹³⁸ For more on intellectual conditions in Italy in the eighteenth century, see Patrizia Delpiano, *Il governo della letteratura: Chiesa e libri nell'Italia del Settecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007); Daniel Gordon, *Equality and Sociability in French Thought, 1670-1789* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Dino Carpanetto and Giuseppe Ricuperati, *Italy in the age of reason, 1685-1789*, (London; New York: Longman, 1987).

¹³⁹ Françoise Waquet, *Le modèle français et l'Italie savante: conscience de soi et perception de l'autre dans la République des Lettres (1660-1750)* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, Palais Farnèse, 1989). 330

¹⁴⁰ Marc Fumaroli, *Quand l'Europe parlait français* (Paris: Editions de Fallois, 2001). 119

desire to find employment or financial backing.¹⁴¹ The abundant opportunities for commissions, coupled with the glory of making a living in such a culturally respected city, encouraged many artists to travel there in search of fame and fortune. Others were attracted by the city's culture, both in terms of the amusements it offered, and in terms of the scholarly opportunities available there.¹⁴² Paris was a place where one could go to meet leading thinkers, both in order to advance their studies, and in order to expand their networks among the learned.¹⁴³ Even so, the population of foreign scholars was relatively small in eighteenth-century Paris, representing only 3.16 percent of the 9300-strong population of foreign travellers in the city.¹⁴⁴ Of this 3.16 percent, the largest numbers were of Italian, Dutch, and German origin, while the smallest group within this percentage was comprised of British natives.¹⁴⁵

Attending salon gatherings was a leading way for scholars, both foreign and local, to forge contacts and make names for themselves in Paris.¹⁴⁶ Attending a salon affected the connections a scholar could make, both directly (in terms of

¹⁴¹ Jean-François Dubost, "Les Étrangers à Paris au siècle des Lumières," in *La Ville promise: mobilité et accueil à Paris (fin XVIIe - début XIXe siècle)*, ed. Daniel Roche (Paris: Fayard, 2000), 221.

¹⁴² Ibid., 221.

¹⁴³ Daniel Roche, "Introduction: Mobilité et accueil à Paris (XVIIe-XIXe siècle): questions et perspectives," in *La Ville promise: mobilité et accueil à Paris (fin XVIIe - début XIXe siècle)*, ed. Daniel Roche (Paris: Fayard, 2000), 11.

¹⁴⁴ Van Damme, "'The World is too Large'," 386.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 386. For an in-depth statistical account of the make up of foreign groups in Paris and their activities there, see Dubost, "Les Étrangers à Paris au siècle des Lumières."

¹⁴⁶ Roche, *Humeurs vagabondes*, 725. Salons reached their height 1750-1850 (Antoine Lilti, "Sociabilité et mondanité: les hommes de lettres dans les salons Parisiens au XVIIIe siècle," *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 3 (2005): 418.). However, they were important places for scholars in the first half of the eighteenth century as well. For more on salons, see Antoine Lilti, *Le Monde des salons: sociabilité et mondanité à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), Dena Goodman, *The republic of letters: a cultural history of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994) and Carolyn C. Lougee, *Le paradis des femmes: Women, Salons, and Social Stratification in Seventeenth-Century France* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976).

the other members to which one could gain access) and indirectly (in terms of outsiders who would seek to befriend members in order to gain access to the networks that they had formed within the salon). In addition to providing a venue for scholars to discuss matters of an intellectual nature, salons also provided their attendees with a means through which to make a name for themselves in Parisian society.¹⁴⁷ In its function as an intermediary between the literary world, that of the elite, and that of the court, salons gave aspiring authors who attended them the chance to form connections with aristocrats, connections that could eventually translate into the acquisition of a position of some kind. It was equally beneficial for salon hosts and hostesses to attract people to their gatherings, as the reputation of the salon rested on the fame of its members.¹⁴⁸ Becoming a member of the right salon was of considerable importance, as one's reputation was based in part on the salon to which they went.¹⁴⁹ In order to gain access to a salon, one had to be recommended, either by letter of introduction or by a person present at one of the gatherings. Having forged prior contacts with one's compatriots who were resident in Paris was important in this regard, as foreigners tended to introduce their countrymen into salon society.¹⁵⁰

Censorship was another difficulty faced by aspiring writers in Paris. The press, which was underdeveloped in comparison with that which existed in England, Holland, and Germany, was far from free.¹⁵¹ Before they could be

¹⁴⁷ Lilti, "Sociabilité et mondanité," 421.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 423, 427.

¹⁴⁹ Roche, *Humeurs vagabondes*, 725.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 725. For instance, as Roche points out, Grimm often recommended Germans, and Hume often recommended people from Britain, for membership to salons.

¹⁵¹ Robert Darnton, "Presidential Address: An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris," *American Historical Review* 105, no. 1 (2000): 7.

printed, all written works had to be examined by censors, whose decisions were enforced by a special branch of the police that dealt exclusively with the book trade. As a result, a number of French periodicals were printed outside of France.¹⁵² However, as Voltaire's problems with the Parisian court and periods spent in exile demonstrate, publishing one's work outside of France was not always an effective means of circumventing punishment for breaking censorship rules.¹⁵³

Scholarly conditions in England

England provided a very different set of conditions for aspiring writers. Many foreign scholars admired England for what they perceived as its modernity.¹⁵⁴ Following the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the existence of Parliament, religious toleration, and freedom of the person were all guaranteed. It was this form of constitutional monarchy, and the presence of these freedoms, that attracted the attention of the intellectuals of Continental Europe.¹⁵⁵ As Diderot remarked, "In England, philosophers are honoured, respected; they rise to public

¹⁵² Ibid., 6.

¹⁵³ For more on intellectual conditions in France in the eighteenth century, see Roger Chartier, "The Man of Letters." In *Enlightenment Portraits*, edited by Michel Vovelle, 142-89 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Dena Goodman, *The republic of letters: a cultural history of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994). For more on eighteenth-century print culture in France, see Raymond Birn, *La Censure royale des livres dans la France des Lumières* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2007), Jack Censer, *The French press in the age of Enlightenment* (New York: Routledge, 1994). For more on the circumstances faced by aspiring writers in particular in France during this period, see Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982) and "The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature in Prerevolutionary France" *Past and Present* 51 (1971): 81-115.

¹⁵⁴ Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the creation of the modern world* (London: Allen Lane: The Penguin Press, 2000), 6.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 6, 14.

offices, they are buried with kings...In France warrants are issued against them, they are persecuted, pelted with pastoral letters..."¹⁵⁶ Indeed, due to the relative absence of state and religious oppression and censorship, prospects were very promising, and opportunities numerous, for aspiring writers in England.¹⁵⁷

In contrast to the situation in France, periodical publishing flourished in eighteenth-century England.¹⁵⁸ In 1711, there were an estimated sixty-six different periodicals available in Britain; that number rose to ninety in 1750 and again to one hundred and forty in 1775. The number of book shops in the country also rose throughout the century, from four hundred in two hundred British towns in 1749 to nearly one thousand in three hundred by the 1790s.¹⁵⁹ However, the proliferation of published material did not translate into financial success for authors. Writers in eighteenth-century England were faced with a situation in which they could no longer count on substantial financial support from the aristocracy because writers greatly outnumbered the elites willing to support them.¹⁶⁰ While writers tried to circumvent this problem by publishing by subscription, the expansion of the reading public in this period meant that it was increasingly difficult for authors to anticipate what kinds of works would sell well. Indeed, making a living by one's writings only became a viable option for

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the creation of the modern world*, 7.

¹⁵⁷ Porter, *Enlightenment*, 14, 16. Although printed material was not required to pass inspection by censors before publication, periodical printers and publishers could be prosecuted for obscenity, blasphemy, and libel. Excluding warrants issued for breach of parliamentary privilege, over seventy such charges were brought between 1715 and 1759. See Iona Italia, *The Rise of Literary Journalism in the Eighteenth Century: Anxious Employment* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 12.

¹⁵⁸ Italia, *The Rise of Literary Journalism*, 7.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

¹⁶⁰ Frank Donoghue, *The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 1.

most writers in the nineteenth century, when the literary market had developed sufficiently in order to support them.¹⁶¹

While the proliferation of opportunities for publication would have been beneficial to Algarotti, the lack of accompanying financial prospects was not. While the intellectual conditions in Italy, France, and England would have appealed to Algarotti in different ways, his inability to find a paying position in any of these places would lead him to seek, and find, fortune in Prussia, and later, Saxony.

Methodology

My examination of the ways in which Algarotti negotiated the conditions he faced in order to make a name for himself is based largely on correspondence, both that which he had with others, and that which others had concerning him. Working with letters can be problematic. While they create the illusion of giving historians access to what was happening behind the scenes, their recipients often shared the information they contained with other people in their circle of associates. Because letters would be written with this in mind, their contents do not always reveal the true feelings of those who wrote them. Examining Algarotti's correspondence has provided me with the details of his movements and his plans. The reports of his activities contained therein have also enabled me

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 1-2. For more on intellectual conditions in England in the eighteenth century, see Jeremy Black, *A subject for taste: culture in eighteenth-century England* (London; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Dror Wahrman, *The making of the modern self: identity and culture in eighteenth-century England* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2004).

to discern how he came to form the networks that he did. The crucial role that letters played in Algarotti's ability to forge networks and make a name for himself also influenced my decision to make such extensive use of correspondence in this study. Letters of recommendation are what enabled Algarotti to meet many of the contacts in his network, particularly early in his career, and he would write such missives for others when he became more renowned himself. The correspondence of others concerning Algarotti provides clues to the sort of reputation Algarotti had at the time of writing, and sheds light on how his reputation changed over time. Due to the semi-public nature of letters in this period, what others wrote about Algarotti in their correspondence also contributed to the establishment of this reputation.

Like many of his contemporaries, Algarotti was a prolific letter-writer. Much of his correspondence with better-known eighteenth-century thinkers has been published. The letters exchanged between Algarotti and Voltaire, and between Algarotti and Emilie du Châtelet, can be found in Theodore Besterman's exhaustive edited collection of Voltaire's correspondence.¹⁶² Algarotti's correspondence with Frederick II (the Great) has been reproduced in volume eighteen of *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand*.¹⁶³ In cases where the entirety of Algarotti's correspondence with a particular person has not been published, portions of it can be found in published volumes. This is the case with his correspondence with Francesco Maria Zanotti, some parts of which can be found

¹⁶² Theodore Besterman, ed. *Voltaire's Correspondence* (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1953-1965), 107 vols.

¹⁶³ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, vol. XVIII (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1851).

in volume one of Zanotti's collected works,¹⁶⁴ and others in various volumes of Algarotti's collected works. Algarotti's collected works also contain a large part of the correspondence exchanged between Algarotti and Maupertuis, as well as containing some of the letters he exchanged with intellectuals of note, Italian and otherwise, on topics deemed interesting by the editors.

A great deal of Algarotti's correspondence remains unpublished, however. This includes the entirety of his correspondence with his brother Bonomo Algarotti, his chief correspondent throughout his life. Over five hundred letters were exchanged between the two throughout Francesco's life. These letters, along with several other letters exchanged between Algarotti and various other thinkers, including Eustachio Manfredi and Giampietro Zanotti, can be found at the Biblioteche Comunali di Treviso in Treviso, Italy. A large part of the unpublished correspondence exchanged between Algarotti and Francesco Maria Zanotti, particularly that dating from the 1730s, can be found at the Museo Civico Correr in Venice, Italy. Letters exchanged between Algarotti and other intellectuals can also be found at the Museo Biblioteca Archivio in Bassano del Grappa, Italy.¹⁶⁵

Three separate sets of Algarotti's collected works appeared in the eighteenth century, each of which contains letters he exchanged with various other scholars over the course of his life. The first set, published in Livorno and

¹⁶⁴ Francesco Maria Zanotti, *Opere scelte*, vol. 1 (Milan: Società tipografica de' classici italiani contrada del cappuccio, 1818).

¹⁶⁵ Biblioteche Comunali di Treviso (BCT): MS 1256A, MS 1256B, MS 1258, MS 1259. Museo Civico Correr (MCC): MS P.D.c7, MS PD 547 c/9, MS PD c.549 c/308, Epistolario Moschini MS P.D.c549; Museo Biblioteca Archivio di Bassano del Grappa (MBAB): Epistolario Gamba III.A.10, Epistolario Gamba X.A.4. Some of Algarotti's correspondence can also be found at the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, Italy. However, given that this correspondence dates from a period later than that which is covered by my study, I did not make use of it here.

entitled *Opere del conte Algarotti*, appeared in 1764, the year of his death.¹⁶⁶

The second, published in Cremona between 1778 and 1784 was entitled *Opere del Conte Algarotti cavaliere dell'ordine del merito e ciambellano di S.M. il Re di Prussia*.¹⁶⁷ The third set, entitled *Opere del Conte Algarotti*, was published between 1791 and 1794 in Venice.¹⁶⁸ This third set is by far the most comprehensive, numbering seventeen volumes in total. In conducting my research, I have made use of all three collections.

Algarotti's published works figured significantly in the establishment of his reputation and networks. Because his *Il Newtonianismo per le dame* brought him a great deal of fame, I have analysed its contents in depth in order to determine the reasons for the book's success. The dedications of his published works also played an important role in attracting the attention of readers, particularly that of the dedicatee. In order to illuminate the tactics he employed in this regard, I have examined the dedication of the 1746 edition of the *Newtonianismo* to the Czarina Anna Ioannovna and that of the 1750 edition to Frederick II, as well as the dedication, to Francesco Maria Zanotti, of Algarotti's 1745 *Saggio sopra la durata de' regni dei re di Roma*. Also to this end, I have studied some of the poetry dedicated to various illustrious figures in his 1733 *Rime*, and the dedication of this book, written by Giampietro Zanotti.

Because many of the figures with whom Algarotti interacted over the course of his life remain well known to this day, the secondary literature dealing

¹⁶⁶ Francesco Algarotti, *Opere del conte Algarotti* (Livorno: M. Coltellini, 1764-1765).

¹⁶⁷ Francesco Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti cavaliere dell'ordine del merito e ciambellano di S.M. il Re di Prussia* (Cremona: Lorenzo Manini Regio Stampatore, 1778-1784).

¹⁶⁸ Francesco Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1791-1794).

with their lives and works is abundant. However, like Algarotti himself, many of his Italian associates have not retained the illustrious status they enjoyed in their own time. In order to learn about the activities of these lesser-known associates of Algarotti's, I have made a great deal of use of biographical dictionary entries, particularly those found in the *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*¹⁶⁹ and the World Biographical Information System database.¹⁷⁰

Because the main focus of this study is an examination of the different methods Algarotti used to negotiate the conditions he faced, and their efficacy, it might have been useful to have organized my work thematically. However, I have instead decided to follow a more or less chronological organization, with each new chapter dealing with a new place Algarotti travelled to. There are two reasons that I chose such a structure. The first has to do with simplicity. The details of Algarotti's life are not well-known to most; following a chronological structure has enabled me to tell his story in a straightforward fashion while analysing the details of it at the same time. The other reason is that such a division has provided me with a good framework for analysis. Dividing up the chapters along geographical lines has enabled me to identify and examine what strategies Algarotti made use of in which places, to compare them to those he used in other places, and to compare their efficacy when used in multiple places. Each new place Algarotti travelled to represents a new stage in his career. Dividing up the chapters according to the places he travelled to has allowed me to

¹⁶⁹ Alberto M. Ghisalberti, ed., *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1960-), 73 vols.

¹⁷⁰ World Biographical Information System (WBIS) online (Farmington Hills, Mich.: Thomson Gale, 2004-).

examine what strategies he made use of at different phases of his career, and compare those he used in one phase to those he made use of in others.

Summary of chapters

The early years of Algarotti's career, including his studies, took place in Italy. From the time he began his studies in the 1720s until 1734, he spent time in Venice, Bologna, Padua, Florence, and Rome. In addition to addressing the question of why he travelled so widely within Italy, the first chapter examines the ways in which he built a reputation for himself during those years against the backdrop of the intellectual conditions he faced in each city. Algarotti employed various methods in order to expand his networks during this period, including associating himself with various groups, such as the Istituto delle Scienze in Bologna and the freemasons in Florence, highlighting his associations with illustrious people through letters of introduction and publications, and attempting to attract the attention of people he wished to meet through poetry. The various methods he made use of in order to expand his networks during this period were methods he would make use of throughout his career, adapting them to meet the conditions he faced in the other places to which he travelled.

From 1734 until 1736, Algarotti travelled to and lived in France and in England. During these years, he would forge relationships with leading thinkers in each place, including Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, Voltaire, and Emilie du Châtelet in France, and Antioch Cantemir, Lord Hervey, and Lady Mary

Wortley Montagu in England. Chapter two examines how he came to make these connections, both in terms of why these thinkers would be interested in getting to know Algarotti (as a means of gauging the reputation he had built by this time), and in terms of the methods he employed in order to attract their attention, which included making use of letters of recommendation and travel companions. During his time in France and England, he managed to gain invitations to join groups well known in intellectual and cultural circles, such as du Châtelet's salon at Cirey and the Royal Society in London. He showed his written work to everyone he met, enabling him to create a reputation for it and himself. I also examine the intellectual conditions in each place, in terms of why Algarotti would find them attractive and how they were convenient to Algarotti's purposes.

The publication of *Il Newtonianismo per le dame* marked a turning point in Algarotti's career. Its appearance in 1737 won him immediate international renown. In order to illuminate the reasons this was so, chapter three examines the contents, and the circumstances surrounding the publication of the work, including Algarotti's intentions in writing it, his intended audience, its reception, and its effect on the diffusion of Newtonian scientific principles in Italy.

Recognizing that his renown had reached great heights following the publication of the *Newtonianismo*, Algarotti sought to capitalize on this fame. Chapter four examines the ways in which he sought to perpetuate this fame by taking measures to ensure that his work remained in the spotlight, and how he sought to profit from this fame in conjunction with his connections in trying to secure a position first in England and then later in St. Petersburg. When the

Newtonianismo was translated into French in 1738, the translator, M. Duperron de Castera, made use of this translation as a forum through which to express his anti-Newtonian views, and negative opinion of Algarotti. Algarotti intentionally fanned the flames of the scandal this provoked by making use of it to draw further attention to the *Newtonianismo* and his authorship of it. In 1739, he would issue a second edition of the work, in which he would attempt to highlight the praise his illustrious associates had for the *Newtonianismo*, by including poems they had written in honour of it. He would dedicate this new edition to the Czarina Anna Ioannovna in hopes of winning her favour, and would make use of one of her favourites, Antioch Cantemir, as an intermediary through which to deliver the work to her, with the aim of ensuring she would give it due attention.

In 1739, having failed to obtain a position in St. Petersburg, Algarotti decided to return to London. Along the way, Algarotti and his travelling companion Lord Baltimore stopped in Prussia, where they made the acquaintance of then-crown prince Frederick, soon to become King Frederick II (the Great). The impression Algarotti made on Frederick during this meeting was such that, upon the latter's accession in 1740, he invited Algarotti to join his court. Chapter five examines various aspects of the relationship between Algarotti and Frederick, including the reasons why they were interested in getting to know each other, the methods that Algarotti made use of in order to keep Frederick's attention, and how their relationship evolved once Algarotti joined the court. While Frederick was aware of Algarotti's authorship of the *Newtonianismo*, it was for his poetic talents that the crown prince appreciated him most. The effect of being a member

of this court on Algarotti's reputation is also examined, as are his opinions of the intellectual conditions there in comparison to those of other scholars at the court.

In 1742, following a falling-out with Frederick, Algarotti relocated to Dresden in search of a new position at the court of Augustus III, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. The position to which he would be appointed by Augustus, that of collector of art for the royal collections, was rather different in nature from the endeavours he had undertaken previously. Chapter six examines the methods he used to obtain this position, and those he employed in order to successfully carry out this commission. A comparison of these methods with the strategies he had previously made use of in his intellectual undertakings reveals that, in spite of the differences in context, the tactics he employed in each case were very similar, and met with similar levels of success. These included advertising his knowledge and abilities through the written word, drawing attention to the associations he had formed previously in order to form new ones, and making use of his contacts as intermediaries through which to further expand his networks, and procure services. The intellectual conditions at Augustus's court are described in comparison to those at Frederick's in order to clarify why Algarotti left Prussia in search of employment in Dresden. The effect of being a member of Augustus's court on Algarotti's renown is also addressed.

In 1747, due to Algarotti's dissatisfaction with his role at Augustus's court, in conjunction with the intercession of Maupertuis on Frederick's behalf, Algarotti agreed to return to the court in Prussia. In addition to addressing the reasons he consented to do so and exploring his activities while there, chapter

seven examines networking methods from both ends of the spectrum. Algarotti had reached such a high level of international renown by this time that lesser-known scholars tried to involve Algarotti in their own strategies for success. An examination of the ways in which these scholars tried to exploit their association with Algarotti in order to get ahead reveals that the tactics Algarotti had made use of in order to expand his own networks and advance his own career were also widely used by other scholars of diverse origins. These associates of Algarotti made use of letters of recommendation and dedications in order to advertise their connection with him, and sought to engage his services as an intermediary in order to increase their chances of winning the favour of his more powerful associates. Shortly after his return to Prussia, Algarotti set about trying to secure a new position in Italy, an enterprise in which he made use of these very methods. An examination of the dissatisfaction with life at Frederick's court that led him to take this course of action makes plain the disadvantages faced by intellectuals in the King's service.

Although he was internationally renowned at the time of his death in 1764, Algarotti no longer enjoys a level of fame equivalent to that which he had attained. In the conclusion to this study, I examine the ways in which Algarotti's posthumous reputation changed over time with a view to illuminating the reasons for these changes. The development of the Romantic movement and the advent of Italian nationalism appear to have played significant roles in this. Because the *Newtonianismo* is often considered to be Algarotti's most important work,

attitudes towards this work have also impacted the way in which he was viewed by subsequent generations.

Because the legacy of many of Algarotti's associates has suffered the same fate as his own, I have included a Cast of Characters in Appendix 2. This alphabetical list contains short biographical notes on the figures who played a recurring role in Algarotti's life.

Conclusion

There are several reasons why Algarotti's life is of interest when studying eighteenth-century Europe, his contemporary international fame being one of them. Although he has fallen into relative obscurity in recent years, that he was so renowned in his own day, and that his activities being intertwined with those of many of the leading thinkers of the time, demonstrates that he played an important role in the intellectual culture of the eighteenth century. As noted by the scholars who have undertaken studies of him, Algarotti made important contributions to various fields, particularly through his popularization of Newtonian science, as well as his work in the field of fine arts. However, it is not the ways in which Algarotti stands out that are of the greatest interest in considering the intellectual history of the eighteenth century. Like many other thinkers of the time, Algarotti wanted to make a career for himself by writing about his ideas. Examining the strategies he made use of in order to realize these goals against the background of the structures within which he operated with reveals a great deal about the

conditions eighteenth-century scholars faced, and the ways in which they sought to deal with them, in trying to achieve intellectual renown.

Networking starts at home: Algarotti's Italian contacts and how he came to form them

Francesco Algarotti (*see Figure 1*) was born in Venice in 1712, the second child of wealthy merchant Rocco Algarotti and his wife Maria.¹⁷¹ Algarotti undertook his earliest studies in Venice, at a school for sons of wealthy families run by Jesuit Padre Carlo Lodoli, future chief censor of the Venetian Republic.¹⁷² Following this, Algarotti went to study at the Collegio Nazareno in Rome in late 1724.¹⁷³ He returned to Venice in 1725 at the request of his father, who wanted to supervise his education more closely.¹⁷⁴ However, with the death of Rocco Algarotti in 1726, Francesco's older brother Bonomo, who was an art collector by trade, became his guardian, with the result that he would be responsible for deciding where Algarotti would study and for supplying him with the funds to do so.¹⁷⁵ Rather than having Francesco pursue his studies in Venice, Bonomo opted to send him to study at the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna.¹⁷⁶ Following the completion of his studies there in 1732, Algarotti travelled around Italy for two years, spending time in Padua, Florence, and Rome before deciding to leave Italy for France in 1734.

¹⁷¹ Franco Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)" (Dottore di ricerca dissertation, Università degli studi di Torino; Università degli studi di Genova, 1989), 15.

¹⁷² Ibid., 15; Ida Frances Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle: Francesco Algarotti* (Trévoux: Imprimerie Jules Jeannin, 1913), 25.

¹⁷³ Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 15.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 15; Domenico Michelessi, *Memorie intorno alla vita ed agli scritti del Conte Francesco Algarotti, Ciambellano di S.M. il re di Prussia e Cavalier del Merito ec.* (Venice: Giambattista Pasquali, 1770), 9.

¹⁷⁵ Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 25.

¹⁷⁶ Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 17.

During his years in Italy, Algarotti's main intellectual interests were science and poetry. The fruits of his scientific efforts during this period include a public demonstration of Newton's optical experiments, undertaken in 1728, and the beginnings of what would become his popularization of Newtonian science for women, entitled *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, or *Newtonianism for the Ladies*.¹⁷⁷ Where poetry is concerned, a collection of poems he had written, entitled *Rime*, was published in 1733.¹⁷⁸ Beginning in the same year, he undertook to prepare the poetry of his teacher and friend Francesco Maria Zanotti for publication. As a result of Algarotti's efforts, Zanotti's collection of poems, entitled *Poesie volgari e latine*, would be published in 1734.¹⁷⁹

Algarotti's ambition was to become a writer. In order to achieve this goal, he needed to become sufficiently renowned to secure financial backing of some kind. Accordingly, over the course of his studies and subsequent travels around Italy, Algarotti actively sought to expand his networks with a view to building a reputation for himself. The strategies he would develop during this time were ones that he would employ throughout his career when seeking to forge contacts or to find a new position.

In his efforts to expand his networks and made a name for himself, Algarotti made use of several different, and often overlapping, tactics. Some of these tactics involved highlighting his association with scholars more prominent than himself. He made use of poetry and letters of introduction to this end.

¹⁷⁷ Francesco Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame, ovvero dialoghi sopra la luce e i colori* (Naples, 1737).

¹⁷⁸ ———, *Rime* (Bologna: Stamperia de L. dalla Volpe, 1733).

¹⁷⁹ Francesco Maria Zanotti, *Poesie volgari e latine* (Florence: Paperini, 1734).

Another strategy involved displaying his knowledge in order to give himself intellectual credibility. His public demonstration of Newton's optical experiments, and the publication of his *Rime* served this function, as did his preparation of Zanotti's *Poesie* for publication. By praising his work in publications of their own, as well as in letters of introduction written on Algarotti's behalf, his associates helped him to advertise his knowledge and talents. Finally, Algarotti made use of travel both as a means of expanding his networks by meeting scholars in other cities, and of making them aware of his work by discussing it with them in person. By using all of these strategies in combination, Algarotti built an extensive network of contacts both Italian and foreign, and established a reputation for himself in the fields of science and poetry.

Initial contacts

Algarotti made his first important contacts while undertaking his studies at the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna. Studying at this institution gave him the opportunity to meet and form relationships with the illustrious scholars who were his teachers there. Being associated with both these teachers and with the Istituto itself also served to give Algarotti intellectual credibility.

The Istituto delle Scienze had its origins in a small group of Bolognese adolescents interested in science, known as the Accademia degli Inquieti.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Marta Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto: alle origini dell'Istituto delle Scienze di Bologna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), 58.

Eustachio Manfredi founded the group in 1690 so that its members could share scientific instruments and books, and pool their resources in order to purchase these items.¹⁸¹ Over the course of subsequent years, the Accademia grew in prestige, attracting illustrious thinkers to its membership, such as mathematicians (and brothers of Eustachio) Gabriele and Ercolito Manfredi, famed anatomist Iacopo Bartolomeo Beccari, and Giovanni Battista Morgagni, who would also gain repute in the field of anatomy.¹⁸² In 1705, ex-army captain and amateur scientist Count Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli took an interest in the Inquieti.¹⁸³ Marsigli was a Fellow of the Royal Society in London as well as a correspondent of Giandomenico Cassini, then-director of the astronomical observatory at the Académie des sciences in Paris.¹⁸⁴ He offered his home as a meeting place to the group, which changed its name to the Accademia delle scienze dell'Istituto.¹⁸⁵ The academy met at Marsigli's house until 1711, at which time it began meeting in a palace owned by the Bolognese senate.¹⁸⁶ In 1714, the Istituto delle Scienze, which incorporated the Accademia delle Scienze, was officially inaugurated.¹⁸⁷

The Istituto had close ties with leading scientific academies elsewhere in Europe. Already in its days as the Accademia degli Inquieti, its members

¹⁸¹ Filippo Bosdari, "Francesco Maria Zanotti nella vita Bolognese del Settecento," *Atti e memorie della R. Deputazione di storia patria per le provincie di Romagna Serie IV XVIII*, no. Fasc I-III gennaio-giugno Anno VI (1928): 157, Dino Provenzal, *I Riformatori della bella letteratura italiana: Eustachio Manfredi, Giampietro Zanotti, Fernand' Antonio Ghedini, Francesco Maria Zanotti*, Studio di storia letteraria Bolognese del sec. XVIII (Rocca S. Casciano: Licinio Cappelli, editore, 1900), 8.

¹⁸² Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 59.

¹⁸³ Bosdari, "Francesco Maria Zanotti nella vita Bolognese del Settecento," 158-159. For more on Marsigli, see John Stoye, *Marsigli's Europe, 1680-1730: The Life and Times of Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, Soldier and Virtuoso* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

¹⁸⁴ Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 181, Marta Cavazza, "The Institute of Science of Bologna and the Royal Society in the 18th Century," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 56, no. 1 (2002): 3.

¹⁸⁵ Provenzal, *I Riformatori della bella letteratura italiana*, 8.

¹⁸⁶ Bosdari, "Francesco Maria Zanotti nella vita Bolognese del Settecento," 162.

¹⁸⁷ Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 31.

maintained a correspondence with the Académie des sciences in Paris.¹⁸⁸ Indeed, many the academy's members learned French in order to read and discuss the publications of the Académie.¹⁸⁹ The membership of the Istituto also communicated regularly with that of the Royal Society in London.¹⁹⁰ Ties between the Royal Society and the Istituto delle Scienze were particularly strong from the end of the 1720s until the end of the 1730s.¹⁹¹

The philosophy of scientific investigation adopted by the Istituto greatly facilitated the establishment of communication between its members and those of the Académie des sciences and the Royal Society. In its institutionalization of the separation of science from metaphysics and its differentiation of scientific discourse from philosophical discourse, the Istituto delle Scienze adopted a different approach to learning from that of contemporary Italian universities, including the university of Bologna.¹⁹² As a result, science was more technically advanced in Bologna than it was elsewhere in Italy in the early eighteenth century.¹⁹³

The most significant contacts that Algarotti formed at the Istituto were those with the Istituto's founder Eustachio Manfredi and scientist Francesco Maria Zanotti. A renowned mathematician and astronomer, Manfredi was a

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 59, 63, 181-182.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 59, 63, 181-182.

¹⁹⁰ ———, "The Institute of Science of Bologna and the Royal Society," 10.

¹⁹¹ Marie Boas Hall, "La Scienza italiana vista dalla Royal Society," in *Scienza e letteratura nella cultura italiana del settecento* ed. Renzo Cremante and Walter Tega (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984), 54.

¹⁹² Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 148, Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 17.

¹⁹³ Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto: alle origini dell'Istituto delle Scienze di Bologna*, 148.

leading figure in the intellectual culture of Bologna.¹⁹⁴ In addition to being a scientist and philosopher of note, Francesco Maria Zanotti was the perpetual secretary of the Istituto during Algarotti's time in the city, and would be nominated its president in 1766.¹⁹⁵ Both were teachers of Algarotti's, Manfredi of astronomy and geometry,¹⁹⁶ and Zanotti of mathematics and philosophy.¹⁹⁷ Algarotti clearly made an excellent impression on these two scholars. Both would maintain a correspondence with him following his departure from Bologna in 1732, and correspond with each other about him and the direction his career was taking. Indeed, the relationships Algarotti had with these men, rather than being of the kind maintained purely for intellectual exchange, are more properly described as friendships. This is especially the case with Francesco Maria Zanotti, with whom Algarotti would regularly discuss his feelings regarding personal matters in his life.

Studying at the Istituto also afforded Algarotti the opportunity to form a friendship with fellow student Eustachio Zanotti. Nephew of Francesco Maria Zanotti and godson of Eustachio Manfredi, he attended the latter's lectures with Algarotti in Bologna.¹⁹⁸ Given that Eustachio Zanotti was so well-connected with these leading Bolognese scientists, his companionship would be quite beneficial

¹⁹⁴ Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 18, Paola Ambri Berselli, "Lettere di illustri francesi a Francesco Maria Zanotti," *Strenna storica bolognese* 5 (1955): 17, Provenzal, *I Riformatori della bella letteratura italiana*, 144.

¹⁹⁵ Bosdari, "Francesco Maria Zanotti nella vita Bolognese del Settecento," 205, Provenzal, *I Riformatori della bella letteratura italiana*, 148.

¹⁹⁶ Ivana Miatto, "Francesco Algarotti: ritratto di un dilettante cosmopolita attraverso il suo epistolario" (Tesi di laurea, Università degli studi di Venezia Ca'Foscari, 1994-1995), 23.

¹⁹⁷ Michelessi, *Memorie intorno alla vita ed agli scritti del Conte Francesco Algarotti*, 10.

¹⁹⁸ Miatto, "Francesco Algarotti", 23. Eustachio Zanotti would later become a celebrated astronomer, and lecturer in this topic at the Istituto in 1739. See Bosdari, "Francesco Maria Zanotti nella vita Bolognese del Settecento," 176, 198.

to Algarotti. Eustachio Zanotti would become Algarotti's companion in his travels around Italy early in his career.

Through his friendships with Francesco Maria and Eustachio, Algarotti met another prestigious member of the Zanotti family during his time in Bologna: Giampietro Zanotti, brother of Francesco Maria and father of Eustachio.¹⁹⁹ Giampietro Zanotti, a painter and noted art teacher and critic, was a member of the Bolognese art academy known as the Accademia Clementina.²⁰⁰ Like the Istituto delle scienze, this academy, of which Giampietro would become president in 1727, was also under the protection of Marsigli.²⁰¹ Algarotti's connection with Giampietro Zanotti, like that with the other Zanottis, would prove useful to Algarotti in his early career, particularly where his poetic endeavours are concerned.

During his time in Bologna, Algarotti's friendship with Francesco Maria Zanotti also enabled him to form a connection with woman of letters Marchesa Elisabetta Hercolani Ratta.²⁰² She and her husband, Senator Lodovico Ratta, were significant patrons of Bolognese intellectuals.²⁰³ Elisabetta Ratta was herself a person of culture, known in Bolognese society for the poems she wrote under the name Aglaura.²⁰⁴ She provided financial backing to numerous Bolognese scholars, including Francesco Maria Zanotti, who she engaged as a

¹⁹⁹ Bosdari, "Francesco Maria Zanotti nella vita Bolognese del Settecento.", 175-176.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 159.

²⁰¹ Provenzal, *I Riformatori della bella letteratura italiana*, 55.

²⁰² Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 28.

²⁰³ Bosdari, "Francesco Maria Zanotti nella vita Bolognese del Settecento," 178.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 178.

teacher for her children.²⁰⁵ She also provided monetary support to Francesco Maria's brother Giampietro.²⁰⁶

Of those scholars to whom she offered her financial support, Francesco Maria Zanotti was her favourite, for, in addition to acting as instructor to her children, Zanotti was also her lover.²⁰⁷ Accordingly, Zanotti's recommendation of Algarotti to Ratta held special weight. Indeed, she developed a great admiration for Algarotti.²⁰⁸ In a 1729 letter, she praised Algarotti for his intelligence and devotion to matters of the mind.²⁰⁹ Algarotti's letters to Ratta indicate that he held her in high esteem as well. He praised her intelligence, beauty, and spirit.²¹⁰ In one letter, he wrote a portrait of her, praising her for her good looks, grace, ability to converse, wide variety of interests, and poetic talent.²¹¹ Indeed, her only fault, according to him, was that she had too low an opinion of herself, and perhaps too low an opinion of him as well.²¹² It appears that Algarotti's admiration for Ratta led him to develop romantic feelings for her. He lamented his misfortune at being in love with her,²¹³ and expressed the hope that she would develop romantic feelings for him in return.²¹⁴ It is unclear

²⁰⁵ Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 28.

²⁰⁶ Bosdari, "Francesco Maria Zanotti nella vita Bolognese del Settecento," 178.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 165, 178. Eustachio Manfredi had also been interested in winning the romantic attentions of Ratta, but had Zanotti had won her heart instead. See ———, "Francesco Maria Zanotti nella vita Bolognese del Settecento," 178.

²⁰⁸ Bosdari, "Francesco Maria Zanotti nella vita Bolognese del Settecento," 165.

²⁰⁹ Elisabetta Hercolani Ratta, *Lettere della Marchesa Elisabetta Hercolani Ratta al Conte Francesco Algarotti* (Bologna: Gamberini e Parmeggiani, 1824), 1-2.

²¹⁰ Biblioteche Comunali di Treviso (BCT) MS 1259 F Algarotti to Madama NN Venice 8 Sept 1729. The identity of Madama NN is not revealed outright in this correspondence. However, some of the letters contained therein are also published in the above-cited collection of Ratta's letters, confirming that Madama NN is indeed Elisabetta Ratta.

²¹¹ BCT MS 1259 Francesco Algarotti to Madama NN, Bologna 8 June 1730.

²¹² BCT MS 1259 Francesco Algarotti to Madama NN, Bologna 8 June 1730.

²¹³ BCT MS 1259 Francesco Algarotti to Madama NN, Venice 20 Sept 1729.

²¹⁴ BCT MS 1259 Francesco Algarotti to Madama NN, fragment.

whether these feeling that Algarotti had for Ratta were genuine, or whether he hoped that, in declaring his devotion to her, she would give him the same special consideration she gave to Zanotti. Whatever the case, Algarotti's love appears to have remained unrequited. However, his connection with Ratta would prove to be beneficial, as she would provide the financial backing for the publication of his 1733 *Rime*.

Indeed, the first connections Algarotti had formed during his studies in Bologna would prove to be of great use in expanding his networks and advancing his career. Not only could they introduce him to other scholars, but they could also vouch for his intellectual abilities. Indeed, simply being associated with these scholars would act as a sort of proof of Algarotti's intellectual credentials: that such illustrious thinkers thought him worthy of their friendship would demonstrate that Algarotti was a man of some intelligence.

Algarotti was indeed a scholar, and wished to make his living writing about his intellectual interests. Accordingly, he tried to make a name for himself in the two fields that attracted him most at the time: science and poetry. Algarotti made use of various strategies in order to draw attention to his talents in both fields, some independent of, and others in conjunction with, the prestige afforded him by his Bolognese connections.

Advertising intellectual talents: science

Not surprisingly, given that he had undertaken his studies at the Istituto delle scienze, the first field in which Algarotti sought to establish a reputation was that of science. Algarotti's particular interest was in Newtonian optics. His public acceptance of Newton's theories in this field, in the form of his demonstration of Newton's optical experiments, would win him the recognition of scientists both in Italy and abroad, especially those connected to the Royal Society of London. The scandalous nature of the circumstances surrounding the reproduction of these experiments would serve to attract further attention to their outcome, and, by extension, to him.

In the late 1720s, the time during which Algarotti undertook his studies at the Istituto, Newtonianism had still not officially supplanted Cartesianism as the most widely accepted set of scientific principles in Italy.²¹⁵ Newton's theories had first begun to make some headway in Rome in the early eighteenth century, thanks to the efforts of a group of scholars headed by Celestino Galiani.²¹⁶ In 1714, Galiani had written a summary of the ideas contained in Newton's *Principia*, entitled *Epistola de gravitate et Cartesianis vorticibus*.²¹⁷ However, the fear of being reprimanded by the Inquisition had prevented him from publishing this work, leading him to choose instead to circulate it privately among Roman scientists.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Franco Arato, *Il secolo delle cose: scienza e storia in Francesco Algarotti* (Genova: Marietti, 1991), 21.

²¹⁶ Hanns Gross, *Rome in the Age of Enlightenment: The Post-Tridentine Syndrome and the Ancien Regime*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History. (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 252-254.

²¹⁷ Vincenzo Ferrone, *Una scienza per l'uomo: illuminismo e rivoluzione scientifica nell'Europa del Settecento* (Turin: UTET libreria, 2007), 137.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 138.

Newtonian science was not openly embraced in Bologna either when Algarotti began his studies there. Although the Istituto was the most advanced scientific institution in Italy, this did not translate into an easy acceptance of Newton's principles in Bologna.²¹⁹ Because the Istituto took as its model the Parisian Académie des Sciences, Cartesianism, the system subscribed to by most Académiciens at the time, was also that which most members of the Bolognese organization accepted as true.²²⁰ Indeed, Algarotti's teacher Francesco Maria Zanotti accepted, and taught, Cartesian physics as the most plausible system.²²¹ Although he was open to the possibility that Newton's optical theories were correct, his failed attempt to reproduce the experiments on light and colour described in Newton's 1704 *Opticks* led him to conclude that Descartes's theories on optics were in fact correct.²²²

Eustachio Manfredi took a different view, however. He was one of the first members of the Istituto not to dismiss Newton's theories outright.²²³ His contacts with Roman scholars, including Celestino Galiani and Thomas Dereham, English ex-patriot living in Rome, enabled him to secure copies of Newton's *Principia* and *Opticks*. Accordingly, it was through Manfredi that information about Newtonian science first came to be diffused in Bologna. By the time Algarotti had become his student, Manfredi was increasingly convinced that the Newtonian system best matched celestial appearances. However, rather than

²¹⁹ Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 238.

²²⁰ Ibid., 240.

²²¹ Ibid., 241.

²²² Arato, *Il secolo delle cose*, 21.

²²³ Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 240.

publicly declaring his support for this system, Manfredi maintained an officially ambiguous stance on it.²²⁴

While Italian scholars who supported Newton's theories did not declare so publicly, Italian scientists who opposed Newton's theories could be quite vocal about their views, as the example of Treviso scientist Giovanni Rizzetti demonstrates. In the later 1720s, Rizzetti tried to reproduce the experiments described in Newton's *Opticks*.²²⁵ Like Francesco Maria Zanotti, however, he failed to obtain the same results as Newton had.²²⁶ The results he did obtain led him to deduce his own theory of light and colour. Rather than being an element naturally present in light (as Newton posited it was), Rizzetti claimed that colour was a combination of rays coming from the sun and rays coming from the sky.²²⁷ Rizzetti's optical theory received a favourable review in the *Journal des sçavans* of Paris.²²⁸ Rizzetti subsequently published his *De luminis affectionibus specimen physico mathematicum*²²⁹ in 1727, in which he provided an account of all the optical experiments he had undertaken, using this account to support his own theory of optics in opposition to that of Newton.²³⁰

Rizzetti's theory caught the attention of several members of the Royal Society in London, including Newton himself.²³¹ James Jurin, secretary of the Royal Society, wrote to Thomas Dereham requesting that he send a copy of the

²²⁴ Ibid., 240-241, 244.

²²⁵ Vincenzo Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione: mondo newtoniano e cultura italiana nel primo Settecento* (Naples: Jovene, 1982), 250.

²²⁶ Ibid., 250.

²²⁷ Arato, *Il secolo delle cose*, 21.

²²⁸ Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione*, 251.

²²⁹ Giovanni Rizzetti, *De luminis affectionibus specimen physico mathematicum* (Treviso and Venice, 1727).

²³⁰ Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione*, 251-252.

²³¹ Ibid., 252.

De luminis as soon as it was published. Newton also asked Royal Society Fellow J.T. Desaguliers to reproduce the experiments described in the *Opticks* before a meeting of the Society in order to provide public proof that the theories Newton had derived from these experiments were correct. Acting on behalf of the Royal Society, Dereham asked Eustachio Manfredi to arrange for a public demonstration of Newton's optical experiments in order to achieve a similar goal in Italy. Manfredi assigned this task to Algarotti.²³²

Accordingly, in 1728 Algarotti undertook to publicly perform Newton's experiments on the immutability and diverse refrangibility of light.²³³ After several failed attempts with faulty prisms, Algarotti succeeded in repeating Newton's principal optical experiments, using prisms made in England.²³⁴ This was the first time these experiments had been successfully reproduced in Italy.²³⁵ Despite his Cartesian stance, Francesco Maria Zanotti offered his advice and encouragement to his student during his attempts to reproduce these experiments.²³⁶ Once Algarotti had succeeded, Zanotti recorded these experiments as being the first to demonstrate the truth of the Newtonian theory of light and colour in Italy. Zanotti would also write an account of the reproduction

²³² Ibid., 252, 254-255. Steven Shapin provides an excellent account of the important role that public demonstrations of experiments played in the acceptance or rejection of scientific theories by the scientific community. See Steven Shapin, "The House of Experiment in Seventeenth-Century England," *Isis* 79, no. 3 (special issue) (1988). For more on the role of public demonstrations in science, see Bernadette Bensaudé-Vincent and Christine Blondel, eds., *Science and Spectacle in the European Enlightenment* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2008), Geoffrey V. Sutton, *Science for a Polite Society: Gender, Culture, and the Demonstration of Enlightenment* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), Simon Schaffer, "Natural Philosophy and Public Spectacle in the Eighteenth Century," *History of Science* 21 (1983).

²³³ Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 19.

²³⁴ Ibid., 22.

²³⁵ Philippe Hamou, "Algarotti vulgarisateur," in *Cirey dans la vie intellectuelle : la réception de Newton en France*, ed. François de Gandt (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2001), 74.

²³⁶ Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 242.

of these experiments for the first volume of the Istituto's journal, entitled *Commentarii*, published in 1731. Although the success of Algarotti's experiments had convinced Zanotti of the truth of the Newtonian theory of light and colour, he framed his account of them in the *Commentarii* in neutral language, in hopes of avoiding controversy with those who still held the Cartesian theory to be correct.²³⁷

Performing Newton's optical experiments presented Algarotti with an excellent opportunity to increase his renown, thereby facilitating the expansion of his networks. Reproducing these experiments in public gave Algarotti a great deal of exposure; that he had done so successfully demonstrated his scientific knowledge and abilities to all present. Because scandal is wont to attract attention, that the controversy with Rizzetti had been the impetus for Algarotti's undertaking of this task would have served to increase the number of people who took an interest in both the outcome of these experiments and the person who performed them. Zanotti's account of this demonstration in the *Commentarii* would have further publicized Algarotti's achievement. Also contributing to the attention Algarotti would have received for this was the stature of the Royal Society of London within the Italian scientific community. During the first thirty years of the eighteenth century in particular, many Italian scientists considered the approval of the Royal Society to be a mark of great accomplishment.²³⁸ Italian scientists would have been all the more interested in Algarotti's demonstration,

²³⁷ Ibid., 242.

²³⁸ Boas Hall, "La Scienza italiana vista dalla Royal Society," 54.

given that the proceedings had been arranged by the members of the Royal Society.

Certainly, the outcome of this demonstration was of great interest to the Fellows of the Royal Society. Consequently, Algarotti's success in this endeavour won him a great deal of attention from the Royal Society, giving him international exposure. At the request of Dereham, following the public demonstration, Algarotti began working on a dissertation dealing with the experiments entitled *De Colorum immutabilitate eorumque diversa refrangibilitate*.²³⁹ Dereham planned to publish the dissertation in the Royal Society's journal *Philosophical Transactions*, as a refutation of Rizzetti's work.²⁴⁰ However, this dissertation remained for a long time only an outline, and was eventually abandoned by Algarotti all together, at least in its original format.²⁴¹

In 1732, J.T Desaguliers published his own response to Rizzetti.²⁴² Perhaps in order to ensure that he remained fresh in the minds of Royal Society Fellows, Algarotti, who had been studying the English language, considered translating this response into Italian.²⁴³ Recognizing that this presented Algarotti with an excellent opportunity to advance his career, Francesco Maria Zanotti encouraged his former student to undertake the translation, pressing him to add

²³⁹ Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)," 22; Massimo Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies," *Bologna Science Classics Online*: 22. http://www.cis.unibo.it/cis13b/bsco3/notbyed2.asp?id_opera=32 (page consulted September 5, 2008).

²⁴⁰ Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)," 22.

²⁴¹ ———, *Il secolo delle cose*, 22. The dissertation's contents would serve as the basis for his *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*.

²⁴² Francesco Maria Zanotti, *Opere scelte*, vol. 1 (Milan: Società tipografica de' classici italiani contrada del cappuccio, 1818), 470.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 470.

notes concerning the optical experiments he had performed in Bologna to it.²⁴⁴

However, Algarotti told Zanotti that he was reluctant to publish such a translation, as he feared it would be too much of an affront to Rizzetti, who had never directly insulted him.²⁴⁵ Although Zanotti originally supported Algarotti in this decision,²⁴⁶ he later tried once again to encourage his friend to publish an Italian translation of this response. In December of 1732, Zanotti wrote to Algarotti, enquiring as to whether he had decided to undertake the translation after all.²⁴⁷ A Bolognese Jesuit had expressed an interest in the contents of Desaguliers's response to Rizzetti, but was not capable of reading English, a problem that Algarotti's translation could solve.²⁴⁸ Algarotti had in fact done the translation, and sent Zanotti a copy of it for the Jesuit.²⁴⁹ Shortly thereafter, having heard from Monsignor Antonio Leprotti in Rome that someone else was poised to publish their own Italian translation of Desaguliers's response, Zanotti encouraged Algarotti to publish his work first.²⁵⁰ Algarotti was not keen to do so, however; rather, he expressed an interest in seeing this other translation, which had been authored by Thomas Dereham, the Royal Society fellow who had wanted to publish Algarotti's now-abandoned dissertation in the *Philosophical*

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 471, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Eustachio Manfredi, 20 September 1732.

²⁴⁵ Museo Civico Correr (MCC) MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, 11 October 1732.

²⁴⁶ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, il di di S Simone 1732.

²⁴⁷ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, 9 December 1732.

²⁴⁸ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, 9 December 1732.

²⁴⁹ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Padua 18 December 1732.

²⁵⁰ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, 23 December 1732.

Transactions.²⁵¹ He was certain, he confided to FM Zanotti, that Dereham's translation would be better than his own.²⁵²

Algarotti would never publish his translation of Desaguliers's response to Rizzetti. However, the excuse that he gave Zanotti, that he did not wish to insult Rizzetti, does not seem to be a very plausible one. Certainly, Rizzetti's possible reaction had not been a concern to Algarotti when he had agreed to perform the Newtonian optical experiments in public. On the contrary, he took advantage of the existing controversy, and the scandal that a successful reproduction of the experiments in question would cause, in order to expose his talents to the widest possible audience. The more likely explanation for Algarotti's decision not to publish his translation is that his ambition was to be a writer, not a scientist. Accordingly, he would not want his reputation in intellectual circles to be based entirely on scientific accomplishments of a technical nature.

Using science to meet others

However, Algarotti's lack of desire to pursue a strictly scientific career did not prevent him from taking full advantage of the reputation his successful reproduction of Newton's optical experiments had given him in order to expand his networks. Rather, he made use of the scientific standing that reproducing these experiments gave him at every opportunity in order to forge new contacts.

²⁵¹ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Padua 2 January 1733. Algarotti spells the name of the author of this translation "Diram." Presumably, this is a misspelling of "Dereham." Mazzotti agrees (Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies," 22)

²⁵² MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Padua 2 January 1733.

For instance, while he was in Padua in 1732, this credential, in combination with the contacts he had formed at the Istituto delle scienze, enabled him to form relationships with University of Padua professor of astronomy and hydraulics Giovanni Poleni, and with Giambattista Morgagni, an early member of the Accademia degli Inquieti.²⁵³ Algarotti would also make use of his scientific reputation in order to form valuable contacts when he travelled to Florence in 1733, particularly with the freemasons.

Algarotti's decision to travel to Florence in late 1733 had financial motivations: as he told his brother Bonomo in an effort to convince him to pay for the trip, Francesco thought that he would find more opportunities for financial backing there than he had in Padua, from whence he was travelling to Florence.²⁵⁴ Indeed, given that Algarotti had made a name for himself among the members of the Royal Society in London, his expectations regarding increased opportunities for financial backing there were well-founded. By the 1730s, Florence had become home to a sizeable community of English ex-patriots.²⁵⁵ They had begun arriving in the second half of the seventeenth century in order to join the courts of the Grand Dukes.²⁵⁶ Attracted by the city's museums, libraries, and monuments,

²⁵³ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Padua 21 July 1732; Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, 1 August 1732. In fact, Morgagni had spent a year as president, or *Principe*, of the Inquieti, from late 1704 to late 1705. During his reign, Morgagni had made several reforms to the Inquieti, the inspiration for which was the structure of the Académie des sciences in Paris. Morgagni had left Bologna in 1712 for Padua, where he taught theoretical medicine at the university. Subsequent to this, he received an offer from Boerhaave to teach at the University of Leida, but Morgagni turned it down in order to remain in Padua. See Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 63-64, 179, 275-276.

²⁵⁴ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Bologna 12 October 1733; Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Bologna 18 October 1733.

²⁵⁵ Carlo Francovich, *Storia della massoneria in Italia: dalle origini alla Rivoluzione francese* (Firenze: La nuova Italia, 1974), 52.

²⁵⁶ Susanna Gianfermo, *Settecento fiorentino erudito e massone* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1986), 34-35.

these English Italophiles immigrated in fairly large numbers.²⁵⁷ By the 1720s and 1730s, they constituted a significant portion of the Florentine population.²⁵⁸

As a result of the presence of so large a population of English ex-patriots, English became more widely understood in Florence than in any other Italian city at this time, and anglomania, the love of all things English, was more prevalent there than elsewhere in Italy.²⁵⁹ The presence of this English community and the prevalence of anglomania within the population at large facilitated the establishment of a Masonic lodge in the city some time between 1731 and 1732.²⁶⁰

While freemasonry had existed for centuries, the eighteenth century saw a renewed interest in it. This renewed interest brought with it a changed approach to the fraternity. Prior to 1550, freemasonry had been, essentially, an illegal trade union made up of practicing masons who accepted the doctrines of the Catholic Church.²⁶¹ However, between 1550 and 1700, the order gradually transformed into an organization of scholarly gentlemen advocating religious toleration.²⁶² This new kind of freemasonry, called speculative freemasonry, differed from the original, known as operative freemasonry, in that there was less interest among its members in the masonry techniques that previous generations of freemasons had passed down to one another. Rather, the attention of the members came to be focused on the ideas associated with freemasonry, hence the name “speculative.”

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 34-35.

²⁵⁸ Francovich, *Storia della massoneria in Italia*, 52.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 52.

²⁶⁰ Franco Cristelli, "Alle origini della massoneria fiorentina," *Rassegna storica Toscana* 45, no. 1 (1999): 185; Francovich, *Storia della massoneria in Italia*, 49-50.

²⁶¹ Jasper Godwin Ridley, *The Freemasons: A History of the World's Most Powerful Secret Society* (New York: Arcade Pub., 2001), 17.

²⁶² Ibid., 17.

These new freemasons were concerned with the ancient knowledge held by freemasons, and indeed with the sharing of knowledge in general.²⁶³

While speculative freemasonry began in England in the early eighteenth century, it soon spread to many other parts of Europe, in large part due to the impetus of English ex-patriots. Beginning in the 1720s, the Grand Lodge in London began to organize lodges amongst English residents abroad.²⁶⁴ By the 1730s, Masonic lodges could be found in France, Germany, the Netherlands, the Austrian Empire, Spain, Sweden, and several Italian cities, many of them formed by English residents living abroad and affiliated with the Grand Lodge in London.²⁶⁵ Members of the upper and middle classes on the European continent found freemasonry appealing for the same reasons as their English counterparts, namely the organization's goal of rediscovering and disseminating ancient knowledge. In addition to this, however, continental Europeans were also attracted to freemasonry simply because it was of English origin.²⁶⁶ Indeed, freemasonry was the embodiment of everything that continental Europeans perceived to be admirable about English society at this time: religious toleration, socialization across classes, the rewarding of merit, and democratic rule by constitutions and elections.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 38.

²⁶⁴ Ridley, *The Freemasons*, 44.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 47-48, Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 90.

²⁶⁶ Ridley, *The Freemasons*, 47-48.

²⁶⁷ Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 73.

Certainly, its association with these admired aspects of English culture was a large part of what made freemasonry attractive to Italians.²⁶⁸ In the 1730s, freemasonry had its greatest Italian success in Florence.²⁶⁹ This success can be attributed in large part to the colony of English ex-patriots living there at the time. They were responsible for founding the lodge there, and initially made up the vast majority of its membership.²⁷⁰ However, before long Florentines began to join the organization as well, motivated by admiration for English values, an admiration that may have been strengthened by interaction with the large numbers of English people living in their city.²⁷¹ The movement became extremely popular among the cultured class.²⁷²

Freemasonry offered its members an excellent means of extending their social networks. Indeed, one of the essential principles of freemasonry was mutual help between brothers; along with religious and political tolerance, democracy within the lodge, cosmopolitanism, and equality of all members, regardless of social class.²⁷³ The founders of speculative freemasonry had had as their goal the creation an environment in which people who might otherwise

²⁶⁸ Gian Biagio Furiozzi, "Note e discussioni: Massoneria e illuminismo," *Pensiero Politico* 30, no. 3 (1997): 490.

²⁶⁹ Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore: da Muratore a Beccaria*, Biblioteca di cultura storica, 103 (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1969), 54.

²⁷⁰ Cristelli, "Alle origini della massoneria fiorentina," 185, Francovich, *Storia della massoneria in Italia*, 49-50.

²⁷¹ Francovich, *Storia della massoneria in Italia*, 50-51.

²⁷² Venturi, *Settecento riformatore: da Muratore a Beccaria*, 54.

²⁷³ Francovich, *Storia della massoneria in Italia*, 37. In spite of claims to the contrary, the freemasons did not actually believe that everyone was equal, or, at the very least, their actions as an organization did not suggest that they did. Rather, a hierarchy existed within the organization. This hierarchy was based on merit rather than birth, merit being considered the basis of social and political order by freemasons. However, it was a hierarchy nonetheless. Further going against the masons' self-proclaimed equality, women, the illiterate, and the poor were not permitted to join. This last group was kept out through the charging of initiation fees and dues. See Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 8-9, 20, 123.

never meet could form contacts with each other.²⁷⁴ The principle of solidarity espoused by the freemasons meant that brothers undertaking travels could easily form connections with freemasons in other cities. This was facilitated by the common practice of providing one's Masonic brothers with letters of recommendation.²⁷⁵

There was a strong connection between freemasonry and Newtonian science, many freemasons being strong supporters of Newton's principles.²⁷⁶ During the 1720s and 1730s, forty five percent of Royal Society Fellows were also freemasons.²⁷⁷ For instance, J.T. Desaguliers, whose response to Rizzetti Algarotti had translated into Italian, was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge in London in 1719.²⁷⁸ Martin Folkes, who was vice president of the Royal Society in 1723, and who would become its president in 1741, was also a freemason.²⁷⁹

The link between freemasonry and science may have helped Algarotti penetrate the circle of Florentine freemasons. Indeed, the two Florentines with whom Algarotti formed his strongest connections during his time in the city, medical doctor Antonio Cocchi²⁸⁰ and poet Tomasso Crudeli,²⁸¹ were

²⁷⁴ Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, "The Universal Republic of the Freemasons and the Culture of Mobility in the Enlightenment," *French Historical Studies* 29, no. 3 (2006): 421.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 411.

²⁷⁶ Margaret C. Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 8.

²⁷⁷ Paul Elliott and Stephen Daniels, "The 'School of True, Useful and Universal Science'?: Freemasonry, Natural Philosophy and Scientific Culture in Eighteenth-Century England," *British Journal of the History of Science* 39, no. 2 (2006): 213.

²⁷⁸ Ridley, *The Freemasons*, 37.

²⁷⁹ Elliott and Daniels, "The 'School of True, Useful and Universal Science'?", 220-221.

²⁸⁰ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 21 November 1733. Cocchi had been the first native Florentine to join the lodge. See Francovich, *Storia della massoneria in Italia*, 51.

²⁸¹ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti Florence 18 Jan 1734.

freemasons.²⁸² Algarotti's new acquaintances were closely tied to the English colony in Florence: Antonio Cocchi's facility with the English language meant that he was the first choice among the English ex-patriots when they needed medical attention.²⁸³ Crudeli also had strong links to this community, earning his living by giving Italian lessons to English speakers.²⁸⁴ Through his new acquaintances, Algarotti met several members of the English colony,²⁸⁵ many of whom were likely freemasons as well.

At the time that Algarotti met Cocchi and Crudeli, the Florentine lodge was the only Masonic lodge in Italy.²⁸⁶ While freemasonry was tolerated for a brief period on the Italian peninsula, the Church soon became suspicious of it. The Church did not like the secrecy of freemasonry, or its association with Protestant England.²⁸⁷ In 1738, Pope Clement XII issued a Bull against freemasons entitled *In eminenti*.²⁸⁸ Identifying freemasons as libertines and miscreants, the Bull warned that the punishment for joining the organization would be excommunication.²⁸⁹ During the subsequent crackdown, in 1739 Tommaso Crudeli was arrested.²⁹⁰ Despite their best efforts, Crudeli's English brothers in Florence were able neither to prevent his arrest nor to secure his

²⁸² Miatto, "Francesco Algarotti", 42.

²⁸³ Ibid., 42.

²⁸⁴ Umberto Renda and Pietro Operati, "Crudeli, Tommaso," in *Dizionario storico della letteratura italiana* (Turin: Paravia, 1959). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=2099> (consulted August 16, 2010)

²⁸⁵ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 2 January 1734.

²⁸⁶ Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 26.

²⁸⁷ Ridley, *The Freemasons*, 50.

²⁸⁸ Cristelli, "Alle origini della massoneria fiorentina," 187.

²⁸⁹ Ridley, *The Freemasons*, 50.

²⁹⁰ Giuseppe Giarrizzo, *Massoneria e illuminismo nell'Europa del Settecento* (Venice: Marsilio, 1994), 78.

release.²⁹¹ He was imprisoned for two years, during which time he underwent harsh treatment.²⁹² Upon his release in 1741 he was banished to his native village, although he was eventually allowed to return to Florence several years later.²⁹³

Algarotti's connection with the freemasons would cause problems for him in the future. As a result of this association (among other things) his *Newtonianismo* would be placed on the *Indice dei libri proibiti*, or *Index of Forbidden Books*, in 1739. Though some speculate that Algarotti was a member of the Florentine lodge,²⁹⁴ whether or not this was in fact the case remains to be proven. However, at the time in which Algarotti was in Florence, his connection with Crudeli and other freemasons afforded him the opportunity to expand his networks among the English community there.

Algarotti also made use of his scientific reputation to expand his networks in Rome, where he arrived in February of 1734.²⁹⁵ Through a letter of introduction written by Francesco Maria Zanotti, Algarotti came to befriend man of science Monsignor Antonio Leprotti.²⁹⁶ Algarotti's association with Zanotti, as announced by this letter, would have demonstrated to Leprotti that Algarotti had some scientific credentials. Being himself interested in scientific matters, Leprotti would likely have heard about Algarotti's successful reproduction of Newton's optical experiments in 1728.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 78.

²⁹² Cristelli, "Alle origini della massoneria fiorentina," 188.

²⁹³ Ridley, *The Freemasons*, 53.

²⁹⁴ Giarrizzo, *Massoneria e illuminismo nell'Europa del Settecento*, 82, Arato, *Il secolo delle cose*, 8.

²⁹⁵ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 20 February 1734; BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Rome 22 February 1734.

²⁹⁶ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 22 February 1734.

Algarotti's first visit to Leprotti went well: as he reported to Zanotti, he had found Leprotti to be among the most courteous men in the world.²⁹⁷ Thereafter, Algarotti became a frequent guest at learned *conversazioni* held in Leprotti's home.²⁹⁸ Learned *conversazioni*, which were salon-style gatherings at which scholars would meet in order to discuss ideas, played a significant role in the intellectual life of Rome in this period.²⁹⁹ Attendance at these *conversazioni* would give young scholars access to intellectuals who were more well-established, providing them with an entry into learned circles.³⁰⁰

As has always been the case throughout its history, Rome was filled with visitors from other lands at this time.³⁰¹ Indeed, many of the scholars present at Leprotti's *conversazioni* were foreigners.³⁰² Accordingly, Algarotti's presence at these gatherings enabled him to form connections with illustrious intellectuals of foreign origin, many of whom were scientists.³⁰³ One such scientist with whom Algarotti forged a relationship at Leprotti's *conversazioni* was future President of the Royal Society Martin Folkes.³⁰⁴ Given his connection with the Royal Society (although not yet president, he was a Fellow), Folkes would have known about Algarotti's public demonstration of Newton's optical experiments. This may have led him to take an interest in Algarotti. Algarotti's connection with the Florentine freemasons may also have helped in this regard: when he and Folkes

²⁹⁷ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 22 February 1734.

²⁹⁸ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 6 March 1734; Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 13 March 1734.

²⁹⁹ Gross, *Rome in the Age of Enlightenment*, 247-248.

³⁰⁰ Ibid. 247-248.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 1.

³⁰² Miatto, "Francesco Algarotti", 48.

³⁰³ Ibid., 48.

³⁰⁴ Elliott and Daniels, "The 'School of True, Useful and Universal Science'?", 212, Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 27-28.

met in 1734, Folkes was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge in London.³⁰⁵

Algarotti's presence at Leprotti's *conversazioni* also enabled him to become re-acquainted with Swedish scientist Anders Celsius, of future temperature scale fame.³⁰⁶ Although the two had already met briefly when Celsius had visited Manfredi's astronomical observatory in Bologna, after encountering each other at Leprotti's *conversazioni*, Algarotti and Celsius forged a more lasting relationship, spending the summer of 1734 performing photometric experiments together in Rome.³⁰⁷

Forging contacts through written works

In addition to making contacts and creating a scholarly reputation for himself through his scientific activities, Algarotti also sought to achieve these goals through written works. Indeed, this was a logical step for Algarotti to take, given his aspiration to make his living as a writer. Although his principal aim in producing written works was to establish a literary reputation for himself, Algarotti also made use of written works to publicize his connections. By using written works to achieve these goals, Algarotti greatly expanded the audience to which he could demonstrate his literary abilities and the associations he had made.

³⁰⁵ Elliott and Daniels, "The 'School of True, Useful and Universal Science'?", 212.

³⁰⁶ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 1 May 1734. Celsius would develop the Celsius temperature scale in 1742. In its original version, the boiling and freezing points of water were reversed; that is, 0C was denoted as the boiling point and 100C, the freezing point.

³⁰⁷ Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 28, Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 43.

One area in which Algarotti made use of written works to this end was poetry. Writing poetry was a common pursuit amongst the intellectuals of eighteenth-century Europe.³⁰⁸ In keeping with this generalization, many, if not all, of Algarotti's Bolognese associates were poets. Both Francesco Maria and Giampietro Zanotti wrote poetry,³⁰⁹ as did Elisabetta Ratta. Even mathematical superstar Eustachio Manfredi wrote poetry, although his activities in this field virtually ceased after 1700.³¹⁰ Algarotti began to write poetry while undertaking his studies in Bologna.³¹¹ In a 1729 letter to Ratta, Algarotti announced his intention to make a career of this pursuit.³¹² In the years following this declaration, Algarotti devoted himself to his poetic ambitions, particularly during the time he spent in Padua in 1732. Indeed, poetry was a topic of discussion in virtually all the letters exchanged between Algarotti and Francesco Maria Zanotti during this period.

In a letter to Manfredi, Zanotti noted that he was impressed with the quality of the poems Algarotti was producing.³¹³ While his poetic talent in itself did result in some acclaim, the networking success that poetry brought him was largely due to how he made use of it. Algarotti employed poetry in order to expand his networks in three ways. Firstly, he wrote the majority of his poetry

³⁰⁸ Sylvain Menant and William McCuaig, "Poetry," *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* (e-reference edition), Alan Charles Kors, ed. (Oxford University Press, Inc, 2002, 2005 <http://www.oxfordenlightenment.com/entry?entry=t173.e553> (consulted August 4, 2010).

³⁰⁹ Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 19, Provenzal, *I Riformatori della bella letteratura italiana*, 40.

³¹⁰ Provenzal, *I Riformatori della bella letteratura italiana*, 40. Manfredi's resolution to quit writing poetry may perhaps be explained by the decision of Giulia Vandi, the love of Manfredi's life, to become a nun in that year. See ———, *I Riformatori della bella letteratura italiana*, 22.

³¹¹ Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 246, Michelessi, *Memorie intorno alla vita ed agli scritti del Conte Francesco Algarotti*, 43.

³¹² BCT MS 1259 Francesco Algarotti to Madama NN, Venice 8 September 1729. He credited Ratta for being the inspiration for this aspiration.

³¹³ Zanotti, *Opere scelte*, 470.

about illustrious people. In doing so, he aimed not only to gain the friendship of the dedicatees through flattery, but also to improve his own reputation by associating his name with theirs.³¹⁴ Secondly, he had his own poetry published by illustrious people, signalling both that he was an associate of the person responsible for its publication, and that this person thought Algarotti's poetry worth publishing. Thirdly, he prepared the poetry of illustrious people for publication. While this could bring results similar to those yielded by dedicating poetry to the eminent and well-connected, it had the added benefit of establishing Algarotti as someone who was knowledgeable about poetry.

Although Algarotti would dedicate poems to illustrious people he wished to impress throughout his life, this was a tactic that he used more heavily in his early career when he could not yet rely on the reputation he later built. In some cases, Algarotti wrote poems praising people he had already met, as a way of retaining their attention; at other times, he wrote poetry about people he had yet to meet, but with whom he wished to be personally acquainted. The chief aim of these poems was to flatter their subjects. Of course, having a poem written about one's self might be considered a compliment in itself, but in addition to this, the laudatory nature of the poems made Algarotti's esteem for the dedicatee quite explicit. He would typically praise both the achievements and the character of the subject, often likening them to an illustrious figure from the past.

Algarotti also made use of his laudatory poems as a means of showcasing his intelligence and erudition to his dedicatees. For example, many of his

³¹⁴ For more on the role played by dedications in Italian literature, see Maria Antonietta Terzoli, ed., *I margini del libro: indagine teorica e storica sui testi di dedica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Basilea, 21-23 novembre 2002* (Rome; Padua: Editrice Antenore, 2004).

laudatory poems contained references to new scientific ideas, such as the Newtonian theory of light and colour. He refers to this theory in a poem written in honour of Laura Bassi, the first European woman to be offered a university teaching position.³¹⁵ Algarotti is thought to be one of the first people there to have made use of scientific terms in poetry.³¹⁶

In cases in which Algarotti was already acquainted with the dedicatee of his poems, he could present the person with the poem himself. However, in cases where he had yet to meet the subject of his poem, he made use of an intermediary already known to that person in order to have it delivered. The use of such an intermediary could be of great benefit to him. By sending the poem to the dedicatee, the intermediary was in a sense vouching for Algarotti's character, thereby increasing the chances that the recipient would read the poem with due attention. In some instances, however, Algarotti could not make use of an intermediary, as the person whose acquaintance he wished to make was not a member of any of his associates' networks. He overcame this difficulty through publication. In either case, publishing poems dedicated to illustrious people had the added advantage of increasing the potential readership of his poems, as admirers of the dedicatees would be interested in reading poetry about them.

In 1733, a collection of Algarotti's poetry, entitled simply *Rime*, or *Poetry*, was published.³¹⁷ The book contained poems about such well-known figures as

³¹⁵ Paula Findlen, "Science as a Career in Enlightenment Italy: The Strategies of Laura Bassi," *Isis* 84, no. 3 (1993): 441.

³¹⁶ Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 246, Michelessi, *Memorie intorno alla vita ed agli scritti del Conte Francesco Algarotti*, 43.

³¹⁷ Francesco Algarotti, *Rime*. Bologna: Stamperia de L. dalla Volpe, 1733. Although the book bears the publication date of 4 December 1733, the printing of it was only completed in January of 1734 (MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 1 December

Elisabetta Ratta, Eustachio Zanotti, Francesco Maria Zanotti, Laura Bassi, Eustachio Manfredi, Isaac Newton, Antonio Conti, and Domenico Lazzarini, poet and professor of humanities at the University of Padua. While these dedicatees would likely feel flattered that poems about themselves had been published, to the reader, these poems might serve to create a link between Algarotti and the subjects of the poems, or perhaps also suggest that Algarotti had some sort of relationship with the subjects of these poems.

All the arrangements for the publication of this book had been undertaken by Giampietro Zanotti, who had also written an introductory letter to appear at the beginning of the volume.³¹⁸ The publication was paid for by the Marchesa Ratta, on condition that this fact be hidden from Algarotti.³¹⁹ Algarotti suspected that she was the financier, however, and sought confirmation of this from Francesco Maria Zanotti.³²⁰ It seems that Ratta thought her investment worthwhile: once the book was printed, she wrote to Algarotti expressing her enthusiasm that his poems were finally published, imagining they would be praised by admirers of other great Italian poets such as Petrarch.³²¹

According to Treat, Algarotti's *Rime* met with little success in Italy.³²² By Algarotti's own account, however, his *Rime* were well-received in Florence.³²³

1733). Algarotti would publish two more works on the topic of poetry in his lifetime. One, another collection of his verse, *Epistole in Versi (Opere del Conte Algarotti, vol. 1* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1791)) was published in 1758. The other, *Saggio sopra la rima (Opere del Conte Algarotti, vol. 4* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1792)) was published in 1752.

³¹⁸ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 5 December 1733; MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 24 November 1733.

³¹⁹ Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 38.

³²⁰ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 23 January 1734.

³²¹ Ratta, *Lettere della Marchesa Elisabetta Hercolani Ratta al Conte Francesco Algarotti*, 24.

³²² Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 40.

³²³ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 9 January 1734.

Either way, the work was a success where networking was concerned, as both the circumstances surrounding its publication, and its contents, enabled Algarotti to form new contacts and increase his renown. Given Giampietro Zanotti's stature in the cultural community of Bologna, that he had undertaken to prepare the *Rime* for publication and had attached his name to it would have encouraged people to read it. Zanotti dedicated the *Rime* to the Marquis Ubertino Landi, and included a letter he had written to him at the beginning of the work. In it, he praised Algarotti for his vast knowledge, not only of poetry, but also of science, mathematics, and languages, and made clear that the many eminent thinkers whom Algarotti had met agreed with his assessment.³²⁴ By dedicating the work to Landi, Zanotti had likely hoped to help Algarotti by drawing the attention of the Marquis to the work. The tactic proved successful: Landi told Zanotti that he was greatly impressed by the quality of Algarotti's poetry, and asked that several copies of the *Rime* be sent to him in order that he might distribute them to his acquaintances.³²⁵ One such acquaintance wrote a poem in honour of Landi having given him a copy of the *Rime*.³²⁶ Presumably, the author's intention in writing this poem was to flatter Landi rather than to praise Algarotti. It would have been beneficial to Algarotti nonetheless, however, in that it associated his name with that of the Marquis.

Another way in which Algarotti made use of poetry to form networks at this time in his career was by preparing the poetry of illustrious people for publication. In 1733, Algarotti's former teacher Francesco Maria Zanotti

³²⁴ Algarotti, *Rime*, 5-6.

³²⁵ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 24 February 1734.

³²⁶ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 24 February 1734.

entrusted Algarotti with the preparations for the publication of his *Poesie volgari e latine*, or *Vernacular and Latin Poetry*. Accordingly, Algarotti edited the poems Zanotti wished to include in the book and made all the necessary arrangements with the publisher.³²⁷ Initially, Algarotti had engaged Antonio Volpi, whom he had met on a trip to Pauda in 1732, as the book's publisher.³²⁸ However, because he could not have the book printed quickly enough, Algarotti appointed Paperini, a Florentine publisher, to undertake this task.³²⁹ As it happened, Paperini also seemed to be a poor choice of publisher where efficiency was concerned: it took so long for the book to be printed that Algarotti threatened to take it to Bologna for publication instead.³³⁰ The book finally saw the light of day in February of 1734.³³¹

Having prepared Zanotti's *Poesie* for publication allowed Algarotti to identify himself in the work as the one who had been responsible for undertaking these tasks. Consequently, this project provided Algarotti with an excellent opportunity to increase his renown in the field of poetry. Given Zanotti's stature in the intellectual community of Bologna, his *Poesie* would have had a fairly wide readership, the attention of which Algarotti would be able to attract through his own association with this book. It would be clear to the reader that Algarotti was an associate of Zanotti's. That such an illustrious figure as Zanotti would select Algarotti as his associate would suggest to readers of the book that Algarotti was

³²⁷ Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 246.

³²⁸ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Padua 24 October 1732.

³²⁹ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Venice 1 March 1733, Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 5 December 1733.

³³⁰ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 22 December 1733.

³³¹ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Sienna 11 February 1734.

someone worthy of attention. It would also suggest both that Zanotti thought Algarotti to be trustworthy, and that he had been correct in doing so: he had entrusted Algarotti with the necessary tasks for the work's publication, and Algarotti had undertaken them successfully. Algarotti's association with the *Poesie* would also demonstrate to its readers that Algarotti was knowledgeable about poetry, and had excellent taste in that domain. This would encourage readers to take an interest in Algarotti's own poetry. To this end, Algarotti included one of his own poems at the beginning of the collection as well, by way of introduction.³³² To maximize the recognition he would receive for his work, when the *Poesie* appeared in 1734, Algarotti sent one hundred copies of it to his brother Bonomo in Venice, asking him to distribute them to everyone he knew.³³³ Zanotti would distribute copies to his own acquaintances as well,³³⁴ thereby making Algarotti's name even more widely known.

Algarotti also made use of written works dealing with scientific subjects in order to expand his networks and increase his renown. Perhaps due to the influence of the scientific circle he had befriended in Rome, it was during his time in that city that Algarotti began working on his popularization of Newtonian science, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*. This work, based on the format of Fontenelle's popularization of Cartesian science for women, *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*, was to be made up of a series of fictional dialogues between a male narrator and a female marquise interested in Newtonian science. Algarotti began sending extracts of the early manuscript version of this work to Francesco

³³² MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Padua 24 October 1732.

³³³ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Rome 10 April 1734.

³³⁴ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Sienna 11 February 1734.

Maria Zanotti in March of 1734.³³⁵ Zanotti reported to Algarotti that, upon showing the first of these to Elisabetta Ratta, the Marchesa had expressed a great interest in knowing who the Marchesa in the book was meant to represent, wondering perhaps whether she was a stand-in for her.³³⁶ Zanotti was quite plain with his friend Algarotti in his assessment of the project: he had never liked the form of dialogue Fontenelle had employed in his *Entretiens*.³³⁷ However, he was open to the possibility that Algarotti's dialogues would change his opinions on this subject, as he thought Algarotti more capable than Fontenelle of transforming serious topics into light-hearted reading.³³⁸ He complimented Algarotti by saying that the extracts of the *Newtonianismo* he had sent so far had a playful quality that Fontenelle's work lacked entirely.³³⁹ His having begun the book while in Rome would have given Algarotti the opportunity to ask the scientists he met there for their opinions of the work as well. This would have enabled him to demonstrate his talents to those scientists while building a reputation for the *Newtonianismo* among their circles before it had even been published.

Forging contacts through travel

In undertaking his travels throughout Italy, Algarotti had likely been motivated in part by his desire to find a position of some kind in order to finance his writing career. Indeed, when planning his trip to Florence, Francesco had told

³³⁵ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 27 March 1734.

³³⁶ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 27 March 1734.

³³⁷ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 27 March 1734.

³³⁸ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 27 March 1734.

³³⁹ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 27 April 1734.

his brother Bonomo that his reason for going to that city was that he thought his prospects would be better there. Financial considerations aside, however, the desire to forge new contacts must also have been among his motivations for travelling. Indeed, travel afforded scholars the opportunity to meet intellectuals in other cities in person and establish reputations for themselves in the circles in which these intellectuals operated.³⁴⁰

Algarotti made use of various methods in order to ensure that his networking ventures would be successful during his travels. Many of these involved highlighting his associations with other, more prominent intellectuals. For instance, he made a great deal of use of letters of introduction. In July of 1732, he travelled to Padua for what would be the first of two stays there.³⁴¹ Through a letter of introduction written by Francesco Maria Zanotti, Algarotti was able to meet and befriend professor of philosophy and publisher Antonio Volpi,³⁴² who was the first publisher he later engaged to publish Zanotti's *Poesie*. Zanotti had also written Algarotti a letter of introduction for Monsignor Leprotti,³⁴³ whose *conversazioni* Algarotti attended in Rome. Manfredi, too, had provided Algarotti with a letter of introduction, this one for Monsignor Bottari, for his trip to Rome.³⁴⁴

Another manner in which Algarotti drew attention to the contacts he had made with other scholars during his travels was by travelling in the company of

³⁴⁰ Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 4.

³⁴¹ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Giampietro Zanotti, Venice 12 July 1732.

³⁴² MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Padua 21 July 1732.

³⁴³ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 2 February 1734, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 9 February 1734.

³⁴⁴ Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 27.

Eustachio Zanotti, his former classmate at the Istituto. He and Eustachio had initially planned to spend time in Verona together in 1732,³⁴⁵ but their trip was cut short by the death of Algarotti's youngest brother, who had been ill for some time. The two did travel to Florence together in 1734, however.³⁴⁶

This arrangement would have been beneficial to both Algarotti and Zanotti. Eustachio Zanotti was well connected: his father was Giampietro Zanotti, his uncle was Francesco Maria Zanotti, and his godfather was Eustachio Manfredi. While Algarotti formed relationships with all of these men, Eustachio Zanotti's ties to them were much stronger. Given that all three of these relatives of his were known and had contacts outside of Bologna, these connections could facilitate Algarotti's and Eustachio Zanotti's entry into intellectual circles in Florence. At the same time, the name that Algarotti had made for himself by successfully reproducing Newton's experiments would have enabled them to more easily gain access to Florentine scientific circles as well. Given that Zanotti wanted a scientific career (he would later become a well-known astronomer), he would have valued the opportunity to forge scientific contacts in Florence.

Algarotti also made use of travel in conjunction with written works in order to expand his networks and make a name for himself. While in Florence, Algarotti gave copies of his *Rime* to several of the acquaintances he made there.³⁴⁷ Presenting copies of this work to people in person had several advantages. It enabled him to demonstrate his talents in a tangible way to the people he met. Having met Algarotti, they would have been more likely to read it than if he had

³⁴⁵ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Bologna 8 April 1732.

³⁴⁶ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 18 January 1734.

³⁴⁷ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti Florence 2 January 1734.

sent it to them through the mail. The recipients of copies of the *Rime* could also show the book to their associates, thereby expanding Algarotti's pool of potential contacts. Having met Algarotti, the recipients of this book would have been more likely to read it. Algarotti employed a similar tactic with Francesco Maria Zanotti's *Poesie*. Once it was printed, Algarotti distributed copies of it to seventy of the acquaintances he had made in Florence.³⁴⁸ When he left Florence for Rome in 1734, he brought fifty copies of Zanotti's book with him in order to present it to the scholars he would meet there.³⁴⁹ Francesco Maria Zanotti stood to increase his own renown through Algarotti's distribution of the *Poesie*, something of which he was well aware. He asked Algarotti to make certain to give a copy of the work to Monsignor Leprotti in Rome,³⁵⁰ and to send one hundred copies of the work to Bonomo Algarotti in Venice so that they might be distributed among Bonomo's acquaintances there.³⁵¹

Algarotti's travels had indeed been instrumental in his efforts to expand his networks. Through these travels, and the various tactics he had employed during them, Algarotti had managed to form contacts with illustrious scholars, both Italian and foreign. These contacts could, and did, introduce him to even more scholars of note. The networking success Algarotti had experienced led him to want to continue travelling, an intention he announced to his brother Bonomo in a letter written in April of 1734.³⁵² Algarotti would spend the years between

³⁴⁸ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Sienna 11 February 1734.

³⁴⁹ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Sienna 11 February 1734, Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, 14 February 1734.

³⁵⁰ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 22 February 1734.

³⁵¹ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 22 February 1734.

³⁵² BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Rome 17 April 1734.

1734 and 1736 in France and England, during which time he would further increase his international renown and expand his network of contacts significantly.

Intellectual and financial conditions in Italy: further motivations for travel

Besides wanting to expand his networks by meeting illustrious intellectuals in person, the intellectual and financial conditions Algarotti was faced with in Italy were likely also a motivating factor in his decision to travel to France and England. Italy, not being a united country, did not have a capital. Consequently, unlike France and England, it lacked a centre around which intellectuals could organize, with the result that Italy lacked a unified cultural program. Many Italians saw this as an impediment to cultural and intellectual development in Italy. For instance, the editors of the *Giornale dei letterati d'Italia*, a periodical published in Venice from 1710 to 1740, were highly critical of this situation, and sought to rectify it through their publication by uniting Italian intellectuals behind common cultural goals.³⁵³ As Algarotti's opinions on the atmosphere of the various Italian cities in which he spent time demonstrates, he found Italy to be a less than ideal environment in which to achieve his intellectual goals.

Algarotti spent time in Padua in 1732. The University of Padua had long played a significant role in the cultural environment of the city, with the result

³⁵³ Brendan Maurice Dooley, *Science, Politics, and Society in Eighteenth-Century Italy: The Giornale de' letterati d'Italia and its World* (New York: Garland Pub., 1991), 2, 8.

that this environment was very academic in nature.³⁵⁴ Indeed, Algarotti found the intellectual atmosphere in Padua to be pedantic and conceited.³⁵⁵ Not long after his arrival there, he began to suffer from melancholia.³⁵⁶ In a letter to Francesco Maria Zanotti, he confided that he found life in Padua terribly solitary,³⁵⁷ the loneliness he felt only increasing over time.³⁵⁸

In November of 1732, just as Algarotti was considering leaving the city, Giambattista Morgagni offered Francesco Maria Zanotti a post at the University of Padua.³⁵⁹ Distressed by the solitude-induced melancholia Algarotti was experiencing, Zanotti considered accepting the offer.³⁶⁰ However, Algarotti advised him against such action.³⁶¹ Teaching in Padua would mean that Zanotti would have less free time than his teaching duties in Bologna allowed him, something Algarotti knew would make Zanotti unhappy.³⁶² Eustachio Manfredi also advised Zanotti against accepting the offer.³⁶³ After some deliberation, Zanotti resolved to turn the offer down.³⁶⁴ His knowledge that Algarotti would likely leave Padua at some point made him reluctant to relocate.³⁶⁵

Francesco Maria Zanotti had been correct in thinking that Algarotti would not remain in Padua; in 1733, Algarotti travelled to Florence in the company of Eustachio Zanotti. At first, Algarotti enjoyed the atmosphere in that city,

³⁵⁴ Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione*, 237-238.

³⁵⁵ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, 1 August 1732.

³⁵⁶ Zanotti, *Opere scelte*, 472, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Eustachio Manfredi, 8 October 1732.

³⁵⁷ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Padua 29 October 1732.

³⁵⁸ BCT MS 1258 F Algarotti to Giampietro Zanotti, Padua 6 November 1732.

³⁵⁹ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, 11 November 1732.

³⁶⁰ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, 11 November 1732.

³⁶¹ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Padua 29 November 1732.

³⁶² MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Padua 29 November 1732.

³⁶³ Provenzal, *I Riformatori della bella letteratura italiana*, 126-127.

³⁶⁴ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, 25 November 1732.

³⁶⁵ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, 25 November 1732.

describing it as light-hearted in a letter written to Francesco Maria the day after his arrival there.³⁶⁶ In subsequent letters to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Algarotti enthusiastically described the art and architecture he saw in Florence, saying it would take an eternity to list all the beautiful things the city had to offer.³⁶⁷

However, this enchantment was short-lived. Less than two months after his arrival in Florence, Algarotti began to see his surroundings in a more negative light. In a letter to Francesco Maria Zanotti, he described Florentine society as irritating and boring.³⁶⁸ He found Florentines to be unbearably pretentious, particularly in their claim that, while Lombards excelled in science, they had no aptitude for the arts.³⁶⁹ The only thing more pitiful than the Florentines themselves, he remarked cuttingly, was their belief that other Italians saw them as the ornament of Italy.³⁷⁰ Algarotti's utter dislike of Florentines prompted him to write a satire about them.³⁷¹ In it, he depicts them as forever boasting about all the insignificant things they wasted their time learning instead of using their time to learn things that actually matter.³⁷² Algarotti confided to Francesco Maria Zanotti that he would find Florence insufferable were it not for the presence of so

³⁶⁶ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 7 November 1733.

³⁶⁷ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 21 November 1733. He also expounded on Florence's beauty in a letter to his brother Bonomo. See BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Florence 21 November 1733.

³⁶⁸ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 29 December 1733.

³⁶⁹ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 21 November 1733.

³⁷⁰ "...è un pietà il vederla, e tanto più pietà quanto meno è si conoscono, e credeno anzi d'essere riguardato dal resto dell'Italia come l'ornamento e il sostegno del nome Italiane." BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 29 December 1733.

³⁷¹ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 29 December 1733. This satire, a copy of which Algarotti sent Francesco Maria Zanotti in January of 1734 (BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 9 January 1734), does not appear to have been published. A copy of it can be found in the archives of the Museo Civico Correr in Venice, attached to a letter written by Francesco Maria Zanotti to Algarotti on 19 January 1734 (MCC MS P.D.c7).

³⁷² MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 19 January 1734.

many foreigners, including Zanotti's nephew Eustachio, as well as of so much beautiful art and architecture.³⁷³ At a certain point, however, even these comforts were not enough to keep him there. Feeling that Florence inspired him with nothing but dark thoughts, in January of 1734 he took the decision to leave for Rome.³⁷⁴

Initially, just as had been the case with Florence, Algarotti was delighted with Rome. He found the appearance of the city to be magnificent, so much so that it inspired him to undertake studies of Roman history in order to deepen his understanding of what he saw around him.³⁷⁵ He was especially appreciative of the city's classical architecture, telling Francesco Maria Zanotti that being in the same city as the Pantheon caused St. Peter's Basilica (the main attraction for many tourists even then) to lose some of its grandeur.³⁷⁶

Algarotti was not equally appreciative of the religious element of Roman life, however. Indeed, the pervasive influence of Catholicism in Roman society, due to the presence of the Vatican, had been seen as an impediment by other intellectuals in the city, such as Celestino Galiani, whose fear of reprimand from the Inquisition prevented him from publishing his summary of Newton's *Principia*.³⁷⁷ Algarotti's first accommodation in the city was in a pension in which the other guests were churchmen.³⁷⁸ After being pressured to eat with two of these men one day, he reported to Francesco Maria Zanotti that he found the

³⁷³ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 29 December 1733.

³⁷⁴ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Florence 18 January 1734.

³⁷⁵ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 20 February 1734, Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 22 February 1734.

³⁷⁶ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 22 February 1734.

³⁷⁷ Ferrone, *Una scienza per l'uomo*, 138.

³⁷⁸ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 20 February 1734.

experience so disagreeable that he would even have preferred to dine with ten Florentines, each of whom had ten pieces of news to tell him.³⁷⁹

Algarotti's brother Bonomo had wanted Francesco to return to live in their native city of Venice after he had completed his studies at the Istituto delle scienze. However, as Algarotti's decision to travel around Italy demonstrates, he was extremely reluctant to do so.

In comparison with the other Italian cities in which Algarotti had spent time, intellectual conditions in Venice were perhaps more suitable to his ambition to become a writer. Because the ruling class was opposed to the views of counter-Reformation Rome, Venetians were accorded a great deal of liberty.³⁸⁰ Indeed, Venice's resultant reputation as a city of pleasure drew travellers from all over Europe to the city.³⁸¹ Political discussion was closely monitored, as the ruling class did not permit the least criticism of the city's system of governance.³⁸² However, scholars, whether visiting Venice or residing in the city, were free to openly express libertine thoughts.³⁸³ This intellectual freedom extended to

³⁷⁹ MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Rome 20 February 1734. Despite what would appear to be a general distaste for men of the cloth, Algarotti did develop acquaintances with some religious figures while in Rome, in addition to Leprotti, whose learned *conversazioni* he had attended. One such figure was Monsignor Bottari, for whom Manfredi had written him a letter of introduction. Another was Pope Clement XII, with whom he was granted a meeting in April of 1734. It is likely through his uncle Monsignor Giovanelli, himself a high-ranking religious official, that Algarotti secured this audience with the Pope. This encounter does not appear to have been terribly memorable for Algarotti, however. Describing this meeting to his brother in a letter, Francesco reported that it consisted in fifteen minutes of being questioned about a variety of seemingly trivial matters. See BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Rome 10 April 1734, Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 27, Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 41.

³⁸⁰ Volker Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano alla fine della Repubblica 1646-1797: Demografia, famiglia, ménage*, trans. Benedetta Heinemann Campana (Rome: Jouvence, 1997), 13.

³⁸¹ Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters; A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1980), 245.

³⁸² Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione*, 237.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 238, Venturi, *Settecento riformatore: da Muratore a Beccaria*, 24.

publication, with the result that works of all kinds were available to be read in Venice.³⁸⁴

Indeed, the publishing business in Venice was one of the most significant in Europe, publishing works by both foreign and Venetian scholars.³⁸⁵ Among the works published in the city that were authored by Venetians were a number periodicals containing book reviews, such as the *Novelle della repubblica delle lettere*, of which publisher Giambattista Albrizzi was editor.³⁸⁶ This periodical, which was published weekly from 1729 to 1761, contained reviews of all the latest books published all over Europe.³⁸⁷ The *Giornale de' letterati d'Italia*, published from 1710 to 1740 and edited by dramatist Apostolo Zeno, best-selling libretti-writer Alessandro Scarlatti, historian and literary critic Scipione Maffei, and University of Padua biologist Antonio Vallisneri, had a more narrow focus, only reviewing books written by Italians.³⁸⁸

At first glance, the intellectual liberty Venice offered, in combination with its booming publishing business, would seem like it would have been attractive to a scholar such as Algarotti, who was seeking to establish himself as a writer. However, while the ruling class of Venice was happy to allow scholars to discuss all non-political ideas openly, the Church did not turn a blind eye to this. Rather, the Jesuits and the Inquisition monitored the activities of intellectuals in the city

³⁸⁴ Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione*, 237-238.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 237. For more on publishing in Italy in the eighteenth century, see Mario Infelise and Federico Barbierato. *Libro e censura* (Milan: Bonnard, 2002).

³⁸⁶ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters; a study in the relations between Italian art and society in the age of the baroque*, 332, 334, 337.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 223, 334, 347.

³⁸⁸ Dooley, *Science, Politics, and Society in Eighteenth-Century Italy*, 1.

quite closely, to a degree that many found to be quite burdensome.³⁸⁹ What is more, although the publishing business flourished in the city, this did not translate into profits sufficient for authors to make a living.

Indeed, financial problems abounded in Venice. Although Venetians believed that special historical and divine favour would enable the city to overcome any problems it faced, Venice was so economically weak that it was forced to remain neutral in international conflicts from 1718 onwards.³⁹⁰ Added to state financial problems were economic difficulties among the ruling nobles themselves. While some noble families remained terribly rich, many others faced bankruptcy in the eighteenth century.³⁹¹ As a result, the nobility could not be counted on by scholars as a source of financial support. In 1646, the Venetian state began allowing people to purchase patrician status, in part to replenish the city's coffers. This practice was stopped in 1718, but would be resumed in 1775.³⁹² Unfortunately for Algarotti, this meant that, if he had been eligible to purchase a title, he was born too late and died too early to do so. Indeed, because the Algarotti family was not part of the patriciate, Francesco's chances of obtaining a prestigious position in Venice were very poor.³⁹³

³⁸⁹ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore: da Muratore a Beccaria*, 24. For more on the interactions between intellectuals and the Church in eighteenth-century Italy, see Patrizia Delpiano, *Il governo della letteratura: Chiesa e libri nell'Italia del Settecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007) and Mario Infelise and Federico Barbierato, *Libro e censura* (Milan: Bonnard, 2002).

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 272, 274. This belief in the invincibility of Venice due to historical or divine right is referred to as the myth of Venice. For an account of the role this plays in the historiography of Venice, see James S. Grubb, "When Myths Lose their Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography," *The Journal of Modern History* 58, no. 1 (1986).

³⁹¹ Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano alla fine della Repubblica*, 16.

³⁹² Ibid., 17, 19.

³⁹³ Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies," 7. In fact, the Venetian government would not offer him any diplomatic duty during all the time he was abroad.

In addition to these problems, Algarotti's family situation also made Venice unattractive to him. When Algarotti's younger brother died in 1732, his family insisted (or rather, attempted to insist) that he settle in Venice and marry at once.³⁹⁴ Indeed, marriage played a crucial role in the fortunes of families in Venice. Not only would such a union likely produce children who could carry on the family name, but marriage could also unite two families, benefiting the finances and prestige of both.³⁹⁵ Algarotti's family relented in its demands temporarily when it was decided that his brother Bonomo would marry instead.³⁹⁶ In many cases, once one son in a family had married, ensuring the continuity of the family line, the other sons were not required to follow suit.³⁹⁷ However, when the marriage of one son was not deemed sufficient insurance that the family name would be carried on, another son would have to marry as well.³⁹⁸ This appears to have been the case for Algarotti, as his family soon renewed their efforts to convince him to marry.³⁹⁹ Algarotti was steadfast in his refusal to submit to his family's desires, however, telling his brother Bonomo that marriage would be like death for him.⁴⁰⁰

Because so much was at stake in terms of the finances and prestige of the families, Venetians often had little say in who their marriage partners would be.⁴⁰¹ Love being of little concern, most marriages were arranged by the families of the

³⁹⁴ Zanotti, *Opere scelte*. 468, FM Zanotti to E Manfredi 16 July 1732

³⁹⁵ Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano alla fine della Repubblica 1646-1797: Demografia, famiglia, ménage*, 147, 158.

³⁹⁶ Zanotti, *Opere scelte*. 475, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Eustachio Manfredi, 29 October 1732.

³⁹⁷ Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano alla fine della Repubblica*, 23, 25.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

³⁹⁹ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Bologna 20 October 1733.

⁴⁰⁰ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Bologna 20 October 1733.

⁴⁰¹ Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano alla fine della Repubblica*, 158.

people to be wed. However, marriage had another ramification, one that was perhaps more serious for Algarotti: marriage, and the family duties that came along with it, were seen to be an impediment to one's career.⁴⁰² Indeed, Francesco Maria Zanotti feared the effect that compliance with his family's demands would have on Algarotti's career. In a letter to Manfredi, Zanotti confided his fear that, should Algarotti remain in Venice, he would never be anything more than a poet.⁴⁰³ Were he to marry, Zanotti told Manfredi, Algarotti would never leave Italy.⁴⁰⁴

Indeed, whenever Algarotti was required to spend time in Venice, he was unhappy. His family situation certainly played a large role in this: exasperated by their incessant demands, he referred to his family as "those buffoons" in a letter to Francesco Maria Zanotti.⁴⁰⁵ During times spent in Venice, Algarotti complained both of melancholy⁴⁰⁶ and of boredom.⁴⁰⁷ Francesco Maria Zanotti feared the effect that these feelings would have on Algarotti's intellect, telling Manfredi in one letter that being in Venice appeared to be dulling Algarotti's intellectual curiosity.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰² Ibid., 147, 158. In ruling families, this meant that the son who was less likely to be successful in politics would be the one who would marry in order to carry on the family name while the others would concentrate on bringing glory to the family through their careers. See ———, *Il patriziato veneziano alla fine della Repubblica*, 148.

⁴⁰³ Zanotti, *Opere scelte* v. 1. 469, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Eustachio Manfredi, 16 July 1732.

⁴⁰⁴ Zanotti, *Opere scelte*. 468, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Eustachio Manfredi, 16 July 1732.

⁴⁰⁵ "...questi buffoni di casa mia." MCC MS P.D.c7 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Venice 22 June 1732.

⁴⁰⁶ MCC Epistolario Moschini MS P.D.c549 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Venice 17 September 1732.

⁴⁰⁷ BCT MS 1258 Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Venice 14 March 1733.

⁴⁰⁸ Zanotti, *Opere scelte*. 468, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Eustachio Manfredi, 16 July 1732.

Conclusion

Not finding conditions in any of the Italian cities in which he had spent time suitable to his aim of establishing himself as a writer, Algarotti elected to leave Italy. Telling Bonomo he planned to travel to France and England, he asked Bonomo for a greater allowance in order to facilitate this.⁴⁰⁹ By May of 1734, his itinerary was almost set: he would go from Rome to Florence, and from there to France via either Genoa or Lombardy.⁴¹⁰

During his years in Italy, Francesco had managed to make a name for himself, both in the field of science, and in that of poetry. Written works and travel had been important factors in the creation of his reputation. However, above all, his contacts had been instrumental. It was through his association with others that Algarotti had been able to gain notice for his intellectual achievements. Algarotti's associates had also played a crucial role in his ability to meet illustrious scholars and form contacts with them. Manfredi's delegation of the task of reproducing Newton's optical experiments to Algarotti brought the Venetian a great deal of attention from the scientific community, both in Italy and abroad. Giampietro Zanotti had prepared Algarotti's *Rime* for publication, and had included a letter of his own authorship at the beginning of the work, greatly increasing the number of people who would be interested in Algarotti's poetry. Francesco Maria Zanotti had entrusted Algarotti with the necessary preparations for the publication of his own volume of poetry, *Poesie vulgari e latine*, giving

⁴⁰⁹ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Rome 17 April 1734.

⁴¹⁰ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti Rome 21 May 1734.

Algarotti the chance to increase his renown by associating his own name with the work. Introductions made on his behalf by these associates, both in person and through letters, had also played an important role in his ability to increase his renown and expand his networks.

The importance of networks as a means of being accepted in scholarly circles was not lost on Algarotti. Prior to his departure for Paris, he asked his brother for letters of introduction for use in Genoa and Leghorn, as well as one for the Venetian ambassador in Paris.⁴¹¹ He also secured addresses of Bonomo's acquaintances in Paris and Lyons.⁴¹² In addition, he arranged to undertake his travels in the company of man of science Anders Celsius.⁴¹³ Algarotti, who considered Celsius to be a great friend, told Bonomo that he felt he could not find a better person with whom to travel.⁴¹⁴ His assessment of the worthiness of Celsius as a travel companion would turn out to be correct. His association with Celsius, as demonstrated by the fact that they were travelling together, would open important doors for Algarotti in the scientific circles of Paris.

⁴¹¹ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Rome 21 May 1734, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Rome 12 June 1734.

⁴¹² BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Rome 3 June 1734.

⁴¹³ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Rome 17 July 1734.

⁴¹⁴ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Rome 17 July 1734.

**Cultivating networks in cultural capitals: Algarotti's travels in Paris and
London, 1734-1736**

Between the years 1734 and 1736, Algarotti would travel to, and live in, France and England, forging contacts and making a name for himself in the intellectual circles of Paris and London. Algarotti was not the only Italian scholar to seek to expand his networks outside of Italy during this period. For instance, Venetian intellectual Antonio Conti had undertaken travels to both Paris and London, as had author of the periodical *Frusta letteraria* Giuseppe Baretti.⁴¹⁵ By the time Algarotti left for Paris, he had already established a reputation for himself in intellectual circles both in Italy and abroad. Studying at the prestigious Istituto delle scienze in Bologna had given him scientific credentials; through his public replication of Newton's optical experiments, he had demonstrated these credentials to all scientists interested in their outcome, and had shown himself to be a supporter of Newtonian optical principles. His having begun work on his *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, extracts of which he had shown other scholars, confirmed his Newtonian stance. He had also made a name for himself in the field of poetry, having had his *Rime* published in 1733, and having arranged for the publication of Francesco Maria Zanotti's *Poesie vulgari e latine*, published in 1734. By giving copies of both works to the scholars he had met during his travels, he had increased the pool of people familiar with these works, and thereby, the recognition he received for them.

⁴¹⁵ For more on both, see the introduction.

Algarotti's contacts had played a crucial role in helping him to advertise his talents in science and poetry. Eustachio Manfredi had given Algarotti the chance to make his scientific skills and views known by assigning him the task of performing Newton's optical experiments in public. With the roles they played in the publication of Algarotti's *Rime*, Giampietro Zanotti and Elisabetta Ratta had been instrumental in making Algarotti's talents known to a wider circle, Zanotti by having associated his name with the it by preparing it for publication, and including an introductory letter of his own authorship at the beginning of this work, and Ratta by financing the printing of the book. Likewise, Francesco Maria Zanotti had provided Algarotti with the opportunity to prepare his *Poesie vulgari e latine* for publication, giving Algarotti the chance to associate his name with Zanotti's in print, and to publicize his own poetry to admirers of Zanotti through the inclusion of one of his own poems at the beginning of the work. Algarotti's associates had also helped make his talents known by introducing him to other scholars, either in person or through letters of recommendation.

Through his talents, and the efforts of his friends to help publicize them, Algarotti had managed to greatly expand his network of contacts, and thereby, increase his renown. Algarotti would make use of strategies very similar to those he had employed in Italy in order to forge contacts and make a name for himself in the intellectual circles of France and England. In both places, his knowledge of science and poetry enabled him to befriend leading thinkers. By invoking the names of his associates, both the ones he had previous to his arrival in each place and the ones he would acquire there, he was able to gain access to these

intellectual circles more easily. The network of contacts he developed during these travels, and the name he had made for himself within this network, left him poised for instant success when his *Newtonianismo* would be published in 1737.

The intellectual and cultural capital of the world: France in the eighteenth century

During the eighteenth century, many Europeans, particularly intellectuals, were infected with gallomania, or the love of all things French.⁴¹⁶ This was because Paris was widely considered to be the intellectual and cultural capital of Europe.⁴¹⁷ Given the prestigious place accorded to Paris in the European cultural landscape, many came to see French as the ideal language.⁴¹⁸ The ability to communicate in French not only facilitated the gathering and disseminating of knowledge, but also served to demonstrate that one was on the forefront of intellectual and social trends.⁴¹⁹ Accordingly, French was adopted as the official language of communication at various European scientific academies, replacing Latin as the language of learning.⁴²⁰ Several intellectuals chose French as their

⁴¹⁶ Thomas J. Schlereth, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought, its Form and Function in the Ideas of Franklin, Hume, and Voltaire, 1694-1790* (Notre Dame (Ind.): University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 3.

⁴¹⁷ Françoise Waquet, *Le modèle français et l'Italie savante: conscience de soi et perception de l'autre dans la République des Lettres (1660-1750)* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, Palais Farnèse, 1989), 330.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 316.

⁴¹⁹ Daniel Roche, *Humeurs vagabondes: De la circulation des hommes et de l'utilité des voyages* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 700.

⁴²⁰ Ulrich Im Hof, *The Enlightenment*, trans. William E. Yuill. (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 99, Arturo Graf, *L'Anglomania e l'influsso inglese in Italia nel secolo 18* (Torino: E. Loescher, 1911), 3. For instance, proceedings at the Berlin Academy of sciences were conducted in French.

language of correspondence, and several European courts, as the standard language of communication.⁴²¹

Many Italians shared this exalted view of France and Paris.⁴²² Perceiving French intellectuals as leading authorities in their fields, numerous Italian scholars sought to learn all they could about the intellectual and scientific developments taking place in Paris.⁴²³ This admiration of all things Parisian extended beyond the confines of ideas. Italian francophiles sought to import every trend from Paris.⁴²⁴ This desire to emulate Parisians in all things extended to the French language. Although Italians did not adopt French as the language of learning and culture as quickly as Europeans elsewhere had (desire to cling to memories of a glorious literary past being the reason for this), they eventually followed suit: all the leading figures on the Italian cultural and intellectual scene knew how to speak French.⁴²⁵

Certainly, Algarotti would have recognized the importance of Paris as an intellectual capital. This would have been evident to him as soon as he began his studies at the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna, which had close ties with the Académie des sciences in Paris, and many of whose members had learned French in order to keep abreast of scientific developments in Paris.⁴²⁶

⁴²¹ Marc Fumaroli, *Quand l'Europe parlait français* (Paris: Editions de Fallois, 2001), 17, Im Hof, *The Enlightenment*, 99. For instance, Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia wrote all of his correspondence in French, as did Catherine II (the Great) of Russia.

⁴²² Waquet, *Le modèle français et l'Italie savante*, 330.

⁴²³ Ibid., 97, 100.

⁴²⁴ Graf, *L'Anglomania e l'influsso inglese in Italia*, 17.

⁴²⁵ It should be noted that not all Italians were Francophiles in this period. There were Italians who hated everything French as well. They criticized the character of the French, and attempted to censor the use of the French language. See Ibid., 4, 19-20, 28.

⁴²⁶ For more on this, see chapter one.

Gallomania, and the perception of Paris as a cultural and intellectual Mecca, led foreigners from all over Europe to travel to the city.⁴²⁷ While some travelled to Paris in pursuit of pleasure, others travelled to the city in order to advance their scholarly careers.⁴²⁸ Italians, along with Germans and the Dutch, represented the largest proportion of the population of foreign scholars in Paris.⁴²⁹ Like their counterparts from other European countries, the travels of these Italian scholars were motivated by a desire to forge contacts with the leading Parisian intellectuals, and gain admittance to the city's learned academies.⁴³⁰ Given the Europe-wide reputation of Paris as an intellectual capital, making a name for one's self in the scholarly circles of the city was tantamount to acquiring international fame.⁴³¹

Like other Italian scholars who had travelled to Paris, Algarotti would seek to gain access to these intellectual circles, and create a reputation for himself within them. These endeavours would prove to be successful: Algarotti would forge relationships with many of the city's leading thinkers, including Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, Émilie du Châtelet, and Voltaire. While his knowledge of science and poetry would help him to form and cement these

⁴²⁷ Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 24; Fumaroli, *Quand l'Europe parlait français*, 9. For more on foreigners in Paris during the eighteenth century, see Roche, *Humeurs vagabondes*, Jean-François Dubost, "Les Étrangers à Paris au siècle des Lumières," in *La Ville promise: mobilité et accueil à Paris (fin XVIIe - début XIXe siècle)*, ed. Daniel Roche (Paris: Fayard, 2000).

⁴²⁸ Dubost, "Les Étrangers à Paris au siècle des Lumières," 221.

⁴²⁹ Stéphane Van Damme, "'The World is too Large': Philosophical Mobility and Urban Space in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Paris," *French Historical Studies* 29, no. 3 (2006): 386.

⁴³⁰ Waquet, *Le modèle français et l'Italie savante*, 118-120. Many Italian artists also travelled to Paris with a view to advancing their careers. See Norbert Jonard, *La France et l'Italie au siècle des Lumières: essai sur les échanges intellectuels* (Paris: Honoré Champion éditeur, 1994), 30.

⁴³¹ Waquet, *Le modèle français et l'Italie savante: conscience de soi et perception de l'autre dans la république des lettres (1660-1750)*, 118-120, 126.

relationships, introductions from his associates, both in person and through letters of recommendation, would also play a crucial role.

Algarotti's first impressions of Paris, like his first impressions of so many of the other cities he had visited, were quite positive. Shortly after arriving, he wrote to his brother Bonomo to report that he was thoroughly charmed by everything he saw.⁴³² In order to facilitate his entry into Parisian intellectual circles, Algarotti arrived in Paris with letters of introduction from Eustachio Manfredi, Francesco Maria Zanotti, and Antonio Conti, all three of whom had contacts in Paris.⁴³³ Shortly after his arrival in Paris, likely at Bonomo's suggestion, Francesco presented himself to the Venetian ambassador to France.⁴³⁴ The ambassador instructed Algarotti in the customs of Parisian society life and introduced him to other diplomats in the city.⁴³⁵

Most notable among the diplomats with whom Algarotti became acquainted was Abate Giulio Franchini, living in Paris as the representative of Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo III.⁴³⁶ Having become a respected member of

⁴³² Biblioteca Comunale di Treviso (BCT) MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Paris ce...1734. The only thing Algarotti did not like about Paris was its music.

⁴³³ Ivana Miatto, "Francesco Algarotti: ritratto di un dilettante cosmopolita attraverso il suo epistolario" (Tesi di laurea, Università degli studi di Venezia Ca'Foscari, 1994-1995), 49. Algarotti had met and befriended Conti in Venice in the 1730s. Conti had been greatly impressed by this sonnet. See Museo Civico Correr (MCC) MS P.D.c7, Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, Venice 22 June 1732; Francesco Maria Zanotti, *Opere scelte*, vol. 1 (Milan: Società tipografica de' classici italiani contrada del cappuccio, 1818), 468, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Eustachio Manfredi, 16 July 1732.

⁴³⁴ BCT MS 1256A F Algarotti to B Algarotti, Paris ce...1734. It seems likely that it was Bonomo's idea for Francesco to present himself to the Venetian ambassador because, after having done so, Francesco wrote to Bonomo to report that he had introduced himself.

⁴³⁵ Massimo Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies" [on line] *Bologna Science Classics Online*, http://www.cis.unibo.it/cis13b/bsco3/notbyed2.asp?id_opera=32 (page consulted September 5, 2008), 8.

⁴³⁶ He is also known Giulio Franchini Taviani (1694-1759). Sent to France in 1722, he remained there as the representative of Cosimo III until 1740. See O Gori Pasta, "Franchini Taviani, Giulio," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani. Vol. 50*, ed. Alberto Maria Ghisalberti (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1998), 124.

the Parisian intellectual community, Franchini was able to introduce Algarotti to many influential scholars.⁴³⁷ Many of these scholars were people of science.

Science in Paris in the eighteenth century

As early as 1690, French scientists had begun to adopt some of Newton's scientific principles.⁴³⁸ For many years thereafter, however, the vast majority remained staunch supporters of the Cartesian system. Particularly vocal in this regard was Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, whose popularization of Cartesian science for women, *Entretiens sur la pluarlité des mondes*, had appeared in 1686, one year prior to the publication of Newton's landmark work, the *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*. Beginning in the years 1726 to 1728, during which time Fontenelle was appointed the first-ever perpetual secretary of the Académie des sciences in Paris, he transformed his support of Cartesian mechanics into a public campaign against Newtonianism.⁴³⁹

A short while later, two different works supporting Newtonian scientific principles were published in Paris. Each has been identified by philosophes writing in the later eighteenth century as having played a crucial role in the eventual acceptance of Newtonian scientific principles over those of Descartes in France.⁴⁴⁰ The first of these was Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis's 1732

⁴³⁷ Ibid. 124; Franco Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)" (Dottore di ricerca dissertation, Università degli studi di Torino; Università degli studi di Genova, 1989), 28.

⁴³⁸ John Bennett Shank, *The Newton Wars and the Beginning of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 28.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 263.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 17.

*Discours sur les différentes figures des astres avec une exposition des systèmes de MM Descartes et Newton.*⁴⁴¹ The second was François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire's 1734 *Lettres philosophiques*.⁴⁴²

The publication of the *Discours* marked Maupertuis as France's first self-proclaimed Newtonian.⁴⁴³ In the work, Maupertuis first describes the Cartesian system of astrophysics. He then describes the Newtonian astrophysical system as a means of pointing out Descartes's errors (and Newton's correct ideas). Maupertuis's prestige gave his pronouncement in favour of Newtonianism credibility. In 1728, Maupertuis had spent three months in London, during which time he got to know Royal Society Newtonians such as Martin Folkes.⁴⁴⁴ His appointment to a high-ranking position within the Académie des sciences in 1731 and the authority this position gave him also led people to take notice of ideas.⁴⁴⁵

Being a writer rather than a scientist, Voltaire's espousal of Newtonianism and the attention he received for it were rather different than had been the case with Maupertuis.⁴⁴⁶ The impetus for Voltaire's support of Newtonian science had been a trip he had taken to London in the mid-1720s.⁴⁴⁷ Impressed with what he perceived to be England's modernity, in the *Lettres philosophiques* he attributed this in part to the superiority of Newtonian science over that then current

⁴⁴¹ Pierre Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, *Discours sur les différentes figures des astres d'ou l'on tire des conjectures sur les étoiles qui paroissent changer de grandeur, & sur l'anneau de Saturne : avec une exposition abrégée des systèmes de M. Descartes & de M. Newton* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1732).

⁴⁴² Voltaire, *Lettres philosophiques* (Amsterdam: E. Lucas, au Livre d'or, 1734).

⁴⁴³ Shank, *The Newton Wars*, 233.

⁴⁴⁴ Mary Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth: Maupertuis and the Sciences in the Enlightenment* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 41-42, 44-45.

⁴⁴⁵ Shank, *The Newton Wars*, 236.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 236-237.

⁴⁴⁷ Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs and Margaret C. Jacob, *Newton and the Culture of Newtonianism* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1995), 86.

France.⁴⁴⁸ Because Voltaire was a writer, the supporters his work gained for Newton were largely of the literary, rather than the scientific, variety.⁴⁴⁹ The purposely antagonist tone of Voltaire's work, and the scandal this caused, also served to generate interest in Newtonian science among those who read it.⁴⁵⁰

The works of Maupertuis and Voltaire had served to create an interest in Newtonianism among the intellectuals of Paris. Mathematics had become quite fashionable in Paris in the 1730s, both for ladies and for men.⁴⁵¹ As a result, being in the city offered Algarotti with an excellent opportunity to generate interest in his *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*.

How Algarotti's reputation and connections helped him to penetrate Parisian scientific circles

The scientific reputation Algarotti had established for himself prior to his arrival in Paris would have facilitated his entry into scientific circles in the city. That Algarotti had letters of recommendation from two of Bologna's leading scientists, Eustachio Manfredi and Francesco Maria Zanotti, would have helped bolster this reputation. That he had arrived in the city in the company of noted scientist Anders Celsius would also have worked in his favour in this regard.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 86.

⁴⁴⁹ Shank, *The Newton Wars*, 236. As Shank points out, this distinction is something of an oversimplification, as the line between scientists and other intellectuals was not firmly defined at this time by any means. See———, *The Newton Wars*, 236-237.

⁴⁵⁰ Shank, *The Newton Wars*, 239.

⁴⁵¹ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 85.

The first prominent Parisian scientist with whom Algarotti formed a relationship was mathematician and member of both the Académie des sciences and the Royal Society Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis.⁴⁵² As is evidenced by his authorship of the *Discours sur les différentes figures des astres*, Maupertuis had an interest in, and was a supporter of, Newtonian science, something that would have facilitated the formation of their friendship.⁴⁵³ The two would maintain a correspondence well after Algarotti left Paris, and be reunited at the court of Frederick II (The Great) of Prussia in 1740.

Through Maupertuis, Algarotti was able to meet the Parisian mathematicians with whom the former associated, including Alexis Claude Clairaut and Émilie de Breteuil, Marquise du Châtelet.⁴⁵⁴ Du Châtelet had come to know both Maupertuis and Clairaut through her studies, having engaged Maupertuis as her tutor of geometry.⁴⁵⁵ When her mathematical abilities came to surpass those of the latter, she replaced him with Clairaut.⁴⁵⁶ Du Châtelet would go on to translate Newton's *Principia* into French, a tremendous undertaking, as

⁴⁵² Philippe Hamou, "Algarotti vulgarisateur," in *Cirey dans la vie intellectuelle : la réception de Newton en France*, ed. François de Gandt (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2001), 74.

⁴⁵³ Like Algarotti, early in his career Maupertuis had moved around to various cities, trying to establish a reputation for himself by creating networks with intellectuals in the various places he travelled to. During these travels he had befriended Martin Folkes in 1728, whom Algarotti had also met in Rome in 1734. Means employed to achieve fame aside, the results of employing these means is something else that Algarotti and Maupertuis had in common. Like Algarotti, Maupertuis is historically significant not because of any one particular great accomplishment. Rather, the sum of his accomplishments meant that he, like Algarotti, was a central figure in European intellectual circles in his day. Also like Algarotti, despite the contemporary fame he achieved, by the end of the eighteenth century this fame had already begun to fade. See Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 8-10, 41-42, 44-45.

⁴⁵⁴ Hamou, "Algarotti vulgarisateur," 74. Clairaut and Algarotti were quite close in age. The former was born in 1713, the latter, in 1712. Clairaut died in 1765. Du Châtelet's full name was Gabrielle Emilie le Tonnelier de Breteuil, Marquise du Châtelet-Lomont.

⁴⁵⁵ Judith P. Zinsser, *La Dame d'Ésprit: A Biography of the Marquise Du Châtelet* (New York: Viking, 2006), 66, 72.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

is demonstrated by the fact that hers is still the standard French translation of this work in use today.⁴⁵⁷ Du Châtelet's studies with Maupertuis had sparked a romantic liason between the two.⁴⁵⁸ Although this romance was short-lived, the two had remained friends afterwards.

Just as attending Leprotti's learned *conversazioni* had enabled Algarotti to form contacts with the scientific community in Rome, attending salon gatherings enabled Algarotti to expand his network of scholarly contacts in Paris. By attending salons, scholars could gain access to the prestigious intellectuals also in attendance.⁴⁵⁹ Salon gatherings could contribute to the attendee's renown, both by providing them with a forum through which to make their knowledge and talents known to others, and by identifying them as a member of a prestigious group.⁴⁶⁰ In the fall of 1734, Maupertuis and Clairaut organized a salon-style intellectual retreat at Mont Valerian just outside Paris, inviting both Algarotti and his travelling companion Celsius to join them.⁴⁶¹ Not only did this provide him with the opportunity to forge contacts with the other scholars present, but his having been invited to join this group of well-known scholars on the retreat would have bolstered his reputation in scientific circles. The Abate Franchini, who Algarotti had met shortly after his arrival in Paris, was also part of the group, as

⁴⁵⁷ Vesna Crnjanski Petrovich, "Women and the Paris Academy of Sciences," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no. 3 (1999): 383.

⁴⁵⁸ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 86.

⁴⁵⁹ Roche, *Humeurs vagabondes*, 725. For more on salons, see Antoine Lilti, *Le Monde des salons: sociabilité et mondanité à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), Dena Goodman, *The republic of letters: a cultural history of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), and Carolyn C. Lougee, *Le paradis des femmes: Women, Salons, and Social Stratification in Seventeenth-Century France* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976).

⁴⁶⁰ Antoine Lilti, "Sociabilité et mondanité: les hommes de lettres dans les salons Parisiens au XVIIIe siècle," *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 3 (2005): 421.

⁴⁶¹ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 100.

was Émilie du Châtelet.⁴⁶² This was likely the venue of Algarotti's first meeting with du Châtelet. A letter du Châtelet wrote to Maupertuis in January of 1735, following her departure from Mont Valerian, suggests that this encounter with Algarotti was quite memorable for her. In it, she wrote that Algarotti's presence at Mont Valerian had led her to develop a deep love of the place, and that knowing that Algarotti was still there made her wish that she could return.⁴⁶³ Through du Châtelet, Algarotti was able to form a contact with another significant figure on the Parisian, and international, intellectual scene. By this time, she had begun what would be a long-term romance with François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire.⁴⁶⁴ Algarotti had been familiar with Voltaire's name since at least 1732.⁴⁶⁵ Du Châtelet would introduce Algarotti to Voltaire.

Just as Algarotti's scientific knowledge would have made his friendship attractive to the mathematicians he had met in Paris, so it was with Voltaire. In a letter written to Nicolas-Claude Thieriot, the first in which he mentioned Algarotti, Voltaire described the Venetian as being quite knowledgeable concerning Newtonian scientific principles.⁴⁶⁶ In a letter to Pierre-Joseph Thouliez d'Olive, Voltaire noted that Algarotti understood Newton as well as he

⁴⁶² Ibid, Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. IV (1735)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1953), 21, du Châtelet to Maupertuis ? January 1735.

⁴⁶³ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. IV (1735)*, 21, du Châtelet to Maupertuis ? January 1735.

⁴⁶⁴ Du Châtelet and Voltaire (1694-1778) began their romantic relationship in 1733. In 1735, because Voltaire had been banished from Paris, the two took up residence together at Cirey, with du Châtelet's husband's knowledge and consent. See Zinsser, *La Dame d'Ésprit*, 62, 116.

⁴⁶⁵ Museo Civico Correr (MCC) MS P.D.c7, Francesco Algarotti to Francesco Maria Zanotti, 1 August 1732. In this letter, Algarotti told Zanotti that he had recently attended a public performance in Padua, the aim of which was to demonstrate that French literature was uncultured in comparison to that produced in Italy. Algarotti did not agree with this assessment, pointing out to Zanotti that France had produced some excellent authors, among which was "Volterre."

⁴⁶⁶ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. IV (1735)*, 169, Voltaire to Nicolas Claude Thieriot, 3 November 1735.

understood Euclid.⁴⁶⁷ Lamenting the fact that, in contrast with Algarotti, few people in France understood Newton properly, he remarked that the French should be ashamed that their knowledge of Newtonian principles was so poor.⁴⁶⁸

In a letter written to Pierre Robert le Cornier de Cideville in December of 1735, Jean-Baptiste Nicolas Formont described Algarotti as “a truly great geometer.”⁴⁶⁹ Algarotti’s reputation as scientifically knowledgeable had been instrumental in his ability to form contacts with Parisian intellectuals. These contacts further contributed to this reputation, Maupertuis by inviting him to join the intellectual retreat at Mont Valerian, and Voltaire, by advertising Algarotti’s scientific prowess to his correspondents. As a result, Algarotti came to be widely known in Parisian intellectual circles for his scientific capabilities.

*Other factors that enabled Algarotti to expand his Parisian networks:
cosmopolitanism and poetry*

Algarotti’s knowledge and abilities in the field of science were not the only attributes that facilitated the expansion of his networks in Paris. That he was identified as a cosmopolitan also contributed to this. Cosmopolitanism, or the desire to seek out people culturally different from one’s self, and the ability to feel at home among them, was a trait that was admired by eighteenth-century

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. 191, Voltaire to Pierre-Joseph Thoulhier d’Olive, 30 November 1735.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid. 191, Voltaire to Pierre-Joseph Thoulhier d’Olive, 30 November 1735.

⁴⁶⁹ “un fort bon géomètre.” Ibid., 201, Jean-Baptiste Nicolas Formont to Pierre Robert le Cornier de Cideville, 3 December 1735.

intellectuals.⁴⁷⁰ Maupertuis's cosmopolitanism is one of the reasons the Venetian admired him. In a letter written to Algarotti in April of 1735, Francesco Maria Zanotti stated that he was pleased to hear that Algarotti thought of Maupertuis as a man of all nations.⁴⁷¹ During his extensive travels around Italy, Algarotti had managed to gain acceptance in the scholarly circles of the various cities in which he had spent time. His experience in Paris proved similar in this regard, as he managed to form contacts, and fit in with, various leading thinkers in the city. This enabled Algarotti to establish a reputation for himself in Parisian circles as a cosmopolitan. Writing to Thieriot, Voltaire identified Algarotti as someone who knew the languages and customs of all countries.⁴⁷²

Just as it had during his time in Italy, Algarotti's poetic talent also enabled him to form contacts in Paris. In November of 1735, Voltaire wrote to Nicolas-Claude Thieriot to report that Algarotti was staying with him and du Châtelet.⁴⁷³ In this letter, he equated Algarotti's verses to those of famed Renaissance poet Ludovico Ariosto.⁴⁷⁴ In a subsequent letter to the Abate Franchini, Voltaire compared his own poetry unfavourably with that of Algarotti.⁴⁷⁵ In fact, Voltaire thought so highly of Algarotti's poetical abilities that he wrote a poem in his

⁴⁷⁰ Margaret C. Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 1-2, 12.

⁴⁷¹ "...piacemi che vi paja un uomo di tutti i paesi..." Zanotti, *Opere scelte*, 604, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, 17 April 1735.

⁴⁷² Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. IV (1735)*, 168, Voltaire to Thieriot, 3 November 1735.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 168, Voltaire to Thieriot, 3 November 1735.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 168, Voltaire to Thieriot, 3 November 1735. The most well-known work by Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533) was (and is) his 1516 epic poem *Orlando Furioso*.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. 174, Voltaire to Giulio Franchini-Taviani, 10 November 1735.

honour, in which he described the Venetian as “the god of verses.”⁴⁷⁶ Voltaire’s praise of Algarotti’s poetry, both in letters and in poems of his own, may have contributed to the establishment of a reputation for Algarotti as a noteworthy poet among the former’s correspondents. Writing to Pierre Robert le Cornier de Cideville, Jean-Baptiste Nicolas Formont, frequent correspondent of Voltaire, boasted that he knew Francesco Algarotti, a Venetian who wrote excellent poems.⁴⁷⁷ That Algarotti had come to be known for his poetry also appears to have encouraged Parisians to read his *Rime*: in the above-mentioned letter, Formont noted that Algarotti’s poems had been published.⁴⁷⁸

Invitations to Lapland and Cirey

The reputation Algarotti had gained in Parisian society as both a Newtonian and a poet, and the connections he had formed there, led to him being offered two very different invitations, the acceptance of which would have been equally beneficial to the development of Algarotti’s renown, and therefore, career. The first, issued by Maupertuis, was to join a scientific expedition to Lapland. The second, issued by du Châtelet and Voltaire, was to spend time with them at their estate in Cirey. Both parties sought to convince Algarotti to accept their offer over that of the other, suggesting that Algarotti’s renown was such that

⁴⁷⁶ “le dieu des vers.” ———, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. V (1736)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1953), 95, Voltaire to Thieriot 16a March 1736.

⁴⁷⁷ ———, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. IV (1735)*, 201, Formont to Pierre Robert le Cornier de Cideville, 3 December 1735.

⁴⁷⁸ “...qui a fait bien des vers en sa langue dont il y en a d’imprimés...” Ibid., 201, Formont to Pierre Robert le Cornier de Cideville, 3 December 1735.

Maupertuis thought the Venetian's presence in Lapland would have been beneficial to the reputation of the expedition, and du Châtelet and Voltaire, to the former's estate at Cirey. After some deliberation, Algarotti chose Cirey over Lapland. His acceptance of du Châtelet's and Voltaire's offer over that of Maupertuis enabled him to pursue his ambition to become a writer by providing him with the chance to work on, and create a reputation for, his *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*.

Adding to the strain of choosing between these two offers were financial woes. In May of 1735, Francesco wrote to Bonomo, complaining that the funds his brother had allotted him were not adequate to maintain a decent lifestyle.⁴⁷⁹ He claimed that, if Bonomo did not grant him a larger allowance, he would be forced to leave Paris.⁴⁸⁰ This financial disagreement continued into June.⁴⁸¹ Bonomo was steadfast in his refusal to grant Francesco's request, with the result that this was an argument which Francesco did not win: in late August, Francesco announced that he was making preparations to leave Paris for the provinces, where the cost of living would surely be lower.⁴⁸² For this reason, the invitations Algarotti received to Lapland and Cirey could not have come at a more fortuitous time.

In 1735, the Académie des sciences decided to organize and fund two scientific expeditions, one to the Arctic Circle, and the other to the Equator.⁴⁸³ The purpose of these expeditions was to gather the necessary measurements in

⁴⁷⁹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Paris 21 May 1735.

⁴⁸⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Paris 21 May 1735.

⁴⁸¹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Paris 17 June 1735.

⁴⁸² BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Paris 28 August 1735.

⁴⁸³ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 2, 88.

order to determine whether the shape of the Earth was oblong (as Cartesians posited) or oblate (as Newtonians did).⁴⁸⁴ Maupertuis was chosen by the Académie to head the Arctic expedition, which was to travel to Lapland, which is located in the northern most parts of modern-day Sweden and Finland, in order to collect its data. Clairaut was to be a member of this team, as was Algarotti's travelling companion Anders Celsius.⁴⁸⁵ Maupertuis invited Algarotti to join the expedition as well, in the guise of the team's poet.⁴⁸⁶ That the group thought it necessary to have an officially designated poet among their number suggests that poetry was considered to be an important element of Parisian intellectual life. It also suggests that Algarotti was greatly admired for his talents in this department, and that it was thought that his poetic prowess would attract attention to the expedition in scholarly circles. However, Algarotti's scientific abilities were also a factor in his being extended this invitation, as, in addition to writing verse, he was also to assist in taking the measurements.⁴⁸⁷

Accepting this invitation would have offered Algarotti the opportunity to further cement his reputation in scientific circles. Indeed, his simply having been asked to join the expedition won Algarotti the admiration of Parisian intellectuals.⁴⁸⁸ In a letter written to Maupertuis, du Châtelet mentioned that Voltaire was jealous of Algarotti: if only Lapland were not so cold, Voltaire

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 2, 88. The results of both expeditions suggested that the Newtonian theory was correct.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 88, 100 102.

⁴⁸⁶ Voltaire, *Les Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire = The Complete Works of Voltaire*, ed. W.H. Barber and Ulla Kölvig, vol. 14 (1734-1735) (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1989), 543 n. 26.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 543 n. 26.

⁴⁸⁸ ———, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. IV (1735)*, 201, Jean-Baptiste Nicolas Formont to Pierre-Robert le Cornier de Cideville, 3 December 1735, ———, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. V (1736)*, 1, du Châtelet to ?, 3 January 1736.

would have accepted the position of the team's poet, had it been offered to him.⁴⁸⁹

In joining Maupertuis's team, Algarotti may have had the opportunity to form a lasting connection with the Académie des sciences, as this body had been responsible for organizing and funding the expedition. Accepting the offer to would also have given Algarotti the chance to expose his poetry to an audience of all parties interested in the outcome of this venture.

Algarotti had originally intended to accept the invitation, much to du Châtelet's dismay. Because Voltaire was forbidden to set foot in Paris at the time, he and du Châtelet lived at the latter's country estate at Cirey.⁴⁹⁰ She hoped to persuade Algarotti to join her and Voltaire there for the winter of 1735-1736.⁴⁹¹ Being isolated from Parisian intellectual life, du Châtelet sought to create a scholarly environment at the estate.⁴⁹² Indeed, Cirey came to be a place associated with intellectual pursuits.⁴⁹³ Voltaire described the estate as "a little province inhabited by philosophy, the graces, liberty and study,"⁴⁹⁴ and Maupertuis, who had also spent time there, as "a universal Academie of the sciences and wit."⁴⁹⁵ Algarotti would later praise the intellectual environment of Cirey as well, describing his time spent there as "a life seasoned by the pleasures

⁴⁸⁹ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence*. Vol. IV (1735), 143, du Châtelet to Maupertuis 3 October 1735.

⁴⁹⁰ Zinsser, *La Dame d'Ésprit*, 116.

⁴⁹¹ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence*. Vol. IV (1735), 154, du Châtelet to Algarotti, c. 10 October 1735.

⁴⁹² Zinsser, *La Dame d'Ésprit*, 116.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 120.

⁴⁹⁴ Quoted in Ibid., 117.

⁴⁹⁵ Quoted in Ibid., 117.

of the mind.”⁴⁹⁶ Indeed, rather than providing their guests with more traditional entertainments, du Châtelet and Voltaire encouraged them to spend their days pursuing their studies.⁴⁹⁷

Du Châtelet invited scholars from all over Europe to visit her and Voltaire at Cirey.⁴⁹⁸ In October of 1735, du Châtelet asked Algarotti to spend the winter of 1735-1736 with her and Voltaire at the estate.⁴⁹⁹ Much in the way that being associated with a certain salon could give a scholar credibility, spending time at Cirey would allow Algarotti to increase his renown in intellectual circles, both in Paris and abroad. The significant amount of time allotted to personal study in the day-to-day life at Cirey would give Algarotti the chance to work on his *Il Newtonianismo*. Accepting du Châtelet’s offer would have afforded Algarotti the opportunity to advertise this work both to his illustrious hosts and the other scholars present at Cirey, as well as to strengthen his relations with them.

Du Châtelet was anxious to convince Algarotti to accept her offer over that of Maupertuis. In the letter in which she extended the invitation to winter at Cirey, she expressed her dismay that he was considering undertaking the trip to Lapland.⁵⁰⁰ She also wrote to Maupertuis to chastise him for planning to take Algarotti so far away.⁵⁰¹ Voltaire also sought to persuade Algarotti to forfeit his place on Maupertuis’s team in favour of visiting Cirey. He sent the Venetian a

⁴⁹⁶ “...una vita condita da’ piaceri della mente.” Francesco Algarotti, *Opere del conte Algarotti*. Vol. 7 (Livorno: M. Coltellini, 1764), 211 Francesco Algarotti to Franchini, Cirey 12 October 1735.

⁴⁹⁷ Zinsser, *La Dame d’Ésprit*, 120.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 116. Those spent time at Cirey were called “les Emiliens” by Voltaire. See ———, *La Dame d’Ésprit*, 116.

⁴⁹⁹ Voltaire, *Voltaire’s Correspondence*. Vol. IV (1735), 154, du Châtelet to Francesco Algarotti, c. 10 October 1735.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 154, du Châtelet to Francesco Algarotti, c. 10 October 1735.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 143, du Châtelet to Maupertuis, 3 October 1735.

poem he had written in which he expressed surprise at Algarotti's desire to freeze in Lapland with Maupertuis and Clairaut when he could be at Cirey with du Châtelet instead.⁵⁰² Expressing admiration for Algarotti's astronomical exploits, Voltaire argued that du Châtelet's charms would be sufficient to induce him to abandon any trip to the North Pole.⁵⁰³ Indeed, it would seem that Algarotti agreed with Voltaire on this, as he decided in favour of his and du Châtelet's offer.

Algarotti at Cirey

In accepting the invitation to Cirey, Algarotti declined that to join the expedition to Lapland, something for which du Châtelet feared Maupertuis would never forgive her.⁵⁰⁴ Nevertheless, she was quite pleased with Algarotti's decision. In early October of 1735, she wrote to him expressing both her and Voltaire's excitement at his impending visit.⁵⁰⁵ She informed him that she had a reasonably stocked library, and that she had started learning Italian in honour of his visit.⁵⁰⁶ He arrived at Cirey at the end of October.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰² ———, *Les Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire = The Complete Works of Voltaire*, 542-543. Although Voltaire had written this poem for private reading only, Desfontaines published it in his periodical *Observations* in November of 1735. As the poem makes plain that he and du Châtelet were involved in a romantic relationship, Voltaire feared its publication would harm the reputations of both Emilie and her husband. Accordingly, he was not pleased that the poem was published without his permission, and let his anger be known to Desfontaines. See *Ibid.*, 541 n.21.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, 543-544.

⁵⁰⁴ ———, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. V (1736)*, 140, du Châtelet to Francesco Algarotti, 20 April 1736.

⁵⁰⁵ ———, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. IV (1735)*, 154, du Châtelet to Francesco Algarotti, c. 10 October 1735.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 154, du Châtelet to Francesco Algarotti, c. 10 October 1735.

⁵⁰⁷ Gabrielle Emilie Le Tonnelier de Breteuil Du Châtelet, *Les lettres de la marquise Du Châtelet; publiées par Theodore Besterman*, ed. Theodore Besterman, vol. 1, Publications de l'Institut et musée Voltaire. Série d'Études, 3-4 (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1958), 86.

The time that Algarotti spent at Cirey served to endear him even further to his hosts. As she would later confess to Maupertuis, the more du Châtelet got to know Algarotti, the fonder she became of him.⁵⁰⁸ She was particularly impressed by his level of intelligence, which, especially given his age, she regarded as quite exceptional.⁵⁰⁹ Voltaire shared du Châtelet's opinion. Writing to Berger, he described Algarotti as someone whose intellectual abilities were far more advanced than his age, and who, as a result, would be capable of accomplishing anything and everything he wished.⁵¹⁰ Voltaire's enthusiasm for Algarotti led him to pen a sonnet in Algarotti's honour in which he stated that

Venice and he [Algarotti] seem to have been made for the gods;
But the latter will be dearer to the world.⁵¹¹

When recording his memoirs many years later, Voltaire would describe Algarotti as an extremely likeable Venetian who knew a bit about everything and brought grace to everything he did.⁵¹²

During his time at Cirey, Algarotti continued to work on his Newtonian dialogues. Newtonianism being a subject of interest to both his hosts, Algarotti was pleased to take advantage of an attentive audience for his work-in-progress.⁵¹³ Du Châtelet and Voltaire were indeed quite receptive. Writing to an

⁵⁰⁸ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence*. Vol. IV (1735), 206, du Châtelet to Maupertuis, 10 December 1735.

⁵⁰⁹ ———, *Voltaire's correspondence*. Vol. V (1736), 1, du Châtelet to ?, 3 January 1736. Algarotti was twenty three years old at the time.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid. 269, Voltaire to Berger, 10 October 1736.

⁵¹¹ "Venise et lui [Algarotti] semblent faits pour les dieux; Mais le dernier sera plus cher au monde." Ibid. 94, Voltaire to Thieriot, 16 March 1736.

⁵¹² ———, *Mémoires pour servir à la vie de M. de Voltaire, écrits par lui-même, suivis de Lettres à Frédéric II*. Éd. présentée et annotée par Jacques Brenner, ed. Jacques Brenner (Paris: Mercure de France, 1965), 20.

⁵¹³ Algarotti, *Opere del conte Algarotti*. Vol. 7, 211, Francesco Algarotti to Franchini, Cirey 12 October 1735.

unknown correspondent, du Châtelet described Algarotti's dialogues as having the potential to achieve a level of renown at least equal to that of Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle's wildly successful popularization of Cartesian science for women, *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*.⁵¹⁴ Voltaire also appears to have been convinced that, when published, the *Newtonianismo* would receive lasting acclaim. In a 1736 poem praising Algarotti's Newtonian dialogues, Voltaire wrote

We have praised your [Venice's] walls built on the waves;
And your [Algarotti's] work is more lasting than them.⁵¹⁵

Indeed, once published, the *Newtonianismo* would meet with tremendous success, something to which the time Algarotti spent at Cirey would contribute. By working on the manuscript version of these dialogues while there, he had piqued the interests of his internationally renowned hosts in this work. Through their correspondence, du Châtelet and Voltaire had created an interest in this work among their associates as well, with the result that the book was already well-known in the intellectual circles of Paris before it was even published.

Aside from praising Algarotti in letters and poems sent to his correspondents, Voltaire also made his connection to Algarotti known through publication. While putting the finishing touches on his *La Mort du César* in early 1736, he decided to include a letter written by Algarotti at the beginning of the

⁵¹⁴ Voltaire, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. V (1736)*, 1, du Châtelet to ?, 3 January 1736.

⁵¹⁵ "On a vanté vos murs bâtis sur l'onde; Et votre ouvrage est plus durable qu'eux." Ibid. 94, Voltaire to Thieriot 16 March 1736. This poem would later appear in the 1739 edition of the *Newtonianismo* (Francesco Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame, ovvero dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione. Novella edizione emendata ed accresciuta* (Naples: Giambattista Pasquali, 1739), [pages unnumbered].

work, by way of introduction.⁵¹⁶ The inclusion of this letter at the beginning of his work would have been beneficial to Voltaire. In this letter, which was addressed to Franchini, Algarotti expressed praise for the work, saying he could not admire it enough.⁵¹⁷ Voltaire's decision to include Algarotti's letter in *La Mort du César* would also have been beneficial to Algarotti. Given Voltaire's renown, a great number of people would have been likely to read the work, all of which would become familiar with Algarotti's name, and association with Voltaire, in the process.

Algarotti would remain at Cirey for only six weeks.⁵¹⁸ Almost immediately after he left Cirey, du Châtelet wrote to Algarotti to say that she and Voltaire already missed him terribly.⁵¹⁹ He was back in Paris by January of 1736, as a letter he wrote to Bonomo at that time indicates.⁵²⁰ In February, he ran into Voltaire's correspondent Nicolas Claude Thieriot. Writing to Voltaire on the subject of this encounter, Thieriot reported that Algarotti had nothing but compliments for both Cirey and its inhabitants.⁵²¹ Indeed, it is not hard to see why: having spent time there had enabled him to win the great admiration of du

⁵¹⁶ Francesco Algarotti, "Lettre de M. Algarotti a M. l'Abbé Franchini, envoyé de Florence, sur la tragédie de Jules César, par M. de Voltaire," in *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire. Vol. III* (Paris: Thomine et Fortic, 1825). In March of 1736, Voltaire wrote to La Marre in order to ensure that the letter, which was written in Italian, had been properly translated into French. See ———, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. V (1736)*. 86-88 Voltaire to La Marre, Cirey 15 March 1736.

⁵¹⁷ "Lettre de M. Algarotti a M. l'Abbé Franchini," 173-177. In 1735, Algarotti had written to Franchini on the subject of this work which Algarotti had seen in manuscript format. See Algarotti, *Opere del conte Algarotti. Vol. 7*, 211, Francesco Algarotti to Franchini, Cirey 12 October 1735. The letter Algarotti gave to Voltaire for inclusion in the book was a modified version of this one written to Franchini.

⁵¹⁸ Voltaire, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. V (1736)*, 1, du Châtelet to ?, 3 January 1736.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 5, du Châtelet to Francesco Algarotti, 7 January 1736.

⁵²⁰ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Paris 27 January 1736.

⁵²¹ Voltaire, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. V (1736)*, 60, Thieriot to Voltaire 20 February 1736.

Châtelet and Voltaire, something that served to increase his renown in intellectual circles considerably.

On to England

After having successfully forged contacts with leading French thinkers, and formed a reputation for himself among them, Algarotti decided to move on to England, arriving in London in March of 1736. Among those who met Algarotti in London, there was an almost universal consensus that he was a fascinating person.⁵²² While there, he would gain new honours in the form of membership to the Royal Society and to the Society of Antiquaries. He would also forge contacts with various intellectuals, especially authors, most notably Russian diplomat and poet Antioch Cantemir, Member of Parliament and poet John Lord Hervey of Ickworth, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, famed writer and introducer of inoculation against smallpox to the west. Algarotti would also take advantage of his time in London in order to generate local interest in his *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*.

While in London, Algarotti would make use of many of the tactics that he had in France in order to gain access to, and create a name for himself in, intellectual circles. Certainly, his scientific reputation played a role in this. Prior even to his stay in France, he would already have been known in English scientific circles for having successfully replicated Newton's optical experiments

⁵²² Robert Halsband, *Lord Hervey; Eighteenth Century Courtier* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1973), 192.

at the Royal Society's request. However, the time he had spent in France had served to increase his scientific renown. His having been invited to join the expedition to Lapland would also have contributed to his scientific credibility. That he had been invited to spend time at Cirey would have demonstrated that he was a noteworthy intellectual. His reputation as a poet had also grown during his time in France, in no small part owing to Voltaire's praise of Algarotti's poetic skills, both in letters to his correspondents and in poems of his own authorship. All of this served to facilitate Algarotti's entry into intellectual circles in London. However, Algarotti's contacts also played a crucial role in this. That leading thinkers in France, notably Maupertuis, du Châtelet, and Voltaire, had granted him their friendship also served to demonstrate his intellectual worth.

London: the other intellectual capital of Europe

Algarotti was a great admirer of England.⁵²³ His fondness for, and interest in visiting, England may have had its origins in several of the friendships he had forged before his visit. Venetian intellectual Antonio Conti, whom Algarotti had met in Venice, and in whose honour he had written a sonnet in 1732, had travelled to England earlier in his career. Florentine freemason and medical doctor Antonio Cocchi, whom Algarotti had met in 1733, had also spent time in London. The contacts Algarotti had formed with the community of English ex-patriots in Florence may have also influenced Algarotti's desire to visit England. The time he had spent in France, particularly at Cirey, may have served to strengthen this

⁵²³ Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 31.

desire: as he indicated in his *Lettres philosophiques* of 1734, Voltaire held England and the ideas being developed there in high regard. Du Châtelet shared Voltaire's opinion. During the time Algarotti had been at Cirey, du Châtelet had expressed a desire to travel to London with Algarotti as her travelling companion.⁵²⁴ That Algarotti had already established some contacts in London prior to his departure, such as the English scientists who had followed his successful replication of Newton's optical experiments in 1728, and Royal Society Fellow Martin Folkes, whom he had met while both had been visiting Rome in 1734, may also have encouraged him to undertake the trip.

Anglomania, or the love of all things English, infected Italians just as much as gallomania did in the eighteenth century.⁵²⁵ Indeed, this admiration of all things English is often attributed to the influence of gallomania (in that many French thinkers were themselves anglophiles) and to that of Voltaire's tremendously successful *Lettres philosophiques*.⁵²⁶ Encounters with the droves of English Grand Tourists who visited Italy would have encouraged an interest in

⁵²⁴ Voltaire, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. V (1736)*, 138, du Châtelet to Francesco Algarotti, 20 April 1736. It seems Algarotti had agreed to accompany du Châtelet on a trip to London, as, in April of 1736, she would write to him in order to remind him of this promise. Although du Châtelet did not travel to London in 1736, she continued to hope that this trip would become a reality. She would write to Algarotti in 1738 to say she would not be able to travel to London until the following year, but hoped that he would still act as her tour guide when she went. However, it was not to be: not only would Algarotti never accompany du Châtelet to London, but she would never visit the city at all. See ———, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. V (1736)*, 138, du Châtelet to Francesco Algarotti, 20 April 1736, Du Châtelet, *Les lettres de la marquise Du Châtelet, vol. 1*, 211, du Châtelet to Francesco Algarotti, 2 February 1738.

⁵²⁵ Graf, *L'Anglomania e l'influsso inglese in Italia*, 33-35. For more on anglomania in the general European context, see Ian Buruma, *L'Anglomanie: une fascination européenne* (Paris: Bartillat, 1999).

⁵²⁶ Jonard, *La France et l'Italie au siècle des Lumières*, 177, Graf, *L'Anglomania e l'influsso inglese in Italia*, 35-36.

England among Italians as well.⁵²⁷ In particular, Italians admired English philosophy, science, and institutions.⁵²⁸ This esteem for England and all it was imagined to have stood for spurred many Italian men of science and letters to visit this country. As the experiences of Algarotti's Italian acquaintances Conti and Cocchi indicate, as the eighteenth century progressed, Italian anglophiles travelled to England in increasing numbers in order to immerse themselves in English science, culture, and literature.⁵²⁹

Admiration for English culture and institutions aside, the conditions faced by authors in England would also have contributed to Algarotti's decision to travel to London. Periodical publishing flourished in eighteenth-century England.⁵³⁰ Because state and religious oppression and censorship was virtually non-existent in England at this time, prospects were very promising, and opportunities numerous, for aspiring writers there.⁵³¹ Given his literary aspirations, these conditions would have been quite appealing to Algarotti.

⁵²⁷ Italy was the subject of admiration on the part of many of its English visitors: in the middle of the eighteenth century, these admirers formed a club in London, known as the Dilettanti Club. See Graf, *L'Anglomania e l'influsso inglese in Italia*, 114. For more on British views of Italy during this period, see Bruce Redford, *Dilettanti: The Antic and the Antique in Eighteenth-Century England* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum: The Getty Research Institute, 2008), ———, *Venice and the Grand Tour* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996), Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

⁵²⁸ Ginetta Auzzas, "Gallomania e anglomania," in *Storia della cultura veneta: il Settecento. Vol. 5/I*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, editore, 1985), 579.

⁵²⁹ Graf, *L'Anglomania e l'influsso inglese in Italia*, 45, 55.

⁵³⁰ Iona Italia, *The Rise of Literary Journalism in the Eighteenth Century: Anxious Employment* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 7.

⁵³¹ Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the creation of the modern world* (London: Allen Lane: The Penguin Press, 2000), 14, 16. Although printed material was not required to pass inspection by censors before publication, periodical printers and publishers could be prosecuted for obscenity, blasphemy, and libel. Excluding warrants issued for breach of parliamentary privilege, over seventy such charges were brought between 1715 and 1759. See Italia, *The Rise of Literary Journalism*, 12.

Travel to England at this point in his career would also have been favourable for Algarotti given that the subject of his *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, which he would continue to work on while there, was Newtonian science. Being from England himself, Newton had gained his earliest supporters there. Shortly after the publication of his *Principia* in 1687, Newton had already begun to attract followers in England.⁵³² By the 1690s, England's earliest Newtonians had emerged.⁵³³ Among these was J.T. Desaguliers, whose response to Rizzetti Algarotti had translated into Italian. Much as Algarotti had sought to do with his replication of Newton's optical experiments, Desaguliers sought to demonstrate the truth of Newtonian principles through public lectures that included demonstrations.⁵³⁴ Newtonian science gained wide acceptance among English scientists well before it had been by scientists elsewhere in Europe. Indeed, Newton had been elected President of the Royal Society in 1703. Algarotti may have hoped that this familiarity with, and support for, Newtonian science would have translated into a greater interest in his *Il Newtonianismo* among English intellectuals.

The results of reputation and connections: membership to the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries

⁵³² Dobbs and Jacob, *Newton and the Culture of Newtonianism*, 65.

⁵³³ Ibid., 65.

⁵³⁴ Ibid., 82.

Shortly after his arrival in London, Algarotti gained membership to two learned societies: the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries. A combination of reputation and contacts enabled him to gain both honours.

Shortly after his arrival in London in late March of 1736, Algarotti was invited to attend a meeting of the Royal Society.⁵³⁵ One week later, Algarotti was elected a Fellow.⁵³⁶ Certainly, Algarotti would already have been known to at least some of the members of this society prior to his arrival in London. The Istituto delle scienze in Bologna, where Algarotti had studied, has close ties with the Royal Society. Following his successful replication of Newton's optical experiments in 1728, which he had undertaken at the request of the Society, Thomas Dereham had invited him to write a dissertation based on these for publication in the *Philosophical Transactions*. Given the ties that existed between the Royal Society and the Académie des sciences in Paris, London scientists would certainly have been aware that Algarotti had been invited to join the Lapland expedition in 1735. However, the connections Algarotti had formed prior to his arrival in London also played an important role in his election to the Royal Society. The invitation to attend his first Royal Society meeting had been issued him by his former travelling companion Anders Celsius, who had preceded him to London.⁵³⁷ Celsius had also been responsible for nominating Algarotti for

⁵³⁵ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 193.

⁵³⁶ Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 357. Election to the Royal Society was considered a great honour by scientific Italians, only about 110 of which were made Fellows between 1690 and 1790. See Marie Boas Hall, "La Scienza italiana vista dalla Royal Society," in *Scienza e letteratura nella cultura italiana del settecento* ed. Renzo Cremante and Walter Tega (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984), 54, 63-64.

⁵³⁷ Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies," 10; Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 193.

membership, along with Martin Folkes, whom Algarotti had met in Rome in 1734, and Andrew Mitchell.⁵³⁸

Algarotti's election to the Society of Antiquaries in May of 1736 was also the result of a combination of reputation and connections. The name of the category of membership to which he was elected, that of "Foreigners of Eminent Note and Learning,"⁵³⁹ suggests that the members of this society thought highly of Algarotti's intellectual accomplishments. Indeed, membership to this category was very exclusive: only seven people were elected to this category of membership between the years 1735 and 1751.⁵⁴⁰ However, Algarotti's contacts may also have played a role in his election to this society. Martin Folkes was the vice president of the Society of Antiquaries at this time, and Anders Celsius had been elected a "Foreigner of Eminent Note and Learning" in 1735.⁵⁴¹

Membership to both these societies would have been of great benefit to Algarotti. His having been chosen to join these societies denoted that their members considered him a peer. Therefore, belonging to these societies would have added to Algarotti's intellectual credibility. Being a member of these societies would also have given Algarotti access to the other members of these groups, enabling him to form contacts with them.

⁵³⁸ Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies," 10; Halsband, *Lord Hervey; eighteenth century courtier*, 193.

⁵³⁹ Halsband, *Lord Hervey; eighteenth century courtier*, 193.

⁵⁴⁰ Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 89.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid, Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 193. Celsius had been the first person to be elected to this category of membership. Folkes would become president of the Society of Antiquaries in 1749. See Paul Elliott and Stephen Daniels, "The 'School of True, Useful and Universal Science'? Freemasonry, Natural Philosophy and Scientific Culture in Eighteenth-Century England," *British Journal of the History of Science* 39, no. 2 (2006): 220-221.

Forming contacts in the English literary community

The intellectuals with whom Algarotti formed his most significant and lasting connections while in London were John, Lord Hervey of Ickworth, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Prince Antioch Cantemir. Like Algarotti, all three were interested in science, and all three were writers. These shared interests enabled Algarotti to form the close ties with them that he did. They also enabled him to garner interest among them in his *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, building a reputation for the book in London before it was published.

Prior to his departure from France, Algarotti had secured several letters of introduction from Voltaire to facilitate his networking efforts in London.⁵⁴² It was through one such letter that Algarotti came to meet John, Lord Hervey of Ickworth.⁵⁴³ Hervey had a keen interest in science, as is indicated by his membership to the Royal Society.⁵⁴⁴ Hervey and Algarotti also had membership to the Society of Antiquaries in common.⁵⁴⁵ While these common connections are what enabled Algarotti and Hervey to meet, that Hervey, like Algarotti, wrote poetry would have contributed to the development of their friendship.⁵⁴⁶ Indeed, Hervey was quite enchanted with Algarotti. Writing to Voltaire, Hervey reported

⁵⁴² Fumaroli, *Quand l'Europe parlait français*, 147.

⁵⁴³ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 357, Lucia Faedo, "Francesco Algarotti conservateur à Dresde avant Winckelmann: remarques sur un parcours intellectuel," in *Entretiens de la Garenne Lemot. Winckelmann et le retour de l'antique. (Actes du colloque 9 au 12 juin 1994)* (1994), 156. Hervey and Voltaire had first met during Voltaire's visit to England. The two had also spent some time together in 1729, when Hervey happened to be in Paris. See Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 159.

⁵⁴⁴ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 357, Faedo, "Francesco Algarotti conservateur à Dresde avant Winckelmann," 156.

⁵⁴⁵ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 357, Faedo, "Francesco Algarotti conservateur à Dresde avant Winckelmann," 156.

⁵⁴⁶ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 61.

that Algarotti's youthful liveliness, in combination with his rare intelligence and good taste, made him immensely charming.⁵⁴⁷

Hervey was well connected in the English court. He had been elected a Member of Parliament in 1725 and had been made Vice-Chamberlain to the King's Household by King George II in 1736.⁵⁴⁸ Through his fulfilment of the latter role, and the time he had spent at court prior to this appointment, he had become a favourite of Queen Caroline. Hervey introduced Algarotti to Queen Caroline,⁵⁴⁹ an introduction that Algarotti hoped (in vain) might result in a future court appointment.

Hervey also introduced Algarotti to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.⁵⁵⁰ Wortley Montagu also spent a great deal of time at court, which is how she and Hervey had become friends.⁵⁵¹ Like Hervey and Algarotti, Wortley Montagu was also interested in science. Wortley Montagu was responsible for having introducing inoculation against smallpox to the western world.⁵⁵² Wortley Montagu's brother had died of smallpox in 1713, and she herself had contracted the disease in 1715.⁵⁵³ In 1721, London was hit by a smallpox outbreak so severe that a different acquaintance of Wortley Montagu's had died from it every week of its duration. Fearing for the life of her daughter (also named Mary), Wortley Montagu had decided to have her inoculated against the disease. This practice was non-existent in London at this time. It was, however, quite common in

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 192.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., 55, 96-97.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 171, 193.

⁵⁵⁰ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 357.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 357.

⁵⁵² Ibid., xvii.

⁵⁵³ Although she recovered from the disease in 1716, the disease had left her face pox-marked. See Ibid. 66, 100, 102-103.

Turkey, where Wortley Montagu had lived from 1717 to 1718.⁵⁵⁴ Because the inoculation of her daughter had been successful in protecting her from smallpox, Wortley Montagu had become an active promoter of this practice. As a result, many people had decided to have their own children vaccinated, including then-Princess Caroline. While Wortley Montagu's efforts had not immediately convinced everyone of the efficacy of inoculation, they had won her a great deal of recognition and praise.⁵⁵⁵

Hervey aside, Algarotti and Wortley Montagu had another associate in common: Venetian intellectual Antonio Conti. Algarotti had met Conti in Venice in the early 1730s, and had written a sonnet in his honour. Wortley Montagu and Conti had met in London in 1715, when the latter had travelled to the city in order to observe a solar eclipse.⁵⁵⁶ The two had met up again in Paris in 1718, where Conti had introduced Wortley Montagu to the local scholars with whom he was acquainted. When Wortley Montagu had left Paris, she had promised Conti she would keep in touch through correspondence, a promise she would keep. Conti would later translate Wortley Montagu's poetry into Italian, and she would address her most philosophical *Embassy Letters* to him.⁵⁵⁷

Wortley Montagu was among the best female writers in England.⁵⁵⁸

Embassy Letters aside, the vast majority of her writings consisted largely of

⁵⁵⁴ Lady Mary and her family had lived in Turkey during this time because her husband Edward had been appointed ambassador to Turkey. See Ibid., 141, 168, 211.

⁵⁵⁵ For a more detailed account of Lady Mary's introduction of inoculation of smallpox to the west, see Ibid., 210-211, 213.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 83, 90.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 90, 175-177.

⁵⁵⁸ Francesco Viglione, *L'Algarotti e l'Inghilterra (dai manoscritti del British Museum)* (Naples: Nicola Jovene, 1919), 90.

poetry.⁵⁵⁹ This mutual interest in poetry served to cement the friendship between Algarotti and Wortley Montagu. Hervey, an admirer of Wortley Montagu's work, recommended it to Algarotti.⁵⁶⁰ Indeed, Algarotti seemed to think this recommendation was merited: once he had read Wortley Montagu's poetry, he compared her to Sappho.⁵⁶¹

While in London, Algarotti read manuscript versions of his *Il Newtonianismo* to both Hervey and Wortley Montagu, asking for their comments and criticisms.⁵⁶² Having done so enabled Algarotti to familiarize both of his associates with his work. Given that both were well-connected in intellectual circles, by piquing Hervey's and Wortley Montagu's interest in his work, he was able to create a reputation for it amongst English scholars before having published it. Perhaps with a view to making his association with Wortley Montagu plain to the reader, Algarotti made references to her in the final version of the work. The Marquise, the female character in the *Newtonianismo*, refers to herself, as Wortley Montagu did, as a "citizen of the world," and the narrator character cites the advent of inoculation as proof of science's usefulness for women.⁵⁶³

In addition to Hervey and Lady Mary, Algarotti befriended a third well-placed person in London: Russian poet and ambassador to England Antioch

⁵⁵⁹ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 310. Her most famous non-poetical work was her *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M[ar]y W[ortle]y M[ontagu]e, written, during her travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa to persons of distinction*, now known as *The Turkish Embassy Letters*. The work, which is a collection of letters dealing with her experiences in Turkey in the late 1710s, was first published in 1763.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 337.

⁵⁶¹ Viglione, *L'Algarotti e l'Inghilterra*, 93.

⁵⁶² Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 357, 360.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, 360.

Cantemir.⁵⁶⁴ Cantemir was well-respected by the intellectual community in London.⁵⁶⁵ The Russian ambassador was well-liked by the members of the London court, and by Queen Caroline in particular.⁵⁶⁶ Algarotti's association with Cantemir would result in Algarotti being extended an invitation to St. Petersburg in 1739, an invitation that he would accept.⁵⁶⁷

Cantemir had befriended quite a few Italians living in London by the time of Algarotti's arrival, including Italian librettist Paolo Rolli.⁵⁶⁸ It is perhaps through Rolli that Algarotti met Cantemir. Indeed, Rolli is someone whose friendship Algarotti would have been likely to seek, for many reasons. Both Algarotti and Rolli were friends of Antonio Conti, who could well have recommended one to the other, or both to each other. By the 1730s, Rolli's work as a librettist for Handel had made him famous throughout London.⁵⁶⁹ This certainly would have made him of great interest to Algarotti, who was a great lover of opera.⁵⁷⁰ Another of Rolli's accomplishments would have gained

⁵⁶⁴ A.G. Cross, "The Lords Baltimore in Russia," *Journal of European Studies* 18 (1988): 80. Cantemir's (1708-1744) name is also sometimes spelled "Kantemir." He was nominated Russian ambassador to England in 1731, when he was just 22 years old. He arrived in London in 1732 and remained there until 1738, when, being newly appointed Russian ambassador to France, he moved to Paris. He remained in Paris until his death in 1744. See Stefan Lemny, *Les Cantemir: L'aventure européenne d'une famille princière au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 2009). 193, 208, 215, 219.

⁵⁶⁵ Cross, "The Lords Baltimore in Russia," 78.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁵⁶⁷ In that year, at Cantemir's recommendation, Charles Calvert, 5th Lord Baltimore (1699–1751) would invite Algarotti to join him on a trip to St. Petersburg to attend the wedding of the niece of Czarina Anna Ioannovna as the representatives of King George I.

⁵⁶⁸ Lemny, *Les Cantemir: L'aventure européenne d'une famille princière au XVIIIe siècle*, 248, 256. Rolli (1687-1765) had arrived in London in 1715 in the company of Antonio Conti. See Graf, *L'Anglomania e l'influsso inglese in Italia*, 56.

⁵⁶⁹ Valentin Boss, "Kantemir and Rolli-Milton's *Il Paradiso Perduto*," *Slavic Review* 21, no. 3 (1962): 446.

⁵⁷⁰ Algarotti would later write *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica* (Livorno: M. Coltellini, 1763), in which he identified all the elements an opera would need in order to be great.

Algarotti's attention as well: he had translated Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a work that Algarotti admired, into Italian.⁵⁷¹

However the two came to meet, Algarotti and Cantemir had a great deal in common in spite of their very different origins. Aside from their shared love of poetry, they also shared an interest in science. Prior to leaving Russia, Cantemir had studied at the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences.⁵⁷² Although it is not known whether he became a member of this institution following his studies there, he did retain close connections to it once he became an ambassador. Cantemir acted as intermediary between the St. Petersburg Academy and the scientists of western Europe, making efforts to circulate Russian scientific tracts in England and France, and to send those produced in these countries back to Russia, along with western scientific instruments. Cantemir also recommended western scientists for membership to the St. Petersburg Academy, such as Maupertuis, and then-Royal Society President Hans Sloane, recommendations that were taken seriously by the Russian scientific body.⁵⁷³

Cantemir's interest in science led him to take an interest in Algarotti's *Newtonianismo*. Cantemir had read Fontenelle's *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*, upon which the format for the Newtonian dialogues was based, and had

⁵⁷¹ He published the first 6 books of his Italian translation of Milton's *Paradise Lost* in 1729. He did so as a sort of response to Voltaire's 1727 *Essay on Epick Poetry*, in which he had spoken unfavourably of Milton and some Italian poets. See "Kantemir and Rolli-Milton's *Il Paradiso Perduto*," 446, 454. For more on Rolli, see George E. Dorris, *Paolo Rolli and the Italian circle in London, 1715-1744* (The Hague & Paris: Mouton, 1967).

⁵⁷² Lemny, *Les Cantemir*, 182.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, 245-248. Sloane was accepted for membership in 1735, and Maupertuis, in 1738. Maupertuis was the third Frenchman ever to be made a member of this academy. Cantemir pushed to have Clairaut elected a member as well. Although his efforts in this regard did not meet with immediate success, Clairaut was eventually elected a member in 1754, ten years after Cantemir's death.

enjoyed it so much that he had translated it into Russian.⁵⁷⁴ He was similarly impressed by Algarotti's Newtonian dialogues, and undertook to translate these into Russian as well before they were even published.⁵⁷⁵

Meanwhile, du Châtelet's interest in Algarotti's *Newtonianismo* had not waned. In April of 1736, she wrote to Algarotti to remind him of the esteem she had for him, and of how special that should make him feel, since it was rare for her to have such respect for someone as young as he.⁵⁷⁶ She asked Algarotti to return to Cirey so that they could observe the rings of Saturn and do light experiments together.⁵⁷⁷ In particular, she wanted to recreate the experiments he described in his Newtonian dialogues with him, and had had a camera obscura set up at her estate especially for that purpose.⁵⁷⁸ Pleased that Algarotti had promised to use her picture as the frontispiece of the *Newtonianismo*, she expressed her hope that he would dedicate the work to her as well.⁵⁷⁹ She was so enthusiastic about his dialogues, she told him, that she was improving her knowledge of the Italian language not only in order to be able to understand them, but also so she could translate them into French.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁴ This translation, begun in 1730 and finished in 1731, was only published ten years later. See Ibid., 193.

⁵⁷⁵ This translation, which is suspected to have been suppressed by the Holy Synod, is no longer extant. See Cross, "The Lords Baltimore in Russia," 80, Valentin Boss, *Newton and Russia; the early influence, 1698-1796* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 125.

⁵⁷⁶ Voltaire, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. V (1736)*, 137, du Châtelet to Algarotti, 20 April 1736. Algarotti was twenty-three years old at the time.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 137-138, du Châtelet to Algarotti, 20 April 1736.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 137-138, du Châtelet to Algarotti, 20 April 1736.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 137-138, du Châtelet to Algarotti, 20 April 1736.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 137-138, du Châtelet to Algarotti, 20 April 1736. Du Châtelet would never actually translate the *Newtonianismo* into French. Instead, the French translation of the work would be undertaken by M. Duperron de Castera in 1738. Given that the translation was poorly done, and that the translator included his own, Cartesian commentary of the work in the footnotes, Algarotti was not at all pleased with it. For more on this, see chapter four.

The link between networking and romance: Algarotti, Hervey, and Wortley Montagu

In September of 1736, having completed his Newtonian dialogues, Algarotti decided to return to Italy in order to arrange for their publication. Algarotti's Italian friends were excited by this news: Francesco Maria Zanotti wrote to entreat him to stop in Bologna along the way, so they could see each other again.⁵⁸¹

However, Algarotti's London associates did not share Zanotti's enthusiasm for Algarotti's impending departure. Algarotti had conquered the hearts of both Lord Hervey and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu during his time in London.⁵⁸² This had caused a rivalry between Hervey and Wortley Montagu to win Algarotti's love,⁵⁸³ a rivalry that became all the more bitter when Algarotti announced his decision to leave the city.

Hervey and Algarotti had had an instant rapport, a rapport that led Hervey to fall madly in love with Algarotti.⁵⁸⁴ Even before Algarotti had decided to leave London, Hervey wrote to the Venetian to say he would never forget him for as long as he lived.⁵⁸⁵ Wortley Montagu, too, was entirely enamoured with Algarotti within only two weeks of meeting him, in spite of the considerable age difference between them: Wortley Montagu was forty seven years old, and Algarotti, twenty

⁵⁸¹ Zanotti, *Opere scelte*, 606, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Algarotti, 14 September 1736.

⁵⁸² Arato, "Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)", 31.

⁵⁸³ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 360.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 358.

⁵⁸⁵ John Lord Hervey, *Lord Hervey and His Friends, 1726-38; Based on Letters from Holland House, Melbury, and Ickworth*, ed. The Earl of Ilchester (London: Murray, 1950), 247.

three, the same age as Wortley Montagu's son.⁵⁸⁶ In her letters to him, Wortley Montagu tried to impress Algarotti with her learning.⁵⁸⁷ She also made use of her letters to confess her love to him. Writing to Algarotti in August of 1736, Wortley Montagu declared that her feelings for him had become too strong for her to hide.⁵⁸⁸ By September she told him she would love him all her life in spite of both his impulsiveness and her good sense.⁵⁸⁹ She informed him that he should be happy to be loved in so desperately.⁵⁹⁰ Whether or not he was happy to be loved with such profundity, Algarotti did not return Wortley Montagu's feelings.

Algarotti had tried to use romance to get ahead before: during his time in Bologna, he had professed his love to influential promoter of Italian intellectuals Elisabetta Ratta. Although she did not return his feelings, his efforts were not entirely without consequence, as it was she who had paid for his *Rime* to be published. Perhaps he hoped that his two well-placed London friends, Lord Hervey and Wortley Montagu, would be even more inclined to help him advance his career if their interest in him went beyond admiration of his talents. It is not clear whether Algarotti had actively sought to encourage Hervey or Wortley Montagu to confess their undying love to him. However, once they had, he certainly did not take steps to discourage these feelings in either one of them.

⁵⁸⁶ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 357. In addition, Wortley Montagu had been since 1712 married to Edward Wortley Montagu, who was still living at this time. See ———, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 57.

⁵⁸⁷ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 357.

⁵⁸⁸ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Vol. II: 1721-1751*, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 103, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti August 1736.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., 104, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti September 1736.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 105, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti 10 September 1736.

When Algarotti decided to leave London, Wortley Montagu was plunged into the depths of despair.⁵⁹¹ Hervey, too, was quite broken up about Algarotti's departure. Shortly after Algarotti left, Hervey wrote to Algarotti to say, "I love you with all my heart and I beg you never to forget the affection I have for you, nor let the affection you have expressed for me grow weaker."⁵⁹² Indeed, Hervey missed Algarotti so terribly that he fell into a depression.⁵⁹³

The circumstances surrounding Algarotti's departure and its aftermath caused a great deal of friction between Wortley Montagu and Hervey. On his last night in London (September 5, 1736), Algarotti dined with Wortley Montagu, at her invitation.⁵⁹⁴ Algarotti told Hervey, who had also extended him a dinner invitation for that evening, that he could not accept because he had already agreed to dine with Martin Folkes.⁵⁹⁵ However, his choice of companion for his last night in London did not mean that he preferred Wortley Montagu to Hervey. Algarotti had promised to write to Wortley Montagu once he had reached Calais, but did not.⁵⁹⁶ Rather, he wrote to Hervey.⁵⁹⁷ Having discovered in whose company Algarotti had actually spent his last evening in London in the meantime, and wanting to get revenge on his rival, Hervey boasted about having received this letter to Wortley Montagu. Desperate to hear news of Algarotti, Wortley Montagu coerced Hervey into meeting with her. However, still resentful over not

⁵⁹¹ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 356.

⁵⁹² Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 200.

⁵⁹³ Hervey, *Lord Hervey and his friends, 1726-38; based on letters from Holland House, Melbury, and Ickworth*, 249, Hervey to Algarotti, September 9/20 1736; 250-251, Hervey to Henry Fox, September 16 1736.

⁵⁹⁴ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 360.

⁵⁹⁵ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 199.

⁵⁹⁶ Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 361.

⁵⁹⁷ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 201.

having Algarotti's first choice during his last evening in London, Hervey made certain not to share any information on their mutual love interest at this rendez-vous.⁵⁹⁸

The more he ignored her after leaving London, the more desperate Wortley Montagu's love for Algarotti became. She continued to write him sentiment-laden letters in which she complained bitterly that he never wrote back.⁵⁹⁹ When sending him a portrait of herself proved not to be enough to persuade him to write to her, she wrote to express her anger at this latest evidence of his callousness.⁶⁰⁰ However, her anger was not great enough to induce her to forget about him; quite the contrary, in fact. In this same letter, she told him that, if he could not arrange to return to London, she would arrange to join him in Italy.⁶⁰¹ She would make good on this promise in 1741, much to Algarotti's chagrin.⁶⁰²

Publication problems

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., 199, 201.

⁵⁹⁹ Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Vol. II: 1721-1751*, 110, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, 21 October 1736.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 110, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, December 1736.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 111, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, December 1736.

⁶⁰² In this year, Algarotti spent some months in Turin in the guise of secret diplomat for Frederick II (the Great). Wortley Montagu also happened to be in the city at this time. Accordingly, the two met up. The details of this meeting are unclear; however, it must have been quite unpleasant, as the two did not communicate with each other at all for several years thereafter. For more on this episode, see chapter five.

Having left this emotional drama behind him in London, Algarotti stopped in Paris on his way back to Italy, from whence he made a brief visit to Cirey.⁶⁰³ From there, he went to Lyons, and then to Turin, before returning to Venice to prepare the *Newtonianismo* for publication.⁶⁰⁴ He had arrived in his native city by October of 1736.⁶⁰⁵

Algarotti had hoped to publish the *Newtonianismo* in Venice.⁶⁰⁶ There are several reasons that he may have hoped to publish this work in his native city. Given that the Venetian publishing business was one of the most significant in Europe at the time,⁶⁰⁷ it made sense for Algarotti to seek to publish it there, all the more so because the book was written in Italian. Furthermore, both he and his brothers had connections in Venice, which Algarotti may have thought would have enabled him to find a publisher there more easily. However, Algarotti's search for a Venetian publisher for his work would end in failure. Shortly after his return to Venice, rumours began to circulate there that the book contained ideas opposed to Church doctrines. These rumours attracted the attention of Church officials in Rome.⁶⁰⁸ Algarotti's friend and former teacher Bolognese scientist Eustachio Manfredi advised him to assuage the Church by removing the controversial parts of the book, such as references to the ideas of John Locke.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰³ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 202, Voltaire, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. V (1736)*, Voltaire to Berger, Cirey 10 October 1736.

⁶⁰⁴ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 203.

⁶⁰⁵ Zanotti, *Opere scelte*, 606, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Algarotti, 29 October 1736.

⁶⁰⁶ Ida Frances Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle: Francesco Algarotti* (Trévoux: Imprimerie Jules Jeannin, 1913), 56.

⁶⁰⁷ Vincenzo Ferrone, *Scienza, natura, religione: mondo newtoniano e cultura italiana nel primo Settecento* (Naples: Jovene, 1982), 237-238.

⁶⁰⁸ Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 56-58.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 56-58. The ideas of both Newton and Locke were often taken to be heretical. See Dobbs and Jacob, *Newton and the Culture of Newtonianism*, 67.

However, Algarotti would not take Manfredi's advice. Because he was increasingly surrounded by scandal, Algarotti's family decided it would be best if he left Venice until things blew over. Accordingly, they sent him to Milan at the end of 1737.⁶¹⁰ Milanese publishers had a reputation for publishing books on all sorts of topics, including those prohibited by the Church.⁶¹¹ Indeed, Algarotti found a publisher in Milan willing to publish his book.⁶¹² However, likely as a precaution against repercussions from the Inquisition, the name of this publisher is not listed anywhere in the *Newtonianismo*, and the place of publication is given as Naples, not Milan.⁶¹³

Conclusion

Once published, the *Newtonianismo* brought Algarotti tremendous success, greatly increasing his renown in European intellectual circles. The contacts Algarotti had formed, and the reputation he had made for himself, amongst scholars in France and England played a large role in paving the way for this success. Through the receipt of various honours, such as the invitation to join the Lapland expedition and that to spend time at Cirey, and being chosen for membership to the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries, Algarotti had established a reputation for himself as a noteworthy intellectual in England and

⁶¹⁰ Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 56-58.

⁶¹¹ Massimo Mazzotti, *The World of Maria Gaetana Agnesi, Mathematician of God* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 164 n. 30.

⁶¹² Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 56-58.

⁶¹³ Algarotti, or the publisher, may have decided to list the place of publication as Naples because Celestino Galiani had recently avoided prosecution by the Inquisition for his espousal of Lockean ideas there. For more on this, see the introduction.

France. The contacts he had formed with leading thinkers such as Maupertuis, du Châtelet, and Voltaire in France and Hervey, Wortley Montagu, and Cantemir in England, further contributed to this reputation. That Algarotti had achieved such a status would have encouraged more people to read his book. The contacts Algarotti had formed also contributed to the success of the *Newtonianismo* in another, perhaps more significant way. Establishing friendships with leading thinkers and spending time with them had enabled Algarotti to interest these scholars in his work by discussing it with them and showing manuscript versions of it to them. Impressed by this work, these scholars caused it to become known to the other scholars with whom they were associated, Voltaire and du Châtelet through their letters, and Cantemir, through his Russian translation. As a result, the *Newtonianismo* was known, and therefore eagerly anticipated, in intellectual circles before it was published.

Publishing the *Newtonianismo* outside of Venice was not enough for its author to avoid becoming immersed in the scandal that followed the work's release. Among the difficulties Algarotti would face was the opposition of the Church, which would place the *Newtonianismo* on the *Index of Forbidden Books* in 1739, a falling-out with Voltaire, who would publish his own popularization of Newtonian science, *Eléments de la philosophie de Neuton*, in 1738, and a very bitter public quarrel with M. Duperron de Castera, who would translate Algarotti's Newtonian Dialogues into French in 1738. However, Algarotti would turn these problems and their ensuing scandals to his advantage, capitalizing on them to draw even further attention to his work.

International fame: *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*

You say nothing to me in your last letter of your Newtonian *Dialogues*. Are they published, or are they forgot? The last is a question which will never be asked after they are published.

-Lord Hervey, 1737⁶¹⁴

Algarotti's Newtonian dialogues were published in late 1737 under the title *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, or *Newtonianism for the Ladies*.⁶¹⁵ While not forgotten, Algarotti's *Il Newtonianismo*, like Algarotti himself, receives little recognition today in comparison to that which it received in the years following its publication.⁶¹⁶ However, the optimism Hervey expressed in the above lines was not unfounded: the *Newtonianismo* was an instant sensation, so much so that it can be considered one of the most successful books of the eighteenth century.⁶¹⁷ By 1812, this work had gone through sixteen Italian-language editions, the first six appearing in each of the six years following its original publication.⁶¹⁸ It was also translated into several European languages almost immediately, including English, French, Russian, Swedish, German, and Portuguese. As Michelessi

⁶¹⁴ John Lord Hervey, *Lord Hervey and His Friends, 1726-38; Based on Letters from Holland House, Melbury, and Ickworth*, ed. The Earl of Ilchester (London: Murray, 1950), 272, John Lord Hervey to Francesco Algarotti, 17/28 September 1737. Some of the contents of this chapter have previously appeared in Cheryl Smeall, "Women of Science: Outsiders in Enlightenment Europe?" *Cahiers d'histoire* XXVIII, no. 1 (2009).

⁶¹⁵ Francesco Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame, ovvero dialoghi sopra la luce e i colori* (Naples, 1737).

⁶¹⁶ This may be explained in part by the tendency in the past of historians of science to think of popularizations as belonging solely to the realm of literary scholars. Massimo Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies: Gentility, Gender and Radical Culture," *British Journal for the History of Science* 37, no. 2 (2004): 121. For more on this disparity, see also Marta Féher, "The Triumphal March of a Paradigm: A Case Study of the Popularization of Newtonian Science," *Tractrix* 2 (1990): 93-94.

⁶¹⁷ Franco Arato, *Il secolo delle cose: scienza e storia in Francesco Algarotti* (Genova: Marietti, 1991), 55, Féher, "The Triumphal March of a Paradigm," 100.

⁶¹⁸ Féher, "The Triumphal March of a Paradigm," 100.

notes in his 1770 biography of Algarotti, there had never before been an Italian book that had been translated into so many languages.⁶¹⁹

With the publication of the *Newtonianismo*, Algarotti achieved his ambition to become a renowned writer. Having been the author of this book would have a significant impact on Algarotti's career in years to come. The fame it brought him greatly facilitated his networking efforts, thereby increasing his opportunities for gaining financial support. In order to understand why this work had such a significant impact on his career, it is helpful to examine the reasons for its great success. One important reason is the manner in which its contents were presented. Newtonian popularizations were fairly common in the years leading up to the publication of the *Newtonianismo*, but none had presented Newton's theories in the format used by Algarotti: that of a fictional dialogue between a man and a woman. Most, if not all, of the Newtonian popularizations that had preceded Algarotti's had not been specifically addressed to women. That Algarotti had chosen women as his audience would also have served to increase its readership, particularly as one of the aims of the work was to identify women as equally capable of undertaking scientific study as men with a view to encouraging them to engage in serious scientific pursuits. The various controversies surrounding the publication of the *Newtonianismo* would also have served to attract greater attention to it. The book contains several passages aimed at discrediting staunch Cartesian and perpetual secretary of the Académie des sciences Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle and his 1686 popularization of

⁶¹⁹ Domenico Michelessi, *Memorie intorno alla vita ed agli scritti del Conte Francesco Algarotti, Ciambellano di S.M. il re di Prussia e Cavalier del Merito ec.* (Venice: Giambattista Pasquali, 1770), XXXIX.

Cartesian science for women *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*, on which the format of Algarotti's book was largely based. The success the *Newtonianismo* achieved in comparison to Voltaire's 1738 *Éléments de la philosophie de Neuton* caused the latter to turn on Algarotti and seek to discredit his book through his correspondence, drawing even further attention to Algarotti's work. The placement of the *Newtonianismo* on the *Index of Forbidden Books* in 1739 would produce similar results. Finally, Algarotti's work contributed to the acceptance of Newtonian science in Italy, as is suggested by Francesco Maria Zanotti's 1747 *Della forza attrattiva delle idee*, which satirizes those who, carried away by the fashionable nature of Newtonianism, identified themselves as Newtonians without actually understanding Newtonian principles.

Scientific popularizations

The manner in which Algarotti presented Newtonian scientific principles was an important aspect of the work's success. The *Newtonianismo* sought to popularize Newtonian scientific principles through a fictional dialogue between a female Marquise interested in science and a scientifically-knowledgeable male narrator. Certainly, Algarotti was not the first to write a scientific popularization in dialogue format, nor was he the first to write a popularization of Newtonian scientific principles. However, his decision to present these principles in the format of an amusing fictional dialogue would have made the book seem more approachable and appealing to those not well-versed in science.

The format of Algarotti's *Newtonianismo* is very similar to that of Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle's 1686 popularization of Cartesian science for women entitled *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*.⁶²⁰ The *Entretiens* consists of a series of entertaining fictional dialogues in which a male narrator attempts to teach Cartesian science to a female Marquise. After explaining the Cartesian picture of the universe to the Marquise, the narrator and she discuss what the inhabitants of other planets might be like. The work ends with the narrator proclaiming that he has turned the Marquise into a *savante*, and asking as his reward for this that she never think of the matters they had discussed without thinking of him.⁶²¹ This work was tremendously successful, remaining influential even a century after its publication.⁶²² By the mid-eighteenth century, it had gone through thirty-three editions and several translations into various languages.⁶²³

Numerous popularizations of Newtonian science had been published prior to the publication of the *Newtonianismo*. These popularizations were instrumental in spreading Newton's ideas, not only to the general literate public, but also to those well-versed in science.⁶²⁴ Newton's chief works were the *Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica* (published 1687), and the *Opticks* (published 1704). The *Principia*, which contains the famous theory of universal

⁶²⁰ Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (Paris: Chez la veuve C. Blageart 1686).

⁶²¹ ———, *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (Marseille: Editions de l'Aube, 1990), 118.

⁶²² JB Shank, "Neither Natural Philosophy, nor Science, nor Literature- Gender, Writing, and the Pursuit of Nature in Fontenelle's *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes habités*," in *Men, Women and the Birthing of Modern Science*, ed. Judith P. Zinsser (De Kalb, IL: Illinois University Press, 2005), 88.

⁶²³ Ibid., 88. In writing the *Entretiens*, Fontenelle was influenced by two earlier works: Castiglione's *The Courtier*, in which a fictional dialogues take place in a mixed-sex environment, and Galileo's 1632 *Dialogues on the Two Chief World Systems*, in which Galileo makes use of fictional dialogues to explain scientific principles. See Ibid., 99-100.

⁶²⁴ A. Rupert Hall, *Isaac Newton: Eighteenth Century Perspectives* (Oxford, New York, and Tokyo: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

gravitation, was written in Latin. The language in which this work was written would not have presented a problem to most scientists; however, among those who read it, many found the ideas contained therein difficult to understand.⁶²⁵ The *Opticks*, the chief experiments from which Algarotti had reproduced in 1728, presents the theory that white light is actually composed of coloured rays. This work was written in English. For this reason, the work was seen as more approachable; however, it was by no means a work that could be easily comprehended by those not well-versed in science.⁶²⁶ As a result, popularizations played a large role in the general acceptance of Newtonianism by intellectuals, both in England and outside of it.⁶²⁷

One of the better-known English-language popularizations of Newtonian science was Henry Pemberton's *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy*, published in 1728. This work, which had a wide readership, was translated into Italian, French, and German.⁶²⁸ In writing the *View*, Pemberton's intentions were two-fold: first, to teach Newtonian principles to those without any prior scientific knowledge, and second, to encourage men who already had a knowledge of science and mathematics to further their studies along the lines he had laid out.⁶²⁹ Scientifically speaking, Pemberton was more than qualified to write a popularization of Newtonian science: he had been an associate of Newton's, and

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁶²⁸ I. Bernard Cohen, "Introduction to the Reprint Edition," in *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy* (New York and London: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1972), vi.

⁶²⁹ Henry Pemberton, *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy* (London and New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1972), Preface (pages unnumbered).

had worked closely with him on the third edition of the *Principia*.⁶³⁰ Contrary to expectations, however, Pemberton's *View* was rather ineffective in fulfilling its mission: although many people read the work, most who did so disliked it, and were no better able to understand Newtonian science after reading it than they had been before.⁶³¹

Upon reading the *View*, one can see why this was the case. As promised in the preface, Pemberton made minimal use of technical language in the work, and made certain to explain such terms on the rare occasions he was required to employ them.⁶³² Despite the simplicity with which Newton's ideas are explained, however, the style in which these explanations are written is rather dull. In fact, the work reads very much like a textbook. While such a style can be effective when addressing an audience interested in learning about a subject in depth, this is not the case when one is trying to attract readers with nothing more than a casual interest in the subject. Dry, straightforward writing rarely makes for entertaining reading material.

Four years after Pemberton published the *View*, Maupertuis had published his own popularization of Newtonian science, *Discours sur les différentes figures des astres avec une exposition des systèmes de MM Descartes et Newton*.⁶³³ Although both works sought to popularize the same principles, they differed in terms of agenda: while Pemberton sought simply to explain Newtonian principles

⁶³⁰ Cohen, "Introduction to the Reprint Edition," vi.

⁶³¹ Ibid., vi, viii.

⁶³² Pemberton, *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy*, Preface.

⁶³³ Pierre Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, *Discours sur les différentes figures des astres d'où l'on tire des conjectures sur les étoiles qui paroissent changer de grandeur, & sur l'anneau de Saturne : avec une exposition abrégée des systèmes de M. Descartes & de M. Newton* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1732).

to his readers, Maupertuis sought to demonstrate why Newtonian science was superior to that of Descartes. Each section of the work begins with a summary of a certain principle of Cartesian celestial physics. For each, Maupertuis cautions his readers not to take the simplicity of Cartesian explanations as proof of their correctness: though they are simple, these explanations do not fit the observed phenomena, or Kepler's laws of planetary motion.⁶³⁴ He then points out how Newtonian principles fit the observed phenomena much more closely. He concludes the work by dealing with various objections to Newtonianism.⁶³⁵ Throughout the work, he points out the manner in which the dogmatism of Cartesians affected their open-mindedness with regard to scientific theories.⁶³⁶

Although their ultimate aims differed, the *Discours* and the *View* are stylistically similar in one respect: like Pemberton, Maupertuis offered explanations of the technical terms he made use of in his work for the benefit of his less scientifically knowledgeable readers.⁶³⁷ Perhaps because he had different goals in mind, Maupertuis's work is wittier and more pleasant to read than that of Pemberton; however, this did not necessarily mean that non-scientists would have found the *Discours* more approachable. As is evident from the title of this work, it is written in the style of a philosophical discourse. The title alone may have

⁶³⁴ See, for example, ———, "Discours sur les différentes figures des astres, où l'on essaye d'expliquer les principaux phénomènes du ciel," in *Oeuvres*. Vol. 1, ed. Giorgio Tonelli (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1965), 91, 105-107.

⁶³⁵ Ibid., 91, 110, 161-170.

⁶³⁶ For instance, in discussing Cartesians' refusal to accept Newton's principle of universal attraction, while he admits that it would be foolish to assign bodies properties other than those that experience indicates exist, he points out that it would be even more foolish to dogmatically pronounce the impossibility of the existence of properties other than those that were already known. See Ibid., 96-97.

⁶³⁷ See, for example, his explanation of centrifugal force: Ibid., 85.

been enough to deter those members of the reading public who found philosophy intimidating.

Algarotti's *Newtonianismo* was published just five years after Maupertuis's *Discours*. Although Algarotti's work dealt primarily with Newton's optical theories, whereas Pemberton's and Maupertuis's had dealt with Newtonian celestial physics, the three authors shared a common desire to popularize Newtonian principles with their work. Where Algarotti differed from his English and French counterparts was in the scope of his intended public. Perhaps owing to the difficulty of explaining Newtonian principles to those who had never undertaken any serious study of science, Pemberton and Maupertuis had addressed their works to a learned audience. In contrast, Algarotti wrote his work with a non-academic readership in mind.⁶³⁸ That Algarotti had such an audience in mind is evident from the style in which he chose to write the work. Rather than adopting the more academic tones used by the Newtonian popularizers who came before him, Algarotti's work took a form that would be more likely to appeal to those who had never studied science formally. His dialogues, replete with witty remarks and romantic undertones, would have seemed much more approachable; and indeed, this does seem to have been the case. According to Michelessi, Algarotti was the first Italian to make the language of science clear to those who had never studied it before.⁶³⁹ In the preface Marchese Poleni would write for the 1765 edition of the *Newtonianismo*, he would praise Algarotti for his remarkable

⁶³⁸ Marta Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto: alle origini dell'Istituto delle Scienze di Bologna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), 245-246.

⁶³⁹ Michelessi, *Memorie intorno alla vita ed agli scritti del Conte Francesco Algarotti.*, XVII.

talent for making difficult matters seem simple, remarking that it is much easier to write about such matters in a complicated fashion.⁶⁴⁰

Women

Algarotti's *Newtonianismo* has been described as having played a crucial role in spreading Newtonian ideas to the general reading public of continental Europe.⁶⁴¹ As is evident from the title of the work, Algarotti saw women as an important part of this public. That it was directed at women is another way in which Algarotti's work stood out from the Newtonian popularizations that came before his. Certainly, Pemberton and Maupertuis did not say that their works were not intended for women. However, given the general attitude concerning women's intellectual capabilities in Enlightenment Europe, and the serious tones of their popularizations, it seems unlikely either of these two popularizers would have imagined that many women would be part of their readership.

In England, France, and Italy, the opinion of most scholars was that woman's natural role was that of mother, and accordingly, that their natural place was in the home.⁶⁴² The reasoning behind this was largely biological: because of their alleged physical weakness, women were thought to be incapable of abstract thought, and of concentrating for long periods of time.⁶⁴³ These ideas, in combination with the belief that women did not have the cranial capacity to hold

⁶⁴⁰ Michelessi makes special note of this in his biography of Algarotti. See Ibid. XXXIX.

⁶⁴¹ Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies," 119.

⁶⁴² Susan Dalton, *Engendering the Republic of Letters: Reconnecting Public and Private Spheres in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 13.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., 12.

brains powerful enough to contemplate scientific matters,⁶⁴⁴ created serious obstacles for women wishing to participate in science.

This is not to say that women were entirely barred from learning about science. On the contrary, by the eighteenth century it had become fashionable for women in England and France to learn about all the latest scientific developments; however, their knowledge of these developments was not meant to, and often did not, go beyond a superficial level.⁶⁴⁵ Usually, serious scientific activities took place in the universities or learned academies, and generally, women were not allowed full access to either.⁶⁴⁶ Some women circumvented these restrictions by assisting male scientists, often their husbands or brothers, with their experiments. Others sought to participate in science by translating scientific works, to which they could add footnotes expressing their own views on the concepts discussed.⁶⁴⁷ However, the restrictions imposed on them prevented many women from participating in science on a level equal to that of their male counterparts.

⁶⁴⁴ Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex? Women and the Origins of Modern Science* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 2.

⁶⁴⁵ This trend had begun in the sixteenth century. See Gabriella Berti Logan, "The Desire to Contribute: An Eighteenth-Century Italian Woman of Science," *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 3 (1994): 785.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 786.

⁶⁴⁷ For instance, Marie-Anne Pierette Paulze (1758-1836), wife of influential chemist Antoine-Laurent de Lavoisier (1743-1794), assisted him with his chemical experiments, drew many of the drawings for his publications, and learned English in order to translate scientific works into French for him. Caroline Herschel (1750-1848) assisted her brother William with his observations during the time that he was the English Astronomer Royal. Teresa and Maddelena Manfredi, sisters of Eustachio, also assisted their brother with his observations and calculations for astronomical tables. In Prussia, Maria Winkelmann (1670-1720), who had studied astronomy, married astronomer Gottfried Kirch in order to be able to continue her work in this field, by assisting him with his work. Emilie du Châtelet used translation as one means of engaging in serious scientific work by translating Newton's *Principia* into French. In fact, a woman was also responsible for the translation of Algarotti's *Newtonianismo* into English: Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806). For more on how women made use of these means to participate in science, see Vesna Crnjanski Petrovich, "Women and the Paris Academy of Sciences," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no. 3 (1999), Logan, "The Desire to Contribute."

Their exclusion from the typical venues of scientific production did not prevent some women from undertaking serious scientific study nonetheless. French mathematician Émilie du Châtelet was one such woman. In addition to providing Voltaire with indispensable research assistance for his *Éléments de la philosophie de Newton*, and writing an essay on the nature of fire for submission to the Académie des sciences, she also translated Newton's *Principia* into French.⁶⁴⁸ Owing to the extreme mathematical complexity of this work, this was a very difficult undertaking, so difficult, in fact, that her translation of the text is still the standard French language version of the *Principia* in use today.⁶⁴⁹ Despite her obvious scientific ability, however, du Châtelet was never able to participate in scientific activity on a level equal to that of her male contemporaries. Not being able to study at university, she had to undertake her studies independently, with the assistance of tutors such as Maupertuis and Clairaut.⁶⁵⁰ And despite the acceptance of her essay on the nature of fire by the Académie, she was never elected a member of this institution.⁶⁵¹

In Italy, the situation of women aspiring to a scientific career was slightly more promising than it was in France. Italian women were occasionally permitted to attend university, and in very rare circumstances, even to teach there. They

⁶⁴⁸ Judith P. Zinsser, *La Dame d'Ésprit: A Biography of the Marquise Du Châtelet* (New York: Viking, 2006). 150, 158. Du Châtelet owned an extensive collection of scientific instruments. For more on this, see Jean-François Gauvin, "Le cabinet de physique du château de Cirey et la philosophie naturelle de Mme Du Châtelet et de Voltaire," in *Emilie Du Châtelet: Rewriting Enlightenment and Science*, ed. Judith Zinsser and Julie Candler Hayes (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2006).

⁶⁴⁹ Petrovich, "Women and the Paris Academy of Sciences," 383.

⁶⁵⁰ Zinsser, *La Dame d'Ésprit*, 66, 72.

⁶⁵¹ Although no rule existed that officially barred them, women were not permitted to become full members of the Académie des sciences until 1979. See Petrovich, "Women and the Paris Academy of Sciences," 383.

were also sometimes elected as members of learned academies.⁶⁵² Bologna in particular was known for its relatively high number of scholarly women in the first half of the eighteenth century.⁶⁵³ Among these were Teresa and Maddelena Manfredi, sisters of Algarotti's teacher Eustachio Manfredi. In 1715, Eustachio Manfredi published *Effemeridi bolognesi, or Bolognese Ephemerides*.⁶⁵⁴ Manfredi's most important collaborators on these tables had been his sisters, particularly Maddelena, who had done the calculations for the longitudinal table. These astronomical tables remained the most complete of their kind in Europe for decades after their publication.⁶⁵⁵

The most famous example of an eighteenth century Italian woman of science is Laura Bassi. Algarotti had met Bassi during his time in Bologna through mutual acquaintance and patron of intellectuals Elisabetta Ratta.⁶⁵⁶ Bassi was the second woman in all of Europe to receive a university degree, and the first to be offered a university teaching position.⁶⁵⁷ She was awarded her degree from the University of Bologna in May 1732, and awarded a teaching position at this university in October of that year. She was also elected a member of the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna. She pursued her scientific career throughout her life, eventually being awarded the illustrious chair in experimental physics at the

⁶⁵² For instance, Émilie du Châtelet was elected a member of the Istituto delle scienze in 1746. See Paula Findlen, "Science as a Career in Enlightenment Italy: The Strategies of Laura Bassi," *Isis* 84, no. 3 (1993): 444.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, 446.

⁶⁵⁴ Cavazza, *Settecento inquieto*, 167. Ephemerides are astronomical tables which indicate the positions of objects in the sky.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁶⁵⁶ Ratta made mention of Bassi to Algarotti in her correspondence with him. See Elisabetta Hercolani Ratta, *Lettere della Marchesa Elisabetta Hercolani Ratta al Conte Francesco Algarotti* (Bologna: Gamberini e Parmeggiani, 1824), 6-8.

⁶⁵⁷ Findlen, "Science as a Career in Enlightenment Italy," 441. The first European woman to earn a university degree was also an Italian: Elena Cornaro Piscopia received a degree in philosophy from the University of Padua in 1678.

Istituto delle scienze, a post she held from 1776 until her death in 1778.⁶⁵⁸

Algarotti had written two poems in honour of Bassi's achievements on the occasion of her graduation from the University of Bologna.⁶⁵⁹ Giampietro Zanotti had also written a poem celebrating Bassi's accomplishments.⁶⁶⁰

Despite the seemingly egalitarian attitude that Bassi's career would appear to illustrate, Italian women of science were not in fact treated as equals by the majority of their male counterparts. Although they managed to make use of the universities and academies in order to pursue serious scientific interests, the women in these institutions were treated very differently from the men.⁶⁶¹ In spite of all her scientific achievements, many of Bassi's contemporaries still felt that her membership in the Istituto, as well as her degree and lectureship, should be regarded as purely symbolic.⁶⁶² She was only permitted to give three lectures per year at her initial teaching post, the duties of which also included participating in various public ceremonies.⁶⁶³ In fact, Bassi's frustration at the limitations imposed on her teaching by the university led her to begin giving lectures in experimental physics from her home beginning in 1738.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 441, 449.

⁶⁵⁹ "Ombra del gran Britanno, a cui intorno," and "Non la lesboa." Both originally appeared in a collection of poems celebrating Bassi's achievement entitled *Rime per la famosa laurea ed acclamatissima aggregazione al collegio filosofico della ill.ma ed ecc.ma sig.ra Laura Maria Catterina Bassi* (Bologna: L. della Volpe, 1732). Revised versions of both poems would later appear in Algarotti's own *Rime del Signor Francesco Algarotti* (Bologna: L. della Volpe, 1733). Ratta had described Bassi's graduation in great detail to Algarotti in a 1732 letter. See Ratta, *Lettere della Marchesa Elisabetta Hercolani Ratta al Conte Francesco Algarotti*, 6-8.

⁶⁶⁰ Dino Provenzal, *I Riformatori della bella letteratura italiana: Eustachio Manfredi, Giampietro Zanotti, Fernand' Antonio Ghedini, Francesco Maria Zanotti*, Studio di storia letteraria Bolognese del sec. XVIII (Rocca S. Casciano: Licinio Cappelli, editore, 1900), 22.

⁶⁶¹ Logan, "The Desire to Contribute," 786.

⁶⁶² Ibid., 791.

⁶⁶³ Findlen, "Science as a Career in Enlightenment Italy," 451.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., 456.

Many Italian women of learning were made a spectacle of, their intellectual activities being viewed as a form of entertainment,⁶⁶⁵ suggesting that their erudition was seen as something out of the ordinary. Bassi was no exception. In addition to the members of the academic community, the leading political and religious figures of Bologna, all of the nobility, and many of the foreigners who happened to be in the city at the time attended Bassi's thesis defence.⁶⁶⁶ Attendance at her lectures was also largely made up of people not connected to the university. Indeed, it seems as though the motivation for awarding Bassi a degree and lectureship had more to do with increasing the prestige of the city of Bologna by associating the city with her accomplishments, rather than by any desire to recognize these accomplishments for their own sake.⁶⁶⁷

Algarotti's view of the intellectual capabilities women

⁶⁶⁵ For more on this, see Marta Cavazza, "Between Modesty and Spectacle: Women and Science in Eighteenth-Century Italy," in *Italy's Eighteenth Century: Gender and Culture in the Age of the Grand Tour*, ed. Paula Findlen, Wendy Wassing Roworth, and Catherine M. Sama (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009).

⁶⁶⁶ Findlen, "Science as a Career in Enlightenment Italy," 449.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., 448-449. Another example of a learned Italian woman who was made a spectacle of is Milanese mathematician Maria Gaetana Agnesi (1718-1799). The first woman to publish a mathematical work (*Istituzioni analitiche ad uso della gioventù italiana* (Milan: Nella Reggia Ducal Corte, 1748), she was renowned for her mathematical ability even before its appearance. At her father's insistence, she was required to demonstrate her erudition on a regular basis by engaging in philosophical disputations with guests at learned *conversazioni* hosted by her father. Scholars, both foreign and local, would attend these *conversazioni* in order to witness, or participate in, these disputations. Agnesi eventually tired of being put on display. Although she continued to pursue her mathematical studies thereafter, she withdrew from public life in 1740 in order to devote herself to charitable pursuits. For more on Agnesi, see Massimo Mazzotti, *The World of Maria Gaetana Agnesi, Mathematician of God* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

Against this background, and given that the *Newtonianismo* is directed at women, it is worth asking what view Algarotti had toward the scientific capabilities of women. While certain historians have argued that, with this book, Algarotti meant to suggest that women were incapable of engaging in scientific activity on the same level as men, a careful reading of the book, and study of the circumstances in which it was written, suggest otherwise.

According to Moira R. Rogers, Algarotti did not view women as the intellectual equals of men. In fact, she argues that, while the *Newtonianismo* did teach its readers about Newtonian science, one of Algarotti's aims in writing it was to impress upon women the impossibility of their ever being part of the scientific elite.⁶⁶⁸ She bases this opinion on a small selection of quotations taken from the text, which, when read out of context, appear to confirm her assertion. However, a closer analysis of the contents of the *Newtonianismo* demonstrates a very different intention on Algarotti's part.

An examination of the introduction to this work does suggest that Algarotti had a somewhat negative view of the intellectual capabilities of women. In it, Algarotti mentioned all the precautions he had taken to make the *Newtonianismo* more appealing to women: he had left out mathematical terms as much as possible, and any that he had had to include he had explained by relating them to everyday things.⁶⁶⁹ He had also banished lines and figures from his work,

⁶⁶⁸ Moira R. Rogers, *Newtonianism for the ladies and other uneducated souls: the popularization of science in Leipzig, 1687-1750* (New York: P. Lang, 2003), 100, 102.

⁶⁶⁹ Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, VI.

along with anything else that would make the dialogues seem too learned, for fear of intimidating those who wished to learn while being entertained.⁶⁷⁰

However, when one reads the *Newtoniansimo* in its entirety, all suspicions that Algarotti had a condescending attitude towards the intellectual capabilities of women vanish. Algarotti does, to a large extent, exclude mathematics from his discussion. However, he does include several technical terms in his work, including such terms as reflection, refraction, parallelism, divergent rays, and convergent rays.⁶⁷¹ Algarotti's Marquise is portrayed as an intelligent woman. She shows a genuine intellectual interest in the subject at hand. She insists on seeing demonstrations of the various experiments that the narrator describes,⁶⁷² and demands to know how it is possible that philosophers can hold certain theories without having evidence to support these theories.⁶⁷³ Far from being portrayed as scientifically inept, the Marquise of the *Newtonianismo* is depicted as being quite capable of independent thought relating to scientific matters. For instance, she determines that Descartes's theory of colour is wrong on her own, realizing that, if it were correct, we would be able to feel colour.⁶⁷⁴ She also devises a possible experiment for determining whether or not phosphorus is luminous.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., VI.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., 69, 77-79. He explains these terms by relating them to everyday things. For instance, he explains reflection by likening light, in this instance, to a ball which, when thrown at the ground, bounces back. See ———, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, 69.

⁶⁷² See, for example, Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, 83.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., 56, 62.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., 216.

⁶⁷⁵ The narrator explains to the Marquise that, previously, it had been unknown whether luminosity was inherent to phosphorus, or whether it simply appeared to be luminous when in fact it had the ability to retain light from outside it, which it would then emit once in the dark. Having already learned that colour is immutable, the Marquise proposes that phosphorus be mixed with

At various points in the *Newtonianismo*, Algarotti does suggest that mathematics and abstract thinking are associated with masculinity, while women are more focused on feelings, and are more inclined towards developing their imaginations.⁶⁷⁶ As he states in the introduction, in writing the book, he has undertaken to make the truth pleasing to “that sex which likes to feel better than to know.”⁶⁷⁷ He attributes these same allegedly feminine attitudes to past philosophers and enemies of Newton, offering these attitudes as an explanation for the error of their ways.⁶⁷⁸ While, on the surface, it appears that Algarotti means to imply with this that women are too foolish to undertake scientific study, a more in-depth examination of the *Newtonianismo* reveals that this is not the case. In attributing these qualities to the mistaken philosophers of the past, the narrator is trying to demonstrate to the Marquise that they had reached their conclusions through fanciful thoughts and gut feelings rather than through reason and evidence. When the narrator presents various aspects of Cartesian science to her that have no logical explanation, such as the corpuscular theory of vision, she refuses to believe them.⁶⁷⁹ Only once she is presented with concrete evidence supporting Newton’s theories does she come to accept Newtonian science over that of Descartes.

paint which would then be used to paint a picture. Because colours are immutable, if the apparent luminosity of phosphorus was in fact the result of its retaining light it was exposed to, then it would retain the colour of the paint as well, emitting light of that colour when the painting was placed in the dark. However, if luminosity was a quality inherent in phosphorus, then, when placed in the dark, the phosphorus in the painting would emit light of the same colour it had been observed to emit on its own. See *Ibid.*, 208-209.

⁶⁷⁶ Massimo Mazzotti, “Newton for Ladies,” *Bologna Science Classics Online*, http://www.cis.unibo.it/cis13b/bsco/notbyed2.asp?id_opera=32 (page consulted September 5, 2008), 11

⁶⁷⁷ “...e di farla piacere a quel sesso, che ama più tosto di sentire, che di sapere.” Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, V.

⁶⁷⁸ Mazzotti, “Newton for Ladies,” 11

⁶⁷⁹ Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, 53-56.

Algarotti did not portray mathematized science as an undertaking reserved exclusively for men.⁶⁸⁰ On the contrary, the narrator tells the Marquise that, with the right training, she could become a mathematician. In the introduction to the *Newtonianismo*, Algarotti laments that the only modern reading materials available to Italian women were novels and sonnets dealing with love.⁶⁸¹ He expresses the hope that, in his book, women will find a new pleasure (science), and that, because of it, the fashion of cultivating one's spirit will replace the fashion of arranging one's hair according to the latest style among the women of Italy.⁶⁸² As he states in the conclusion, he hopes the Marquise of his book will become a role model for Italian women.⁶⁸³ Rather than suggesting that women were incapable of participating in scientific research, he is suggesting quite the opposite: that they abandon their frivolous pastimes in order to do so.⁶⁸⁴

That Algarotti did not perceive women as incapable of participating in scientific activities can also be seen from the circumstances surrounding the writing of his book. Having undertaken his studies in Bologna in the 1720s, he would have been accustomed to the idea of women participating in scientific study. Given that Eustachio Manfredi was both his teacher and his friend, Algarotti would certainly have known about the work that Teresa and Maddelena Manfredi had done on *Effemeridi bolognesi*. Francesco Maria Zanotti, another of the Bolognese scientists whom Algarotti had befriended during his studies in

⁶⁸⁰ Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies," 12.

⁶⁸¹ Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, XI.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, X.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, 300.

⁶⁸⁴ Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs and Margaret Jacob agree. See Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs and Margaret C. Jacob, *Newton and the Culture of Newtonianism* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1995), 93.

Bologna, was also in favour of women's participation in science. He would be responsible for recommending Laura Bassi for membership in the Istituto delle scienze.⁶⁸⁵ That Algarotti shared the view of his Bolognese teachers with regard to the intellectual capabilities of women can be seen from the fact that he had written a poem celebrating Bassi's achievements.

In addition to this, while working on the manuscript version of the *Newtonianismo*, Algarotti asked two erudite women for their opinions of it: Émilie du Châtelet and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.⁶⁸⁶ It seems highly unlikely that Algarotti would ask two women well known for their scientific achievements for their opinions of the *Newtonianismo* if his intent had been to reinforce the notion that women are incapable of participating in science.

In 1737, while the *Newtonianismo* was being printed, Algarotti wrote to his brother Bonomo in Venice, promising to send him a copy of the work as soon as the printing had been completed, and asking Bonomo to encourage his wife Paulina to read the work as well.⁶⁸⁷ Algarotti knew that Paulina had read Fontenelle's *Entretiens*, and had been bored by them.⁶⁸⁸ In asking that Paulina read the *Newtonianismo*, perhaps he was hoping that she would become the first woman his book would encourage to take an interest in scientific matters.

⁶⁸⁵ Findlen, "Science as a Career in Enlightenment Italy," 449.

⁶⁸⁶ See chapter two.

⁶⁸⁷ Biblioteca Comunale di Treviso (BCT) MS 1256B, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 4 December 1737.

⁶⁸⁸ BCT MS 1256B, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 4 December 1737.

Fontenelle

As mentioned above, the format of Algarotti's *Newtonianismo* is very heavily based on that of Fontenelle's *Entretiens*. Given the success of the *Entretiens*, it is not hard to imagine that other popularizers might like to associate their own work with it, and this is exactly what Algarotti did. In the dedication to the book, which he addressed to Fontenelle, he states explicitly that he has modelled his own work very closely on that of its dedicatee.⁶⁸⁹ Indeed, the format of the *Newtonianismo* is extremely similar to that of the *Entretiens*, except in that the narrator seeks to teach the Marquise about Newtonian, rather than Cartesian, science. Like the *Entretiens*, the *Newtonianismo* also ends on a romantic note, with a compliment to the Marquise's intelligence: the narrator tells her he will record their dialogues, and, if he can depict her as she actually is, the book will have a wide readership, and the Marquise will be responsible for making women readers who follow her example attractive to men.⁶⁹⁰

Dedicating his work to an eminent person is a tactic Algarotti had used before in order to enhance his own reputation as an intellectual of note. In his introduction to the *Newtonianismo*, Algarotti claims that he had chosen to model his work on the *Entretiens* in the hopes that it would achieve a similar level of fame.⁶⁹¹ However, the contents of the work do not suggest that Algarotti hoped the reader would liken him to Fontenelle. Rather, it seems that Algarotti aimed to

⁶⁸⁹ Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, III.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 300.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., IV.

demonstrate the superiority of his work over that of Fontenelle, thereby demonstrating the superiority of Newtonianism over Cartesianism.

The *Newtonianismo* begins with the narrator explaining Cartesian science to the Marquise.⁶⁹² After much discussion, the Marquise comes to accept Cartesian science as correct. Algarotti then has the narrator say that Cartesian science is in fact incorrect (which infuriates the Marquise). The narrator then proceeds to discuss Newtonian science with her, which she comes to accept over that of Descartes.⁶⁹³ Algarotti also insults Fontenelle and Cartesianism in a more direct way in the *Newtonianismo*. The Marquise in the *Entretiens* suggests that the inhabitants of the moons of Jupiter should be subordinate to the inhabitants of Jupiter proper.⁶⁹⁴ In the *Newtonianismo*, the Marquise suggests that planets should be seen as the rulers of their satellites, to which the narrator replies that these sorts of fanciful ideas are more suitable in discussing Cartesianism than Newtonianism.⁶⁹⁵ As a final insult, after her acceptance of Newtonian science, the Marquise expresses an interest in reading the *Entretiens*.⁶⁹⁶ To this the narrator replies, though not in so many words, that since she is now a Newtonian, she is too intelligent to read it.⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹² Ibid., 27-46.

⁶⁹³ Ibid., 154-300.

⁶⁹⁴ Fontenelle, *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*, 92-93.

⁶⁹⁵ “Mi piace, disse la Marchesa, questa convenienza, che v’è tra queste due sorte di Pianeti. Io mi figuro il Sole come il Sovrano di questo immense Regno Planetario...Cotesta vostra similitudine, replicai io, saria più che in qualunque altro, giusta nel sistema de’ Vortici...” Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, 239-240.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., 237.

⁶⁹⁷ “Io non veggo l’ora, disse la Marchesa, per meglio, e più tranquillamente gustar ciò, che mi dite, di aver letto la Pluarlità dei Mondi, che dee convincermi del moto, e dell’agilità, di questa Terra. Ora, rispos’io, che siete cotanto avanzata nella Filosofia, vi converrà cercarne la vera dimostrazione in Inghilterra.” Ibid., 237-238.

Voltaire

Fontenelle was not the only person of note whom Algarotti would end up insulting with the *Newtonianismo*. Through no fault of his own, the work also served as an affront to Algarotti's friend Voltaire. Initially, Voltaire had been quite enthusiastic about Algarotti's project, as is evident from the poems he had written praising Algarotti for it.⁶⁹⁸ Du Châtelet was also excited about the work. After having read the final manuscript version of the *Newtonianismo*, she described it as brimming with flair, beauty, and charm.⁶⁹⁹ After having seen the printed version of the work, she described it to Louis-François Armand Du Plessis, Duke of Richelieu as being "full of spirit and knowledge."⁷⁰⁰ Disappointed that Algarotti had decided to dedicate the work to Fontenelle rather than her, she insisted that he keep his promise to include her portrait as the frontispiece.⁷⁰¹ Perhaps in order to convince him to do so, she jokingly reminded him that, while Fontenelle was wittier than she, she had a prettier face.⁷⁰² Algarotti did indeed put her portrait on the frontispiece, about which she was evidently quite pleased, as she mentioned this to Maupertuis and Richelieu in her correspondence.⁷⁰³ Perhaps she hoped that the appearance of her picture at the

⁶⁹⁸ See chapter two.

⁶⁹⁹ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. VI (1737)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1954), 16, du Châtelet to Algarotti, 11 January 1737.

⁷⁰⁰ "...pleins d'esprit et de conaissance." ———, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. VII (January-November 1738)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1954). 330, du Châtelet to Louis-François Armand du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu, 17 February [?August 1738]

⁷⁰¹ ———, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. VI (1737)*. 16, du Châtelet to Algarotti, 11 January 1737

⁷⁰² Ibid. 16, du Châtelet to Algarotti, 11 January 1737

⁷⁰³ ———, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. VII (January-November 1738)*. 66, du Châtelet to Maupertuis, c. 10 February 1738; 16, du Châtelet to Richelieu, 17 February [?August 1738]

front of the work would convince readers that the Marquise was modelled on her. It seems that Voltaire thought this to be the case. In a letter to Nicolas Claude Thieriot, he states that her picture appears at the beginning of the *Newtonianismo* because she is the Marquise of the work.⁷⁰⁴ He thought this a suitable tribute to du Châtelet as, in his opinion, no one had given Algarotti more useful advice on his work as she had.⁷⁰⁵

Given the renown enjoyed Voltaire and du Châtelet in European intellectual circles, their great interest in the *Newtonianismo* must have given Algarotti hope that others would be encouraged to read it as a result. In fact, the enthusiasm that Algarotti's work initially inspired in Voltaire went beyond admiration. Having spent time with Algarotti while he had been working on the manuscript version of the *Newtonianismo* had led Voltaire to decide to write his own popularization of Newton's ideas.⁷⁰⁶ It appears that part of his inspiration for doing this was fear: given du Châtelet's admiration of Algarotti's work, Voltaire became worried that Algarotti might supplant him as du Châtelet's intellectual mentor.⁷⁰⁷ Voltaire's book, entitled *Éléments de la philosophie de Newton*, was published in 1738, only one year after Algarotti's *Newtonianismo*. In early 1737, du Châtelet told Algarotti that, because he had finished his Newtonian popularization first, it was only right that the *Newtonianismo* be published before Voltaire's *Éléments*; since Voltaire's and Algarotti's works were aimed at people on opposite sides of the Alps, she was convinced that priority of publication was

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid. 180, Voltaire to Thieriot, 18 May 1738

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid. 180, Voltaire to Thieriot, 18 May 1738

⁷⁰⁶ Robert L. Walters and W.H. Barber, "Introduction," in *Éléments de la philosophie de Newton: Critical Edition* (Oxford: The University of Oxford, 1992), 43, Zinsser, *La Dame d'Ésprit*, 116.

⁷⁰⁷ Zinsser, *La Dame d'Ésprit*, 146.

of little import.⁷⁰⁸ However, it would seem that she was quite mistaken in this regard.

Although Voltaire was a great deal more renowned than Algarotti at this time, the *Newtonianismo* met with far more success than did the *Éléments*. In hopes of selling more copies of the *Éléments*, the Dutch publishers of this work added *à la portée de tout le monde* to its title without Voltaire's permission,⁷⁰⁹ presumably to make the title similar to that of Algarotti's *Newtonianismo*.⁷¹⁰ The *Newtonianismo* and the *Éléments* were both reviewed in the 1738 edition of the *Novelle della repubblica letteraria*.⁷¹¹ The review of the *Newtonianismo* highlights the universal appeal of the work among female readers. In it, the reviewer notes that the work seems to be directed not only at the women of Italy, but also to those of England and France.⁷¹² The review of the *Éléments* is quite unfavourable in comparison. The only positive remark made by the reviewer is that the *Éléments* is printed on nice paper, and in a pleasing font.⁷¹³ The reviewer of the *Éléments* declined to say whether the *Newtonianismo* or the *Éléments* was the superior book; instead, he states that du Châtelet would be a better judge of this.⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁸ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence*. Vol. VI (1737). 16, du Châtelet to Algarotti, 11 January 1737

⁷⁰⁹ ———, *Voltaire's Correspondence*. Vol. VII (January–November 1738). 157, 158 n.3, Voltaire to Thieriot, 5 may 1738

⁷¹⁰ Understandably, Voltaire was very upset by this. Ibid. 157, Voltaire to Thieriot, 5 may 1738

⁷¹¹ "Napoli [review of *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*]," *Novelle della repubblica letteraria* (1738): 115–116, "Amsterdam [Review of *Eléments de la philosophie de Neuton*]," *Novelle della repubblica letteraria* (1738): 247–248.

⁷¹² "Napoli [review of *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*]," 115.

⁷¹³ "Amsterdam [Review of *Eléments de la philosophie de Neuton*]," 248.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid., 247–248.

Indeed, du Châtelet was in an excellent position to judge whose book was superior, although not because she was in a position to learn anything about Newtonianism from either. She had done most of the research for the *Eléments*, as Voltaire lacked the mathematical ability to undertake a serious study of Newton's theories.⁷¹⁵ That Voltaire had such a poor understanding of Newtonian science meant that he was not the ideal person to popularize Newton's principles, and this did not escape the notice of his readers. In reference to this work, Marie Claire, Viscountess Bolingbroke, wrote in a letter to Cantemir, "I do not believe that you would claim that you understand it any more than I do, or than he [Voltaire] himself does."⁷¹⁶ In his *Mémoires*, Voltaire boasts that this work was the first to convey Newtonian principles to the people of France in an intelligible language.⁷¹⁷ However, French intellectuals of the time do not appear to have shared this opinion, as the work was generally poorly received by them.⁷¹⁸ Even du Châtelet does not appear to have been a great admirer of the *Eléments*. Voltaire dedicated the work to her, and acknowledged her as a nearly equal partner in the writing of it.⁷¹⁹ However, this was not enough to win her admiration of it. Although du Châtelet did not criticize the *Eléments* outright, Wade contends that the volume of commentary she wrote as an accompaniment to

⁷¹⁵ Zinsser, *La Dame d'Ésprit*, 148.

⁷¹⁶ Valentin Boss, *Newton and Russia; the early influence, 1698-1796* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 123.

⁷¹⁷ Voltaire, *Mémoires pour servir à la vie de M. de Voltaire, écrits par lui-même, suivis de Lettres à Frédéric II. Éd. présentée et annotée par Jacques Brenner*, ed. Jacques Brenner (Paris: Mercure de France, 1965), 36.

⁷¹⁸ Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 123.

⁷¹⁹ Ira O. Wade, *Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet: An Essay on Intellectual Activity at Cirey* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1965), 36-37.

her translation of the *Principia* was really intended as another, better version of Voltaire's *Éléments*.⁷²⁰

Faced with the poor reception of his work in comparison to Algarotti's, Voltaire's opinion of the *Newtonianismo*, or at least that which he expressed behind its author's back, changed drastically. Writing to Berger, Voltaire accused Algarotti of not treating Newtonian science with sufficient (or indeed any) depth in the *Newtonianismo*.⁷²¹ In the dedication of the *Éléments*, Voltaire had written, "This work contains neither an imaginary marquise, nor an imaginary philosophy."⁷²² Certainly, this could have been interpreted as an insult to Fontenelle's *Entretiens*, something which worried both du Châtelet and Voltaire.⁷²³ However, it seems that this comment was also meant to be an insult to Algarotti. Du Châtelet expressed her concern to Maupertuis that Algarotti would interpret it as such.⁷²⁴ Voltaire's comments to Berger about the lack of depth in the *Newtonianismo* suggest that Voltaire did indeed mean this statement to apply to Algarotti. In fact, Voltaire told Berger outright that it was meant to be a reference to remarks he had allegedly made to Algarotti to that effect.⁷²⁵ In a letter to Thieriot, Voltaire listed his criticisms of Algarotti's work.⁷²⁶ Stating that the *Newtonianismo* was nothing more than an Italian version of Fontenelle's *Entretiens*, he wrote, "I believe there is more truth in ten pages of my work than

⁷²⁰ Ibid., 35-37.

⁷²¹ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. VII (January-November 1738)*. 176, Voltaire to Berger, 14 May 1738.

⁷²² "Ce n'est point ici une marquise, ni une philosophie imaginaires." Ibid., 166 n. 2.

⁷²³ Ibid., 163, du Châtelet to Maupertuis, 19 May 1738; 173, du Châtelet and Voltaire to Algarotti, 12 May 1738.

⁷²⁴ Ibid., 163, du Châtelet to Maupertuis, 19 May 1738.

⁷²⁵ Ibid., 176, Voltaire to Berger, 14 May 1738.

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 180, Voltaire to Thieriot, 18 May 1738.

in all of his [Algarotti's] book."⁷²⁷ Complaining of the success that Algarotti's work had experienced in comparison to his own, he wrote, "He took the flowers for himself, and left me with the thorns."⁷²⁸

At the same time, du Châtelet began to express negative opinions on the *Newtonainismo* as well. She stated that she thought the work frivolous, and that she was disappointed that it contained so many jokes.⁷²⁹ Given that she had seen the manuscript version of the *Newtonianismo*, it is difficult to imagine that she was actually surprised at the jovial tone of the work. Perhaps she felt that women could learn about Newtonianism equally well from a work that was more serious in tone. Indeed, she told Richelieu that she did not like to discuss science in such a light-hearted fashion.⁷³⁰ However, in the same letter, she stated that Algarotti had dealt masterfully with the material he covered in his work.⁷³¹ She shared this opinion with Algarotti as well, telling him he deserved all the praise he was getting for the *Newtonianismo*.⁷³²

The work did indeed earn Algarotti a great deal of praise, praise that Voltaire's negative remarks did nothing to reverse. That the comments of someone so renowned and respected as Voltaire could not change people's

⁷²⁷ "Je crois qu'il y a plus de véritez [sic] dans 10 pages de mon ouvrage que dans tout son livre..." Ibid., 180, Voltaire to Thieriot, 18 May 1738.

⁷²⁸ "Il a pris les fleurs pour luy [sic], et m'a laissé les épines." Ibid., 180, Voltaire to Thieriot, 18 May 1738.

⁷²⁹ Paula Findlen, "Becoming a Scientist: Gender and Knowledge in Eighteenth Century Italy," *Science in Context* 16, no. 1/2 (2003): 62, Nancy Mitford, *Voltaire in Love* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1957), 83.

⁷³⁰ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. VII (January-November 1738)*. 330, du Châtelet to Richelieu, 17 February [?August 1738].

⁷³¹ Ibid., 330, du Châtelet to Richelieu, 17 February [?August 1738].

⁷³² Ibid., 338, du Châtelet to Algarotti, 27 August 1738.

opinions of the *Newtonianismo* is a testament to the quality of the work, and to the fame its author had achieved.

The *Index of Forbidden Books*

That the *Newtonianismo* was a tremendous success is further evidenced by the failure of the criticism of another influential quarter to reverse the fortunes of Algarotti and his work: in 1739, the Catholic Church placed the *Newtonianismo* on its *Index of Forbidden Books*.⁷³³

With increased belief in religious toleration, and decreased belief in rule by divine right, among eighteenth-century intellectuals, the Church felt that its traditional power was being threatened.⁷³⁴ As a result, Catholic authorities made increased use of the *Index* as a means through which to broadcast their religious and political message. This was especially the case in the 1730s when the increasingly radical ideas being espoused by intellectuals led the Church to become more vigilant of works being published. At this time, the Church also re-examined those works thought to be at the origin of radical religious and political ideas, with the result that John Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*, published 1689, was put on the Index in 1734.⁷³⁵ Given these conditions, the

⁷³³ Franco Arato, "Minerva and Venus: Algarotti's *Newton's Philosophy for the Ladies*," in *Men, Women, and the Birthing of Modern Science*, ed. Judith Zinsser (De Kalb, IL: Illinois University Press, 2005), 114.

⁷³⁴ Patrizia Delpiano, *Il governo della letteratura: Chiesa e libri nell'Italia del Settecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), 75-76.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, 75, 77-78.

1730s were a rather unfortuitous time for Algarotti to have published his *Newtonianismo*.

The official reason given for the condemnation of the *Newtonianismo* was Algarotti's refusal to make the usual anti-Copernican declaration in his book.⁷³⁶ However, it seems unlikely that the banning of the work had anything to do with Copernicanism. Indeed, Algarotti's was the only book dealing with Newtonianism placed on the *Index* during this period.⁷³⁷ Even books authored by Newton himself were not forbidden reading material.⁷³⁸ Prior to its publication, the *Newtonianismo* had been reviewed by a priest, who had found its contents to be sufficiently vague for approval, and had even smiled occasionally as he read it.⁷³⁹

However, in keeping with the Church's policy of hyper-vigilance with regard to any ideas perceived to be a threat to its temporal powers, the actual reason Algarotti's work was placed on the *Index* appears to have been political in nature. Algarotti's ties to freemasonry, which had been prohibited by papal bull in 1738, appear to have been a significant contributing factor to the banning of the *Newtonianismo*.⁷⁴⁰ The Church's move to prohibit freemasonry was motivated by its dislike of the secrecy surrounding this fraternity and of its practice of religious

⁷³⁶ Arato, "Minerva and Venus," 114.

⁷³⁷ Walter Tega, "Mens Agitat Molem. L'Accademia delle scienze di Bologna (1711-1804)," in *Scienza e letteratura nella cultura italiana del Settecento* ed. Renzo Cremante and Walter Tega (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984), 95.

⁷³⁸ Ibid., 88.

⁷³⁹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 4 December 1737.

⁷⁴⁰ Arato, "Minerva and Venus," 114-115, Mauro de Zan, "La Mesa all'Indice del *Newtonianismo* per le dame di Francesco Algarotti," in *Scienza e letteratura nella cultura italiana del Settecento* ed. Renzo Cremante and Walter Tega (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984), 140, Hanns Gross, *Rome in the Age of Enlightenment: The Post-Tridentine Syndrome and the Ancien Regime*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History. (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 253.

toleration.⁷⁴¹ Although it is unclear whether Algarotti was himself a freemason, he was known to have associated with freemasons in Florence. Part of the appeal of freemasonry for its Italian members was the group's strong ties to England. In the *Newtonianismo*, Algarotti sought to demonstrate the superiority of the political and intellectual culture of Protestant England, criticizing the role of the Church in the intellectual life of continental Europe in the process.⁷⁴² Given that the *Newtonianismo* was the only work dealing with Newtonianism on the *Index* at this time, it seems likely that the real cause of the banning of the work was Algarotti's ties to freemasonry and praise for English values.

From the success that the *Newtonianismo* went on to enjoy over the course of subsequent years, it is evident that the placement of this book on the *Index* did little to prevent people from reading it. Forbidden books circulated quite freely, even in Italy,⁷⁴³ and given the tendency among continental European intellectuals to subvert the restrictions of the Church, the banning of the *Newtonianismo* may actually have served to increase, rather than decrease, its readership.

The impact of the Newtonianismo on the spread of Newtonian ideas in Italy:

Zanotti's Della forza attrattiva delle idee

Algarotti's *Newtonianismo* has been described as having played a crucial role in spreading Newtonian ideas to the general literate public of continental

⁷⁴¹ Delpiano, *Il governo della letteratura*, 79.

⁷⁴² For more on this, see Mazzotti, *The World of Maria Gaetana Agnesi*, 57.

⁷⁴³ Delpiano, *Il governo della letteratura*, 16.

Europe.⁷⁴⁴ That it had played a role in creating a fashion for Newtonian ideas in Italy is suggested by Francesco Maria Zanotti's 1747 satire of those who got caught up in the craze for Newtonian science without understanding it, *Della forza attrattiva delle idee*.

In this book, Zanotti makes use of a fictional setting in order to poke fun at those who claimed to accept Newtonian science without changing their Cartesian mindset. This book purports to provide an account of how the Newtonian principle of universal attraction can be applied to ideas, that is to say, to demonstrate how ideas attract or repel people. Far from believing that this was actually possible, Zanotti aimed to make use of this alleged application of Newtonian science to point out the folly of certain aspects of the Cartesian mindset.

The deliberate silliness of the work's fictional backstory makes Zanotti's aim plain. Zanotti claimed that the work was not of his own authorship, but rather a translation (undertaken by him) of a fragment of a work by a French philosopher known as the Marchese de la Tourri.⁷⁴⁵ This de la Tourri, who was in fact a fictional character of Zanotti's invention, had allegedly gone to Paris to study philosophy and mathematics early in his career where he decided instead to join the army.⁷⁴⁶ According to Zanotti, given his natural military prowess, philosophy almost lost de la Tourri to the army forever until fate intervened to bring him back to this worthy intellectual pursuit by causing him to lose first an eye, then an arm,

⁷⁴⁴ Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies," 119.

⁷⁴⁵ Francesco Maria Zanotti, "Della forza attrattiva delle idee," in *Opere scelte. Vol. 2* (Milan: Società tipografica de' classici italiani contrada del cappuccio, 1818), 322.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid., 322-323.

and then finally a leg, in battle.⁷⁴⁷ Reunited with philosophy, says Zanotti, de la Tourri set about applying Newtonian principles to all divisions of philosophy.⁷⁴⁸ Unfortunately, shortly after completing his work, fire had allegedly consumed de la Tourri's house, along with all his books, and de la Tourri himself, with the result that his application of Newtonian attraction to all levels of philosophy was believed to be forever lost.⁷⁴⁹ Fortunately, Zanotti tells the reader, fragments of de la Tourri's theories on the application of Newtonian principles to everything had been found, the most complete of which being the one that Zanotti was pretending to endeavour to translate.⁷⁵⁰

Zanotti notes in his preface that he had added some annotations of his own authorship at the end of the alleged translation.⁷⁵¹ These annotations make clear that Zanotti did not believe in any of the concepts laid out in the book. In discussing these concepts, Zanotti portrays the alleged author as someone who identified himself as a Newtonian when in fact he still operated under the Cartesian mindset. For instance, Zanotti tells the reader that, in de la Tourri's alleged opinion, if the attractive force the Sun exerts on a given object diminishes by the square of the distance of the Sun from that object, this is not because this is a law followed by all matter, but because the infinite corpuscles of which the Sun was composed were of a certain type, and had a certain disposition which made the Sun follow such a law.⁷⁵² While Cartesians attributed different dispositions to

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid., 323.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 324.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid., 325.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid., 325.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid., 325.

⁷⁵² Ibid., 363.

different types of matter, Newton believed that all matter followed the same laws. De la Tourri's conception of matter as being composed of corpuscles was also Cartesian in nature. Perhaps in order to indicate more clearly that de la Tourri was meant to be interpreted as having a Cartesian mindset, Zanotti tells the reader that de la Tourri had allegedly been a friend of Fontenelle's.⁷⁵³ Remarks of this type indicate that the *Della forza attrattiva delle idee* was meant to satirize those of Zanotti's contemporaries who proclaimed themselves to be Newtonians without actually understanding the implications of this.

Through the format of the *Forza attrattiva*, Zanotti alludes to the *Newtonianismo*. Like this work of Algarotti's, Zanotti's work featured a marquise, to whom de la Tourri explains his application of Newtonian principles. While in the process of writing the *Forza attrattiva*, Zanotti wrote to Algarotti in order to seek his criticisms of it.⁷⁵⁴ By alluding to Algarotti's work in this satire of those who had claimed to espouse Newtonian principles simply in order to be fashionable, it seems likely that Zanotti was suggesting that the success of the *Newtonianismo* had had something to do with this phenomenon.

Conclusion

The publication of the *Newtonianismo* dramatically increased Algarotti's renown. By writing a popularization of Newtonian science, Algarotti was following the larger European trend that saw the publication of many such works

⁷⁵³ Ibid., 322.

⁷⁵⁴ Museo Biblioteca Archivio di Bassano del Grappa (MBAB) Epistolario Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1493, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 25 June 1747.

that attempted to make Newton's ideas more accessible to the general reading public. However, in addressing his work specifically to women, and arguing in it that women could, and should, undertake scientific study on a level equal to that of men, Algarotti's popularization differed significantly from those that had come before it. The scandals surrounding this book also served to garner more attention in it. By casting Fontenelle's *Entretiens* in a negative light in the *Newtonianismo*, Algarotti would have attracted the attention of the numerous people familiar with Fontenelle's successful work. Given the status of Voltaire and du Châtelet in European intellectual circles, the initial praise they had bestowed on the *Newtonianismo* would have encouraged admirers of theirs to read it; the negative views they later expressed concerning this work would only have attracted more attention to it. That the *Newtonianismo* was placed on the *Index* in 1739 would have generated even further interest in this work.

Having achieved his goal of becoming a renowned writer, Algarotti would attempt to capitalize on this fame in order to achieve a related ambition: that of finding a source of income through which to finance his writing career. In order to do so, he would seek to draw as much attention to the *Newtonianismo* and his authorship of it as possible, a tactic he would employ consistently throughout his career.

From West to East: Algarotti's pan-European search for opportunity

After spending a brief amount of time in Italy, following the publication of the *Newtonianismo* Algarotti would resume his European travels, in hopes of obtaining financial backing. After a brief stop in France, Algarotti would travel to London in 1739, and from there, to St. Petersburg.

The success of the *Newtonianismo* had brought Algarotti a great deal of recognition. Accordingly, the *Newtonianismo* figured prominently in Algarotti's attempts to find a position. Algarotti had made use of printed works before, in particular, his 1733 *Rime*, in order to expand his networks and increase his renown with a view to securing financial support. Given the far greater success of the *Newtonianismo* in comparison with the *Rime*, some of the ways in which Algarotti attempted to capitalize on the success of the former differed from the ways in which he had done so with the latter. That the *Newtonianismo* expressed ideas forbidden by the Church provoked a controversy in relation to it in Italy that would culminate in the book's being placed on the *Index* in 1739. The French translation of the work, published in 1738, would cause a scandal in Paris for an entirely different reason, namely that the translator, M. Duperron de Castera, sought to discredit Algarotti and Newtonian science with the introduction and notes he added to the text. In much the same way as he had made use of his public demonstration of Newton's optical experiments, Algarotti would take advantage of these controversies in order to attract as much attention as possible to his work.

Many of the ways in which Algarotti would make use of the *Newtonianismo* were similar to those in which he had made use of the *Rime*, however. In 1739, he would issue a second Italian edition of the work. Algarotti would make use of this new edition in order to draw attention to his connections, by including poems written in praise of the work by his associates, and a “Note to Readers” in which he drew attention to his friendship with Antioch Cantemir. Just as he had presented copies of his *Rime* to scholars he had met, he would make a gift of the second edition of the *Newtonianismo* to Czarina Anna Ioannovna in the hope that this would lead her to take an interest in him.

Although Algarotti would fail to secure a position in France, England, or Russia during the years 1738 and 1739, the time he spent in these places enabled him to further expand his networks. The renown of the *Newtonianismo* would certainly have played an important role in his ability to forge new contacts. That, in the future, Algarotti would attempt to draw attention to his authorship of this work (chiefly by publishing new editions of it) each time he searched for a new source of financial support, certainly suggests that this was the case. While his authorship of the *Newtonianismo* did not enable him to find a position during the years immediately following its publication, the contacts he formed during this time would enable him to meet Crown Prince Frederick, future King of Prussia. This meeting would eventually lead him to gain the financial support he had been searching for, when he would be called to the Prussian court upon Frederick’s accession to the throne in 1740.

Success and scandal: the Newtonianismo in Italy

Once published, the success of the *Newtonianismo* surpassed even Algarotti's expectations, with demand for the book rapidly outweighing supply. In February of 1738, just weeks after it had been printed, Francesco received word from his brother Bonomo that two hundred people had requested that he secure copies for them.⁷⁵⁵ However, Francesco could not fill the order: of the six hundred copies from the original print run, none remained.⁷⁵⁶

In spite of the book's success, its publication was not without controversy in Italy. Because of the scandal that arose regarding the contents of the *Newtonianismo*, Algarotti had been unable to find a publisher for this work in Venice, where negative opinions of him were so great that he had been sent by his family to live in Milan in late 1737. The dislike of the Church for the ideas expressed in the *Newtonianismo* and for its author's association with freemasons led to the book's placement on the *Index of Forbidden Books* in 1739.⁷⁵⁷

However, all this scandal was far from disadvantageous for Algarotti, as it would have drawn more attention to, and created more interest in, the work. Many eighteenth-century writers sought to create reputations for themselves by deliberately associating themselves with controversy, either by involving

⁷⁵⁵ Biblioteche Comunali di Treviso (BCT) MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 12 February 1738.

⁷⁵⁶ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 12 February 1738.

⁷⁵⁷ See chapter three. It seems that Bonomo suspected that Francesco's association with the freemasons was at least in part to blame for his having been unable to publish the *Newtonianismo* in Venice, and for the controversy surrounding the book. Francesco defended his choice of associates to his brother shortly after the publication of the *Newtonianismo*, identifying them as "elevated and sublime men" ("...alti e sublimi signori..."), fascinating people with whom he did not see any problem. See BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 22 January 1738.

themselves in discussions surrounding a pre-existing one, or by manufacturing a fresh controversy themselves.⁷⁵⁸ Voltaire frequently sought to provoke scandal with his work in order to garner attention for it. Maupertuis, too, sometimes made use of this tactic.⁷⁵⁹ Algarotti's awareness of the benefits that controversy could have for the success of a published work could well explain his refusal to take Eustachio Manfredi's advice regarding the removal the objectionable passages from the *Newtonianismo* in order to avoid problems with the Church.⁷⁶⁰ Indeed, actively provoking scandal in relation to his book rather than trying to avoid it, enabled Algarotti to ensure that its publication would not pass unnoticed in intellectual circles in Italy and abroad.

During the time he had spent in France and England prior to the publication of the *Newtonianismo*, Algarotti had managed to create a reputation for the book in these places by showing manuscript versions of it to intellectuals there, gaining praise from these intellectuals for his work in the process. In 1738, he would attempt to capitalize on the international reputation of the *Newtonianismo* by returning to both places. While not having been able to publish his work in Venice had made Algarotti's name even more known in his native city, it had also served to confirm his decision not to settle there. In reference to the negative reputation his work had garnered for him in Venice, in 1737 Francesco wrote to his brother Bonomo from Milan, asking him to reassure their mother that he would not always be "shackled with the infamy given him by

⁷⁵⁸ Mary Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth: Maupertuis and the Sciences in the Enlightenment* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 5.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁶⁰ See chapter two.

the malicious.”⁷⁶¹ By early 1738, Bonomo thought the controversy had settled down enough for Algarotti to be able to return to Venice.⁷⁶² However, Algarotti had no intention of doing so. In a letter to Bonomo, Francesco identified Venice as a city ruled by ignorance and malevolence.⁷⁶³ In response to the entreaties of his brother to return home, Francesco wrote that the love he should feel for his native city, and all the opportunities that Bonomo claimed it offered him, were not enough to convince him to return.⁷⁶⁴ In fact, not even the warm feelings he had for his brother, and his ardent desire to see him again, could do so.⁷⁶⁵

Rather than settle in Venice, Algarotti wanted to return to England.⁷⁶⁶ Scholars in England enjoyed a great deal of liberty when it came to personal expression.⁷⁶⁷ They also enjoyed more prestige and financial benefits than they did in other European countries, often being awarded public offices.⁷⁶⁸ In light of the difficulties the publication of the *Newtonianismo* had brought him in Venice, these aspects of English intellectual life must have seemed all the more attractive to Algarotti.⁷⁶⁹ What is more, because he had gained the favour of so many wealthy, influential people during his last visit, he thought prospects of finding

⁷⁶¹ “...e non calpestato sempre dell’infamia delle bocche maligne...” BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan [no date] 1737.

⁷⁶² BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 22 January 1738.

⁷⁶³ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan [no date] 1737.

⁷⁶⁴ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 22 January 1738.

⁷⁶⁵ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 22 January 1738.

⁷⁶⁶ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 12 March 1738.

⁷⁶⁷ Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the creation of the modern world* (London: Allen Lane: The Penguin Press, 2000), 6, 14.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁶⁹ Algarotti was also considering another, more exotic option at this time. He had received an invitation from Charles-Augustin de Ferriol d’Argental, friend of Voltaire, to join him on the island of St. Dominigue (then a French colony; now the island nation of Haiti) of which he was Intendant. (See BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 13 March 1738.) However, likely motivated by the above-mentioned factors, he decided in favour of returning to England. Of the two, England, an intellectual capital of Europe, was certainly the better choice, given that Algarotti wanted a career as a writer.

financial backing in England, either directly from one of these associates or through introductions to their contacts from them, were greater than they were elsewhere.⁷⁷⁰

Given that Bonomo still controlled Francesco's finances at this time, Francesco had to convince his brother to provide him with the funds to undertake this trip. To this end, Francesco told Bonomo that, if his ventures in England were unsuccessful, he would happily accept "to tranquilly spend the rest of my life enjoying that mediocrity" that Bonomo had in mind for him in Venice.⁷⁷¹ Assuring Bonomo that this trip to the other side of the Alps (in contrast to the one he had taken previously) would be strictly for business purposes, he estimated that he would need to spend only two or three months in England in order to properly assess his prospects.⁷⁷² Should he manage to find financial support of some kind, he promised Bonomo, he would share whatever he gained with him.⁷⁷³ In mid-March of 1738, Francesco informed Bonomo that he would be leaving for England shortly.⁷⁷⁴ If things went as he expected, he told his brother, they would not see each other again for a few years.⁷⁷⁵

Although Algarotti had already formed several contacts in the intellectual circles of England and France (which he planned to pass through on his way to England), in order to maximize the number of people from whom he could potentially gain financial support, he asked Bonomo to provide him with letters of

⁷⁷⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 13 March 1738.

⁷⁷¹ "...a passare tranquilmente il resto della mia vita godendo di quella mediocrità..." BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 13 March 1738.

⁷⁷² BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 13 March 1738, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 19 March 1738.

⁷⁷³ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 19 March 1738.

⁷⁷⁴ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 19 March 1738.

⁷⁷⁵ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 19 March 1738.

recommendation addressed to the latter's contacts in Lyons, Paris, and London.⁷⁷⁶

During his time in Milan, Algarotti had befriended the Countess Simonetta, a member of an old Milanese aristocratic family, who had extensive connections in Paris.⁷⁷⁷ He asked her to write him a letter of recommendation for his trip.⁷⁷⁸

Although Simonetta obliged, she told Algarotti she did not think her letter of introduction would be necessary, as she was certain that he would be well-received by everyone he encountered based on his accomplishments alone.⁷⁷⁹

Algarotti departed from Milan in the company of Frenchman Fimarçon, who had decided to undertake travels in his native country.⁷⁸⁰ Algarotti had met Fimarçon in Milan, possibly through Simonetta, with whom Fimarçon was acquainted.⁷⁸¹ The two arrived in Carcassonne, France in June of 1738, and from there travelled to Toulouse together.⁷⁸² They parted ways in October, when Fimarçon went to Lomont and Algarotti remained in Toulouse.⁷⁸³ By early 1739, Algarotti was in Paris, where he would spend the winter of that year.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁷⁶ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 19 March 1738.

⁷⁷⁷ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan [no date] 1737. Massimo Mazzotti, *The World of Maria Gaetana Agnesi, Mathematician of God* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 5.

⁷⁷⁸ BCT MS 1258 from Simonetta to Algarotti, 22 April 1738.

⁷⁷⁹ BCT MS 1258 from Simonetta to Algarotti, 22 April 1738.

⁷⁸⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan 13 March 1738. Fimarçon's name has been spelled in various other ways by modern historians, including "Firmaon" and "Firmacon." However, since "Firmaçon" is the way the name is spelled by the man himself, I have elected to use this spelling.

⁷⁸¹ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Milan [no date] 1737. According to some sources, Algarotti and Fimarçon were lovers (see, for example, Giovanni Dall'Orto, "Algarotti, Francesco," in *Who's Who in Gay and Lesbian History*, ed. Robert Aldrich and Gary Witherspoon (London: Routledge, 2002).)

⁷⁸² BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Carcassonne 25 June 1738.

⁷⁸³ BCT MS 1258 Fimarçon to Algarotti, 7 October 1738.

⁷⁸⁴ Robert Halsband, *Lord Hervey; Eighteenth Century Courtier* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1973), 246.

Algarotti's stay in Paris would provide him with an excellent opportunity to draw further attention to his *Newtonianismo* in that city. In 1738, a French translation of this work had been published under the title *Le Newtonianisme pour les dames, ou entretiens sur la lumière, sur les couleurs, et sur l'attraction*.⁷⁸⁵ Through comments made in the notes, the translator, M. Duperron de Castera, had sought to make use of this translation in order to disprove the truth of Newtonian science, and discredit Algarotti in the process. Being in Paris shortly after the appearance of this translation enabled Algarotti to take full advantage of the scandal that this had provoked in Parisian intellectual circles, a scandal he did everything he could to perpetuate.

French controversy, French fame: Le Newtonianisme pour les dames

Due to his efforts to promote his work among the scholars he had met, and to the praise du Châtelet and Voltaire had initially accorded it, the *Newtonianismo* had become known in intellectual and cultural circles in France before it had been published. That de Castera had translated the work into French less than a year after the original Italian version had appeared suggests that demand for a French-language version of the work was high demand.⁷⁸⁶ As encouraging as the swift appearance of this translation may have initially appeared to Algarotti, upon reading it, its contents both disappointed and enraged him. Besides containing several errors of translation, it was also riddled with critical comments about the

⁷⁸⁵ Francesco Algarotti, *Le Newtonianisme pour les dames, ou entretiens sur la lumière, sur les couleurs, et sur l'attraction*, Translated by M. Duperron de Castera (Paris: Montalant, 1738).

⁷⁸⁶ The Italian original of the *Newtonianismo* had been published at the very end of 1737.

Newtonianismo, its subject (Newtonianism), and its author.⁷⁸⁷ After having read the *Le Newtonianisme pour les dames*, du Châtelet described the translator, in a letter to Maupertuis, as “the enemy of Newton,” and his comments as “impertinent.”⁷⁸⁸ Indeed, she was not mistaken, on either account.

In his preface to *Le Newtonianisme*, de Castera claimed that his intention in translating the work had not been to offend Algarotti, but rather, to give his compatriots a fair idea of what the original Italian version was like.⁷⁸⁹ While conceding that he had included some critical notes in the text, he alleged that these criticisms were free of bitterness, and that he tried to limit his use of critical notes, both out of respect for Algarotti’s erudition, and in order not to annoy his readers. Consequently, he cautioned his readers not to mistake his lack of commentary on some of the ideas expressed in the text for an acceptance of them on his part.⁷⁹⁰

De Castera was far from the ideal candidate to translate a work about Newtonian science impartially. His work on the translation had been overseen by Fontenelle, whose *Entretiens* Algarotti had sought to discredit in the *Newtonianismo*.⁷⁹¹ Like Fontenelle, de Castera was unabashedly pro-Cartesian, as he makes evident in his preface to the translation, in which he identified

⁷⁸⁷ Scholars often made use of translations as forums through which to express their opinions on the ideas contained therein in this period. See, for example, Vesna Crnjanski Petrovich, “Women and the Paris Academy of Sciences,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no. 3 (1999).

⁷⁸⁸ “l’ennemi de Neuton,” “impertinente” Voltaire, *Voltaire’s correspondence. Vol. VIII (December 1738-February 1739)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1954), 3. Du Châtelet to Maupertuis, c. 1 December 1738.

⁷⁸⁹ Francesco Algarotti, *Le Newtonianisme pour les dames, ou entretiens sur la lumière, sur les couleurs, et sur l’attraction*, trans. M. Duperron de Castera, vol. 1 (Paris: Montalant, 1738), xii.

⁷⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, xiv-xv.

⁷⁹¹ Voltaire, *Voltaire’s correspondence. Vol. VIII (December 1738-February 1739)*, 92, Françoise Paule d’Issembourg d’Happoncourt Huguet de Graffigny to François Etienne Devaux, 22 December 1738.

Descartes as “the father of sound philosophy.”⁷⁹² In de Castera’s estimation, Descartes was so great a thinker that he would have been capable of discovering every scientific truth in existence; all that had prevented him from doing so was a lack of sufficient time, experience, and observations. He credits Descartes for laying all the groundwork for Newton’s discoveries, to the extent that, if Descartes had never existed, Newton “might not have known how to do anything but stutter.”⁷⁹³

De Castera’s anti-Newtonian stance is also made plain in what he identifies as having been his motivation in translating the *Newtonianismo*. Because so many scholars were discussing Newton’s ideas, he thought it would be useful to familiarize even more people with them; however, he makes it clear that, while he sought to spread awareness of Newton’s ideas, he did not aim to spread acceptance of them.⁷⁹⁴ Throughout the text he defends Descartes’s theories against Algarotti’s criticisms.⁷⁹⁵ While the *Newtonianismo* had sought to demonstrate the superiority of Newtonianism over Cartesianism, in translating the work, de Castera sought to demonstrate that the opposite was true. As he stated in the introduction, de Castera felt the French should not hesitate to adopt the scientific ideas of other nations when these ideas are correct, but when the ideas held by those in other nations are incorrect, it is the duty of the French to set them straight.⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹² “Descartes fut le père de la saine philosophie” Algarotti, *Le Newtonianisme pour les dames*, vol. 1. de Castera, trans., vii

⁷⁹³ “...puet-être que sans lui Newton n’auroit sçu que bégayer.” Ibid., viii-ix.

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid., iii-iv.

⁷⁹⁵ See, for example, Ibid., 185-186.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid., iv.

This type of national chauvinism is present throughout the work. De Castera implies several times, both in his preface and in his notes, that Algarotti is the enemy of all French scholars. He accuses Algarotti of being too zealous a partisan of English philosophy, thereby rendering him prejudiced against Descartes and all French philosophers in general.⁷⁹⁷ However, while de Castera took offence to Algarotti's alleged bias against the French, this did not stop him from trying to discredit Algarotti's work in light of his own prejudices against Italians. He claims the Italian style is synonymous with lack of clarity, and suggests that the differences in the tone used by Italians and the French in discussing serious matters demonstrates how taste had evolved differently over time in the two places.⁷⁹⁸

In addition to his philosophically-based criticisms, de Castera's translation of the *Newtonianismo* contains several personal attacks on Algarotti. He challenges Algarotti's professed knowledge of various subjects, for instance, classical mythology.⁷⁹⁹ At the same time, he accuses Algarotti of being too erudite, saying that he should explain some of the facts he mentions in greater detail, since he cannot expect all of his readers to be as learned as he. He also attacks Algarotti's clarity of expression, charging him with a lack of precision in his choice of terms. Even Algarotti's age is to be considered a fault, according to

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid., vi.

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid., v, vii, x-xi.

⁷⁹⁹ See, for example, Ibid., 128.; Francesco Algarotti, *Le Newtonianisme pour les dames, ou entretiens sur la lumière, sur les couleurs, et sur l'attraction*, trans. M. Duperron de Castera, vol. 2 (Paris: Montalant, 1738), 128.

de Castera: given that the inexperience of youth often leads people to make poor choices, Algarotti's judgement should be considered suspect.⁸⁰⁰

Whatever the negative impact de Castera's comments may have had on Algarotti's reputation, they were certainly outweighed by the positive publicity generated by the scandal they provoked. As was the case with the controversy surrounding the publication of the original Italian edition, this episode drew a great deal of attention to Algarotti and his work. As Françoise Paule d'Issembourg d'Happoncourt Huguet de Graffigny reported to François Etienne Devaux, the translation had become a hot topic of discussion among French intellectuals.⁸⁰¹ Algarotti's angry reaction to de Castera's comments only added to the sensationalism. The rage Algarotti felt may well have been genuine. However, as he had done when he had published the original version of the *Newtonianismo*, he played up this scandal with the aim maximizing the attention it could bring him.

First, Algarotti attempted to stop de Castera's translation from being sold all together.⁸⁰² When this proved unsuccessful, he planned (or claimed to plan) to have the *Newtonianismo* re-translated by Pierre-François Guyot Desfontaines,⁸⁰³ although it is not clear what, if anything, came of this. Finally, in order to

⁸⁰⁰ Algarotti, *Le Newtonianisme pour les dames*, vol. 1. de Castera, trans., vii, 134; ———, *Le Newtonianisme pour les dames*, vol. 2. de Castera, trans., 16, 70. Algarotti was twenty-five years old at this time.

⁸⁰¹ Voltaire, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. VIII (December 1738-February 1739)*, 92, Françoise Paule d'Issembourg d'Happoncourt Huguet de Graffigny to François Etienne Devaux, 22 December 1738.

⁸⁰² Ibid., 91, de Graffigny to Devaux, 22 December 1738.

⁸⁰³ Ibid., 193 du Châtelet to Charles Augustin Ferriol, Comte d'Argental, 12 January 1739; Francesco Algarotti, "Lettre d'un italien à un françois, au sujet des *Entretiens sur le Newtonianisme*, traduits en françois par M. du Perron de Castera," *Observations sur les écrits modernes* 15 (1738): 319.

broadcast his criticisms of de Castera's translation to the widest possible audience, Algarotti published an anonymous letter listing them in *Observations sur les écrits modernes* entitled "Lettre d'un italien à un françois, au sujet des *Entretiens sur le newtonianisme*, traduits en françois par M. du Perron de Castera."⁸⁰⁴

Many eighteenth-century scholars made use of literary journals in order to communicate ideas and news discussed in conversations and correspondence to a wider audience.⁸⁰⁵ Literary journals were an important source for news on intellectual developments, and people would often discuss what they read in these journals with other scholars, either in person or in their correspondence.⁸⁰⁶ This being the case, the *Observations sur les écrits modernes* provided Algarotti with the ideal forum through which to defend his work.

Playing on the claim de Castera had made in his introduction to the translation, Algarotti began his letter by stating that his aim in writing it was not to criticize de Castera, but to ensure that his translation of the *Newtonianismo* did not lead readers to form a negative opinion of the Italian original.⁸⁰⁷ The remainder of the letter is a fifteen-page list of all the translation errors de Castera had made in *Le Newtonianisme pour les dames*. For each erroneously-translated passage, Algarotti provides the Italian original, then his own French translation of

⁸⁰⁴ Francesco Algarotti, "Lettre d'un italien à un françois, au sujet des *Entretiens sur le Newtonianisme*, traduits en françois par M. du Perron de Castera." *Observations sur les écrits modernes* 15, (1738): 319-35.

⁸⁰⁵ Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 57.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid., 57.

⁸⁰⁷ Algarotti, "Lettre d'un italien à un françois," 319.

the passage, and finally the mistaken French translation of de Castera.⁸⁰⁸

Presenting de Castera's errors in this way not only enabled Algarotti to correct them in a public forum, but also to demonstrate to the reader how careless de Castera had been in his translation: it showed that even someone whose first language was not French could provide a better translation than his.

This letter had the desired effect: de Castera became so enraged over its contents that he challenged Algarotti to a duel. While the outcome of the duel, or whether it even took place, is unknown, the issuing of this challenge sparked a great deal of gossip among French intellectuals.⁸⁰⁹ Although de Castera had hoped to curtail the fame of the *Newtonianismo* with his translation of it, his efforts had had the opposite effect. The appearance of his *Le Newtonianisme pour les dames* and the resultant controversy only increased the renown of the *Newtonianismo*, and brought its author more attention than he might have received had the work never been translated at all.

Attempts to translate fame into fortune: return to England

Just as he had done in France, Algarotti had managed to make the *Newtonianismo* known in intellectual circles in England prior to its publication by showing the manuscript version of it to the scholars he had met there in 1736.

⁸⁰⁸ For example, de Castera translated stagioni (seasons) as stations (stations). Translation error also led him to denote Copernicus as the inventor of the telescope, which he was not, and which Algarotti never claimed him to be. See Ibid., 325-326.

⁸⁰⁹ For instance, de Graffigny thought this challenge was worth reporting to Devaux (Voltaire, *Voltaire's correspondence. Vol. VIII (December 1738-February 1739)*, 92, de Graffigny to Devaux, 22 December 1738.

Wortley Montagu and Hervey in particular had been greatly impressed by it, as had Russian diplomat Antioch Cantemir, whose enthusiasm for the work had led him to undertake a Russian translation of it before it had been published.⁸¹⁰ The controversy over de Castera's translation of the work that had brought Algarotti and the *Newtonianismo* increased recognition in France would likely have caught the attention of English intellectuals as well. At the end of March 1739, Algarotti finally left France for England in hopes of capitalizing on the success of his book in order to secure financial support of some kind.⁸¹¹

In the same year, an English translation of the *Newtonianismo* was published, entitled *Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy Explain'd for the Use of the Ladies. In Six Dialogues on Light and Colours*.⁸¹² In addition to making the *Newtonianismo* more accessible to English-speakers, the reputation of those associated with the publication of this translation would also served to increase the work's renown in England. The translation had been undertaken by Elizabeth Carter, a female poet known for her erudition.⁸¹³ That a learned woman had thought the book worth translating would have increased its credibility among its

⁸¹⁰ See chapter two.

⁸¹¹ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 247.

⁸¹² Elizabeth Carter, *Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy Explain'd for the Use of the Ladies. In Six Dialogues on Light and Colours* (London: E. Cave, 1739). For more on this translation, see Mirella Agorni, "Elizabeth Carter's Translation of Algarotti's *Newtonianismo per le dame*: Female Learning and Female Cultural Appropriation," in *Translating Italy for the Eighteenth Century: British Women, Translation and Travel Writing (1739-1797)* (Manchester & Northhampton: St. Jerome Publishing, 2002).

⁸¹³ Carter (1717-1806) was known especially for her vast knowledge of several languages. She translated other works in addition to the *Newtonianismo*, including (from the French) *The Critique of Crousaz on Pope's Essay on Man*, which was published in the same year as her translation of Algarotti's work. See J. Watkins, "Carter (Elizabeth)," in *The Universal Biographical Dictionary* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, 1821). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=20a8> (consulted August 17, 2010). For more on Carter, see Judith Hawley, ed., *Bluestocking Feminism: Writings of the Bluestocking Circle, 1738-1785. Vol. 2: Elizabeth Carter* (London; Brookfield, VT: Pickering & Chatto, 1999).

intended audience, namely, women. In addition to this, the translation was published by Edward Cave, founder and director of the widely-read publication *Gentleman's Magazine*.⁸¹⁴ The *Gentleman's Magazine* was the most popular periodical in England at this time, selling over ten thousand copies in 1739.⁸¹⁵ That Cave was the publisher must have encouraged at least some of the readership of this magazine to read the *Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy Explain'd for the Use of the Ladies* as well.

Algarotti made use of association in order to draw further attention to the *Newtonianismo* during his time in England as well. In 1739, he published a second Italian edition of the work, likely in part to meet the growing demand for copies of the book, but also to ensure that it remained fresh in the minds of European intellectuals.⁸¹⁶ In order to maximize the attention the work might attract, particularly from those in living England, Algarotti included a section of laudatory poems written by well-known English admirers of his at the beginning of the work. One, written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, praises Algarotti for his erudition and writing abilities:

Such various learning in this Work appears,
As seems the slow result of length of years;
Yet these dark Truths explain'd in such a way,

⁸¹⁴ Massimo Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies: Gentility, Gender and Radical Culture," *British Journal for the History of Science* 37, no. 2 (2004): 123 n. 7. Edward Cave was born in 1691 and died in 1754. Over ten thousand copies of the *Gentleman's Magazine* were sold in 1739. See H.R. Plomer, "Cave (Edward)," in *A Dictionary of the Printers & Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland & Ireland from 1726 to 1775* (Oxford: Biographical Society, 1932). WBIS online, <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=20ab> (consulted August 17, 2010).

⁸¹⁵ Plomer, "Cave (Edward)." See also Frank Donoghue, *The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 3.

⁸¹⁶ Francesco Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame, ovvero dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione. Novella edizione emendata ed accresciuta* (Naples: Giambattista Pasquali, 1739).

As only youth cou'd write a style so gay.⁸¹⁷

Another, written by Lord Hervey, suggests that Algarotti's authorship of the *Newtonianismo* would ensure his immortality:

When the gay Sun no more his Rays shall boast,
And human Eyes their Faculty have lost;
Then shall these Colours and these Opticks die,
Thy Wit and Learning in oblivion lie;
England no more record her Newton's Fame,
And Algarotti be an unknown name.⁸¹⁸

Algarotti had received much private praise from both Wortley Montagu and Hervey before, praise that they may have expressed to their other associates as well. However, recording this praise in print provided proof both of Wortley Montagu's and Hervey's association with Algarotti, and of their admiration for the *Newtonianismo* and its author. Including this praise in the new edition of the *Newtonianismo* also served to considerably expand the potential audience that this proof could reach.

In addition to calling on her to provide poetic praise for his *Newtonianismo*, Algarotti made use of his friendship with Wortley Montagu to finance his passage from Paris to London. During his absence from London, Algarotti had kept up his correspondence with Wortley Montagu, although, much to her displeasure, the letters she wrote him far outnumbered those he had written her.⁸¹⁹ Desperate to see him, in 1738 she had even gone so far as to suggest that

⁸¹⁷ Ibid. (pages unnumbered)

⁸¹⁸ Ibid. (pages unnumbered)

⁸¹⁹ See the following for Wortley Montagu's lamentations that Algarotti was not answering her letters: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Vol. II: 1721-1751*, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966)., Wortley Montagu to

she go to Venice to be with him, if he could not arrange to return to London.⁸²⁰

Although Algarotti's desire to see Lady Mary again was not nearly so pressing as her own to see him, in early 1739, he used her longing for him to his advantage.

It seems that he told her that all that was impeding their reunion in London was a lack of funds on his part, as in February of that year, she offered to pay for his passage from Paris to London.⁸²¹ He accepted her offer, and travelled to London on her funds.⁸²² Although Algarotti was happy to travel to London at Wortley Montagu's expense, it is unclear whether the two spent much time together after he arrived.⁸²³

However, during his time in London, Algarotti did spend a great deal of time with Lord Hervey, with whom he had also kept up a correspondence during his absence. The hope of securing a position of some kind through his connection with Hervey was likely a strong motivating factor behind Algarotti's desire to spend so much time in Hervey's company. Not long after his return to London, Algarotti moved in with Hervey, who lived at St. James Palace.⁸²⁴ Algarotti knew that Hervey was a favourite of Queen Caroline: during his previous visit to London, Algarotti had been well-received by Caroline owing to his friendship with Hervey. Algarotti may well have expected that his friendship with Hervey would create more opportunities for him to get acquainted with the royal family.

Algarotti, 15 June 1738; 118, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, 24 July 1738; 119, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, 20 August 1738.

⁸²⁰ Ibid. 116, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, 15 June 1738.

⁸²¹ Ibid., 134, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, February 1739.

⁸²² Ibid., 138, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, 12 March 1739.

⁸²³ Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 390.

⁸²⁴ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 247, Ida Frances Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle: Francesco Algarotti* (Trévoux: Imprimerie Jules Jeannin, 1913), 74-75.

However, Caroline had died in 1737, and because she was the member of the royal family who most favoured Hervey, Algarotti's chances of gaining royal patronage through Hervey had been drastically reduced as a result.⁸²⁵

Hervey was not the only London contact through whom Algarotti may have hoped to find a position. Before taking up residence at St. James Palace with Hervey, Algarotti had stayed for a short time with Andrew Mitchell.⁸²⁶ Mitchell, together with Celsius and Folkes, had been responsible for nominating Algarotti for membership to the Royal Society in 1736.⁸²⁷ Like Hervey, Mitchell was well-connected: he was the secretary to John Hay, Fourth Marquis of Tweeddale, who was at this time the Extraordinary Lord of Session of the Scottish Court of Session.⁸²⁸ Algarotti may have hoped that his association with Mitchell would result in his being able to form a relationship with, and be offered a position by, the Marquis of Tweeddale.

However, Algarotti did not always make use of intermediaries through which to gain the attention of the politically powerful during his time in London. In some instances, he tried to win the favour of influential people directly, most notably, that of Robert Walpole. Walpole had become First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1721. From this time until his retirement in 1742, Walpole had complete control of the cabinet, and thereby complete control

⁸²⁵ Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 75. Hervey had remained at Caroline's side throughout the illness that killed her. See Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 225.

⁸²⁶ Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 74.

⁸²⁷ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*. 193; Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies," 10.

⁸²⁸ Mitchell (1708-1771) would go on to win a seat in the House of Commons in 1747. In 1753 he would be knighted and sent as ambassador to the court of Frederick the Great. See H.J. Rose, "Mitchell (Sir Andrew)," in *A New General Biographical Dictionary* (London: Fellowes [et al.], 1853). WBIS online, <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=20b1> (consulted August 17, 2010).

of the affairs of England.⁸²⁹ Prior to his arrival in London, Algarotti had arranged for Bonomo, who was an art collector, to acquire a painting owned by a Mr. Sebastiano of Vicenza.⁸³⁰ Algarotti planned to give the painting to Walpole upon his arrival in hopes of encouraging Walpole to help him find a position.⁸³¹ It is unknown, however, what reaction, if any, Walpole may have had to this gift.

In the end, Algarotti's association with Wortley Montagu, Hervey, and Mitchell, did not enable him to procure a position of any kind in England, nor did his gift of a painting to Walpole. However, his friendship with the politically well-placed Charles Calvert, Fifth Lord Baltimore would result in his being presented with the opportunity to expand his networks and increase his renown in an entirely different setting: that of St. Petersburg.

Algarotti and Baltimore had first met at a meeting of the Royal Society.⁸³² Baltimore was a great fan of Italian opera, which had led to the development of a friendship between himself and Antioch Cantemir during Cantemir's time in London.⁸³³ Love of Italian opera and friendship with Cantemir are both things that Baltimore and Algarotti would have had in common. The two struck up a friendship, and became so well-acquainted that Algarotti moved in with Baltimore

⁸²⁹ Walpole (1676-1745) had also held these positions from 1715 to 1717. In 1742, he would receive the title of "Earl of Orford." See Sir R.H.I. Palgrave, "Walpole, Sir Robert," in *Dictionary of Political Economy* (London: Macmillan, 1894-1899). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=20b7> (consulted August 17, 2010).

⁸³⁰ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Carcassonne 2 July 1738.

⁸³¹ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Carcassonne 2 July 1738.

⁸³² Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 79. The first Lord Baltimore had received the title for being the founder of the colony of Maryland. See A.G. Cross, "The Lords Baltimore in Russia," *Journal of European Studies* 18 (1988): 77.

⁸³³ Cross, "The Lords Baltimore in Russia," 79.

at Chiswick.⁸³⁴ While the two were living together, Baltimore was asked by King George I to travel to St. Petersburg to attend the wedding of the niece of Czarina Anna Ioannovna on his behalf.⁸³⁵ Baltimore invited Algarotti to accompany him on the trip, an offer that Algarotti gladly accepted.

Given Algarotti's propensity for travel and for experiencing what other cultures had to offer, curiosity must have been an important factor in his decision to travel to St. Petersburg.⁸³⁶ Algarotti may also have hoped that accompanying Baltimore on this mission would lead to a diplomatic commission of his own upon their return to England.⁸³⁷ However, as Algarotti's actions while in St. Petersburg would indicate, he must have anticipated being able to obtain a position there. Indeed, Russia had a reputation for being a place that offered prospects for career advancement to those with few opportunities in their country of origin.⁸³⁸

The state of Russia in the eighteenth century

Russia was undergoing immense changes in the eighteenth century. These changes began during the reign of Peter I (r. 1682-1725). Traditionally, Peter is credited with transforming Russia from an isolated and backward country into an

⁸³⁴ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 247.

⁸³⁵ Giorgio Maria Nicolai, "Francesco Algarotti," in *Il Grande orso bianco: viaggiatori italiani in Russia* (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1999), 181.

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁸³⁷ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 248.

⁸³⁸ Nicolai, "Francesco Algarotti," 181., 181; Stefan Lemny, *Les Cantemir: L'aventure européenne d'une famille princière au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 2009), 248.

important force on the European political scene.⁸³⁹ Certainly, Peter did institute several reforms during his reign. Many of the changes that he made were inspired by what he had seen during a trip to London in 1698.⁸⁴⁰ Upon his return he established a new capital in St. Petersburg (the capital had, until this point, been located in Moscow) and oversaw the creation of the Russian navy on the model of the British Royal Navy.⁸⁴¹ Peter also reformed the army, established new administrative institutions, and opened factories and mines.⁸⁴²

Of all Peter's reforms, those he made in the realm of education and learning were perhaps the most significant. At the start of his reign, this was the aspect in which Russia lagged the most behind western, and some eastern, countries.⁸⁴³ All major European countries had at least one university by the end of the seventeenth century. In contrast, Russia had none, nor did it have a single scientific academy. Access to information through books was in an abysmal state. There was only one press in the country, and it was run by the Orthodox Church. Over the course of the entire seventeenth century, this press published fewer than ten books that were not entirely religious in nature. Religious did not fare much better than those of a secular nature, either: only a few hundred were published in this same period.⁸⁴⁴ The changes Peter made in these areas were so drastic that they constitute an intellectual revolution.⁸⁴⁵ Having attended a Royal Society

⁸³⁹ Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 21.

⁸⁴⁰ Notably, Peter was the first Russian Czar to visit England. Valentin Boss, *Newton and Russia; the early influence, 1698-1796* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 9.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁸⁴² Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, 22.

⁸⁴³ *Ibid.*, 298.

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 298.

⁸⁴⁵ Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 9.

meeting while in London, Peter was made aware of all the scientific advances that were taking place in Europe, and of the practical advantages they could have.

Accordingly, upon his return to Russia, he established the country's first system of scientific and mathematical education. He also began the process of founding the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences.⁸⁴⁶ Access to printed material was also greatly improved due to Peter's efforts: one hundred times more books, pamphlets, prints, maps, plans, and drawings were printed during the last twenty five years of Peter's reign than had been produced over the course of the entire seventeenth century.⁸⁴⁷

In stark contrast to this was the state of affairs under Anna Ioannovna, who was on the throne during Algarotti's visit. During her reign, which lasted from 1730 to 1740, Anna did make some positive changes. In order to beautify the capital established by her uncle Peter, Anna approved several construction projects for St. Petersburg.⁸⁴⁸ She appointed Russia's first-ever court composer, the Italian Francesco Aria. The St. Petersburg Classical Dance and Ballet School was also founded during her time as Czarina, by French native Jean-Baptiste Landez.⁸⁴⁹ These few improvements aside, Anna's reign is traditionally

⁸⁴⁶ The Academy only officially opened in 1726, the year after Peter's death. Ibid., 9, 13, 94.

⁸⁴⁷ Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, 317.

⁸⁴⁸ E. V. Anisimov, *Five Empresses: Court Life in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004), 112.

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid., 93-94. However, one major aspect of western culture did not gain a foothold in Russia during Anna's reign: gallomania only became an element of Russian culture between 1740 and 1750, and only became a significant force in the 1760s. See Ludmila Pimenova, "Gallomane et gallophobie dans la culture Russe au siècle des Lumières," in *La Recherche dix-huitièmiste: raison universelle et culture nationale au siècle des Lumières = Eighteenth-Century Research: Universal Reason and National Culture during the Enlightenment*, ed. David Avrom Bell, L. A. Pimenova, and Stéphane Pujol (Paris: H. Champion, 1999), 201-202.

considered to be a dark period in Russian history.⁸⁵⁰ Many Russians thought the foreigners in her court were too numerous, and their influence over her too great, particularly that of her German-born love interest Ernest Biron. As a result, beginning in 1730, criticism of the court became a central theme in Russian Enlightenment literature.⁸⁵¹ However, the problems extended beyond this. Anna's reign was clouded by suspicion and terror. She kept a constant surveillance over her subjects, both through the use of spies and by intercepting and reading her subjects' correspondence.⁸⁵² She persecuted those she suspected to be political opponents mercilessly, often having them tortured until they confessed. Anna's subjects readily denounced those they suspected of conspiring against her, for although doing so could lead to their own torture if the person they informed on did not confess, not informing on suspected conspirators carried a worse punishment: that of being tortured as an accomplice to conspiracy.⁸⁵³

Such was the atmosphere of the Russia to which Algarotti travelled in 1739.

Strangers in a strange land: western Europeans in Russia

While western Europeans had been travelling to Russia for various reasons since at least the late seventeenth century, the phenomenon of visiting this country

⁸⁵⁰ A.S. Lavrov, "Le Progrès des Lumières et l'identité nationale: la Russie sous le règne de l'Impératrice Anne Ioannovna vue par les voyageurs étrangers," in *La Recherche dix-huitième: raison universelle et culture nationale au siècle des Lumières = Eighteenth-Century Research: Universal Reason and National Culture During the Enlightenment*, ed. David Avrom Bell, L. A. Pimenova, and Stéphane Pujol (Paris: H. Champion, 1999), 47.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid., 48.

⁸⁵² Anisimov, *Five Empresses*, 86-89.

⁸⁵³ Ibid., 106.

for purposes of tourism only really began in the 1730s.⁸⁵⁴ However, it was only once Catherine II (the Great) came to the throne in 1762 that westerners began to visit Russia in significant numbers. At around the same time, Russia became a stop on the “Northern Tour,” a variant on the Grand Tour in which travellers visited the northern countries of Europe rather than France and Italy.⁸⁵⁵ While the British were the first Northern Tourists, they were soon joined by travellers from countries such as France and Germany.⁸⁵⁶ By the end of the eighteenth century, several hundred foreigners were visiting Russia each year.⁸⁵⁷

In addition to being the originators of the Northern Tour, the British were also the first western Europeans to take up residence in Russia in significant numbers. Enough British citizens moved to St. Petersburg in the eighteenth century to form a community of ex-patriots there.⁸⁵⁸ Many of the members of this community had moved to St. Petersburg in order to gain employment teaching or practicing specialized crafts, particularly ship-building and navigation. In 1723, approximately two hundred British citizens were living in St. Petersburg; by the 1760s, their number had doubled.⁸⁵⁹ The second half of the eighteenth century also saw an increase in the numbers of French citizens visiting Russia, before

⁸⁵⁴ Anthony Glenn Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva: Chapters from the Lives and Careers of the British in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 6.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸⁵⁶ Wladimir Berelowitch, "Europe ou Asie? Saint-Petersbourg dans les relations de voyage occidentaux," in *Le Mirage russe au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Sergueï Karp and Larry Wolff (Paris: Centre international d'étude du XVIIIe siècle, 2001), 59.

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 57-58. A fair number of these were there not in the guise of tourists, however, but to take up residence in St. Petersburg or Moscow, at least temporarily.

⁸⁵⁸ Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 4.

⁸⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 5, 10, 16. The doubling of the British community in St. Petersburg at this time was partly due to the significant increase in the number of British intellectuals who moved to that city once Catherine II came to the throne.

which time they had been very few in number.⁸⁶⁰ Most French citizens who did make the trip to Russia in the eighteenth century were diplomats, advisors, or members of delegations. Indeed, the only French philosophe to actually visit Russia was Diderot.⁸⁶¹ In contrast, like their British counterparts, many of the Italians who travelled to Russia in the eighteenth century did so in order to work. Unlike the British, however, they did not teach or perform skilled trades. Rather, Italians largely sought (and found) employment as organizers of, and performers in, ballet, theatre, and opera in St. Petersburg.⁸⁶²

Of those western Europeans who travelled to Russia, either as Northern Tourists or in search of employment, some wrote and published accounts of what they had seen during their time there. One of the first accounts of travel in Russia written in French was diplomat Alexandre Frotier de la Messelière's *Voyage à Petersbourg*.⁸⁶³ Although it dealt with travels he undertook in 1757, it was only published posthumously, many years later, in 1803. In fact, the majority of eighteenth-century Russian travel accounts were published between 1770 and the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁸⁶⁴

Although he travelled to Russia much earlier than this, Algarotti would also write an account of his impressions of St. Petersburg, as well as of the other

⁸⁶⁰ Claude de Grève, *Le voyage en Russie: anthologie des voyageurs français aux XVIII et XIX siècles* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1990), I. The mystery that surrounded Russia, the distance that separated it from France, and the funds required to travel this distance, have all been offered as explanations of French reluctance to visit Russia in the first half of the eighteenth century.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid., II-III, VIII. Although Voltaire was appointed historiographer of Russia by Czarina Elizabeth in 1746, in the guise of which he published his *Histoire de l'empire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand* in 1757, he never actually travelled to Russia.

⁸⁶² Anisimov, *Five Empresses*, 93-94.

⁸⁶³ de Grève, *Le voyage en Russie*, 3.

⁸⁶⁴ Berelowitch, "Europe ou Asie?," 59. This can be explained in part by the increased number of westerners visiting Russia during the reign of Catherine II, and the likely corresponding increase in interest in reading about Russia on the part of westerners during this time.

cities he saw along the way. This work represented something new in Italy, both in terms of its content and in terms of its format.⁸⁶⁵ First published in 1759 under the title *Lettere sopra la Russia*,⁸⁶⁶ the work is comprised of letters to two separate addressees. The first eight letters, addressed to Lord Hervey, are a record of the trip, written while it was in progress.⁸⁶⁷ The other letters, addressed to Scipione Maffei, were written much later, in 1750/1751. A second edition, containing three more letters, would be published in 1763. A third edition would appear in 1764, under a new title, *Viaggi di Russia*.⁸⁶⁸ The work would be translated into both English and French in 1769, ten years after the publication of the original.⁸⁶⁹

In this work, Algarotti identifies St. Petersburg as “a large window, newly opened in the north, through which Russia looks on Europe,” in reference to the transformations Russia had undergone beginning in the reign of Peter I.⁸⁷⁰ This description of St. Petersburg remains very well-known among modern eighteenth-

⁸⁶⁵ Marco Padoa, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della sua nascita," *Ateneo Veneto* Anno XXXVI- Vol 1- Fasc 1 e 2, gennaio-aprile (1913): 18.

⁸⁶⁶ Cross, "The Lords Baltimore in Russia," 81.

⁸⁶⁷ In these letters, Algarotti reports every detail of the Russian army to Hervey: the number of troops it had, how these troops were trained, what they ate, what they wore, and the type of artillery they used. He also discusses the topography and economy of Russia at great length. That he took such careful and extensive note of all these matters gives rise to the possibility that he undertook this trip in the capacity of a spy. See Francesco Algarotti, *Lettere sulla Russia* (Paris: Centre de documentation universitaire, 1959). 17-20, Algarotti to Hervey, St. Petersburg, 30 June 1739, 22-24, Algarotti to Hervey, St. Petersburg 21 June 1739, 27-29, Algarotti to Hervey, St. Petersburg, 13 July 1739.

⁸⁶⁸ For a complete account of the circumstances surrounding the publication of the second and third editions, see Robert Bufalini, "To the Eastern Edges of Europe: The Travels of Francesco Algarotti, Ruggerio Boscovich, and Saverio Scrofani" (PhD Dissertation, Brown University, 1990), 56.

⁸⁶⁹ Cross, "The Lords Baltimore in Russia," 81.

⁸⁷⁰ "...questo gran finestrone...novellamente aperto nel norte, per cui la Russia guarda in Europe" Algarotti, *Lettere sulla Russia*, 16, Algarotti to Hervey, St Petersburg 30 June 1739.

century Russian historians.⁸⁷¹ As a result, the *Viaggi di Russia* is taken by some to be Algarotti's most significant work, the one for which he is best remembered today.⁸⁷²

Algarotti in Anna's St. Petersburg

Algarotti and Lord Baltimore set sail for St. Petersburg from Gravesend on May 21st, 1739.⁸⁷³ As Algarotti reported to Hervey, their ship, The Augusta, was stocked with the finest food and wine, in addition to being equipped with a French chef.⁸⁷⁴ Accompanying them on the voyage was Thomas Desaguliers, son of Royal Society mathematician J.T. Desaguliers, whose response to Italian scientist Giovanni Rizzetti's attacks on Newton's optical theories Algarotti had translated into Italian in 1732. The senior Desaguliers had sent his son on the trip so that he could become more familiar with the practice of navigation, with the result that Thomas would later become superintendent of the Woolwich Arsenal.⁸⁷⁵ Also accompanying the travellers was a mathematician named King, who Algarotti identifies as a rival of J.T. Desaguliers. King had come along on the voyage in the hope that, once they arrived in St. Petersburg, he could convince Anna to hire

⁸⁷¹ For instance, on the subject of this statement, in his 2001 chapter, Berelowitch writes, "Everyone is familiar with Francesco Algarotti's words..." ("Chacun connaît le mot du Francesco Algarotti..." Berelowitch, "Europe ou Asie?", 57.). In his 2009 book, Lemny writes that Algarotti's is "an image frequently associated with the name of this city [St. Petersburg]" ("...un image fréquemment associée au nom de cette ville" Lemny, *Les Cantemir*, 243.)

⁸⁷² See, for instance, the following biographical dictionary entries on Algarotti: Enrico M. Fusco, "Algarotti, Francesco," in *Scrittori e idee: dizionario critico della letteratura italiana* (Turin: Soc. Editrice internazionale, 1956), WBIS online, Umberto and Pietro Operati Renda, "Algarotti, Francesco," in *Dizionario storico della letteratura italiana, nuova ed., riveduta e aggiornata* (Turin: Paravia, 1959), WBIS online.

⁸⁷³ Algarotti, *Lettere sulla Russia*, 1, Algarotti to Hervey, Helsinki 10 June 1739.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid., 1, Algarotti to Hervey, Helsinki 10 June 1739.

⁸⁷⁵ Cross, "The Lords Baltimore in Russia," 81.

him as her personal teacher of experimental physics. En route to Russia, the group stopped in Helsinki and then Reval, which belonged to Sweden at this time.⁸⁷⁶ They arrived at Cronstadt, the port of St. Petersburg, on June 21st, 1739.⁸⁷⁷ The arrival of the group was considered to be a noteworthy event by the inhabitants of the city: the *Sanktpeterburgskiiia vedomosti*, or *St. Petersburg News*, reported on both this and the travellers' presentation at court, which took place on June 26, 1739.⁸⁷⁸

As was the case in Western Europe in the eighteenth century, in order to forge contacts while travelling in Russia, one had to be either well-known or recommended by someone who was.⁸⁷⁹ As the announcement of his arrival in the *Sanktpeterburgskiiia vedomosti* indicates, Algarotti was somewhat known; that he was travelling with Baltimore, the envoy of the King of England, would have added to his reputation.

While in St. Petersburg, Algarotti would employ some of the tactics he had used in other locations in order to expand his networks and increase his renown. Much in the way he had made use of his 1733 collection of poetry *Rime* to these ends, Algarotti use of the new edition of the *Newtonianismo* in order to attract the notice of well-placed people, publicize his knowledge of Newtonian science, and draw attention to his connections with illustrious people.

The most influential person whose notice Algarotti attempted to attract with the *Newtonianismo* was the Czarina Anna. In anticipation of his trip to St.

⁸⁷⁶ Algarotti, *Lettere sulla Russia*, 1-3, Algarotti to Hervey, Helsinki 10 June 1739. Algarotti mistakenly misspells "Reval" as "Revel."

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid., 10, Algarotti to Hervey, Cronstadt 21 June 1739.

⁸⁷⁸ Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 335.

⁸⁷⁹ de Grève, *Le voyage en Russie*, 807.

Petersburg, Algarotti had dedicated the new edition to her. This new dedication contained several passages intended to flatter Anna. Some of these were direct compliments of Anna's character, in which he attributed to her the admirable traits of Caesar, Augustus, Trajan, and Titus.⁸⁸⁰ He also identifies her as the inheritor and emulator of Peter's genius.⁸⁸¹ Algarotti also attempted to curry Anna's favour in this dedication by praising St. Petersburg, identifying it, for instance, as the refuge of the arts and knowledge.⁸⁸² He would certainly have had the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences in mind when he wrote this passage.

The Academy was known to be a great source of pride for St. Petersburg.⁸⁸³ Given that some of its members were in correspondence with members of the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna, Algarotti would have been familiar with the St. Petersburg Academy and the kind of work being done there. For instance, Francesco Maria Zanotti corresponded with the head of the school of astronomy there, Joseph Nicolas de l'Isle.⁸⁸⁴ The two corresponded on a variety of scientific matters, such as the possibility of the Istituto publishing a collection of all astronomical observations made in Bologna to date, and shared information on the functionality of various instruments, such as thermometers.⁸⁸⁵ Algarotti would have learned about the St. Petersburg Academy from Anitoch

⁸⁸⁰ Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, "Alla sacra imperial Maesta di tutte le Russie" [pages unnumbered].

⁸⁸¹ Ibid., "Alla sacra imperial Maesta di tutte le Russie" [pages unnumbered].

⁸⁸² "Dell'arti l'albergo, e di Minerva asilo" Ibid.

⁸⁸³ Anisimov, *Five Empresses*, 114.

⁸⁸⁴ De l'Isle (1688-1768) had joined the St. Petersburg academy soon after it had opened in 1726. He was responsible for having laid the foundations for systematic astronomy in Russia, as well as for drawing the first accurate maps of the country. See Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 133.

⁸⁸⁵ Paola Ambri Berselli, "Lettere di illustri francesi a Francesco Maria Zanotti," *Strenna storica bolognese* 5 (1955): 25-27, de l'Isle to Zanotti, 16 August 1739.

Cantemir, who had studied there.⁸⁸⁶ The Academy had several prestigious scientists among its membership (for instance, famed Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler held the institution's Chair of Mathematics), and its library contained the most comprehensive Newtonian collection in all of Eastern Europe.⁸⁸⁷ Given this, Algarotti may have thought that dedicating his popularization of Newtonian science to Anna was a sure formula for success. However, his attempts to appeal to Anna on a scientific level were somewhat misplaced. While she did recognize that the existence of the Academy increased her prestige, her interest in science amounted to little more than an appreciation for its ability to amuse her.⁸⁸⁸

Algarotti also sought to forge contacts at the Russian court, and with Anna in particular, by drawing attention to his friendship with Cantemir. Cantemir may have played a role in Algarotti's decision to visit St. Petersburg, as Cantemir made great efforts to stimulate interest in visiting Russia among the British during his time as London resident.⁸⁸⁹ In order to facilitate Algarotti's entry into Russian society, Cantemir had provided him with a letter of recommendation for use at the court at St. Petersburg.⁸⁹⁰ This recommendation by Cantemir would have been very useful, as Cantemir had played an important role in Anna's accession. In 1730, when Czar Peter II died without an heir, Prince Dmitrii Golitsyn had

⁸⁸⁶ Lemny, *Les Cantemir*, 182.

⁸⁸⁷ Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 94, 136.

⁸⁸⁸ Anisimov, *Five Empresses*, 114-115.

⁸⁸⁹ Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva*, 335.; ———, "The Lords Baltimore in Russia," 80.

⁸⁹⁰ Algarotti is not the only Italian Cantemir assisted in travelling to Russia. He made arrangements for the trips of other Italian friends as well, including Antonio Doni, a composer and organ player, and Piantanida, a violinist. He also supported the trips of some of his contacts in France, for instance Des Fonds, for whom he obtained an officer's position, and Louis Bazan, who also became an officer. Lemny, *Les Cantemir*, 243, 248-249.

proposed to the Supreme Privy Council that Anna be made empress of Russia, with the proviso that limitations be imposed on her powers.⁸⁹¹ Anna had initially accepted these conditions, and was thereby made Czarina in January of 1730. Once she came to power, however, with the support of (among others) the imperial guard and a group of aristocrats who were not members of the Council, she recanted her acceptance of these limitations and declared her intention to rule with absolute power.⁸⁹² Cantemir, who was present at this declaration, was a member of the imperial guard at this time.⁸⁹³ On behalf of that guard, he had approached Anna and asked her to rule as an autocrat, making the support of the guard for her desire to do so clear. Cantemir's support of Anna's autocratic rule won him the Czarina's favour: his role in these events is what led to his being appointed to the position of Resident in London.⁸⁹⁴

Algarotti, likely aware of Anna's appreciation for Cantemir, went to great lengths to highlight his association with the latter in the new edition of the *Newtonianismo*. In a new "Note to Readers" included at the beginning of the work, Algarotti says several flattering things about Cantemir, describing him as exceptional in his knowledge and love of literature and the arts.⁸⁹⁵ He also thanks Cantemir for having done him the honour of translating the *Newtonianismo* into Russian, an effort for which he identifies Cantemir as the propagator of

⁸⁹¹ Anisimov, *Five Empresses*, 59-60. These limitations included only being able to govern with the advice and approval of the council: she could not marry, name a successor, declare war, conclude peace, raise new taxes, or promote anyone above the rank of colonel without the Council's approval. See Philip Longworth, *The Three Empresses: Catherine I, Anne and Elizabeth of Russia* (London: Constable, 1972), 96.

⁸⁹² Longworth, *The Three Empresses*, 97, 102.

⁸⁹³ Lemny, *Les Cantemir*, 190.

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 190-191. Although Cantemir would come to admire the British political system, he would continue to believe that an autocracy was the only political system that could function in Russia.

⁸⁹⁵ Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, "Avvertimento a' lettori" [pages unnumbered].

Newtonianism in Russia.⁸⁹⁶ These remarks would make plain to the reader that Algarotti had a close relationship with Cantemir. In order to make this association even clearer to Anna, Algarotti arranged to have Cantemir send her a copy of the *Newtonianismo* on his behalf.⁸⁹⁷ This would have served as a strong recommendation of the work on the part of Cantemir, increasing the chances that Anna would give it due attention.

In 1733, Algarotti had made use of Giampietro Zanotti as an intermediary through which to send his work to the Marquis Ubertino Landi, to whom the work was dedicated. This tactic had met with some success, as Landi had expressed his great admiration for the work, and had shown it to his circle of contacts. Algarotti had made use of this book in order to advertise his connections and talents by making a gift of it to the scholars he had met during his travels in Italy. However, Algarotti's use of these strategies in conjunction with the *Newtonianismo* did not yield any tangible results in St. Petersburg. Accordingly, late in the summer of 1739, Algarotti left Russia for England in the company of Baltimore.

Failed attempts, fortuitous meetings: the trip back to England

As Algarotti reported in a letter to Hervey, later published in *Lettere sulla Russia*, en route to England he and Baltimore visited several cities, including

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid., "Avvertimento a' lettori" [pages unnumbered]. Newton's ideas were already known among scientists in Russia at this time: J.D. Bruce is credited with introducing these ideas to Russian thinkers at the beginning of the eighteenth century. See Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 2, 34.

⁸⁹⁷ Lemny, *Les Cantemir*, 243.

Danzig, Dresden, Leipzig, Postdam, Berlin, and Hamburg.⁸⁹⁸ Among these stop-overs, however, none would have more significance for Algarotti's future than the one that he and Baltimore made in Rheinsburg, where they met then-crown prince Frederick, the future Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia.⁸⁹⁹

Algarotti had already heard about Frederick from Voltaire, of whose work Frederick was a great admirer.⁹⁰⁰ In 1736, Frederick had written to Voltaire, asking him to send copies of all his works, even those yet to be published, to Prussia.⁹⁰¹ Frederick would already have been familiar with Algarotti's name as well by the time of the latter's visit to Rheinsburg in 1739. Given Frederick's interest in European intellectual affairs, the international fame of the *Newtonianismo* would not have escaped his notice. What is more, Frederick had read Voltaire's 1736 work *La Mort de César*, a work which had a letter written by Algarotti as its introduction.⁹⁰²

This meeting with Frederick left a lasting impression on Algarotti. Writing to Hervey, Algarotti stated that, although he had spent several days in Frederick's company, it had felt like only a few hours to him.⁹⁰³ Frederick was quite taken with Algarotti as well. He was greatly impressed with Algarotti's *Newtonianismo*, and with the Venetian's poetic talents, as a letter he wrote to Algarotti shortly after his departure from Rheinsburg indicates. The letter began

⁸⁹⁸ See Algarotti, *Lettere sulla Russia*, 31, Algarotti to Hervey, Danzig, 13 Aug 1739; 45-49, Algarotti to Hervey, Hamburg 30 Aug 1739.

⁸⁹⁹ Cross, "The Lords Baltimore in Russia," 82.

⁹⁰⁰ Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle*, 99.

⁹⁰¹ Christiane Mervaud, *Voltaire et Frédéric II : une dramaturgie des Lumières, 1736-1778*, Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century. 234. (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1985), 20-21. This letter had marked the beginning of a forty-year correspondence between the two. See Mervaud, *Voltaire et Frédéric II*, 19.

⁹⁰² Mervaud, *Voltaire et Frédéric II*, 28.

⁹⁰³ Algarotti, *Lettere sulla Russia*, 48, Algarotti to Hervey, Hamburg, 30 August 1739.

with a laudatory poem, in which he praised the *Newtonianismo*, and proclaimed that Algarotti would be more fondly remembered by posterity than the Roman poet Virgil.⁹⁰⁴ Saying that he would never forget the eight days Algarotti had spent with him, he begged Algarotti not to forget their time together, either.⁹⁰⁵ Frederick's praise, and his implorations, were sincere: when he acceded to the throne of Prussia in 1740, one of his first acts would be to invite Algarotti to join his court.

Conclusion

The immense success of the *Newtonianismo* had led Algarotti to believe his chances of finding a position were greater than they had ever been. Algarotti employed several tactics in conjunction with the book in order to increase these chances. He had made use of the controversies surrounding it, even trying to further provoke them, in order to maximize the attention the book would receive. He also used the work as a vehicle through which to employ strategies he had made use of before in trying to expand his networks, such as highlighting his association with intellectuals more well known than himself. As he had done in the past with his *Rime*, Algarotti made a gift of the work to an illustrious person, in this case the Czarina Anna Ioannovna, in hopes of drawing her attention to his talents. While the *Newtonianismo* failed to secure him financial support in the

⁹⁰⁴ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1851), 4, Frederick II to Algarotti, Rheinsburg, 1 September 1739. As the editor of this volume acknowledges, the date of this letter is incorrect (4, n. a).

⁹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 5, Frederick II to Algarotti, Rheinsburg, 1 September 1739.

years following its publication, the renown its success had brought him had afforded him the opportunity to greatly expand his networks. The association he formed with Baltimore during this time had enabled him to meet then-Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia. This meeting would bring Algarotti the financial backing he had been looking for, in the form of a position at Frederick's court when the latter would become King in 1740.

**Calling all scholars: Algarotti's first tenure at the court of Frederick II,
1740-1742**

Following his travels in Eastern Europe, Algarotti returned to London, where he would remain throughout the spring of 1740.⁹⁰⁶ During this trip, and the time he had spent in France and England just prior to it, Algarotti had employed several tactics to expand his networks and increase his renown with a view to securing some form of financial backing. Some of these had involved trying to attract attention to the *Newtonianismo* by further provoking the controversies that surrounded it. Others had involved making use of his successful book as a forum through which to advertise his connections with well-known scholars. In spite of his efforts, Algarotti had failed to obtain a position. However, Algarotti's travels in Eastern Europe did bring Algarotti an opportunity for career advancement, one he had not anticipated, in the form of his meeting with Frederick the crown prince of Prussia. Indeed, when the crown prince had told Algarotti in his initial letter that he would never forget him, he had meant it. This letter began a correspondence between the two that would continue (with only one period of interruption) until Algarotti's death in 1764. The relationship they would develop over the course of their early correspondence would lead Frederick to invite Algarotti to join his court upon his accession to the Prussian throne in 1740, an invitation that Algarotti would gladly accept.

⁹⁰⁶ Robert Halsband, *Lord Hervey; Eighteenth Century Courtier* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1973), 258.

Frederick's and Algarotti's shared intellectual interests, their love of poetry in particular, served to endear each to the other, with the result that Frederick would invite Algarotti to join his court only days after his accession. Algarotti's experiences at the Berlin court reveal the benefits for scholars of royal patronage. Being a member of Frederick's court would serve to increase Algarotti's international renown. In an effort to transform Berlin into a European intellectual capital, Frederick would invite several other renowned intellectuals, including Maupertuis, to join his court as well. Being included in their number signalled to all interested in the affairs of Frederick's court that the monarch considered Algarotti to be a noteworthy scholar. In addition to this, being at Frederick's court would provide Algarotti with the financial backing he needed in order to pursue his writing. During his time there, he would begin working on two new projects, a life of Julius Caesar, and a treatise on painting.⁹⁰⁷

As an examination of the time Algarotti spent in Berlin reveals, however, life at Frederick's court also had negative aspects to it. The attention Algarotti received from Frederick would provoke the envy of Voltaire, who was not invited to join the court. Many of the intellectuals in Frederick's circle had expected him to rule in an enlightened fashion; his failure to live up to these expectations left many of the scholars who joined his court feeling disillusioned. Given Frederick's intellectual inclinations, many of these scholars had expected him to ask for their recommendations in forming policies. Instead, Frederick ruled in an

⁹⁰⁷ The life of Julius Caesar would never reach completion. The treatise on painting would, however, and would be published in 1762 under the title *Saggio sopra la pittura*: Francesco Algarotti, "Saggio sopra la pittura." In *Opere del conte Algarotti*, v. 2. (Livorno: M. Coltellini, 1764).

autocratic fashion, prizing military success in the First Silesian War over fostering intellectual development in his kingdom. Indeed, the idleness in which he was kept, in combination with the embarrassment he would suffer when taken prisoner during the First Silesian War would prompt Maupertuis to leave Berlin and return to France in 1741. A similar situation would lead Algarotti to leave Frederick's court in 1742. Although Algarotti's complaints at the idleness in which Frederick had left him led the King to send him as a diplomat to Turin in 1741 in order to broker an alliance with Charles Emmanuelle III, the conditions of utmost secrecy in which Frederick required Algarotti to operate made it impossible for the mission to end successfully. As a result, Algarotti was recalled to Berlin only a few months after he had arrived in Turin. Although the mission would end in failure, being sent to Turin in the guise of diplomat for Frederick (something which became known to all despite Frederick's attempts to keep it a secret) would gain Algarotti a great deal of international recognition, with the result that his renown became greater than it had ever been. This new level of fame, coupled with the embarrassment he had suffered at being recalled from Turin and his general dissatisfaction with life at Frederick's court, would prompt Algarotti to leave Berlin for Dresden in search of better prospects in 1742.

Initial impressions

Frederick and Algarotti had a great deal of admiration for each other, an admiration each would express to his correspondents.⁹⁰⁸ Following Algarotti's visit to Rheinsberg in 1739, Frederick wrote him a letter full of compliments,⁹⁰⁹ and expressed his admiration of Algarotti in his correspondence with others. Shortly after Algarotti had left Rheinsberg, Frederick sent Ulrich Friedrich de Suhm, Privy Counsellor of the Elector of Saxony, an account of his meeting with the Venetian.⁹¹⁰ As a result of the sophisticated discussions they had had during their time together, Frederick told de Suhm, he considered Algarotti someone worthy of esteem for his intelligence.⁹¹¹ He praised Algarotti's wide-ranging knowledge in a letter to Voltaire, saying he had been sorry to see Algarotti leave

⁹⁰⁸ During the years 1739 to 1741, the mutual admiration that Frederick and Algarotti had for each other may have been more than intellectual in nature. According to some accounts, the two had a romantic relationship at this time. This is certainly possible: both Frederick and Algarotti were known to have had romantic relationships with members of the same sex prior to their meeting. See Giovanni Dall'Orto, "Algarotti, Francesco," in *Who's Who in Gay and Lesbian History*, ed. Robert Aldrich and Gary Witherspoon (London: Routledge, 2002), electronic edition, accessed January 26, 2010. Although their relationship was also utilitarian, their initial admiration for each other, intellectual and otherwise, appears to have been genuine.

⁹⁰⁹ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1851), 3, Frederick to Algarotti, Remusberg 1 September 1739. The date of this letter is wrong: see chapter four.

⁹¹⁰ ———, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVI* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1850), 415, Frederick to Ulrich Friedrich de Suhm, Remusberg 26 September 1739. U.F. de Suhm (1691-1740) is also known as U.F. von Suhm. The Elector of Saxony had sent de Suhm to Prussia as his envoy in 1720, a position he held until 1730. During this time, he and Frederick had struck up a friendship, which they maintained through correspondence after von Suhm's departure. Given that the Elector of Saxony sent de Suhm as his envoy to Russia following his departure from Prussia, de Suhm was in St Petersburg in 1739. It is not inconceivable that he had met Algarotti during his time there. ———, *Familiar and friendly correspondence of Frederick the Second, King of Prussia. With U. F. de Suhm, Privy Counsellor of the Elector of Saxony, and his Envoy Extraordinary to the Courts of Berlin and Petersburg. From the original Edition of Berlin, privileged by the Emperor, his Majesty the King of Prussia, and his Serene Highness the Elector of Saxony* (London: Logographic Press, 1787), iii, iv, 263-343.

⁹¹¹ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVI*, 415, Frederick to de Suhm, Remusberg 26 September 1739.

Rheinsberg,⁹¹² and also expressed his regret at Algarotti's departure in a letter to Émilie du Châtelet.⁹¹³

Algarotti was equally impressed with Frederick, and equally eager to report his admiration of the crown prince to his friends. Upon his return to London, Algarotti wrote to Voltaire, recounting his meeting with Frederick, which he described as "heavenly."⁹¹⁴ Du Châtelet told Frederick that Algarotti had spoken so highly of him to her that she was surprised Algarotti had been able to leave Rheinsberg at all.⁹¹⁵ Voltaire confirmed Algarotti's admiration to Frederick: in December of 1739, he reported to Frederick that Algarotti's enthusiasm for him had not waned, even though months had passed since their initial meeting.⁹¹⁶ Algarotti had been particularly impressed by Frederick's "elevated spirit," a quality he had not expected to find in a prince.⁹¹⁷

The reasons that Frederick became an enthusiastic admirer of Algarotti were several. In the first letter Frederick had sent Algarotti following his

⁹¹² ———, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XXI* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1853), 367, Frederick to Voltaire, Remusberg 10 October 1739.

⁹¹³ ———, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVII* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1851), 415, Frederick to Émilie du Châtelet, Remusberg 27 October 1739.

⁹¹⁴ "...j'ai été dans le troisième ciel." Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. IX (March-December 1739)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1954), 62, Algarotti to Voltaire, London 1 April 1739. The date of this letter cannot possibly be correct. Algarotti could not have arrived back in London until September at the earliest, as he wrote to Hervey from Hamburg on August 30. See Francesco Algarotti, *Lettere sulla Russia* (Paris: Centre de documentation universitaire, 1959), 48, Algarotti to Lord Hervey, Hamburg 30 August 1739.

⁹¹⁵ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVII*, 37, du Châtelet to Frederick, Brussels 29 Dec 1739.

⁹¹⁶ ———, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XXI*, 382, Frederick to Voltaire, Brussels 28 December 1739.

⁹¹⁷ "âme bien supérieure" Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. IX (March-December 1739)*, 62, Algarotti to Voltaire, London 1 April 1739. Because monarchs' position of authority was never questioned, the only expectations they faced were to have limited political and military abilities. As a result, it was unusual for a future king to have an interest in matters not related to this. (See Theodor Schieder, *Frederick the Great*, trans. Sabina Berkeley and H. M. Scott, Friedrich der Grosse. English (London; New York: Longman, 2000), 1.) Hence Algarotti's surprise at Frederick's "superior spirit."

departure from Rheinsberg, he included a poem he had written in Algarotti's honour. Although he had confessed to Voltaire that he did not understand Newtonian science,⁹¹⁸ he identified Algarotti as a student of Euclid and "the new author on light" in his poem, referring to Algarotti's authorship of the *Newtonianismo*.⁹¹⁹ Clearly, Frederick's admiration of the *Newtonianismo* (as evidenced by its inclusion in the laudatory poem) was for the fame it (and its author) had achieved rather than for its content.

The several common interests that the two shared were another factor that drew Frederick to Algarotti. Besides being exact contemporaries (both were born in 1712), both had long been admirers of poetry, philosophy, and the classics.⁹²⁰ Indeed, Algarotti's cosmopolitanism and erudition were quite appealing to Frederick,⁹²¹ as is evidenced in another line of the laudatory poem in which he identifies Algarotti as a "likeable and charming citizen of the land of reason," and praises him for his intelligence.⁹²² Algarotti's association with the freemasons may also have contributed to Frederick's interest in him, as Frederick had secretly joined the order in Brunswick in 1738.⁹²³

⁹¹⁸ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. X (1740)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1954), 110, Frederick to Voltaire, Rheinsberg 18 May 1740.

⁹¹⁹ "nouvel auteur de la lumière" Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 3, Frederick to Algarotti, Remusberg 1 September 1739.

⁹²⁰ Because his highly militaristic father, King Frederick Wilhelm, had not thought such subjects suitable for a future leader, Frederick had had to undertake the study of them in secret. He did so with the aid of a secret library he had amassed, containing over 3000 works, many of them by leading French thinkers. See Schieder, *Frederick the Great*, 19.

⁹²¹ Giles MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great: A Life in Deed and Letters* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 123.

⁹²² "Citoyen aimable et charmant/ Du pays du raisonnement" Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 3, Frederick to Algarotti, Remusberg 1 September 1739.

⁹²³ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 113. If Frederick did not know about Algarotti's Masonic associations at the time of their initial meeting in Rheinsberg, it is clear that he had been made aware of them by the time of his accession. Writing to Algarotti on this occasion, Keyserlingk, Frederick's minister and closest companion, reported that both he and Frederick had declared

In particular, Frederick was impressed by Algarotti's poetic abilities, as the following excerpt from the laudatory poem makes clear:

Yes, already Virgil and Tasso,
Surprised by your great progress,
Politely cede to you the place
That they thought they would hold forever...⁹²⁴

Poetic ability is something Algarotti may have found attractive in Frederick as well. Frederick would continue to write poetry throughout his life, but was prolific in this regard between the years 1736 to 1740, the very period in which he and Algarotti got to know each other.⁹²⁵

Intellectual flirtation

The early correspondence between Frederick and Algarotti, which was largely intellectual in nature, proved beneficial to both of them. In his letters, Frederick expressed a keen interest in Algarotti's scholarly undertakings,⁹²⁶ and accorded them a great deal of praise. For instance, upon hearing that Algarotti was working on a life of Julius Caesar, Frederick wrote a poem in his honour, which includes the following lines:

Loveable Algarotti, continue your work
Your abundant fire is not close to burning out
In giving up the compass, by your hand

themselves freemasons. See Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 16, 17, Frederick and Keyserlingk to Algarotti 3 June 1740.

⁹²⁴ "Oui, déjà Virgile et le Tasse,/ Surpris de tes puissants progrès,/ Poliment te cèdent la place/ Qu'ils pensaient tenir pour jamais" Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 4, Frederick to Algarotti, Remusberg 1 September 1739.

⁹²⁵ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 126.

⁹²⁶ See, for example Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 13, Frederick to Algarotti, 15 April 1740.

A volume is growing that will honour the Romans...⁹²⁷

To this, he added the expression of his certainty that this work, when completed, would do honour to Julius Caesar himself.⁹²⁸ Certainly, receiving praise from a future king known for his intellectual nature would have added to Algarotti's reputation as a noteworthy intellectual, all the more so in that he had received it in written format, enabling him to show it to others.

Frederick was eager to share the fruits of his intellectual labours with Algarotti as well. In doing so, he hoped to take advantage of his relationship with Algarotti for the benefit of his own work. In October of 1739, Frederick told Algarotti that he had been working on a refutation of Machiavelli's 1532 *The Prince* entitled *Anti-Machiavel*, the completed version of which he promised to send Algarotti shortly.⁹²⁹ Wanting to publish this work in London, Frederick asked Algarotti, whether he could secure a publisher for it there.⁹³⁰ It was logical for Frederick to assign Algarotti this task; not only was the Venetian well-connected in the literary circles of London, he also happened to be in the city at the time that this request was made. Algarotti accepted the assignment, knowing that it could prove beneficial to him as well. Given that the work's author was the future ruler of Prussia, its readership would be considerable, and being able to identify himself with this work would allow Algarotti to make his name known to

⁹²⁷ "Poursuivez vos travaux, aimable Algarotti/ Votre feu généreux ne s'est point ralenti/ Et, quittant le compass, déjà sous votre plume/ Pour l'honneur des Romains, s'épaissit un volume" Ibid., 12, Frederick to Algarotti, 15 April 1740. In contrast to Frederick, du Châtelet was dismayed to hear that Algarotti had abandoned science in favour of history, and hoped he planned to do so only temporarily. (Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. X (1740)*, 60, du Châtelet to Algarotti, Brussels 10 March 1740.)

⁹²⁸ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 15, Frederick to Algarotti, 19 May 1740.

⁹²⁹ Ibid., 6, Frederick to Algarotti, 29 October 1739.

⁹³⁰ Ibid., 6, Frederick to Algarotti, 29 October 1739.

an even wider group of intellectuals, much as having prepared Francesco Maria Zanotti's *Poesie vulgari e latine* for publication in 1733 had done. As a result, Algarotti agreed to undertake the task. In February of 1740, Frederick renewed his promise to send Algarotti the completed version of the *Anti-Machiavel* shortly.⁹³¹ However, in May of that year, Frederick decided he would rather have the work printed in Holland, and asked Algarotti to make inquiries as to the estimated cost of printing the work there, on the finest paper available.⁹³²

Ultimately, Algarotti would join Frederick's court in Berlin before the *Anti-Machiavel* was published, and the task of arranging for the publication of this work would fall to Voltaire.⁹³³ In addition to asking him to secure a publisher, Frederick also asked Voltaire to edit the treatise and write a preface for it. After sending the completed version to the printer, Voltaire sent a copy of the work to Frederick. Upon reading it, Frederick told Voltaire that he was unhappy with some of the changes that had been made, and planned to prepare a new, improved edition of it himself. Although Frederick was not satisfied with the final product, the *Anti-Machiavel* did receive a great deal of acclaim, including an extremely favourable review in the *Nouvelles privilégiées* of December 8, 1740.⁹³⁴ As this demonstrates, Algarotti's expectations regarding the increased exposure preparing this work for publication could have given him were not misplaced.

⁹³¹ Ibid., 9, Frederick to Algarotti, 26 February 1740.

⁹³² Ibid., 15, Frederick to Algarotti, 19 May 1740.

⁹³³ Christiane Mervaud, *Voltaire et Frédéric II : une dramaturgie des Lumières, 1736-1778*, Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century. 234. (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1985), 95.

⁹³⁴ Ibid., 109, 116-120.

In praising Algarotti's work, and assigning him the task of securing a publisher for his book, Frederick may have had an ulterior motive, namely that of convincing him to return to Prussia. Indeed, Frederick had begun making efforts in that direction shortly after Algarotti's departure from Rheinsberg. Frederick wrote to Algarotti in October of 1739 to say the members of the Rheinsberg court would never forget him, and nothing would make them happier than his return.⁹³⁵ Dietrich von Keyserlingk, who Algarotti had met during his time in Rheinsberg, also sought to convince Algarotti to return by describing the time Algarotti had spent there as "a dear period in Remusberg" in a letter written to him.⁹³⁶ In April of 1740, and again in May, Frederick again pressed Algarotti to return to Prussia so they could be reunited.⁹³⁷ At the end of that month, a change in circumstances would finally convince Algarotti to respond favourably to Frederick's entreaties: Frederick Wilhelm died, leaving Frederick the King of Prussia.

Rheinsberg: the Cirey of Prussia

Frederick's court at Rheinsberg was in many ways similar in character to that of the gatherings held by du Châtelet and Voltaire at Cirey.⁹³⁸ At Rheinsberg,

⁹³⁵ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 7, Frederick to Algarotti, 29 October 1739.

⁹³⁶ "une époque cher à Remusberg" Biblioteche Comunali di Treviso (BCT) MS 1258, Keyserlingk to Algarotti, Remusberg 12 October 1739

⁹³⁷ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 12, Frederick to Algarotti, 15 April 1740; 16, Frederick to Algarotti, 19 May 1740.

⁹³⁸ Frederick referred to Rheinsberg as Remusberg, and invented a far-fetched tale to justify this. He claimed a document had recently been discovered in the Vatican library that indicated that Remus, after having fallen out with his brother Romulus, travelled to northern Germany. There he founded a town, called Remusberg, which was later renamed Rheinsberg by German conquerors. See MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 119.

Frederick had surrounded himself with scholarly friends of his, such as Georg Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff and Dietrich von Keyserlingk.⁹³⁹ In an effort to broaden the intellectual horizons of this court, Frederick had begun to correspond with leading thinkers of the era, mainly those of French origin. For instance, he began what would be a three-year correspondence with Fontenelle in 1737, and began writing to Maupertuis in 1738. In 1736, also during his Rheinsberg years, he commenced his forty two-year correspondence with Voltaire. In an effort to win Voltaire's favour by winning that of du Châtelet, Frederick began a correspondence with her as well, in 1738.⁹⁴⁰

As was the case at Cirey, the environment at Rheinsberg was one of free intellectual exchange.⁹⁴¹ Accordingly, at Rheinsberg intellectual achievement, and not birth or military rank, was the mark of prestige. Like du Châtelet and Voltaire, Frederick spent much of his time at Rheinsberg reading and studying, and his guests there did likewise.⁹⁴² Certainly, Algarotti would have found life at such a court appealing, as it would have offered the same benefits as life at Cirey had, namely the provision of an atmosphere conducive to the pursuit of scholarly endeavours, and the mark of prestige that came along with being invited to join a noteworthy group of intellectuals. Unlike spending time at Cirey, however, joining the court at Rheinsberg would also have provided Algarotti with the financial support he had been seeking throughout his career, in the form of a

⁹³⁹ Ibid., 48, 107. Knobelsdorff (1699-1753) an ex-army officer and architect, designed the palace Frederick inhabited at Rheinsberg. Keyserlingk (also known as Keyserling) (1713-1793) was an army officer as well as was a linguist and poet.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid., 116-117, 123, 146. Frederick sent du Châtelet gifts, and made efforts to praise her intellect in his letters to her.

⁹⁴¹ Schieder, *Frederick the Great*, 34.

⁹⁴² Ibid., 35-36. Frederick and his guests also enjoyed theatrical and musical performances, and masquerade balls. See MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 109.

salary from the crown prince. That Frederick was in correspondence with so many of the people Algarotti had befriended in France would have increased Algarotti's favourable opinion of him. All of these considerations likely played a role in Algarotti's decision to accept Frederick's invitation to join his court upon the latter's accession to the throne in late May of 1740.

New commitments

Once he became King of Prussia, Frederick aspired to recreate the atmosphere of his Rheinsberg court at his new court in Berlin, but on a much larger scale: he hoped to turn the city into a European intellectual centre.⁹⁴³ Given his disdain for German literature, and for the German language itself, he sought to do this by luring the best foreign intellectuals to Berlin with the aim of establishing an academy of arts and sciences that could rival those of London and Paris.⁹⁴⁴ He put these plans into action almost immediately following his accession, issuing invitations to various intellectuals of note across Europe to join his court.⁹⁴⁵

⁹⁴³ Mary Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth: Maupertuis and the Sciences in the Enlightenment* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 180-181.; Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XXII* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1853), 14, Frederick to Voltaire, Charlottenbourg 27 June 1740.

⁹⁴⁴ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 181. Frederick's disdain for the German arts and language was such that he compared the singing of German singers to the neighing of horses (MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 187-188.)

⁹⁴⁵ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XXII*, 14, Frederick to Voltaire, Charlottenbourg 27 June 1740.

Among the scholars Frederick had invited to Berlin upon his accession French Newtonian Maupertuis, one of Algarotti's close associates. Frederick had initially begun his correspondence with Maupertuis in 1738 at the suggestion of Voltaire, who identified Maupertuis as someone capable of establishing a scientific academy in Berlin that could rival the Académie des sciences in Paris.⁹⁴⁶ Frederick first issued the invitation to Maupertuis to come to Prussia in June of 1740. In August, the two met in Wesel, just across the Dutch border.⁹⁴⁷ Although Maupertuis expressed enthusiasm at this meeting for the project of building an academy, he would not commit to staying in Berlin permanently.⁹⁴⁸ Frederick also invited s'Gravesande, Vaucanson, Leonhard Euler, and Christian Wolff to participate in the founding of the academy.⁹⁴⁹ This offer was declined by all but Euler, however.⁹⁵⁰

⁹⁴⁶ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 181.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid., 181-182. Although Frederick found Maupertuis congenial, he found his company to be inferior to that of Algarotti. See Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVII*, 73, Frederick to Jordan, Wesel 7 September 1740.

⁹⁴⁸ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 182.

⁹⁴⁹ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XXII*, 14, Frederick to Voltaire, Charlottenbourg 27 June 1740. s'Gravesande (1688-1742), a mathematician, was one of the earliest supporters of Newton's theories on the continent. He published an account of Newton's ideas in his 1720 *Physices elementa mathematica experimentis confirmata* (See Theo Verbeek, "Gravesande, Willem Jacob 's-" *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*. Ed. Alan Charles Kors. (Oxford University Press, 2002, 2005). e-reference edition <http://www.oxford-enlightenment.com/entry?entry=t173.e281> (accessed 11 March 2010)). Vaucanson (1709-1782) was, and is, best known for the automata he invented, in particular "The Digesting Duck," which was a mechanical duck capable of, among other things, digestion (See John Money "Technology" *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*. Ed. Alan Charles Kors. (Oxford University Press, 2002, 2005). e-reference edition <http://www.oxford-enlightenment.com/entry?entry=t173.e703> (accessed 11 March 2010)). Christian Wolff (1679-1754) began his career as a mathematician, but went on to become the best-known philosopher in Germany in his time (See "Wolff, Christian," *Science in the Enlightenment: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003) online edition http://www.credoreference.com/entry/abcsienl/wolff_christian (accessed 11 March 2010)).

⁹⁵⁰ Euler had moved to Berlin on the promise that he would be a founding member of the new academy of sciences; however, he was dismayed to find that nothing happened on this front for years after his arrival. See Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 182.

Algarotti was also among those who received an invitation to join Frederick's court. Just four days after his accession, Frederick contacted Algarotti. In a note consisting of just two sentences, Frederick wrote, "My dear Algarotti, my lot has changed. I await your arrival impatiently; do not leave me to languish."⁹⁵¹ Algarotti did not leave Frederick to languish; by July of 1740, he was in Berlin.⁹⁵²

Algarotti was quite pleased with Frederick's initial treatment of him. Writing to his brother Bonomo in July of 1740, he announced that he would remain at Frederick's court forever, as it would be impossible for him to return to his previous way of life after what he had experienced there.⁹⁵³ Indeed, upon Algarotti's arrival in Berlin, Frederick had bestowed several honours on him,⁹⁵⁴ and would bestow many more thereafter. Frederick invited Algarotti to accompany him while he received homage from his estates in Berlin and in Königsberg, a privilege granted to very few people.⁹⁵⁵ Shortly thereafter, he decided to visit his sister Wilhelmina, the Margravine of Bayreuth, and brought Algarotti with him. In late August of 1740, Frederick, who had always wanted to see Paris, decided to travel to France.⁹⁵⁶ Again, Algarotti was among the select few invited to join him.⁹⁵⁷ Not wanting to attract attention, the group travelled

⁹⁵¹ "Mon cher Algarotti, mon sort a changé. Je vous attends avec impatience; ne me faites point languir." Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 16, Frederick and Keyserlingk to Algarotti 3 June 1740.

⁹⁵² BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 19 July 1740

⁹⁵³ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 19 July 1740.

⁹⁵⁴ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 19 July 1740.

⁹⁵⁵ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 142-143.

⁹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁹⁵⁷ The only others to be invited along were Frederick's brother Augustus William and Leopold-Maximilian von Wartensleben. See Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XIV* (Berlin:

incognito, adopting false names.⁹⁵⁸ However, upon arrival in Strasbourg, Frederick's true identity was discovered, with the result that the plan to travel to Paris were abandoned.⁹⁵⁹

Being Frederick's chosen companion in these instances served to increase Algarotti's fame and gave him a great deal of international exposure. Their excursion to Strasbourg was reported on in newspapers in Frankfurt and Holland.⁹⁶⁰ Bonomo Algarotti was aware of these accounts, and it would seem that other people in Venice were aware of them, too: in early 1741, Bonomo wrote to say that everyone in Venice was talking about Francesco's grandeur.⁹⁶¹

Rivalry

While the honours Algarotti received during this period brought him a great deal of international attention, they also made him the subject of envy. Frederick's bestowal of these honours on Algarotti and enthusiastic invitations to other intellectuals of note stood in stark contrast to his treatment of Voltaire, who, in spite of his expectations in this regard, would not be offered a position at Frederick's court during the early days of the King's reign. As a result, Voltaire would attempt to promote himself by casting Algarotti in a negative light in letters

Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1850), "Description poétique d'un voyage à Strasbourg," 181 n. b.

⁹⁵⁸ Frederick called himself "comte Dufour," and Algarotti chose the name "Graf Pfuhl." See Ibid., 181 n. b.

⁹⁵⁹ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 145.

⁹⁶⁰ BCT MS 1256B, Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 29 September 1740.

⁹⁶¹ BCT MS 1256B, Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, December 1740/January 1741; Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 18 January 1741.

to his correspondents, including Frederick. Algarotti would make use of a similar tactic to best Ventura Rossi, his rival at the court of Augustus III, in 1743.

When he had been crown prince, Frederick had attempted several times to persuade Voltaire to join his court in Rheinsberg.⁹⁶² When his invitations did not produce results, he had attempted to win Voltaire's favour by sending him gifts, including a portrait of himself, delivered personally by Keyserlingk.⁹⁶³ In light of these entreaties, and given Frederick's aim to assemble a court composed of internationally-acclaimed intellectuals, it is surprising that he only informed Voltaire of his accession to the throne on June 6, three days after he had invited Algarotti to Berlin.⁹⁶⁴ In November of 1740, Voltaire accepted an invitation issued by Frederick to visit him in Prussia.⁹⁶⁵ Frederick hosted Voltaire at Rheinsberg.⁹⁶⁶ Frederick thought the visit had gone well, and had found Voltaire to be quite sociable.⁹⁶⁷ Voltaire does not appear to have enjoyed himself, however. In a letter written to Thieriot from Rheinsberg, he complained that the eight days he had spent there constituted too long a time to be away from his friends.⁹⁶⁸ Although Maupertuis was also at Rheinsberg, Voltaire complained that he was too preoccupied with mathematical pursuits to be of good company.⁹⁶⁹ He

⁹⁶² MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 117.

⁹⁶³ Ibid., 117-119.

⁹⁶⁴ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. X (1740)*, 144, "Commentary" 145, Frederick II to Voltaire, Charlottenbourg 6 June 1740.

⁹⁶⁵ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 28-29, Frederick to Algarotti 21 November 1740. Voltaire and Frederick had first met in September of 1740 at Frederick's residence in Clèves (MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 145.)

⁹⁶⁶ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 28, Frederick to Algarotti 21 November 1740.

⁹⁶⁷ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 150.

⁹⁶⁸ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. X (1740)*, 325, Voltaire to Thieriot, Rheinsberg 24 September 1740.

⁹⁶⁹ Ibid., 325, Voltaire to Thieriot, Rheinsberg 24 September 1740.

indicated to Thieriot that he intended to leave Rheinsberg as soon as possible as a result of his want of suitable companionship.⁹⁷⁰

Voltaire's lack of enthusiasm for the time he had spent at Rheinsberg was likely due not to poor company, but rather to his disappointment that the visit did not produce the results he had anticipated. Before his departure for Rheinsberg, it had been rumoured in France that Frederick was planning to offer him the position of chief minister.⁹⁷¹ However, no such offer was made; in fact, Voltaire received no invitation to join the court in any kind of permanent capacity. This revived his envy of Algarotti, which had been first occasioned by the success of the *Newtonianismo* in comparison to the *Éléments de la philosophie de Neuton*, and led him to attempt to cast the Venetian in a negative light in letters to his correspondents. Algarotti had not been present in Rheinsberg during Voltaire's visit, as an illness had required him to remain in Berlin.⁹⁷² On the subject of Algarotti's absence, Voltaire reported to Thieriot that Algarotti was "making love in Berlin, and also working on a life of Caesar; the first pursuit is not the worst of the two."⁹⁷³ By December, Voltaire was on his way to Clèves, and wrote to Algarotti en route.⁹⁷⁴ In this letter, he accused Algarotti of allowing the indulgences of life in Berlin to lead him to forget his tastes and virtues, and

⁹⁷⁰ Ibid., 325, Voltaire to Thieriot, Rheinsberg 24 September 1740.

⁹⁷¹ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 150.

⁹⁷² Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 19, Frederick to Algarotti, 24 October 1740.

⁹⁷³ "...il fait l'amour à Berlin, et il fait aussi la vie de César; le premier emploi n'est pas le pire des deux." Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. X (1740)*, 325, Voltaire to Thieriot, Rheinsberg 24 September 1740.

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid., 339, Voltaire to Algarotti, A quatre lieues par delà de Wesel, je ne sais où 6 December 1740. Although the editor of Frederick's *Oeuvres* claimed that this letter was intended not for Algarotti, but for Frederick. Besterman argues that this is a mistake, and that the letter was indeed intended for Algarotti (Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XXII*, 61, n. a.; Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. X (1740)*, textual notes, 340.) The contents of the letter suggest that Besterman is correct.

implored him to reverse this trend.⁹⁷⁵ Once he had arrived in Clèves, Voltaire sent Frederick a poem in which he lamented Algarotti's fall from intellectual grace. Specifically, suggested that Algarotti had been involved in a love affair with Charles-Antoine de Guérin, Marquis of Lugeac, and that this love affair had led him to neglect higher pursuits.⁹⁷⁶ It is possible that Algarotti had had an affair with this man. Indeed, it is suspected by some that the illness that had prevented Algarotti from joining Voltaire and Frederick at Rheinsberg was of a sexually-transmitted nature.⁹⁷⁷ Whatever the case, it is unlikely that concern for Algarotti's welfare was Voltaire's true motivation in writing this letter to Frederick. Rather, the letter seems to have been intended to demonstrate his own worth in comparison to that of Algarotti, and his better claim to Frederick's esteem.

Voltaire's envy extended to Maupertuis as well, and may have been the cause of his insinuation that Maupertuis was bad company in his letter to Thieriot. Like Algarotti, he Maupertuis had been offered a position at Frederick's court. Although Voltaire had been responsible for suggesting that Frederick assign the task of creating an academy of sciences in Berlin to Maupertuis, when the Academy was eventually established, Voltaire would claim that Maupertuis had proposed his nomination to its presidency himself.⁹⁷⁸

⁹⁷⁵ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. X (1740)*, 339-340, Voltaire to Algarotti, A quatre lieues par delà de Wesel, je ne sais où 6 December 1740.

⁹⁷⁶ "Mais quand, chez le gros Valori,/ Je vois le tendre Algarotti/ Presser d'une vive embrassade/ Le beau Lugeac, son jeune ami,/ Je crois voir Socrate affermi/ Sur la croupe 'Aleibiade;/ Non pas ce Socrate entêté,/ De sophismes faisant parade,/ A l'œil sombre, au nez épaté,/ A front large, à mine enfumée;/ Mais Socrate vénitien,. Aux grands yeux, au nez aquilin/ Du bon saint Charles Borromée./ Pour moi, très-désintéressé/ Dans ces affaires de la Grèce,/ Pour Frédéric seul empressé..." Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XXII*, 63-64, Voltaire to Frederick, Clèves 15 December 1740.

⁹⁷⁷ See, for example, MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 148.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid., 145.

Disillusionment

As Algarotti's example illustrates, being a member of the court of a monarch could bring one a great deal of international attention. However, this attention was not always of a positive nature. Just as the bestowal of honours brought much publicity to their recipient, embarrassment or mistreatment one suffered at the hands of a monarch could also generate a great deal of attention, as some of the intellectuals with whom Frederick associated soon found out. Frederick had embarrassed Voltaire by not offering him the position he had expected, or, indeed, any position at all. Frederick would also humiliate Maupertuis during the early years of his reign.

Indeed, disillusionment became a common trait among the members of Frederick's court. Being of an intellectual bent himself, Frederick had called scholars from all over Europe to his court, scholars who would be his closest friends.⁹⁷⁹ Given this, and given Frederick's reputation as someone with a great interest in new ideas, intellectuals came to his court with the impression that their views on political affairs would be valued. However, their opinions on such matters were neither appreciated nor sought. Frederick's militaristic view of politics and his refusal to abolish serfdom were contrary to the more humanitarian views held by most intellectuals at this time.⁹⁸⁰ Adding to disappointment with

⁹⁷⁹ Schieder, *Frederick the Great*, 41-42.

⁹⁸⁰ Ibid., 36, 42, 59-60. He did, however, reduce the amount of labour that could be required of serfs (Ibid., 60). He also abolished the practice of *sacken*, whereby female child murderers were

the manner in which Frederick ruled were the generally low wages the King accorded to scholars in his service, complaints about which were usually ignored.⁹⁸¹

Among those intellectuals disappointed with Frederick's rulership and their own roles at the King's court was Maupertuis. During the first months of his time in Prussia, Maupertuis had received a great deal of attention from Frederick.⁹⁸² However, following his declaration of war on Austria in December of 1740, Frederick left Berlin to fight what came to be known as the First Silesian War.⁹⁸³ He left Maupertuis in Berlin with no instructions regarding the creation of the scientific academy, and given that the war had replaced philosophical pursuits as Frederick's main concern, he would not send any. Maupertuis made efforts to get the project going anyway, however, attempting unsuccessfully to lure Swiss mathematicians Daniel and Johann (II) Bernoulli to Berlin.⁹⁸⁴

Maupertuis appears to have become depressed by the idleness in which Frederick

sewn inside leather bags and then drowned in the river, in 1740 (MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 140.)

⁹⁸¹ Giles MacDonogh, *Prussia: The Perversion of an Ideal* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994), 124.

⁹⁸² Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 183.

⁹⁸³ Ibid., 183. The First Silesian War, which was part of the larger War of the Austrian Succession, began with Frederick's invasion of the Austrian-controlled Silesia in December of 1740. Frederick justified this invasion by referring to historical Prussian claims to the land. The First Silesian War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Breslau in June of 1742. In it, Austrian empress Maria Theresa ceded a large part of Silesia to Frederick. See "Silesian Wars," in *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2010), <<http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-9067753>> consulted March 16, 2010.

⁹⁸⁴ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 183-184. The Bernoulli family constituted a mathematical dynasty of sorts, founded by Swiss brothers Jakob I (1654-1705) and Johann I (1667-1748), with whom Maupertuis had studied. Leonhard Euler had also been a student of Johann I. The dynasty is primarily known for its mastery of Leibnizian calculus, and the application of this to mechanical problems, which constituted one of the foundations of analytical mechanics. Both Daniel (1700-1782) and Johann II (1710-1790) were sons of Johann I. Daniel researched and wrote largely on the mechanics of moving fluids, while the work of Johann II dealt mainly with heat and light. See William E. Burns, "Bernoulli Family," in *Science in the Enlightenment: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003), online edition, http://www.credoreference.com/entry/abcsclen/bernoulli_family accessed March 16, 2010.

left him. In a letter written to Algarotti in early 1741, he said that he had become indifferent to everything in Berlin.⁹⁸⁵ A short while later, he wrote to say that, since he no longer knew what to do with himself, he was considering taking a trip to Iceland.⁹⁸⁶

However, the trip would not take place. Instead, at Frederick's insistence, Maupertuis went to join the King the front of the war in Silesia, a summons that was motivated by Frederick's desire for more stimulating company than that of his military men.⁹⁸⁷ This had unhappy consequences for Maupertuis: he was taken prisoner by the Austrians at the battle of Mollwitz. Realizing that Maupertuis was not a soldier but a well-known scientist, Austrian general Count von Neipperg sent Maupertuis to Vienna with letters of recommendation shortly after his capture. After a brief stay in Vienna, government officials there saw that Maupertuis was returned safely to Berlin. However, the damage had been done: Maupertuis, already unhappy at the lack of useful work assigned him by Frederick, felt humiliated by having been taken prisoner.⁹⁸⁸ As he reported to Algarotti in May of 1741, he was planning to return to Paris the moment Frederick gave him permission to do so.⁹⁸⁹ By June he was on his way back to France, entirely disillusioned by his experience at Frederick's court. As he wrote

⁹⁸⁵ Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 16*, 180, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Berlin 21 January 1741.

⁹⁸⁶ Ibid., 185, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Berlin 26 February 1741.

⁹⁸⁷ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 184.

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid., 185-186.

⁹⁸⁹ Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 16*, 187, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Berlin 18 May 1741.

to Algarotti, “after having expected a great honour [that of founding the Berlin academy] I am returning to France laden with ridicule and degradation.”⁹⁹⁰

Like his friends, Algarotti quickly became disillusioned with life at Frederick’s court. Although he found the politics in Berlin interesting enough, Francesco described the atmosphere of the city to Bonomo as being rather dull.⁹⁹¹ He told his brother that he had come to the realization that he could never find happiness by simply following “great men” and had grown weary of trying.⁹⁹² He defined his situation at Frederick’s court as one which was not enduring, and which he did not wish to endure.⁹⁹³

Like Maupertuis, Algarotti had hoped for more interesting and useful duties than merely being a companion to Frederick. Accordingly, Algarotti asked Frederick to send him as ambassador to London.⁹⁹⁴ Frederick refused, justifying his refusal by pointing out that the negotiations that he had been engaged in with England at this time had almost reached their conclusion.⁹⁹⁵ Saying he did not doubt Algarotti’s ability to handle important affairs, Frederick told him he preferred to reserve his abilities for a more suitable situation.⁹⁹⁶ Whether his explanation was truthful or not, Frederick could not send Algarotti to London as

⁹⁹⁰ “après l’esperance d’un grand honneur je m’en retourne en France chargé de ridicule et avilissement” Ibid., 190, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Frankfurt 10 June 1741. Shortly after his return, rumours, started by the Duchess of Aiguillon, began to circulate that Maupertuis had left Berlin because Frederick had not offered him a pension. This could not be further from the truth—Frederick had in fact offered Maupertuis a large pension of 12,000 livres, but he had turned it down. Maupertuis asked Algarotti to let Frederick know that he was not so base a creature, in case the rumours reached his ears. See ———, *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 16*, 192-193. Maupertuis to Algarotti, Paris 28 June 1741; 195, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Paris 16 July 1741.; Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 183.

⁹⁹¹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 5 November 1740.

⁹⁹² “i Grandi” BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 6 August 1740.

⁹⁹³ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 6 August 1740.

⁹⁹⁴ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 262.

⁹⁹⁵ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 21, Frederick to Algarotti [no date].

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid., 21, Frederick to Algarotti [no date].

an ambassador even if he had wanted to, as his rank was not high enough for the position.⁹⁹⁷ Realizing Algarotti was bored, Frederick offered to send him on a trip anywhere he wanted to go while they waited for a situation to arise in which Algarotti's expertise would be of the greatest use.⁹⁹⁸ He also offered to give Algarotti a title.⁹⁹⁹

Francesco wrote to Bonomo to report on this promise of Frederick's.¹⁰⁰⁰ However, it seems that a meaningless title was not enough for him, as he told his brother that he remained too preoccupied by his negotiations with Frederick to think about anything else.¹⁰⁰¹ True to his word, Frederick would bestow a title on Algarotti, that of Count.¹⁰⁰² More meaningfully for Algarotti, however, Frederick finally agreed to give Algarotti more gainful employment, the duties of which the title was meant to facilitate.¹⁰⁰³ Frederick assigned Algarotti the duty of acting as his minister in Turin. Algarotti arrived there in early 1741.

Separation: mission to Turin

Being sent as a diplomat to Turin by Frederick would bring Algarotti a great deal of international exposure. However, the specific guidelines given him by Frederick were such that it would be impossible for him to complete his mission successfully, with the result that the mission inevitably ended in failure.

⁹⁹⁷ Halsband, *Lord Hervey*, 262. The ambassador that London had sent to Berlin was of noble status. Therefore, Frederick could not send Algarotti, who had no title at this time, in exchange

⁹⁹⁸ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 21, Frederick to Algarotti [no date].

⁹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 21, Frederick to Algarotti [no date].

¹⁰⁰⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 12 November 1740.

¹⁰⁰¹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 12 November 1740.

¹⁰⁰² MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 150.

¹⁰⁰³ *Ibid.*, 150.

When Frederick recalled Algarotti to Berlin as a result of this failure, Algarotti was humiliated. As had been the case with the embarrassment suffered by Voltaire and Maupertuis at the hands of Frederick, this would cause a rupture between the King and Algarotti, with the result that, in 1742, Algarotti would travel to Dresden in search of a new position at the court of Augustus III.

Algarotti's mission in Turin was to determine the feasibility of an alliance with the King of Sardinia, Charles Emmanuel III, who held court in Turin, and find out whether he would be willing to attack Silesia simultaneously with Frederick.¹⁰⁰⁴ The kingdom of Sardinia's Piedmontese possessions made it an excellent potential ally for Frederick against Austria.¹⁰⁰⁵ Indeed, the point of access to the road that Frederick would need to use in order to invade Silesia was located in lands controlled by Charles Emmanuel.¹⁰⁰⁶ This being the case, in order to gain control of Silesia, it would be in Frederick's best interests to become the ally, or even protector, of the King of Sardinia.¹⁰⁰⁷

In addition to attempting to broker an alliance between Charles Emmanuel and Frederick, Algarotti was instructed to find out everything he could about the internal workings of the court at Turin: what the King's personality was like, who his favourite ministers were, what the state of his finances and troops was, and whether there were any intrigues going on at court.¹⁰⁰⁸ Algarotti was to write to

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibid., 153. Charles Emmanuel III reigned from 1730 to 1773.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Aurelio Lepre, "Federico il Grande e l'Algarotti," *Belfagor: Rassegna di varia umanità* XVI (1961): 290.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Achille Neri, "Francesco Algarotti diplomatico," *Archivio storico italiano, serie IV* (1886): 233.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid., 233.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Lepre, "Federico il Grande e l'Algarotti," 290.

Frederick every day about what was happening in Turin, and send a copy of each letter to Frederick's minister of foreign affairs.¹⁰⁰⁹

Frederick's reasons for choosing Algarotti to carry out this mission were several.¹⁰¹⁰ First, it would fulfil Algarotti's desire to be employed in a more useful fashion. Second, the fame he had achieved by this time, coupled with his Italian origins, increased the chances he would be favourably received in Turin. Algarotti's Italian provenance had the additional advantage of providing a pretext for his trip: he could pretend that his stay in Turin was just a stop-over en route to Venice.¹⁰¹¹

According to his instructions, Algarotti was not to reveal the purpose of his trip to anyone; should anyone inquire, he was to say that personal business required his presence in Italy.¹⁰¹² Algarotti was forbidden even from revealing the reason for his visit to the members of the Turinese court, and to Charles Emmanuel.¹⁰¹³ Frederick provided Algarotti with two letters of recommendation, one addressed to the King's first minister the Marquis d'Ormea, and the other addressed to Charles Emmanuel.¹⁰¹⁴ Upon arrival, Algarotti was to present the Marquis d'Ormea with the letter of recommendation and try to befriend him and his entourage. However, Algarotti was forbidden from asking for an audience with the king unless d'Ormea thought it appropriate; if the opportunity for such a meeting arose, he was to refuse unless it could take place in secret. If, by chance,

¹⁰⁰⁹ Neri, "Francesco Algarotti diplomatico," 237.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid.: 233.

¹⁰¹¹ Ibid.: 233.

¹⁰¹² Ibid.: 234.

¹⁰¹³ Lepre, "Federico il Grande e l'Algarotti," 290.

¹⁰¹⁴ Neri, "Francesco Algarotti diplomatico," 234.

he was granted an audience with the king, Algarotti was to tell him Frederick had decided to take advantage of Algarotti's alleged trip to Venice in order to have him communicate Frederick's esteem to Charles Emmanuel on his behalf. He was to give the letter of recommendation Frederick had provided to Charles Emmanuel, and inform him that, due to the present state of European affairs, Frederick wished to re-establish the alliance that had once existed between Prussia and Sardinia.¹⁰¹⁵ Given these restrictions, the likelihood that Algarotti would succeed in his mission was very slim indeed.

On December 24, 1740, just prior to his departure for Turin, Algarotti signed a declaration in which he swore absolute fidelity and obedience to Frederick, and pledged never to reveal any of his secrets.¹⁰¹⁶ In order to ensure that Algarotti could travel to Turin undetected, Frederick wrote to Voltaire on December 23 to say that Algarotti had left on a trip to Paris.¹⁰¹⁷ Voltaire believed this to be true, as he reported the news to du Châtelet.¹⁰¹⁸ Despite efforts to be secretive, however, the particulars of Algarotti's trip were soon widely known. Every detail that could be uncovered about Algarotti's travels was announced in several newspapers, both in Italy and in the cities where he stopped en route.¹⁰¹⁹ For instance, Maupertuis wrote to Algarotti in February of 1741 to say that not only did everyone know he had been to Bern, but they also knew where he had

¹⁰¹⁵ Ibid.: 234-235.

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibid.: 238.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid.: 238.

¹⁰¹⁸ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. XI (1741)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1955), 48, du Châtelet to Algarotti, Brussels 1 March 1741.

¹⁰¹⁹ Neri, "Francesco Algarotti diplomatico," 238.

eaten and everything he had said while he was there.¹⁰²⁰ Du Châtelet, too, had read about the details of this trip to Bern in the press.¹⁰²¹

Many of the resident ambassadors in Turin closely followed all news concerning Algarotti's trip, rightly suspecting that Frederick had sent him there on a secret mission.¹⁰²² In fact, shortly after Algarotti's arrival in the city, Jesuit Giovambattista Ratto wrote to the Duke of Modena to announce that Algarotti had appeared in Turin, and there were many reasons to suspect that he was there to fulfill a commission for Frederick.¹⁰²³ Venetians, having heard of Algarotti's appearance in Bern and subsequently in Turin, also suspected he had been sent to Turin by Frederick in the capacity of plenipotentiary minister.¹⁰²⁴

Certainly, that Algarotti's movements had been reported on in various newspapers, and were of interest to so many people, was in part due to the level of fame he had achieved by this point. In fact, in his letter to the Duke of Modena announcing Algarotti's arrival in Turin, Giovambattista Ratto described the Venetian as "the famous Algarotti."¹⁰²⁵ The international interest that Algarotti's trip generated was also due in part to his connection to Frederick, however. Just as his travels with Frederick in the early days of the King's reign had brought him a great deal of attention, so too did these suspicions that he had been assigned to carry out a diplomatic mission for the King. Accordingly, travelling to Turin as a

¹⁰²⁰ Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 16*, 181, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Berlin 18 February 1741. Maupertuis had presumably been privy to the details of Algarotti's travels in advance, as he chided Algarotti in this letter for having asked him to keep his plans secret even though his activities were clearly not a secret at all.

¹⁰²¹ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. XI (1741)*, 48, du Châtelet to Algarotti, Brussels 1 March 1741.

¹⁰²² Neri, "Francesco Algarotti diplomatico," 240.

¹⁰²³ Lepre, "Federico il Grande e l'Algarotti," 291.

¹⁰²⁴ BCT MS 1256B Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 18 Jan 1741.

¹⁰²⁵ "il famoso Algarotti" quoted in Lepre, "Federico il Grande e l'Algarotti," 291.

minister for Frederick would serve to increase Algarotti's renown. For instance, as soon as Francesco's arrival in that city became known in Venice, Bonomo wrote him to say that everyone there associated his name with "universal and great glory."¹⁰²⁶

Algarotti arrived in Turin in January of 1741.¹⁰²⁷ He reported to Frederick that Charles Emmanuel seemed favourable to renewing relations with Frederick.¹⁰²⁸ However, in mid-January, whether out of sincerity, or out of irritation over the distinct lack of secrecy that surrounded Algarotti's movements, Frederick claimed he was already beginning to miss Algarotti's company.¹⁰²⁹ He told Algarotti that he had never met another person who could even compare with him.¹⁰³⁰ Admitting it would be foolish to recall Algarotti from Turin so soon after he had arrived, Frederick begged him to execute his mission quickly so they could be reunited as soon as possible.¹⁰³¹ However, it seems that Frederick's desire for speediness in the execution of the mission did not figure importantly in Algarotti's plans. Rather, writing to Bonomo on February 18, Algarotti announced that he expected to be in Turin for some time.¹⁰³²

Diplomats, gossip-mongers, and Turinese residents were not the only ones to take an interest in Algarotti's arrival in Italy. Having read about his appearance in Turin in a newspaper, Eustachio Zanotti, who had studied with Algarotti in

¹⁰²⁶ "gloria tanto universale e grande" BCT MS 1256B Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 18 January 1741.

¹⁰²⁷ Neri, "Francesco Algarotti diplomatico," 241.

¹⁰²⁸ Ibid.: 243.

¹⁰²⁹ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 31, Frederick to Algarotti, 17 January 1741.

¹⁰³⁰ Ibid., 31, Frederick to Algarotti, 17 January 1741.

¹⁰³¹ Ibid., 31, Frederick to Algarotti, 17 January 1741.

¹⁰³² BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, 18 February 1741.

Bologna, wrote to Algarotti about the possibility of visiting him there.¹⁰³³

Algarotti welcomed the visit, and Zanotti arrived in Turin on March 11.¹⁰³⁴ The reunion was a happy one: Francesco wrote to Bonomo a week later to report on how much he and Zanotti were enjoying each other's company.¹⁰³⁵ Bonomo would also travel to Turin in order to spend time with his brother, much to the latter's relief: prior to Bonomo's departure for Turin, Francesco had told him that he had several matters about which he hoped to confide in him.¹⁰³⁶ As he openly admitted, Francesco hoped that news of Zanotti's visit would entice Bonomo to visit him as well.¹⁰³⁷

In addition to Zanotti and Bonomo, Algarotti had another, perhaps unwanted, visitor in Turin at this time: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.¹⁰³⁸ Wortley Montagu had made every possible effort to see Algarotti again from the time of his departure from London in 1736. She had written to him often, reminding him of her love for him, and pressing him to arrange to meet her.¹⁰³⁹ Finally, in July of 1739, tired of waiting for him to arrange a meeting, she had decided to seek him out in person.¹⁰⁴⁰ Announcing that she would meet him in Venice, Wortley

¹⁰³³ Neri, "Francesco Algarotti diplomatico," 239.

¹⁰³⁴ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, 11 March 1741. Having heard that Zanotti was visiting Algarotti, Maupertuis asked him to pass on his compliments to the Bolognese scientist in May of 1741. See Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 16*, 187, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Berlin 18 May 1741.

¹⁰³⁵ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, 18 March 1741.

¹⁰³⁶ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, 25 March 1741; Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 28 January 1743; Museo Biblioteca Archivio di Bassano del Grappa (MBAB) Epistolario Gamba III.A.10 cc.294, Eustachio Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 7 May 1743. In this last letter, Zanotti tells Francesco that he had developed a great deal of fondness for Bonomo because of the time they had all spent together in Turin.

¹⁰³⁷ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, 25 March 1741.

¹⁰³⁸ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, 25 March 1741.

¹⁰³⁹ See Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Vol. II: 1721-1751*, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 105-238.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 139, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, 16 July 1739.

Montagu had expressed to Algarotti her absolute resolve to see him again.¹⁰⁴¹

However, Algarotti had been nowhere near Venice at the time; rather, he was in London, having recently returned there from his trip to St. Petersburg. Expressing her annoyance at having travelled all the way to Venice for nothing, in December of 1739 Wortley Montagu reminded Algarotti that he had agreed to live with her in that city.¹⁰⁴² She had continued to wait for him in Venice until October of 1740, at which time she moved on to Florence, writing to Algarotti that she would await word from him there as to where she should meet him.¹⁰⁴³

Whether she had received news of his return to Italy directly from Algarotti (which seems unlikely) or had read about it in a newspaper, Wortley Montagu travelled to Turin to see him, arriving there in late March of 1741.¹⁰⁴⁴ She remained in Turin for two months.¹⁰⁴⁵ Given that Francesco noted her appearance in the city in a letter to Bonomo,¹⁰⁴⁶ it appears that Wortley Montagu finally had the opportunity to see her beloved again during this time. However, this encounter does not seem to have produced the happy results she had likely envisaged, as is suggested by the contents of a letter she wrote to Algarotti in May of 1741. In an allusion to Newton's optical experiments, she told him that the

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid., 139, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, 16 July 1739. She informed him while en route that neither the sights she had seen on her travels to Venice, nor the fatigue she experienced from the journey, were able to distract her thoughts from him (Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Vol. II: 1721-1751*, 148, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, c. 6 September 1739.)

¹⁰⁴² Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Vol. II: 1721-1751*, 164, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, 24 December 1739. It is unclear whether Algarotti had actually agreed to live in Venice with Wortley Montagu; with the exception of Wortley Montagu's own assertion, no evidence of this agreement appears to exist.

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid., 206, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, 11 October 1740.

¹⁰⁴⁴ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, 25 March 1741.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 436.

¹⁰⁴⁶ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, 25 March 1741.

prism of his eyes had allowed her to see into his soul, and although she saw many beautiful fantasies there, when combined, they formed indifference.¹⁰⁴⁷ This would be the last letter exchanged between the two for fifteen years.¹⁰⁴⁸

Romantic interest (or lack thereof) aside, that Algarotti had allowed his relations with Montagu to deteriorate to this degree may be explained by the position in his career that he had reached by this point. Although he had managed to make an entrée into European intellectual circles, when he and Montagu had first met in London in 1736, Algarotti was still at the beginning of his career, and therefore, not yet very well-known. He had needed Montagu's friendship more than she had needed his at this time: she was a writer of note in London society, and her friendship could open several doors for him. However, by the time they met again in Turin in 1741, Algarotti's status had changed significantly. Far from being in a position in which connections were essential to his success, Algarotti had developed a reputation as a noteworthy intellectual in his own right. He had achieved international fame with his *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*. His renown had since been intensified by his having become a member of Frederick's court, the title of Count the King had given him, and the mission Frederick had charged him with in Turin. Accordingly, Wortley Montagu's friendship was no longer of any use to Algarotti. This, in combination with Wortley Montagu's emotional attachment to Algarotti, and her persistent demands that he reciprocate her feelings, may have ultimately convinced him to sever his ties with her.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Vol. II: 1721-1751*, 237, Wortley Montagu to Algarotti, May 1741.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Ibid., note 238.

Algarotti made a good impression on the Turinese court during his time there, just as Frederick had hoped would happen. Bonomo relayed to his brother reports he had heard in Venice of the high esteem in which Francesco was held by members of this court to his brother.¹⁰⁴⁹ Within the context of his mission in Turin, however, this admiration did not translate into any results in terms of gathering political information or forging a military alliance. Because he was not able to reveal what Frederick's intentions were, or even that he was there as Frederick's minister, Algarotti was naturally unable to learn much about the secrets or intentions of the court in Turin.¹⁰⁵⁰ Accordingly, after having been in Turin only a few months, Algarotti was recalled by Frederick to Prussia.¹⁰⁵¹

Things fall apart

By June 13, Algarotti was back in Berlin.¹⁰⁵² Frederick had recalled Algarotti under the pretext of missing his company, telling Algarotti that the reason he wanted him back in Prussia was that having him nearby meant more to him than the successful completion of the mission.¹⁰⁵³ However, their reunion was not a happy one. Rather, Algarotti's return to Prussia marked the beginning of a cooling of relations between him and Frederick. Certainly, Algarotti's failure to live up to Frederick's expectations in Turin, and Algarotti's embarrassment at having been recalled before having had the chance to complete the mission

¹⁰⁴⁹ BCT MS 1256B, Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 19 July 1741.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Lepre, "Federico il Grande e l'Algarotti," 290.

¹⁰⁵¹ Ibid.: 291.

¹⁰⁵² BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, 13 June 1741.

¹⁰⁵³ Neri, "Francesco Algarotti diplomatico." 248, 251.

assigned him, may have contributed to the rift forming between them.¹⁰⁵⁴

However, Algarotti's disillusionment with life at Frederick's court, and with Frederick himself, appear to have been much more significant factors in this falling out. Like Voltaire, Algarotti was disheartened by Frederick's militaristic goals, which he saw as irreconcilable with a life dedicated to philosophy and ideas, a life Frederick had given the impression of wanting prior to his accession, and in the very early days of his reign.¹⁰⁵⁵

While he awaited orders from Frederick in Brandenburg,¹⁰⁵⁶ Algarotti took advantage of his time in Berlin to turn his attention to intellectual projects. His first order of business was to resume work on the life of Caesar he had begun in 1740.¹⁰⁵⁷ He enlisted the help of his brother Bonomo on this project by having Bonomo gather information on all the lives of Caesar that had already been written in Italian and Latin, and reporting his findings back to Francesco.¹⁰⁵⁸ Algarotti would later publish a treatise on the alliance between Crassus, Pompey, and Caesar from 60 BCE to 53 BCE, known as the First Triumvirate, entitled *Saggio critico del triumvirato di Crasso, Pompeo e Cesare*.¹⁰⁵⁹ While he may have used some of the information he gathered in 1741 to write this work, he would never publish a life of Caesar as he had intended to.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Lepre, "Federico il Grande e l'Algarotti," 292.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ibid., 292.

¹⁰⁵⁶ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, 13 June 1741.

¹⁰⁵⁷ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, 13 June 1741.

¹⁰⁵⁸ BCT MS 1256B Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 19 July 1741; Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 23 August 1741; Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 8 September 1741.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Francesco Algarotti, "Saggio critico del triumvirato di Crasso, Pompeo e Cesare," in *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 17* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1794).

Algarotti began work on another treatise at this time as well, on the subject of painting.¹⁰⁶⁰ He again enlisted the help of his brother on this project, asking for Bonomo's opinions on various aspects of painting, for example, his opinion on the beauty of the works of Rembrandt as compared to those of Giorgione.¹⁰⁶¹ Given that Bonomo was an art collector by profession, it certainly made sense for Francesco to ask for his views on matters related to painting. Algarotti would make use of the knowledge he gained while undertaking this study of painting in order to secure a position as art collector for Augustus III in 1743. Unlike the life of Caesar he was working on at while at Frederick's court, Algarotti would publish his work on painting (although not until 1762) under the title *Saggio sopra la pittura*, or, *Essay on Painting*.¹⁰⁶²

Although being in Berlin without the supervision of Frederick afforded Algarotti the opportunity to work on these projects, he remained unhappy with his situation. Specifically, he seemed to be displeased at the lack of concrete directives from Frederick. Although he expected news at every moment, Algarotti spent the entire summer of 1741 waiting to hear what Frederick wanted him to do next.¹⁰⁶³ Finally, perhaps in anticipation of a truce with Austria that would formally be signed in on October 9, Frederick called Algarotti to Breslau in mid-September of 1741.¹⁰⁶⁴ Algarotti arrived there on September 22, but

¹⁰⁶⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 5 September 1741.

¹⁰⁶¹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 5 September 1741.

¹⁰⁶² Francesco Algarotti, "Saggio sopra la pittura," in *Opere del conte Algarotti. Vol. 2* (Livorno: M. Coltellini, 1764).

¹⁰⁶³ See, for example, the following letters, in which Francesco laments to Bonomo that he is waiting to hear from Frederick: BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 28 July 1741; Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin [no date] August 1741.

¹⁰⁶⁴ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 16 September 1741. The truce was temporary. Fighting would resume in December of 1741, and would continue until the

Frederick only appeared in the city in early November, in order to receive homage from the people now under his control.¹⁰⁶⁵ Although he had waited so long for Frederick to arrive, Algarotti left Breslau without him on November 8, the day after the homage ceremony.¹⁰⁶⁶

Although Algarotti was unhappy at Frederick's court, being known to be an associate of this monarch had helped to ameliorate his reputation in his native city of Venice. While his authorship of the *Newtonianismo* had brought him notoriety there shortly after its publication in 1737, the opinion of Venetians regarding the book appears to have changed following Algarotti's mission in Turin. In 1741, Carlo Lodoli, who had been Algarotti's classics teacher in Venice, wrote a treatise on architecture.¹⁰⁶⁷ Bonomo wrote to Francesco in August of that year to inform him that Lodoli had made an honourable mention of Algarotti in the preface of this work, which was still in manuscript form.¹⁰⁶⁸ Specifically, Lodoli praised Algarotti for the honour that his *Newtonianismo* had brought to their century.¹⁰⁶⁹ Naturally, Algarotti was quite pleased by this news, and was anxious to see the work in print.¹⁰⁷⁰ However, due to some controversy surrounding it, the work was never published.¹⁰⁷¹ Even though the work never

Treaty of Breslau was signed in June of 1742. See "Silesian Wars," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (online edition).

¹⁰⁶⁵ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Breslau 23 September 1741; Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Breslau 4 November 1741; Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Breslau 7 November 1741.

¹⁰⁶⁶ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Breslau 7 November 1741.

¹⁰⁶⁷ BCT MS 1256B, Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 23 August 1741.

¹⁰⁶⁸ BCT MS 1256B, Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 23 August 1741.

¹⁰⁶⁹ BCT MS 1256B, Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 23 August 1741.

¹⁰⁷⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 5 September 1741.

¹⁰⁷¹ BCT MS 1256B, Bonomo Algarotti to Francesco Algarotti, Venice 22 October 1741. In fact, Lodoli would never publish his theories on architecture, but Algarotti would attempt to popularize them in his 1753 *Saggio sopra l'architettura*. Finally, in 1786, Andrea Memmo, ex-student of Lodoli, would publish an account of his teacher's architectural ideas: Andrea Memmo, *Elementi*

saw the light of day, that a reputed Venetian scholar had been willing to openly praise it in the preface to his own work suggests that Algarotti's association with Frederick caused attitudes about him to change for the better in Venice.

Algarotti's renown in Italy, in combination with his reputation for having a wide network of contacts, prompted at least one Italian to seek to take advantage of his connection with him during this period. In late 1741, Algarotti was contacted by Alessandro Fabri, poet and secretary of the Bolognese senate.¹⁰⁷² A young relative of his was planning to visit Prussia, and Fabri hoped to be able to entrust Algarotti with this young man's care.¹⁰⁷³ Just as Algarotti had associated himself with illustrious people in the past as a means of further expanding his networks, by associating himself with Algarotti Fabri's relative would have been able to form connections more easily when he arrived in Prussia. That Algarotti was so well-connected in Prussia would also have made an association with him advantageous in this regard. It is unclear whether or not Algarotti agreed to take this task on. What is clear is that Algarotti had tired of life at Frederick's court, and decided to take advantage of his fame to secure a position for himself that was more to his liking.

Following his departure from Breslau, Algarotti made a brief trip to Dresden before returning to Berlin.¹⁰⁷⁴ He travelled with the Marquis de Valroy,

dell'architettura Lodoliana o sia l'arte del fabbricare con solidità scientifica e con eleganza non capricciosa libri due (Rome: Pagliarini, 1786).

¹⁰⁷² Fabri was also known as Fabbri (1691-1762). Vincenzo Caputo, "Fabri (o Fabbri), Alessandro," in *I poeti italiani dall'antichità ad oggi: dizionario biografico* (Milan: Gastaldi, 1960), 404. WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1b59> (consulted August 22, 2010).

¹⁰⁷³ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Breslau 1 November 1741.

¹⁰⁷⁴ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Breslau 7 November 1741.

French envoy to the Prussian court.¹⁰⁷⁵ This was not the first time that Algarotti had visited Dresden. He had stopped in this city when returning to London from St. Petersburg in 1739.¹⁰⁷⁶ At this time, Algarotti had met Augustus III, the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland.¹⁰⁷⁷ The favourable impression Augustus III had of Algarotti following this visit would have been further consolidated by Algarotti's having been summoned, along with so many other noteworthy intellectuals, to Frederick's court upon the Prussian monarch's accession, and of his subsequent investiture with the title of Count. Algarotti's reputation in that city would also have benefited from Frederick's glowing accounts of him in his correspondence with Ulrich Friedrich de Suhm, Privy Counsellor to the Elector of Saxony. Although de Suhm had died in 1740, it is not inconceivable that he had mentioned the high praise Frederick accorded to Algarotti in his letters to members of the court there prior to his death.

Algarotti's impression of the Dresden court was equally positive: although he returned to Berlin after his visit to that city,¹⁰⁷⁸ he had no intention of remaining. The upcoming wedding of Frederick's brother Augustus William required his attendance, but he told Bonomo he planned to leave for Dresden as soon as the celebrations had ended.¹⁰⁷⁹ On January 6, the day of the wedding, he

¹⁰⁷⁵ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Breslau 7 November 1741.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Algarotti, *Lettere sulla Russia*, 45, Algarotti to Hervey, Hamburg 30 August 1739. In reporting his impressions of Dresden to Hervey in this letter, Algarotti wrote that he had been particularly impressed by the splendour of the city's court.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ida Frances Treat, *Un cosmopolite italien du XVIIIe siècle: Francesco Algarotti* (Trévoux: Imprimerie Jules Jeannin, 1913), 97.

¹⁰⁷⁸ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 23 November 1741.

¹⁰⁷⁹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 26 December 1741.

wrote to Bonomo to express his excitement at his fast approaching departure; by January 29, 1742, Algarotti had already reached Dresden.¹⁰⁸⁰

Conclusion

The renown that Algarotti gained during his time at Frederick's court was considerable. Certainly, Algarotti had already made a name for himself as an intellectual of note prior to joining this court. While the connections he had formed with illustrious people had contributed to this, the publication of the *Newtonianismo* in 1737 and the various controversies that had ensued had enabled him to demonstrate his talents to a wide audience. As a result, his fame came to be based less on his relationships and more on his abilities. Although Algarotti's reputation had been partly responsible for his ability to attract the notice of Frederick, it was his talents, particularly in the field of poetry but also in that of science, that had enabled him to win the admiration of the crown prince, and eventually obtain a position at Frederick's court. This position, in turn, brought him even more recognition. Many great minds had been invited to join Frederick's court; that Algarotti had received the invitation as well demonstrated that, in Frederick's opinion, he fell into that category. Being held in high regard by a King, and being part of his close entourage, brought Algarotti a great deal of international attention. This attention only increased when Algarotti was invested with the title of count and sent on the diplomatic mission to Turin. His renown

¹⁰⁸⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 6 January 1742; Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 29 January 1742.

was such that, when he became disillusioned with Frederick and life at his court, he felt confident enough in his ability to secure a new position to leave Berlin in search of a more favourable situation in Dresden. Indeed, Algarotti was not mistaken in his expectations of what his renown could bring him: in 1743, he would be invited to join the court of Augustus III, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, in the guise of art collector, a duty he would travel to his native Venice to execute.

**The art of networking and networking through art: Algarotti at the court of
Augustus III, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, 1742-1747**

Algarotti's decision to leave Berlin for Dresden would prove fruitful. He arrived in the city towards the end of January 1742.¹⁰⁸¹ Shortly thereafter, Algarotti would form contacts with members of the community of Italian expatriots living there. After spending a few months in the city, Augustus III would invite him to join this court in the guise of art collector. Algarotti would return to his native Venice in order to carry out this commission. His success in this endeavour would lead Augustus to reward him with the title of war councillor in 1744. Encouraged in part by the increased renown that this title would give him, Algarotti would subsequently try to secure a new source of financial backing, this time in Italy.

In order to secure a position at Augustus's court, Algarotti made use of tactics similar to those he had employed in the past when seeking financial backing. Many of the Italian contacts Algarotti would form in Dresden were well-connected with Augustus's court. As a result, his association with them would play an instrumental role in his acquisition of the position of art collector. As he had done before, however, he would also attempt to attract attention to his knowledge and talents through other means. He would make use of a public display, in the form of an opera, in order to advertise his artistic erudition and abilities to Augustus. He would also make use of written documents outlining

¹⁰⁸¹ Biblioteche Comunali di Treviso (BCT) MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 29 January 1742.

proposed changes to the royal art galleries to this end. The combination of all these factors is what would win him the position of art collector for the King.

Algarotti's new occupation was rather different from the intellectual work he had done in the past. While being a scholar involved producing physical objects (namely, books), being an art collector involved procuring them. In addition, although financial considerations played a role in both lines of work, when trying to establish himself as a writer, Algarotti's personal finances were the main concern, whereas, in working as an art collector, someone else's money was at stake. Nevertheless, in his role as art collector, Algarotti would employ many of the same strategies that he had in promoting his own work in order to ensure his success. As before, written work (this time, in the form of letters) would figure prominently in his efforts to demonstrate his skills in his new position. Just as Algarotti had made use of the favourable opinions of illustrious scholars in order to highlight the worth of his intellectual work, he would make use of the opinions on those well versed in artistic matters in order to demonstrate the value of the paintings he would acquire. Finally, in the same way as he had made use of his associates as intermediaries through which to access their intellectual networks, Algarotti would make use of the artistic contacts he would make as intermediaries through which to connect with sellers and producers of art.

Perhaps encouraged by his success as an art collector, Algarotti would employ very similar tactics in his subsequent attempts to find a new position in Italy. Written works would figure prominently in these efforts. Between the years 1744 and 1746, he would publish five new works: *Vita di Stefano*

Pallavicini, Saggio sopra il commercio, Saggio sopra la durata de' regni de' re di Roma, Il Congresso di Citera, and a new edition of *Il Newtonianismo*. Given the wide array of topics they dealt with, these works Algarotti served to demonstrate the extent of his erudition. By dedicating these works to illustrious people, and sending copies of them to all his contacts, Algarotti hoped to publicize his versatile knowledge to as wide an audience as possible, with a view to increasing his chances of obtaining financial support.

“The Paris of Germany”¹⁰⁸²: Dresden in the eighteenth century

Prior to 1742, Algarotti had made two brief visits to Dresden: one in 1739, en route from St. Petersburg to England, and another in 1741, in the company of the Marquis de Valroy, French envoy to the Prussian court.¹⁰⁸³ The cultural atmosphere of Dresden, which Algarotti would have glimpsed during these brief visits, was of the kind that he would certainly have found attractive. The court at Dresden had the reputation of being among the most magnificent of Europe.¹⁰⁸⁴ Algarotti immediately found life in Dresden far more appealing than life in Berlin. Describing the city as “the Paris of Germany,” he told his brother Bonomo that his lifestyle there was the most pleasant he had experienced in some

¹⁰⁸² “Dresda per altro si può con ragione chiamare il Parigi dell’allemagna” BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 5 March 1742.

¹⁰⁸³ For more on these visits, see chapters four and five.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ettore Bonora, “Bianconi, Giovanni Lodovico,” in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani. Vol. 10* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1968), 253.

time.¹⁰⁸⁵ Indeed, it is easy to understand why life in Dresden appealed to Algarotti so much. In direct contrast to Frederick's Berlin, Dresden was a city in which culture and the arts appeared to actually have been valued, as demonstrated by the actions of its ruler, Augustus III, to improve these aspects of life in this city.¹⁰⁸⁶

Improvements of these kind had begun under Augustus the Strong, father and predecessor of Augustus III. Through his patronage of the arts, Augustus the Strong transformed Dresden from a provincial German city into a major European capital.¹⁰⁸⁷ The rise to prominence of Dresden during Augustus the Strong's reign was so dramatic that it was likened by western Europeans to the rise of St. Petersburg under Peter the Great.¹⁰⁸⁸ Dresden came to be seen as one of Europe's

¹⁰⁸⁵ "Dresda per altro si può con ragione chiamare il Parigi dell'alemagna" BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 5 March 1742; BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 9 March 1742.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Augustus (r 1733-1763) was known simultaneously as Augustus III, King of Poland, and Frederick Augustus II, Elector of Saxony. His father, Augustus the Strong (Frederick Augustus I Elector of Saxony and Augustus II King of Poland) had been the first member of their family to become King of Poland (r 1697-1733), a position he had secured in part due to the support of Austria and of Russia. See Eberhard Hempel, *Baroque Art and Architecture in Central Europe: Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland*, The Pelican history of art, Z22 (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965), 141. The court culture of eighteenth century Dresden has not been as thoroughly studied by historians working in English as that of other major European cities during this period. As Watanabe-O'Kelly points out, her 2002 *Court Culture in Dresden: from Renaissance to Baroque* is the first monograph on the court culture of Dresden in any language. As of 2010, it appears to remain the only English-language monograph written on this subject. The necessity of knowing the German language in order to conduct extensive research on this subject, the destruction wrought on Dresden during the Second World War, and the neglectful attitude of the government towards archival material under the German Democratic Republic have all contributed to this. The secretive attitude of the GDR government also acted as an impediment to historical research: as late as 1988, it was forbidden to use a photocopier in Dresden. However, with the fall of the Berlin wall, and the GDR along with it, historical sources had been catalogued and made accessible, thereby improving the prospects for historical study of Dresden court culture. See Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden: From Renaissance to Baroque* (Houndmills, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2002), 3-4.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden*, 237.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Niels von Holst, *Creators, Collectors and Connoisseurs: The Anatomy of Artistic Taste from Antiquity to the Present Day* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 169.

most festive cities, with the result that it attracted a great deal of tourists.¹⁰⁸⁹ A great admirer of Venice, Augustus the Strong sought to recreate its atmosphere in Dresden.¹⁰⁹⁰ In addition to trying to duplicate some of the aspects of Venice's physical appearance (for instance, through the institution of a building program meant to make the shores of the Elbe resemble those of the Grand Canal), Augustus tried to import some of the city's artistic culture as well, by ordering the construction of Dresden's first opera house, the Zwinger, and by holding elaborate, large-scale festivities to mark significant political events.¹⁰⁹¹

Augustus III, who was passionate about fine arts and music, continued the program of cultural development instituted by his father.¹⁰⁹² His patronage of the arts led to an extensive expansion of the royal art collections, with the result that period of his reign is often described as the golden age of the Gemäldegalerie.¹⁰⁹³ Indeed, by 1760 Dresden came to be known as the Athens for artists because of this gallery.¹⁰⁹⁴ Much of the work for the expansion of the royal collection was overseen by Augustus's favourite minister, Count Heinrich von Brühl, who was entrusted with the direction of art collections from 1733 on.¹⁰⁹⁵ Brühl's chief collaborator in these endeavours was top German art scholar Carl Heinrich von

¹⁰⁸⁹ Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister, and City: The Art and Culture of Central Europe, 1450-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 325.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 326.

¹⁰⁹¹ Shearer West, "Introduction: Visual Culture, Performance Culture and the Italian Diaspora in the Long Eighteenth Century," in *Italian culture in northern Europe in the eighteenth century*, ed. Shearer West (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5.; Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden*, 229.; Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister, and City*, 325.

¹⁰⁹² Hempel, *Baroque Art and Architecture in Central Europe*, 23.; Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister, and City*, 324.

¹⁰⁹³ von Holst, *Creators, Collectors and Connoisseurs*, 169.; Friedbert Ficker, "Treasure House of World Art: 250 Years of the Dresden Art Gallery," *Central Europe Journal* 20, no. 10-11 (1972): 371-372.

¹⁰⁹⁴ von Holst, *Creators, Collectors and Connoisseurs*, 169.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ficker, "Treasure House of World Art," 371-372.

Heinecken, whose advice on how to improve the collections he regularly sought.¹⁰⁹⁶

Augustus III and his predecessor had favoured Italian art in particular.

Consequently, beginning during the reign of Augustus the Strong, Italian artists began moving to Dresden in significant numbers in search of patronage.¹⁰⁹⁷ By the time Algarotti arrived in Dresden in 1742, this group of artists had grown into a community of Italian ex-patriots.¹⁰⁹⁸ It was among this group of ex-patriots that Algarotti would form his closest associations during his early days in Dresden.

Enlarging networks and creating prospects

Only weeks after his arrival, Francesco wrote to Bonomo to say that, contrary to Bonomo's expectations that he would find life in Dresden solitary, he had already begun to form friendships with people there.¹⁰⁹⁹ Among the first people he met was famous opera singer Faustina Bordoni, who had been living and performing at the Saxon court since 1731.¹¹⁰⁰ He also befriended sculptor

¹⁰⁹⁶ Harald Marx, "Painting in Dresden in the Eighteenth Century," in *Dresden in the Ages of Splendor and Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Paintings from the Old Masters Picture Gallery*, ed. Harald Marx and Gregor J.M. Weber (Columbus, Ohio: Columbus Museum of Art, 1999), 6-7.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Ibid., 6-7. Italian artists who moved to Dresden during the reign of Augustus the Strong include Alessandro Mauro, who arrived in the late 1710s, and Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini, who was active in Dresden in the 1720s.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Algarotti makes mention of this community in his *Vita di Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini*, published in 1744: "...la Colonia, diro cosi, Italiana stabilita in Dresda dal re Augusto III..." (Francesco Algarotti, "Vita di Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini," in *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 6* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1792), 336.)

¹⁰⁹⁹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 29 January 1742.

¹¹⁰⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 29 January 1742. Bordoni (1700-1781), of Venetian origin, was married to Saxon composer J.A. Masse. Both had been called to the Saxon court in 1741. See F. Degrad, "Bordoni, Faustina," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani. Vol. 12* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1970), 517-8.

Lorenzo Mattielli and architect Gaetano Chiaveri.¹¹⁰¹ It is quite likely that Algarotti met one through the other: Chiaveri had designed the court church, for which Mattielli had been engaged to sculpt seventy eight sculptures.¹¹⁰² Among the other Italians Algarotti came to know in Dresden were two poets, Giovanni Ambrogio Migliavacca and Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini.¹¹⁰³ Given Algarotti's interest in poetry, it is not surprising that he sought the friendship of these men; nor is it surprising that they sought his, given Algarotti's renown for his talents in this field. Migliavacca would become the court poet of Dresden in 1752.¹¹⁰⁴ Pallavicini, whose father had been the maestro of the court chapel, had been secretary to Augustus III since 1738.¹¹⁰⁵ Algarotti would publish Pallavicini's collected works in 1744, two years after Pallavicini's death.¹¹⁰⁶

A number of factors may have contributed to the ease with which Algarotti formed contacts within this group. Certainly, that both he and these expatriots were of Italian origin gave them all something in common. The fame that Algarotti had acquired, both in Italy and throughout Europe, for having written the *Newtonianismo* and for having been called to Frederick's court along with

¹¹⁰¹ Ivana Miatto, "Francesco Algarotti: ritratto di un dilettante cosmopolita attraverso il suo epistolario" (Tesi di laurea, Università degli studi di Venezia Ca'Foscari, 1994-1995), 72.

¹¹⁰² Ugo E. Imperatori, "Chiaveri, Gaetano," in *Dizionario di italiani all'estero: dal sec. XIII sino ad oggi* (Genoa: Emigrante, 1956). World Biographical Information System (WBIS) online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=20d0> (consulted August 22, 2010), ———, "Mattielli, Lorenzo," in *Dizionario di italiani all'estero: dal sec. XIII sino ad oggi* (Genoa: Emigrante, 1956). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=20d3> (consulted August 22, 2010).

¹¹⁰³ Miatto, "Francesco Algarotti", 72.

¹¹⁰⁴ Carlo Schmidl, "Migliavacca, Giovanni Ambrogio," in *Dizionario universale dei musicisti. Vol. 2* (Milan: Sonzogno, 1938). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=20f0> (consulted August 24, 2010). Migliavacca (b ca 1720) would also be made a counsellor of legation in that year.

¹¹⁰⁵ Algarotti, "Vita di Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini." 319-320, 334.

¹¹⁰⁶ Algarotti, *Vita di Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini*.

other leading thinkers of Europe, must also have enabled him to form these contacts more easily. This aside, there is another factor that may have contributed to Algarotti's warm reception by the Italian community in Dresden. All the members of this community that Algarotti came to know were connected to the arts in some way. For both visual artists and poets, being thought to have taste was essential to their success.¹¹⁰⁷ As the contents of both his *Newtonianismo* and his *Rime*, and his having been called to Frederick's court, would have demonstrated, Algarotti was in possession of this characteristic.¹¹⁰⁸

Taste was thought to be essential to civilized life in the eighteenth century.¹¹⁰⁹ However, it is an extremely difficult concept to define. In essence, taste was understood in the eighteenth century as having the type of wisdom necessary to pronounce judgements on the quality of a work of art (in the broad sense of the term). Taste was thought to be both innate and acquired at the same time; that is, only those who had a certain innate sensibility to begin with were capable of acquiring taste. Simply having this innate sensibility was insufficient, however: in order for this aptitude to evolve into taste, one had to take steps to cultivate it. Experience being considered a necessary factor in acquiring taste, those who had spent a great deal of time observing and evaluating art considered to be great in various ages, and in various places, were thought to be more

¹¹⁰⁷ Rochelle Gurstein, "Taste and 'The Conversible World' in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 61, no. 2 (2000): 210.

¹¹⁰⁸ Although the idea of taste had existed in some form prior to the eighteenth century, it was only at this time that it became the subject of serious debate and investigation (Ibid.: 204.) For an in-depth discussion of the evolution of this concept over the course of the eighteenth century, see Ernst Cassirer's section on aesthetics in Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz C.A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), 275-360.

¹¹⁰⁹ Gurstein, "Taste and 'The Conversible World' in the Eighteenth Century," 204.

qualified to pronounce judgement on subsequent works of art they saw.¹¹¹⁰

Having travelled extensively in Europe, Algarotti certainly fit this description.

Algarotti's reputation for being in possession of taste, in conjunction with his connections with the community of Italian artists living in Dresden, would eventually result in opportunities for him at the court. In the meantime, however, given that he had not managed to obtain a position by May of 1742, he began making plans to visit his brother in Venice.¹¹¹¹ It seems that Algarotti's impending trip to Venice was considered newsworthy, all the more so because of what it was assumed that Algarotti would be doing there. Frederick wrote to inform him that he had read in a certain "chronique scandaleuse" that Algarotti had managed to obtain the post of Venetian resident for Augustus III.¹¹¹² While he admitted that he was returning to Italy, Algarotti assured Frederick that it was completely untrue that he was going in this guise; in fact, he stated, such a thing had never even been proposed to him by Augustus III.¹¹¹³ Algarotti told Frederick that, in the future, the only place in which the monarch would see his name in print was in a literary journal, as he planned to dedicate himself entirely to scholarly endeavours.¹¹¹⁴ Algarotti's claims that he planned to engage exclusively in intellectual pursuits were genuine. In a letter to Bonomo, Francesco announced that he planned to dedicate the rest of his life to philosophy,

¹¹¹⁰ Ibid., 209, 215.

¹¹¹¹ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1851), 49-50, Francesco Algarotti to Frederick II, Dresden 20 May 1742.

¹¹¹² Ibid., 47, Frederick to Algarotti, Chrudim 10 May 1742.

¹¹¹³ Ibid., 49, Algarotti to Frederick, Dresden 20 May 1742.

¹¹¹⁴ Ibid., 50, Algarotti to Frederick, Dresden 20 May 1742.

and noted that he looked forward to finishing some old projects and beginning some new ones.¹¹¹⁵

Although Algarotti had planned to depart for Venice in June of 1742, by August he still had not managed to leave Dresden.¹¹¹⁶ Fighting connected to the First Silesian War was preventing him from traveling, so he decided to put the trip off until fall, when he hoped that traveling conditions would be safer.¹¹¹⁷ True to his word, Francesco wrote to Bonomo in early September announcing that he planned to leave for Italy in a matter of weeks, asking his brother to inform the Venetian ambassador to Vienna of his impending arrival in that city (where he planned to stop along the way) just a few weeks later.¹¹¹⁸ However, on the eve of Algarotti's departure, he received an invitation from Augustus III to spend a few days at Hubertusburg, the royal hunting palace near Leipzig.¹¹¹⁹ His reunion with Bonomo was once again put on hold, as he decided to accept the invitation.¹¹²⁰

It was during this time at Hubertusburg that Algarotti's contacts, and his reputation for having taste, would prove useful. At the time of his arrival, a surprise performance of an opera was being planned for Augustus's birthday.¹¹²¹ Algarotti was known to be a connoisseur of Italian opera.¹¹²² He was asked by the

¹¹¹⁵ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 18 June 1742.

¹¹¹⁶ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 11 June 1742; BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 13 August 1742.

¹¹¹⁷ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 13 August 1742.

¹¹¹⁸ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 3 September 1742; BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 28 September 1742.

¹¹¹⁹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Hubertsbourg 14 October 1742. Hubertusburg is in Wernsdorf, near Oschats (Marx, "Painting in Dresden in the Eighteenth Century," 23-24.)

¹¹²⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Hubertusburg 14 October 1742.

¹¹²¹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Hubertsbourg 14 October 1742. The opera in question was Francesco Cavalli's *Didone*.

¹¹²² Stefan Lemny, *Les Cantemir: L'aventure européenne d'une famille princière au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 2009), 257. For an overview of opera in the eighteenth century and the

organizers of the performance to make some alterations to the opera in order to make it more suitable for the venue in which it was to be performed, and in order to incorporate a mention of the King's birthday into the finale.¹¹²³ Algarotti's reputation as an operatic connoisseur aside, his friendship with the Dresden artists connected to the operatic world may certainly have contributed to his being asked to undertake this task. The changes that Algarotti made were a success: after the performance, he was invited to dine with the maestro of the opera, who paid him many compliments.¹¹²⁴

More significantly, the changes Algarotti made to this opera enabled him to gain the attention of Augustus III, who told the Venetian he had enjoyed the performance immensely.¹¹²⁵ As a result of Augustus's appreciation for his work, Algarotti was invited by the King to remain at Hubertusburg for an extended period.¹¹²⁶ Algarotti found the lifestyle he had in Hubertusburg to be quite to his liking: he related the luxurious details of this lifestyle to Bonomo, telling him that an opera was performed at least two times per week, and that a sumptuous meal was served every day.¹¹²⁷

Having won the good graces of the King, and having been invited to extend his stay in Hubertusburg, provided Algarotti with an excellent opportunity.

debates surrounding it (in particular, the debate as to whether Italian or French opera was superior) see Mary Hunter, "Opera," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment, e-reference edition*, Alan Charles Kors, ed. (Oxford University Press, 2002, 2005). <http://www.oxford-enlightenment.com/entry?entry+t173.e512> accessed April 10, 2010. In 1755, Algarotti would write a work on opera, in which he would call for a large-scale overhaul of the way in which operatic performances were staged in Italy (Francesco Algarotti, "Saggio sopra l'opera in musica," in *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 3* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1791).

¹¹²³ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Hubertsbourg 14 October 1742.

¹¹²⁴ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Hubertsbourg 14 October 1742.

¹¹²⁵ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Hubertsbourg 22 October 1742.

¹¹²⁶ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Hubertsbourg 22 October 1742.

¹¹²⁷ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Hubertsbourg 22 October 1742.

During his travels in the past, Algarotti had made use of the time he spent with the well-known intellectuals he had met in order to promote his talents to them. Part of this self-promotion had involved showing the works he had written (for example, the *Newtonianismo*) to these scholars. While doing so had had the obvious advantage of creating an interest in these works, it had also provided him with a vehicle through which he could demonstrate his knowledge and intellectual abilities. Algarotti used a similar approach in promoting his erudition and talents to Augustus during the time he spent in Hubertusburg. Knowing that Augustus was in the process of trying to revamp the royal art gallery by expanding the collection dramatically,¹¹²⁸ Algarotti sought to gain a position from him in connection with this undertaking. Accordingly, on October 28, 1742, Algarotti presented the King with his *Progetto per ridurre a compimento il Reggio Museo di Dresda*, or *Project to Bring the Royal Museum of Dresden to Completion*, a document in which he had laid out his own suggestions as to how this could be accomplished.

Since having been given control of the royal galleries in 1733, Brühl had sent art collectors to scour churches, convents, palaces and villas throughout Europe in search of desirable artworks.¹¹²⁹ He had agents working for Augustus in Vienna, Paris, Madrid, Prague, Holland, Venice, Rome, Florence, and Bologna.¹¹³⁰ These agents came from diverse backgrounds; while some were

¹¹²⁸ Francesco Algarotti, "Progetto per ridurre a compimento il Regio Museo di Dresda. Presentato in Hubertsbourg alla RM di Augusto III Re di Polonia il di 28 ottobre 1742," in *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 8* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1794), 353.

¹¹²⁹ Giancarlo Roversi, "Il Commercio dei quadri a Bologna nel Settecento," *L'Archiginnasio: bulletino della biblioteca comunale di Bologna* LX (1965): 460-1.

¹¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 461.

artists and established dealers, others were government ministers, ambassadors, and courtiers.¹¹³¹ For instance, Count Villo, Saxon minister in Venice, doubled as an art collector for Augustus.¹¹³² In 1750, Augustus's personal physician Gian Lodovico Bianconi would also be given double-duty as an art collector. Several nobles, artists, and writers living in Italy also offered their occasional assistance to Augustus and Brühl in this regard.¹¹³³

In choosing candidates whose primary function would be that of art collector, Augustus and Brühl sought people with specific characteristics. One of these was demonstrated knowledge of art. Ventura Rossi who, in 1741, had acquired seventy paintings in Northern Italy for the royal collection, had been a court painter in Dresden prior to being engaged as an art collector.¹¹³⁴ Pietro Guarienti, who also worked as a full-time art collector for Augustus, had studied painting in Bologna under Giuseppe Maria Crespi for seven years before taking on this role.¹¹³⁵ Already-established contacts, in combination with the ability to establish new ones in the place where they were sent was another trait that Augustus and Brühl appear to have sought in their art collectors. Given that the art that Augustus was most interested in acquiring was that of Italian origin, that Rossi and Guarienti were Italian may have also been a factor that influenced Augustus to select them: being from Italy, these men would already have a network of contacts there, networks that they could easily build upon. For

¹¹³¹ Marx, "Painting in Dresden in the Eighteenth Century," 30.

¹¹³² Roversi, "Il Commercio dei quadri," 465.

¹¹³³ Ibid., 460, 495.

¹¹³⁴ von Holst, *Creators, Collectors and Connoisseurs*, 169.; Roversi, "Il Commercio dei quadri," 465. Ventura Rossi's full name was Bonaventura Rossi.

¹¹³⁵ Roversi, "Il Commercio dei quadri," 462.

instance, Guarienti was particularly well-connected in Bologna, where he was a member of the Accademia Clementina, the city's artistic academy.¹¹³⁶ In his role as art collector for Augustus, Bologna was among the many places he was sent to acquire art.¹¹³⁷

In writing his *Progetto*, Algarotti went to great lengths to demonstrate his vast knowledge pertaining to all areas of art, some of which he had likely acquired while undertaking research for the treatise on painting he had begun working on in 1741. Through the suggestions he made for purchases for the different areas of the collection in the *Progetto*, he demonstrated that he was familiar with artists in all of the fields concerned, and had the good taste necessary to discern who the best artists were.¹¹³⁸ He also sought to demonstrate that he understood artistic techniques. In suggesting that modern artists be commissioned to paint paintings for the gallery, he recommended that they be assigned subjects that best matched their abilities; for instance, that artists whose skill lay more in drawing than colouring be assigned subjects that did not require a good use of colour, such as nudes.¹¹³⁹ He also suggested that the collection of prints be organized according to the school to which the artist belonged, in order to demonstrate the evolution of the art of painting.¹¹⁴⁰ Algarotti emphasized his familiarity with the benefits of being exposed to works of art by stating that, if his suggestions were followed, “the souls of Saxons will be ignited with love of the fine arts” with the result that “good taste, the son of fine arts, would soon

¹¹³⁶ Ibid., 462.

¹¹³⁷ Ibid., 462.

¹¹³⁸ Algarotti, "Progetto per ridurre a compimento il Regio Museo di Dresda." 354, 356, 366-371.

¹¹³⁹ Ibid., 356.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 357.

permeate everything” in Dresden.¹¹⁴¹ In addition, he sought to show that he knew how to acquire the art necessary for the completion of the royal collection. He pointed out that he knew of collections in Italy from which various items could be purchased.¹¹⁴² In order to improve the collection of medals, he suggested that a catalogue of the existing collection be made, and given to someone who could then travel about in search medals to compliment the existing collection.¹¹⁴³ Finally, he offered specific suggestions as to the contents of paintings that modern artists should be commissioned to create, and which painter should be commissioned for each work.¹¹⁴⁴

In order to further increase the chances that his suggestions would be favourably received by Augustus, Algarotti resorted to what had proven to be a reliable method of winning favour in the past: flattery. In the *Progetto*, Algarotti stated that, if his suggestions were followed, he was certain that the gallery would be looked upon by future generations as a monument to Augustus’s glory.¹¹⁴⁵ He recommended that the best artist available be commissioned to paint a portrait of Augustus in Roman garb, a portrait that would immortalize Augustus’s contribution to the museum.¹¹⁴⁶ He also made certain to compliment the items Augustus already had in his collection. For instance, he pointed out that Augustus

¹¹⁴¹ “Un simile Museo accenderebbe più che mai gli animi de’ Sassoni...”, “Il buon gusto, che è figlio delle arti del disegno, s’insinuerebbe a poco a poco in ogni cosa...” (Ibid., 372, 373).

¹¹⁴² Ibid., 357.

¹¹⁴³ Ibid., 358.

¹¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 366-371.

¹¹⁴⁵ “...per sempre sia un glorioso monumento d’un sovrano a cui le Muse son care...” (Ibid., 353.)

¹¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 370.

had some rare, and beautiful, statues in his possession.¹¹⁴⁷ He described Augustus's collection of paintings as the most beautiful part of the museum, and pointed to this as evidence of Augustus's excellent taste.¹¹⁴⁸ He concluded by stating that he would be pleased if any of his suggestions could increase the splendour of Augustus's reign.¹¹⁴⁹

Algarotti's *Progetto* had the desired effect: it won him a position at the court of Augustus, that of art collector. Through this document, he had demonstrated that he had one of the necessary characteristics for such a position: a vast knowledge of art. That Algarotti also had the other necessary characteristic, the ability to form networks, had been demonstrated by his ability to form contacts with the community of Italian artists living in Dresden. Given that many of these artists were connected to the court in some way, Algarotti's networking abilities would have come to Augustus's attention. Given that he would be sent to Venice in order to carry out his commission, Algarotti's pre-existing networks in Italy would also have been a consideration. His brother Bonomo, who lived in Venice, was an art collector by profession. This being the case, Algarotti would have access to a wide-reaching network there composed of people selling and producing art, in addition to the other contacts he had formed during his studies and travels in Italy.

Exactly when Augustus made this offer to Algarotti is unclear. In mid-December of 1742, Francesco wrote to Bonomo asking him to send an exact list

¹¹⁴⁷ "Benchè tutte le statue non sieno del medesimo valore, come nol sono in niuna Galleria, havvene però di bellissime." (Ibid., 359.)

¹¹⁴⁸ "Vengo ora alla parte più bella del Museo e che è la più compita mercè la munificenza e il gusto di S.M...." (Ibid., 360.)

¹¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 374.

of all the paintings in their house in Venice and their sizes.¹¹⁵⁰ He told Bonomo that he was not able to explain the reason for this request.¹¹⁵¹ This suggests either that Augustus had agreed to engage Algarotti's services by this time, but had asked him to keep quiet about it, or that the two were in negotiations regarding this position. Meanwhile, Algarotti's reputation as someone with artistic taste was building. In late December of 1742, Count Nikulaus Esterházy, minister in Dresden for the queen of Hungary and Bohemia, asked Algarotti to design some decorative porcelain statues for the queen's table.¹¹⁵² Algarotti was happy to oblige, suggesting compositions for seven different porcelain table statues, and even provided suggestions for additional statues for the garden of the queen.¹¹⁵³

Finally, in late January of 1743, Francesco wrote to Bonomo to announce that Augustus had commissioned him to travel to Italy in order to collect paintings for the royal gallery.¹¹⁵⁴ Once he had arrived in their native land, Francesco planned to take a quick tour of Italy in order to assess what was available where.¹¹⁵⁵ He confessed to his brother that he was quite excited about having been offered this assignment, as it meant he could devote even more of his time to the fine arts.¹¹⁵⁶

¹¹⁵⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 18 December 1742.

¹¹⁵¹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 18 December 1742.

¹¹⁵² Francesco Algarotti, *Opere del conte Algarotti. Vol. 6* (Livorno: M. Coltellini, 1764), 172-175, Francesco Algarotti to N. Estherasi, Dresden 24 December 1742.

¹¹⁵³ Ibid., 172-175, Algarotti to Estherasi, Dresden 24 December 1742.

¹¹⁵⁴ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti Dresden, 28 January 1743.

¹¹⁵⁵ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti Dresden, 28 January 1743.

¹¹⁵⁶ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti Dresden, 28 January 1743.

Art collecting in eighteenth-century Venice

The art of painting flourished in eighteenth-century Venice.¹¹⁵⁷ However, contemporary artists there were not well-supported by Venetians themselves. Although the Venetian government had previously commissioned local artists heavily, during the eighteenth century state commission of local artists had virtually ceased.¹¹⁵⁸ Venetian patricians did not represent a significant source of patronage for contemporary artists, either. They most often acquired art collections through inheritance and rarely made efforts to expand these collections.¹¹⁵⁹ These private collections seldom contained works painted after the seventeenth century. In fact, many of the collections held by Venetian patricians contained the same items at the beginning of the eighteenth century as they did at century's end.¹¹⁶⁰

The majority of Venetians who were patrons and collectors of contemporary Venetian art were not members of the patrician class.¹¹⁶¹ A large number of these were book publishers.¹¹⁶² The high international demand for

¹¹⁵⁷ Michael Levy, *Painting in XVIII Century Venice* (London: Phaidon Press, 1959), 2. For an extensive overview of painting in Venice in the eighteenth century, see Rodolfo Pallucchini, *La Pittura nel Veneto: Il Settecento* (Milan: Electa, 1995-1996), 2 vols.

¹¹⁵⁸ Levy, *Painting in XVIII Century Venice.*, 19; Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters; A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1980), 246.

¹¹⁵⁹ Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux: Paris, Venise: XVIe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 223, 225.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 224, 225.

¹¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 226-227. Bonomo Algarotti provides an excellent example of such patronage, as he made his living by collecting and selling art. Although he had inherited a large part of his personal collection from his father, he sought to improve on this collection by making new acquisitions.

¹¹⁶² Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 332.

Venetian books translated into a great need for artists to illustrate these books. In addition to hiring artists to illustrate their books, however, Venetian book publishers often commissioned works from these artists for their private collections. For instance, book publishers Giambattista Albrizzi and Giambattista Pasquali both commissioned a great deal of art for their personal collections in addition to that which they commissioned for their books.¹¹⁶³ Book publishers sometimes also expanded their enterprise into print selling, and hired artists to create these prints.¹¹⁶⁴ For example, the book-publishing firm of Remondini made most of its money selling prints, which it engaged artists to create.¹¹⁶⁵

Although the commissions provided by Venetians to Venetian artists were few, over the course of the century the number of art collectors active in the Veneto region increased from seventy to approximately one hundred and fifty.¹¹⁶⁶ The demand for Italian art among foreigners seeking to improve their collections, either through the acquisition of older paintings or of contemporary ones, was high.¹¹⁶⁷ Due to the dearth of opportunities available to them in Venice, Venetian artists received most of their commissions for foreigners.¹¹⁶⁸ As is evidenced by the colony of Italian artists living in Dresden, many Venetian artists spent a large part of their careers working outside Venice. Even those who continued to live in Venice most often made their living through foreign commissions. Some of these commissions would come from wealthy people living in Venice as foreign

¹¹⁶³ Ibid., 332, 334, 336, 399. Both Albrizzi and Pasquali were notable members of the Venetian intellectual scene as well, particularly Albrizzi, who was the editor of the *Novelle della repubblica delle lettere*.

¹¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 340.

¹¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 340. Remondini was based in Bassano, but had a branch in Venice.

¹¹⁶⁶ Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux*, 221.

¹¹⁶⁷ Roversi, "Il Commercio dei quadri," 458.

¹¹⁶⁸ Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux*, 226.

residents, a group whose numbers were significant in the eighteenth century. These foreign residents would assemble collections of art, both old and new, either to sell to people in their countries of origin, or to take with them when they left.¹¹⁶⁹

Foreigners living outside of Venice were also great patrons of Venetian art, both in terms of buying old paintings, and in terms of commissioning new ones.¹¹⁷⁰ In the case of older art, which, in comparison to other European cities, was rarely for sale in Venice, those who wished to purchase it were required to get to know the owner of the painting they wished to acquire. This being the case, wealthy foreigners looking to purchase Venetian art would often make use of intermediaries to act on their behalf. When wishing to purchase a great deal of Venetian art, foreign collectors would send someone to Venice to do so on their behalf. However, when foreign buyers sought only to acquire a few, specific paintings, they would make use of someone already living in the city to act as intermediary. In some cases, foreign residents filled this role.¹¹⁷¹ The most famous example of a foreign resident who acted as intermediary for art collectors is Joseph Smith. Smith is considered to be the most important patron of Venetian art in his day.¹¹⁷² Having settled in Venice in the early eighteenth century in the guise of businessman and merchant, he was made British Consul to the city in 1744. His extensive patronage of the arts meant that he was in close contact with nearly all the leading painters of the city. In addition to collecting and

¹¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 224-225.

¹¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 225.

¹¹⁷¹ Ibid., 222-224.

¹¹⁷² Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 299.

commissioning art directly, Smith also gave his support to the publishing industry, providing Giambattista Pasquali with the financial backing to open his publishing business in the early 1730s. He maintained close ties with area intellectuals as well, including Carlo Lodoli, Giovanni Poleni, and Antonio Maria Zanetti,¹¹⁷³ all of whom were known to Algarotti. His extensive connections in the Venetian art scene, and his extensive personal art collection, made Smith an ideal person from whom to acquire Venetian paintings, either by engaging him as a middle-man, or by purchasing paintings from him directly. In fact, Augustus III acquired a number of paintings from Smith in 1741.¹¹⁷⁴

In other cases, Venetian artists acted as intermediaries for foreigners wishing to purchase art.¹¹⁷⁵ As artists, they would have an extensive knowledge of the art scene in Venice, and would be well-connected to other artists there, as well as to collectors. One example of such an intermediary is Antonio Maria Zanetti the Elder. Zanetti had studied painting in both Venice and Bologna.¹¹⁷⁶ An engraver by profession and an art collector himself, Zanetti was well-connected to Venice's leading artists. He had the reputation of being one of the city's chief connoisseurs, and as such several foreign collectors maintained a correspondence with him, and made use of his intermediary services.¹¹⁷⁷ As was the case with Smith, Augustus made use of Zanetti's services in order to acquire paintings on occasion.¹¹⁷⁸ Algarotti, who was already acquainted with Zanetti

¹¹⁷³ Ibid., 299-301.

¹¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 307.

¹¹⁷⁵ Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux*, 222.

¹¹⁷⁶ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 341.

¹¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 341; Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux*, 227.

¹¹⁷⁸ Roversi, "Il Commercio dei quadri," 465.

prior to being engaged as an art collector for Augustus, must have realized that Zanetti could be of great use to him in his art collecting endeavours: prior to his departure from Dresden, he asked Bonomo to say hello to Zanetti for him.¹¹⁷⁹ Indeed, Zanetti's help would prove invaluable to Algarotti in his new post.

Algarotti as art collector in Venice

Shortly after announcing to his brother that he had been engaged as an art collector for Augustus, Algarotti departed for Venice. While en-route, Francesco told Bonomo that, in his imagination, his home-coming would be like Cicero's return to Rome.¹¹⁸⁰ However, his triumphant return was marred by domestic unpleasantness. Despite his long absence, and the various successes he had achieved during this time, Francesco discovered that Bonomo's attitude towards his brother's future had not changed. Bonomo still harboured dreams of seeing Francesco established in an advantageous marriage, and set about trying to arrange one almost immediately after Francesco's arrival in Venice, without Francesco's consent.¹¹⁸¹ Francesco's attitude towards his future had not changed either, however, with the result that Bonomo's attempts would not meet with success.

¹¹⁷⁹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Lazaretto di Verona 18 April 1743.

¹¹⁸⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Lazaretto di Verona 18 April 1743.

¹¹⁸¹ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, ed. Alessandro Bettagno and Marina Magrini (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 2002), 90, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 17 June 1743.

As had been the case when Algarotti had travelled to Turin to undertake the secret diplomatic mission for Frederick, word of Algarotti's voyage spread quickly. Having heard that his friend was returning to Italy, in May of 1743, Eustachio Zanotti, with whom Algarotti had studied in Bologna, and who had visited Algarotti in Turin, wrote to enquire as to the nature of his trip.¹¹⁸² He informed Algarotti that his friends in Bologna were curious to learn whether he had returned in order to fulfil another royal commission, and, if so, whether it was on behalf of Frederick or Augustus.¹¹⁸³ Certain that Algarotti had returned with a commission of some kind, Zanotti had told Algarotti's friends as much, although he was careful to state that he was uncertain of the nature of this commission, or who it was being carried out for.¹¹⁸⁴ Indeed, Algarotti attempted to keep the nature of his assignment secret. He hoped to lead people to believe that he was purchasing art for his own collection, rather than for that of Augustus, in order to ensure buyers would offer him a fair price.¹¹⁸⁵

The use of this tactic is one among many interesting things that Algarotti's work as an art collector for Augustus reveals about the mechanics of such an undertaking in eighteenth-century Venice. Algarotti would use the same methods to form networks and make a name for himself in the art collecting world as he had when seeking to do so in the intellectual world. He made great efforts to draw attention to his talents, knowledge, and intelligence, chiefly through the

¹¹⁸² Museo Biblioteca Archivio di Bassano del Grappa (MBAB) Epistolario Gamba III.A.10 cc.294, Eustachio Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 7 May 1743.

¹¹⁸³ MBAB Epistolario Gamba III.A.10 cc.294, Eustachio Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 7 May 1743.

¹¹⁸⁴ MBAB Epistolario Gamba III.A.10 cc.294, Eustachio Zanotti to Francesco Algarotti, Bologna 7 May 1743.

¹¹⁸⁵ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, 102, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

written word. When scandal arose, he tried to make use of it to show his superiority over his rival. As had been the case before, employing these methods would bring Algarotti even greater prestige and success.

Demonstration of worth: the art collector and the art

As Brühl was in charge of the royal art collections, it was to him that Algarotti would write to report on the work he was doing in Venice. He wrote his first letter to Brühl in June of 1743, shortly after his arrival in Venice.¹¹⁸⁶ In it, he mentioned his brother's attempts to convince him to marry, but noted that he had been able to ignore this distraction and set straight to work for Augustus upon his arrival in his native city.¹¹⁸⁷ In fact, he had already acquired an unspecified Old Master painting, by Veronese, for the collection.¹¹⁸⁸ Perhaps with his brother's then recently acquired commission in mind, Bonomo had purchased the painting at a very advantageous price that March, and then sold it to Augustus through Francesco.¹¹⁸⁹

In this first letter, as in all his subsequent letters to Brühl, Algarotti made great efforts to demonstrate that he was dedicating all of his efforts to carrying out his commission successfully. For instance, in his first letter to Brühl, he made note of all the paintings of interest he had seen for sale to date.¹¹⁹⁰ In a

¹¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 90, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 17 June 1743.

¹¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 91, 95, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 17 June 1743. Algarotti told Brühl that focusing his attention on his work for Augustus consoled him in these times of domestic difficulty.

¹¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 91, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 17 June 1743.

¹¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 92, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 17 June 1743.

¹¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 97, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 17 June 1743.

subsequent letter, also concerning paintings of interest for sale, Algarotti stated that he had had drawings of the paintings made so that Augustus could see them for himself before deciding whether or not they should be purchased.¹¹⁹¹ He informed Brühl of the efforts he made to purchase art from well-known collections, such as that of Zaccaria Sagredo.¹¹⁹² Sagredo, who had died in 1729, had been a leading patron of the arts in Venice, and had amassed an impressive art collection.¹¹⁹³ Given that Zanetti had been a friend of Sagredo's,¹¹⁹⁴ it is likely that Algarotti had learned what this collection contained from him. He told Brühl that he had developed a plan to deal with sellers who were asking too high a price for their art: he would feign indifference in their collections until such time as they would make a more reasonable offer.¹¹⁹⁵

In addition to demonstrating his own value as an art collector, Algarotti took pains to demonstrate the worth of each painting he acquired for the royal collection. Many of these justifications relied heavily on what other people thought of the painting in question. In trying to build a reputation for himself as a noteworthy intellectual, Algarotti had often tried to highlight his associations with well-known scholars. In doing so, Algarotti was in part attempting to use the interest of these scholars in him and his work as a demonstration of the value of his work. In much the same way, Algarotti would make use of the interest a given

¹¹⁹¹ Ibid., 108-109, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 9 August 1743.

¹¹⁹² Ibid., 96, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice s.d. (July 1743). Algarotti was attempting to purchase these paintings from Sagredo's widow.

¹¹⁹³ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 263.

¹¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 266.

¹¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 96 Algarotti to Brühl, Venice s.d. (July 1743).

painter or painting had garnered in those whose artistic opinions were valued in order to prove the painting's worth.

The *Relazione storica de'quadri acquistati dal Conte Francesco Algarotti per la Maestà del Re di Polonia Elettore di Sassonia eccetera eccetera eccetera*, or *Historical account of the paintings acquired by Count Francesco Algarotti for His Majesty the King of Poland Elector of Saxony etcetera etcetera etcetera*, a document Algarotti submitted to Augustus in 1744, contains several such demonstrations of value.¹¹⁹⁶ In this document, Algarotti listed each painting he bought for the royal collection, describing its history, its composition, and how he came to obtain it. In each of these descriptions, Algarotti always made certain to provide a reason why the painting was worth having. In some cases, he would do so by discussing what technique the artist had used, or what the artist was trying to achieve in the painting, in order to highlight its artistic value.¹¹⁹⁷ In other cases he would point to the value of the artist who had produced the work in question, sometimes by likening the artist to another, more famous one, and other times by drawing attention to the reputation the artist had among his or her peers or among art connoisseurs, himself included.¹¹⁹⁸ Algarotti also pointed to the reputations of the works themselves in order to demonstrate their worth, by mentioning who their previous prestigious owners had been.¹¹⁹⁹ If someone of note thought a painting was worth having, how could Augustus not agree?

¹¹⁹⁶ Francesco Algarotti, "Relazione storica de'quadri acquistati dal Conte Francesco Algarotti per la Maestà del Re di Polonia Elettore di Sassonia eccetera eccetera eccetera," in *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, ed. Alessandro Bettagno and Marina Magrini (Vicenza: Nero Pozzi Editore, 2002).

¹¹⁹⁷ See, for example, *Ibid.*, 122-123, 128.

¹¹⁹⁸ See, for example, *Ibid.*, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 130, 134.

¹¹⁹⁹ See, for example, *Ibid.*, 123, 124, 126, 130, 133, 134.

Prior to writing this document, Algarotti had attempted to demonstrate the worth of the paintings he had acquired in a similar manner in his letters to Brühl. Algarotti went to great lengths to impress upon Brühl that the Veronese painting he had acquired in June of 1743 was held in high esteem by others. Algarotti told Brühl that this particular painting was the subject of great admiration on the part of all present-day Venetian painters, especially Giambattista Tiepolo, who had studied Veronese's work extensively.¹²⁰⁰ In order to show that art collectors agreed with Tiepolo's assessment, Algarotti pointed out that Zanetti had previously attempted, and failed, to purchase the Veronese painting on behalf of Philippe, duke d'Orleans.¹²⁰¹ As further proof of the value of this painting, Algarotti told Brühl that, if Augustus did not want it, he would be glad to keep it for the Algarotti family collection.¹²⁰²

Algarotti argued in a similar vein to justify purchasing two paintings by Sebastiano Ricci in July of 1743.¹²⁰³ He pointed out that he had bought these paintings from Zanetti,¹²⁰⁴ a knowledgeable art collector whose ownership of the painting was demonstrative of its value. In order to further justify these purchases, he told Brühl that, while he had been in Vienna en route to Venice, Daniele Antonio Bertoli, who was a painter at the court there, had told him about how beautiful these paintings were.¹²⁰⁵ In October of 1743, he again referred to

¹²⁰⁰ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, 92, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 17 June 1743.

¹²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 92, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 17 June 1743.

¹²⁰² *Ibid.*, 95, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice s.d. (July 1743).

¹²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 97, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice s.d. (July 1743).

¹²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 97, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice s.d. (July 1743).

¹²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 97, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice s.d. (July 1743). For more on Bertoli, see Andrea Corna, "Bertoli, Antonio Daniele, Conte," in *Dizionario della storia dell'arte in Italia. Vol. I* (Piacenza: Tarantola, 1930). WBIS online

the admiration of others, both artists and otherwise, to justify his purchase of paintings by Palma Vecchio Schiavone. He reported to Brühl that, since he had acquired these paintings, he had received non-stop visits from painters and dilettantes asking to see them.¹²⁰⁶

The worth of the art collector's network: Algarotti's use of intermediaries

Although Algarotti's knowledge of art and use of the written word to demonstrate this contributed to his success as an art collector, his networks were also of great importance in this regard. Like most other art collectors seeking to purchase Venetian paintings, he occasionally made use of intermediaries to act on his behalf. In the past, Algarotti had made use of intermediaries through which to promote his written work, by having them write introductions for it, and send it to people with whom they were acquainted on his behalf. He had also made use of intermediaries in order to promote himself to others, through letters of recommendation. In doing so, Algarotti was able to gain access to, and form relationships with, the contacts of these intermediaries. Similarly, in using Algarotti as an intermediary, Augustus sought to make use of his connection to Algarotti to gain access to art collectors in Algarotti's network. Indeed, Algarotti's Venetian contacts did include some art collectors, such as his brother Bonomo, and Zanetti. However, in order to ensure his success in purchasing paintings from people with whom he was not yet acquainted, Algarotti would

<http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=20d6> (consulted August 22, 2010).

¹²⁰⁶ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, 116 Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 4 October 1743.

make use of his contacts, with Bonomo and Zanetti as well as with others, to gain access to these people.

Carrying out his work for Augustus naturally brought Algarotti into contact with several significant figures on the Venetian art scene. Among these were artists. Certainly, any one of his contacts that were well connected in the art world, such as his brother Bonomo, or Zanetti, could have helped him expand his network among Venetian artists. The contacts he made within the community of Italian artists living in Dresden may also have helped him in this regard. However, the commissions he gave Venetian artists on the part of Augustus likely helped to cement the relationships he had formed with them. Augustus had decided to accept Algarotti's suggestion, laid out in the *Progetto*, that modern artists be commissioned to paint paintings for the gallery. Accordingly, Algarotti engaged the services of Francesco Zuccarelli, Giambattista Pittoni, Jacopo Amigoni, Giambattista Piazzetta, and Giambattista Tiepolo to this end.¹²⁰⁷ Also in accordance with the recommendations made in the *Progetto*, Algarotti assigned each artist a subject that best matched his respective talents.¹²⁰⁸

Algarotti's relationship with these artists was mutually beneficial. While he had helped them out by commissioning them to paint works, they could help him out in his art collecting efforts. Specifically, they could function as intermediaries. Of the five artists Algarotti had commissioned to paint paintings

¹²⁰⁷ These paintings arrived in Dresden in June 1746. In 1754, they were still in the gallery store-room, and were then moved to Hubertusburg in 1755. In 1765 they were sold at auction in Amsterdam, and have since all disappeared. See Gregor J.M. Weber, "Catalogue II: Eighteenth Century Paintings Acquired by the Gallery," in *Dresden in the Age of Spendor and Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Paintings from the Old Masters Picture Gallery*, ed. Harald Marx and Gregor J.M. Weber (Columbus, Ohio: Columbus Museum of Art, 1999), 230.

¹²⁰⁸ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, 106 Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 9 August 1743.

for the gallery in Dresden, two in particular would be of especial help to Algarotti: Giambattista Piazzetta and Giambattista Tiepolo. Just as Algarotti's services improved Augustus's prospects of acquiring art in Venice, so too could the intercession of painters help Algarotti obtain pieces for the gallery. The painters Algarotti used as intermediaries had many of the same qualities that had led Augustus to choose Algarotti as his agent. As artists, they were naturally quite knowledgeable about art, and could therefore be counted on, following the examination of a painting, to give a reliable judgement as to whether or not it was worth acquiring. Part of what had motivated Augustus to engage Algarotti's services was the connections he had already formed in Venice; through their work, these artists would have formed connections with Venetian art collectors as well, including collectors whose acquaintance Algarotti sought. Finally, like Algarotti, these artists were renowned figures in Venice, which would make those selling art more inclined to receive their requests to view and purchase pieces in their collections favourably.

Algarotti's association with Piazzetta enabled him to obtain pieces from Venetian art collector and book publisher Giambattista Albrizzi. Piazzetta was a close friend of Albrizzi's.¹²⁰⁹ In fact, the two were so close that, upon Piazzetta's death in 1754, Albrizzi wrote and published a biography of him.¹²¹⁰ Albrizzi was in possession of drawings Piazzetta had done for an edition of Renaissance poet Torquato Tasso's *La Gerusalemme liberata*, or *Jerusalem Delivered*.¹²¹¹ Thanks

¹²⁰⁹ Ibid., 107, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 9 August 1743.

¹²¹⁰ Levy, *Painting in XVIII Century Venice*, 38.

¹²¹¹ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, 109, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 9 August 1743.

to Piazzetta's intercession, Albrizzi offered, through Algarotti, to sell these drawings to Augustus.¹²¹²

Tiepolo's friendship would also enable Algarotti to obtain pieces for the royal collection.¹²¹³ Specifically, Tiepolo assisted Algarotti in acquiring notable pieces from the private collections of Venetian patrician families. In September of 1743, with Tiepolo's help, Algarotti purchased a major work of art for Augustus's collection: a painting by Jean Holbein.¹²¹⁴ In keeping with his strategy of demonstrating the worth of acquisitions through others' opinions of them, Algarotti told Brühl that this painting was so widely admired that, as soon as his acquisition of it had become known, a continuous stream of painters, including Piazzetta, had been coming to his home to see it.¹²¹⁵ Tiepolo also played an instrumental role in Algarotti's acquisition of paintings from the private collections of Mrs. Cornari and Mrs. Sagredo, the widow of Zaccaria Sagredo.¹²¹⁶ In fact, both women had expressly requested that Tiepolo represent their interests in these transactions.¹²¹⁷ The significance of Algarotti's relationship with Tiepolo in the former's ability to purchase these paintings was also recognized by Augustus. As a reward for the help Tiepolo had provided in these acquisitions,

¹²¹² Ibid., 109, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 9 August 1743. Algarotti does not say outright that Piazzetta was directly responsible for this offer being made. However, in his letter to Brühl, he prefaces the announcement that Albrizzi has offered to sell the drawings to Augustus by stating that Piazzetta was a close friend of Albrizzi's.

¹²¹³ Algarotti's association with Tiepolo went beyond one of business. The two would remain in correspondence with each other until 1762, well after Algarotti had stopped working as an art collector for Augustus. See Ivana Miatto, "Alcuni documenti inediti sullo stretto sodalizio tra Francesco Algarotti e Giambattista Tiepolo," *Ricerche di storia dell'arte* no. 61 (1997): 93.

¹²¹⁴ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I.*, 111, 113, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 6 September 1743. In this letter to Brühl, Algarotti describes Holbein as the Raphael and Leonardo of Germany. He also says that any real dilettante would give both his watch and his ring to own this painting.

¹²¹⁵ Ibid., 111-112, 112 n. 5, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 6 September 1743.

¹²¹⁶ Ibid., 114-116, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 4 October 1743.

¹²¹⁷ Ibid., 116, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 4 October 1743.

Augustus would ask Algarotti to present Tiepolo with a golden snuff box on his behalf in 1744.¹²¹⁸

Venetian art collectors, too, had provided Algarotti with invaluable assistance and advice. Certainly, Bonomo would have been helpful in this regard. Joseph Smith was known to have collaborated with Algarotti as well.¹²¹⁹ The precise circumstances of their relationship, including how they met, are unclear. They did have several associates in common, including Carlo Lodoli, Giovanni Poleni, and Antonio Maria Zanetti, any of whom could have introduced them to each other. However, based on the frequency with which Algarotti mentions him in his letters to Brühl, the Venetian art collector who provided Algarotti with the most assistance appears to have been Antonio Maria Zanetti, with whom Algarotti was already acquainted prior to his arrival in Venice in 1743. A gift made by Augustus to Zanetti further suggests that the latter's help had been invaluable to Algarotti. As he had done for Tiepolo, Augustus entrusted Algarotti with a snuff box to give Zanetti on his behalf (although, rather than being made of gold, as Tiepolo's snuff box had been, Zanetti's was made of porcelain).¹²²⁰

Not being connected to Augustus themselves, the art collectors who helped Algarotti stood, in theory, to gain little from providing him with their assistance, as he technically constituted a business rival to them. Indeed, not all art collectors operating in Venice were eager to help Algarotti; rather, one in particular sought to protect his own interests by trying to impede Algarotti's attempts to purchase various artworks. This was Ventura Rossi, another Italian

¹²¹⁸ Ibid., 141, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 17 July 1744.

¹²¹⁹ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 300.

¹²²⁰ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, 141, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 17 July 1744.

working as art collector for Augustus since at least 1741. In attempts to best his rival, Algarotti would make use of tactics similar to those that Voltaire had employed when trying to demonstrate his worth over that of Algarotti to Frederick in 1740.

The Rossi affair

Rossi would become Algarotti's chief competitor in his efforts to collect art for Augustus.¹²²¹ The rivalry between the two began only a short while after Algarotti's arrival in Venice.¹²²² The trouble began when Algarotti reached a deal with a man named Ricci (who was, apparently, in desperate need of money) to purchase four of his paintings for the royal collection at a very low price.¹²²³ Algarotti had thought this transaction was a done deal, but it turns out he was mistaken: before Algarotti could finalize the sale, Rossi acquired the paintings in question by offering more money for them.¹²²⁴ Following this episode, Algarotti learned that Rossi had also tried to prevent Bonomo from buying the Veronese painting (discussed above) by offering the seller more money.¹²²⁵ Given that the

¹²²¹ Gregor J.M. Weber, "The Gallery as Work of Art: The Installation of the Italian Paintings in 1754," in *Dresden in the Ages of Speldor and Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Paintings from the Old Masters Picture Gallery*, ed. Harald Marx and Gregor J.M. Weber (Columbus, Ohio: Columbus Museum of Art, 1999), 185. Rossi was indeed competitive in nature. He was known to boast frequently about how his talents as a collector had enabled him to acquire top paintings from collections in Rome, Florence, Bologna, and Venice. See Roversi, "Il Commercio dei quadri," 465.

¹²²² *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, 99, n. 84.

¹²²³ Ibid., 99, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²²⁴ Ibid., 99-100 Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²²⁵ Ibid., 100, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

purchase had been made by Bonomo, Algarotti admitted the impossibility of Rossi having known that this Veronese painting was destined for Augustus's collection, and so he was willing to forgive Rossi's actions in this instance.¹²²⁶ However, given that Rossi had known that Algarotti was working as art collector for Augustus at the time, the Ricci affair was something that Algarotti could simply not forgive.¹²²⁷ According to the account he sent Brühl, when Algarotti had confronted Rossi about his behaviour, Rossi had responded by pointing out that he had a commission to buy art for Augustus as well, a commission just as important as Algarotti's, and even proceeded to insult Algarotti.¹²²⁸

Rossi's subsequent actions made it very plain that this incident had not been about the particular paintings themselves, but rather had constituted an attempt to demonstrate that he was a superior art collector to Algarotti. As Algarotti reported to Brühl, Rossi followed him everywhere.¹²²⁹ Algarotti sent an intermediary to examine an unidentified Bassan painting that was for sale on his behalf; the very next day he heard that Rossi had also decided to go see the painting.¹²³⁰ Rossi had even tried to block a deal that Algarotti had sought to broker with his own uncles. These maternal uncles of Algarotti's (whose last name was Meratti) were in possession of three Carlo Maratti paintings.¹²³¹ Thinking that these paintings would be suitable for Augustus's collection, upon his arrival in Venice, Algarotti made his uncles an offer for these works.¹²³² His

¹²²⁶ Ibid., 100, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²²⁷ Ibid., 100, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²²⁸ Ibid., 100, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²²⁹ Ibid., 100, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²³⁰ Ibid., 99-100, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²³¹ Ibid., 100, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²³² Ibid., 101, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

uncles wanted much more money than he was offering, with the result that Algarotti resolved to let the matter sit for a while, in the hopes that his uncles would revise their offer.¹²³³ However, in the meantime Rossi paid a visit to the Merattis and made them a better offer than Algarotti had for the paintings in question.¹²³⁴ Thinking it ridiculous to let Rossi's desire to ruin him prevent him from acquiring these paintings, Algarotti employed the services of an intermediary and, after several days of negotiations managed to secure the paintings for himself, although at a much higher price than he had wanted to pay.¹²³⁵ Fearing Rossi would encroach on all his deals in progress, Algarotti was reluctant to open negotiations on any new deals, and in a great hurry to conclude those he had already begun.¹²³⁶

As he had done when de Castera had tried to damage his intellectual credibility through his translation of *Il Newtonianismo per le dame* in 1738, Algarotti tried to use the scandal Rossi was causing to his advantage. Similarly to the manner in which Voltaire had tried to cast Algarotti in a negative light in the poem he had sent Frederick shortly after leaving Prussia in 1740, Algarotti tried to destroy Rossi's integrity as an art collector by casting him in a negative light in his letters to Brühl. Certainly, reporting all the deals that Rossi had tried to ruin constituted part of this effort. To reinforce his negative opinion of Rossi, Algarotti began referring to him as "la maschera," or "the mask," in his letters to

¹²³³ Ibid., 101, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²³⁴ Ibid., 101, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²³⁵ Ibid., 101, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²³⁶ Ibid., 101, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

Brühl.¹²³⁷ Algarotti also sought to damage Rossi's reputation by contrasting his own positive motivations with Rossi's negative ones. He went to great lengths to point out how Rossi's actions were damaging not only Algarotti's reputation, but also the potential greatness of Augustus's collection. He told Brühl that what upset him the most about the whole situation was that someone he had imagined might help him had instead become his competitor.¹²³⁸ Algarotti had been trying to behave as though he were purchasing paintings for his personal collection in order to get the lowest price possible from sellers.¹²³⁹ However, because Rossi was known to be an art collector for Augustus, having purchased several paintings for him in Northern Italy in 1741, the rivalry he was causing was drawing attention to the fact that Algarotti was also working for the King.¹²⁴⁰

Algarotti tried to turn his rivalry with Rossi to his advantage. As a solution to the problems that Rossi was causing, Algarotti proposed that Augustus grant him a title, as this would set him apart from Rossi by making it evident that Augustus valued the services he provided.¹²⁴¹ Algarotti even had a suggestion as to what this title should be: "Superintendent of the King's buildings and Exhibition Rooms."¹²⁴² Knowing that Brühl was a favourite of Augustus's, Algarotti implored him to speak to the King about the matter on his behalf.¹²⁴³ Perhaps in order to provide further incentive to the minister, Algarotti informed Brühl that he had commissioned Tiepolo to do two paintings to give him as a

¹²³⁷ Ibid., 101, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²³⁸ Ibid., 102, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²³⁹ Ibid., 102, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²⁴⁰ Ibid., 102, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²⁴¹ Ibid., 102, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²⁴² "surintendant des bâtiments et cabinets du Roi" Ibid., 102, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²⁴³ Ibid., 103, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

gift.¹²⁴⁴ Unfortunately for Algarotti, however, his efforts were to no avail, and his request for this title was refused.¹²⁴⁵

Although efforts to gain royal assistance in this matter had been unsuccessful, Algarotti did not let the matter drop. Instead, he sought help in besting his rival from other people living in Dresden, specifically, Marie de Sylvestre (or Silvestre), who was likely the wife of Dresden court painter Louis de Silvestre.¹²⁴⁶ In November of 1743, he received a letter from de Sylvestre, the content of which suggests that she was responding to a request from Algarotti for information on the paintings Rossi had recently acquired in Italy. Saying she had not yet seen these paintings, de Sylvestre expressed her confidence that Dresden art connoisseurs would find the paintings Algarotti had acquired to be equal in quality and value to those acquired by Rossi.¹²⁴⁷

In search of a title

It is unknown whether de Sylvestre's letter had reassured Algarotti. In the meantime, however, not having given up hope of being granted a title by Augustus, Algarotti attempted to demonstrate his talents to the King and his court through writing. Dresden court poet Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini had died in

¹²⁴⁴ Ibid., 103, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²⁴⁵ Ibid., 102-103 n. 92, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 19 July 1743.

¹²⁴⁶ Louis de Silvestre (1675-1760) had been court painter in Dresden since 1716, and would remain in Dresden until 1748. Véronique Meyer and J. Patrice Marandel. "Silvestre (i)." In *Grove Art Online*. *Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T078788pg2> (accessed April 22, 2010).

¹²⁴⁷ BCT MS 1258, Marie de Sylvestre to Algarotti, Dresden 11 November 1743.

1742. At Augustus's request, Algarotti undertook to edit the poet's collected works and prepare them for publication.¹²⁴⁸

The reasons Augustus may have chosen Algarotti for this task are several. During the time he had spent in Dresden in 1742, Algarotti had established a friendship with Pallavicini. This being the case, Algarotti was unlikely to pass negative judgement on Pallavicini's poetry in his introduction to the collected works. Furthermore, Algarotti was knowledgeable and talented when it came to poetry, as demonstrated by the praises he had received from Voltaire, and for his authorship of his 1733 *Rime*. Additionally, he had already successfully undertaken a project involving the preparation of a collection of poems for publication: that of Francesco Maria Zanotti, also published in 1733. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Algarotti was a famous author. At the beginning of his career, Algarotti was pleased to have the names of more established intellectuals attached to his work, as it increased the likelihood that people would read the work. Now that Algarotti had achieved such renown himself, the same would be true of a book to which he attached his name.

Algarotti had begun working on this project as early as November of 1743. In the middle of this month, he wrote to Brühl to let him know that he had begun taking the necessary steps to prepare Pallavicini's works for printing.¹²⁴⁹ He had also begun writing the introduction to the collection, in which he promised to identify Brühl as assisting Augustus in bringing about a return of the golden

¹²⁴⁸ Algarotti, "Vita di Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini," 335-6.

¹²⁴⁹ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, 120 Algarotti to Brühl, Verona 17 November 1743.

age of the arts in Dresden.¹²⁵⁰ Algarotti assured Brühl that, by the time he received the portrait of Augustus for the frontispiece, which was being undertaken by Dresden court engraver Lorenzo Zucchi, the book would be complete.¹²⁵¹ True to his word, by January of 1744, Algarotti had already sent a completed version of the book to Augustus, who granted it his royal approval.¹²⁵² At the same time, Algarotti was asked by Brühl to return to Dresden.¹²⁵³

Just prior to this, Algarotti had sought to win the good graces of Brühl's favourite assistant, Carl Heinrich von Heinecken, by doing him a favour. In early 1744, von Heinecken had written to Algarotti to ask for his assistance. Heinecken's cousin Matthias Oesterreich¹²⁵⁴ had received a scholarship to study painting in Italy, prompting Heinecken to ask that Algarotti allow Oesterreich to stay in his home in Venice for the duration of his studies.¹²⁵⁵ Algarotti was unable to fulfil this request as Count Giovanni Pietro Minelli, war counsellor to Augustus and his agent in Venice, was staying with Algarotti at the time, leaving no space for Oesterreich.¹²⁵⁶ However, Algarotti offered von Heinecken another, perhaps better, alternative: he arranged for Oesterreich to stay with Tiepolo instead.¹²⁵⁷ Staying with Tiepolo, Algarotti assured von Heinecken, would give

¹²⁵⁰ Ibid., 121, Algarotti to Brühl, Verona 17 November 1743.

¹²⁵¹ Ibid., 121, Algarotti to Brühl, Verona 17 November 1743.

¹²⁵² Ibid., 139, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 31 January 1744.

¹²⁵³ Ibid., 139, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 31 January 1744.

¹²⁵⁴ Oesterreich (b. 1716), who Algarotti mistakenly calls Heinecken's nephew in his letter, would go on to become the head of the art gallery at Sanssouci. Ibid., 137 n. 182.

¹²⁵⁵ Ibid., 137-138, Algarotti to von Heinecken, Venice 9 January 1744.

¹²⁵⁶ Ibid., 138, 138 n. 183, Algarotti to von Heinecken, Venice 9 January 1744. Minelli's duties included shipping paintings collected by Augustus's various art collectors in Italy back to Dresden. See Roversi, "Il Commercio dei quadri," 466.

¹²⁵⁷ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, 138, Algarotti to von Heinecken, Venice 9 January 1744.

Oesterreich an unparalleled opportunity to develop his painting skills under the watchful eye of the best painter in Venice.¹²⁵⁸

By May of 1744, Algarotti had, as requested, returned to Dresden. As this marked the end of his commission as art collector for Augustus, Algarotti was trying to negotiate a new position for himself at court, and sought Brühl's advice as to how to go about this.¹²⁵⁹ Aside from genuinely wanting Brühl's advice on this matter, Algarotti may have had another motivation in writing to him about it. Because Brühl was so close to the King, he was quite likely to share the contents of Algarotti's letter with Augustus. Therefore, by framing his letter as a request for advice, he could indirectly let Augustus know what kind of position, and benefits, he wanted. On the question of salary, Algarotti phrased his expectations in the form of a request for guidance. The amount he wanted was half that earned by Saxon minister in Venice Count Villo.¹²⁶⁰ Therefore, he asked Brühl whether he thought it advisable to insist on such a sum.¹²⁶¹ Algarotti made his thoughts on various positions even plainer in the letter. The post he hoped for was that of court chamberlain, which he felt he deserved based on all the services he had performed for Augustus up to this time.¹²⁶² If this position was not available, he would be happy to accept the position of war councillor, but only on certain

¹²⁵⁸ Ibid., 138, Algarotti to von Heinecken, Venice 9 January 1744.

¹²⁵⁹ Museo Civico Correr (MCC) MS PD 547 c/9 Algarotti to Brühl, Dresden 9 May 1744. This letter is described by the archivist who catalogued it as "without addressee" (*senza indirizza*). Indeed, the letter is addressed only to "Monseigneur." However, clues contained in the letter suggest that the addressee could be none other than Brühl. Throughout the letter, Algarotti refers to the addressee as "Votre Excellence," a title he uses to address Brühl in all the other letters he wrote to him. In addition, he refers to the addressee as a minister of the King in the letter, which Brühl indeed was.

¹²⁶⁰ MCC MS PD 547 c/9 Algarotti to Brühl, Dresden 9 May 1744.

¹²⁶¹ MCC MS PD 547 c/9 Algarotti to Brühl, Dresden 9 May 1744.

¹²⁶² "consigliere intima di guerra" BCM MS PD 547 c/9 Algarotti to Brühl, Dresden 9 May 1744.

conditions.¹²⁶³ For instance, he was not willing to forgo any of the privileges he had grown accustomed to, particularly that of being invited to dine at Hubertusburg on occasion.¹²⁶⁴

The result of Algarotti's efforts was that he was awarded his second-choice position, that of war councillor.¹²⁶⁵ He announced this news in a triumphant letter to his brother in May of 1744.¹²⁶⁶ In it, he boasted that the privileges the position entailed were on par with those granted to Saxon colonels and generals.¹²⁶⁷ What, exactly, this position entailed is unclear. Shortly after his appointment he returned to Italy.¹²⁶⁸ Although he would continue to purchase paintings from time to time on Augustus's behalf, it is clear that this was not meant to be his primary occupation. Between 1743 and 1746, Algarotti acquired thirty-four paintings for Dresden gallery,¹²⁶⁹ of which he had already purchased twenty-one by October of 1743.¹²⁷⁰ The title Algarotti received suggests that he was meant to provide Augustus with advice on war; if this was actually so, the nature of his work would have to be (and must have been) kept secret. Algarotti's appointment to this post did coincide with the outbreak of the Second Silesian War, in which Saxony sided with Austria against Frederick the Great's Prussia. And indeed, in May of 1745, Algarotti was surrounded by suspicion of political dealings. The newspapers had been reporting that Algarotti was in Dresden,

¹²⁶³ MCC MS PD 547 c/9 Algarotti to Brühl, Dresden 9 May 1744.

¹²⁶⁴ MCC MS PD 547 c/9 Algarotti to Brühl, Dresden 9 May 1744.

¹²⁶⁵ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 23 May 1744.

¹²⁶⁶ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 23 May 1744.

¹²⁶⁷ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Dresden 23 May 1744.

¹²⁶⁸ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, 142, Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 17 July 1744.

¹²⁶⁹ Jaynie Anderson, "Count Francesco Algarotti as an Advisor to Dresden," in *Il Collezionismo a Venezia e nel Veneto ai tempi della serenissima*, ed. Bernard Aikema (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 2005), 279.

¹²⁷⁰ *Lettere artistiche del settecento veneziano I*, 116 Algarotti to Brühl, Venice 4 October 1743.

heavily involved in political affairs.¹²⁷¹ The strength of these rumours is attested to by the fact that Algarotti felt it necessary to denounce these reports in a letter (written from his country home in Paluello) to Alessandro Fabri, secretary of the Bolognese senate.¹²⁷² He told Fabri that, rather than being heavily involved in political affairs, he had been spending his time in the company of books, studying literature.¹²⁷³

While it is unclear whether or not Algarotti was involved in political dealings of some kind at this time, it is certainly true that he had been spending a significant amount of time engaged in literary pursuits. Indeed, the years between 1744 and 1746 were very prolific ones for him. In addition to the *Vita di Stefano Pallavicini*, he published three other books during this period: a treatise on trade entitled *Saggio sopra il commercio*; an application of Newton's chronological theories to the reigns of Roman emperors entitled *Saggio sopra la durata de' regni de' re di Roma*; and *Il Congresso di Citera*, a work in which the different problems associated with love in England, France, and Italy are discussed by a congress of three fictional women, one from each place. That he was able to complete so many works in so short a time suggests that his duties as war councillor for Augustus were not very demanding. The idleness in which he was kept is part of what had prompted Algarotti to leave Frederick's court in Berlin in 1742. This being the case, it is likely that the apparent inactivity involved in being war councillor to Augustus may have left him feeling similarly dissatisfied.

¹²⁷¹ Francesco Algarotti, *Opere del conte Algarotti. Vol. 7* (Livorno: M. Coltellini, 1764), 236, Algarotti to Alessandro Fabri, Paluello 8 May 1745.

¹²⁷² Ibid., 236, Algarotti to Alessandro Fabri, Paluello 8 May 1745.

¹²⁷³ Ibid., 236, Algarotti to Alessandro Fabri, Paluello 8 May 1745.

Indeed, it seems that Algarotti had grown impatient with the various impediments involved with royal patronage at this time: the circumstances surrounding the appearance of the works he published between 1744 and 1746 imply that Algarotti hoped to make use of them in order to secure a new source of financial backing.

In search of new prospects

Algarotti had often made use of written works as a means of advertising his talents. This form of self-promotion had enabled him to increase his pool of contacts, which in turn had enabled him to secure financial backing, first from Frederick, and then from Augustus. The diversity of topics on which he wrote from the years 1744 to 1746 suggests that was seeking to make use of his newly-written works in order to improve his prospects in a variety of fields. Having worked as an art collector for Augustus had enabled Algarotti to build on the renown he had already acquired in Italy. That he had been sent back to Venice with the title of war councillor would have further contributed to this fame. Working for Augustus had also enabled Algarotti to expand his Italian networks. This being the case, Algarotti's prospects of securing financial backing in Italy were better in this period than they had ever been. Accordingly, it was in Italy that he now sought to find a position, as the ways in which he made use of his new written works indicate.

As he had done so many times before, Algarotti sent copies of his new works to his contacts. In particular, he made certain to send copies to members of his Italian network. The Italians to whom he sent copies were all people he had already established relationships with. This being the case, they were likely unable to offer him patronage: they would already have been quite familiar with his talents, and if they had been in a position to offer him financial backing, they would presumably have already done so. However, he may have hoped that these people could help him find patronage of some kind, by sharing his work with those in their circle of acquaintances who were in a position to offer it to him. Certainly, Algarotti's contacts had nothing but favourable comments for both him and the works he sent them. In 1744, Algarotti sent copies of his *Vita di Pallavicini* to Eustachio and Giampietro Zanotti in Bologna.¹²⁷⁴ Writing to thank Algarotti for his copy, Eustachio Zanotti expressed great admiration both for the work and for its author. Congratulating Algarotti on his new appointment as war councillor, he praised the Venetian for his many talents, which were so unique that Eustachio Zanotti considered Algarotti to be deserving of having a "life" written about him as well.¹²⁷⁵ In 1746, Algarotti sent a copy of his *Saggio sopra il commercio* to Francesco Maria Zanotti, seeking his opinion of the work.¹²⁷⁶ The review was positive: Zanotti told his friend that he found the work "beautiful

¹²⁷⁴ MBAB Epistolario Gamba III.A.10 cc.294, Eustachio Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 7 May 1743.

¹²⁷⁵ MBAB Epistolario Gamba III.A.10 cc.294, Eustachio Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 7 May 1743. Among the talents for which Zanotti praised Algarotti was the ease with which he was able to gain access to the courts of Europe.

¹²⁷⁶ MBAB Epistolario Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1492, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 4 November 1746.

and light-hearted.”¹²⁷⁷ In the same year, Algarotti sent a copy of the *Congresso di Citera* to the Marchese Malaspina in Naples.¹²⁷⁸ In addition to reading the work himself, Malaspina showed it to his associates.¹²⁷⁹ He relayed their comments, as well as his own, back to Algarotti, all of which were positive: Malaspina and his associates praised several things about the *Congresso*, including its novelty, the vivacity with which it was written, and the realistic nature of the characters contained therein.¹²⁸⁰ They also appreciated that it was written in such a way that most people, not just the erudite, could understand it.¹²⁸¹

In the past, Algarotti had sought to attract readers by dedicating his works to illustrious people. Algarotti employed a similar tactic in the case of his *Saggio sopra la durata de' regni de' re di Roma*, published in late 1745.¹²⁸² Algarotti had written an early version of this work between the years 1730 and 1732 at the suggestion of Eustachio Manfredi, who had been his teacher in Bologna, although he had never published it.¹²⁸³ When he finally did publish this work in 1745, he dedicated it to another of his former teachers in Bologna, Francesco Maria Zanotti. As he states in this dedication, the impetus to finally publish the work had come from Zanotti, who had informed him that it had been mentioned

¹²⁷⁷ “bella e leggiarda” MBAB Epistolario Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1492, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 4 November 1746.

¹²⁷⁸ BCT MS 1258, Malaspina to Algarotti, Naples 1 February 1746. The book is not actually identified by name in the letter; however, based on Malaspina’s description of it, it could not be anything but the *Congresso*.

¹²⁷⁹ BCT MS 1258, Malaspina to Algarotti, Naples 1 February 1746.

¹²⁸⁰ BCT MS 1258, Malaspina to Algarotti, Naples 1 February 1746.

¹²⁸¹ BCT MS 1258, Malaspina to Algarotti, Naples 1 February 1746.

¹²⁸² Francesco Algarotti, “Saggio sopra la durata de' regni de' re di Roma,” in *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 4* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1791).

¹²⁸³ Franco Arato, “Il giovane Algarotti (1712-1740)” (Dottore di ricerca dissertation, Università degli studi di Torino; Università degli studi di Genova, 1989), 18.

recently at a meeting of the Istituto delle scienze of Bologna.¹²⁸⁴ Certainly, Algarotti aimed to catch the attention of the membership of the Istituto with this dedication, both by mentioning the academy's interest in the work, and by mentioning that it had been Zanotti, then the perpetual secretary of the Istituto, who had told him about this interest. By highlighting that the membership still recalled a work he had written sixteen years previously, demonstrating that he took the membership's appreciation of his work seriously enough to prompt him to publish it, and showing that he and Zanotti were still in close contact, Algarotti may have hoped the Istituto would offer him a salaried position.

Algarotti prepared yet another revised edition of his *Newtonianismo* for publication in 1746,¹²⁸⁵ which further suggests that he may have been trying to gain the attention of the Istituto at this time. The nature of most of the revisions he made in this new edition indicates that he hoped to make it more acceptable for members of the Istituto, and for Italians in general, to praise the work and its author, who had hitherto been the subject of much criticism in his native land. Some of these revisions were aesthetic in nature. For instance, Zanotti complimented him on the revisions he had made to the Marchesa's character: he thought the Marchesa in the new edition behaved much more like then-contemporary Italian women.¹²⁸⁶ However, the majority of the revisions he made

¹²⁸⁴ Algarotti, "Saggio sopra la durata de' regni de' re di Roma," 129, 131.

¹²⁸⁵ MBAB Epistolario Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1492, FM Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 4 November 1746.

¹²⁸⁶ MBAB Epistolario Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1492, FM Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 4 November 1746.

were to the parts of the work that the Vatican had found objectionable, with the aim of having the work removed from the *Index of Forbidden Books*.¹²⁸⁷

In order to have an ecclesiastical opinion on whether the Vatican would find the changes he had made acceptable, Algarotti provided his associate Padre Carlo Lodoli with a manuscript copy of this revised edition.¹²⁸⁸ In his efforts to improve his chances of having the ban lifted, Algarotti also enlisted the help of Francesco Maria Zanotti, whose brother Ridolfino was connected to the Church in Rome. In November of 1746, Francesco Maria Zanotti informed Algarotti that he had written to “N. Signore” (presumably, Ridolfino Zanotti) in Rome about this matter.¹²⁸⁹ Francesco Maria Zanotti also promised to plead Algarotti’s case to another ecclesiastical figure in Rome, Padre Orsi.¹²⁹⁰ In the meantime, however, he suggested that Algarotti send Orsi a copy of the new edition, in order that he might see that Algarotti had changed those portions of the book that the church had objected to.¹²⁹¹ These efforts would be to no avail, however. The question of whether the *Newtonianismo* should remain on the *Index* would only be revisited by the Church in 1758, at which time it was decided that the book would remain forbidden.¹²⁹²

¹²⁸⁷ MBAB Epistolario Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1492, FM Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 4 November 1746.

¹²⁸⁸ MBAB Epistolario Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1492, FM Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 4 November 1746.

¹²⁸⁹ MBAB Epistolario Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1492, FM Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 4 November 1746.

¹²⁹⁰ MBAB Epistolario Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1492, FM Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 4 November 1746.

¹²⁹¹ MBAB Epistolario Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1492, FM Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 4 November 1746.

¹²⁹² Vittorio Criscuolo, "Giovanni Lodovico Bianconi et le *Journal des savans d'Italie* (1748-1749)," *El Argonauta Español* 6 (2009). [pages unnumbered]

Contrary to what he may have hoped, Algarotti's literary efforts did not enable him to find a position in Italy. However, his accomplishments did result in his being offered another position: in 1747, Frederick II would offer Algarotti the position of court chamberlain at his court in Berlin, the very position he had hoped to obtain from Augustus III. Algarotti would accept Frederick's offer and return to Berlin.

Conclusion

In the time that he spent in Dresden, both before and after he became a member of the court of Augustus III, Algarotti had managed to expand both his networks and his renown considerably. The contacts he had formed among the artistic community in Dresden, in combination with his talents, had enabled him to secure the position of art collector from Augustus, a commission he had been quite successful in executing.

Part of what had made Algarotti a successful art collector was his ability to transfer the skills he had acquired in promoting his own work to the execution of his new duties. Indeed, many of the tactics Algarotti had made use of in order to secure this commission, and to fulfil it, were similar to those he had employed to create a reputation for himself as an intellectual. Just as he had done in other fields previously, he had used the written word in order to draw attention to his

knowledge and talents in the field of art, first in his *Progetto per ridurre a compimento il Reggio Museo di Dresda*, and then in his letters to Brühl and his *Relazione storica de' quadri acquistati dal Conte Francesco Algarotti per la Maestà del Re di Polonia Elettor di Sassonia eccetera eccetera eccetera*. Much in the same way as he had made use of the praises he received from people of note to demonstrate the worth of his work, he had made use of the opinions of others, namely art collectors and artists, in order to demonstrate the value of the works he acquired. Finally, just as he had made use of his contacts as intermediaries through which to form contacts with other scholars, he had made use of his associates in Venice as intermediaries through whom to gain access to their networks of artists and art collectors.

Algarotti's success as an art collector had led Augustus to grant him the title of war councillor in 1744. The time he had spent in Venice purchasing art for Augustus had enabled Algarotti to significantly increase his renown in Italy, something to which the acquisition of the title of war councillor would have contributed. Algarotti had also significantly expanded his networks in Italy at this time. Both of these factors, in combination with his frustration with the negative aspects of royal patronage had led him to seek a new source of financial backing in Italy. He had attempted to make use of the works he had written during this time to these ends. As had happened previously, however, while using his works as a means to promote his talents and associations with others had enabled him to increase his renown, this failed to translate into financial support.

That his disappointment with the negative aspects of royal patronage had led Algarotti to seek a new source of financial backing in Italy seems out of keeping with his decision to return to Frederick's court. That his search for patronage in Italy had proved fruitless may have been one influential factor in his acceptance of Frederick's offer. However, during Algarotti's absence from Prussia, Frederick had changed his attitude towards the intellectuals in his service, and had begun to appreciate, and make use of, their talents. This had enabled him to lure Maupertuis back to his court in 1745, and would enable him to convince Voltaire to join his service as well. Indeed, Frederick's new attitude appears to have been an important factor in convincing Algarotti to return to Berlin as well.

**The importance of networks: Algarotti's second tenure at the court of
Frederick II, 1747-1753**

In 1747, Algarotti would return to Frederick's service in the post of court chamberlain. By this time, Maupertuis had already returned to the court to take up the presidency of the Berlin Academy. Voltaire would return to Berlin in 1750 as well, joining Frederick's service in the capacity of his official grammarian. Algarotti would remain at Frederick's court until 1753, during which time he would, at Frederick's request, design houses for the streets surrounding the King's new palace, known as Sanssouci. He would also continue to pursue his writing, preparing a new collection of poetry, *Epistole in versi*, and publishing a new edition of the *Newtonianismo* under the new title *Dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione*. An examination of this time in Algarotti's career demonstrates the significance of networks in eighteenth-century intellectual life. It also makes plain the negative side of accepting patronage from Frederick, namely, that he would do everything in his power to ensure that his commands would be obeyed.

Being in the service Augustus III had provided Algarotti with the financial backing necessary to pursue his writing. Indeed, he had produced five works while a member of Augustus's court. However, being in the service of this King had also brought Algarotti several disappointments. When Rossi had tried to impede Algarotti's efforts to purchase art for the royal galleries, the latter's appeals to Augustus, through Brühl, for assistance in this matter had not produced the desired results. Although Algarotti had carried out this commission

successfully, in spite of Rossi's interference, his efforts had not been rewarded with the position he had coveted, that of court chamberlain. The post he was given instead, that of war councillor, does not appear to have had any significant duties attached to it. As a result, Algarotti found himself trapped in the same undesirable position he had been in while in Frederick's service: while being war councillor to Augustus supplied Algarotti with financial support, it did not enable him to make use of his talents in service of the King, suggesting that Augustus did not perceive Algarotti's abilities to be valuable. Indeed, Algarotti's role had been reduced to that of providing Augustus with prestige through his membership to the King's court. Consequently, he had begun searching for a new position.

Although Algarotti's previous experience as a member of Frederick's court had been a much more negative one than his experience as a member of that of Augustus, the changes that life in Berlin had undergone during his absence made accepting a position at the court there seem attractive to Algarotti. Indeed, being a member of Frederick's court appeared to offer everything Algarotti was looking for. As was the case in his post as war councillor to Augustus, his duties at Frederick's court would still allow him ample time to pursue his own work. However, it would also mean being in the service of a monarch who appreciated his abilities, and put them to good use.

Disillusionment with Frederick's prioritization of military matters over intellectual ones had been among the reasons that Maupertuis and Algarotti had initially left Frederick's service, the former in 1741, and the latter, in 1742. Their feeling that Frederick did not appreciate their talents and abilities, as indicated by

the idleness in which he had left them, had contributed to this disillusionment. However, Frederick was able to lure both of them back by demonstrating that he had changed his attitude, giving intellectual pursuits a prestigious place both in his personal life and in that of his court. Accordingly, rather than calling scholars to his court simply in order to keep him company, he had begun doing so with the intention of taking advantage of their talents by assigning them tasks well suited to these. He made this plain to Maupertuis by offering him the presidency of the Berlin Academy, and then supplying him with the resources necessary to get the Academy off the ground and keep it running. This new approach of Frederick's towards the intellectuals in his service, exemplified by his treatment of Maupertuis, would be among the reasons that Algarotti would agree to return to Berlin.

An examination of Algarotti's second tenure at Frederick's court demonstrates the crucial role that networks played in the achievement of career objectives in the eighteenth century. While an appreciation of Algarotti's talents and company were part of the reason that Frederick had reengaged Algarotti, the networks the Venetian had formed had also contributed to Frederick's desire to win him back. Indeed, Algarotti's contacts were quite valuable to Frederick's purposes, as is revealed by an examination of the tasks the King would assign him. Frederick would make use of Algarotti as an intermediary through which to obtain art and architectural treatises, and to secure artistic and financial support for the construction of a Catholic Church in Berlin.

Frederick would not be the only one who would seek to use his association with Algarotti to their own advantage at this time. Several of Algarotti's lesser-known contacts would attempt to profit from their connection with him during his time in Berlin in order to advance their careers. Some sought to increase their own renown by associating their names with that of Algarotti. Others sought to make use of their relationship with him in order to form contacts with his more powerful associates, Maupertuis and Frederick. In all cases, the tactics that Algarotti's associates made use of in seeking to take advantage of their connection with him were the same as those he had made use of himself on previous occasions in order to expand his networks and increase his renown: flattery, being introduced to those he wished to meet by associates in contact with the person in question, dedicating written work to illustrious personages, securing praise from well-known scholars, and using contacts as intermediaries through which to draw attention to one's written works. That Algarotti's contacts would make use of the very tactics he had employed throughout his career suggests that these were tactics commonly used by scholars seeking to establish reputations for themselves.

An examination of what transpired at Frederick's court during the years 1747 to 1753 also demonstrates the difficulties that came along with acceptance of patronage from the King. Although Frederick had changed his attitude regarding the value of the intellectuals at his court, he had not become more reasonable in his expectations regarding the scholars in his service. An examination of his treatment of Algarotti during this time reveals that Frederick

continued to expect to have absolute control over the activities of his courtiers. This is also evident from his dealings with Voltaire, who in 1752 would become involved in a very public quarrel with Maupertuis. Frederick's treatment of Voltaire during this episode demonstrates the lengths the King would go to in order to ensure that his commands were obeyed. For both Algarotti and Voltaire, this aspect of life at Frederick's court would negate all the advantages that came along with being in the King's service, prompting both Voltaire and Algarotti to leave Frederick's service in 1753.

Initial disillusionment: the reasons why intellectuals had left Frederick's court in the early 1740s

Maupertuis, Voltaire, and Algarotti had all become disillusioned with life at Frederick's court in the early years of the king's reign. Accordingly, all three had left Prussia not long after having arrived. They had all had similar reasons for leaving, reasons that were closely related to one another. The gatherings that Frederick had held at Rheinsburg prior to his accession, which were similar to those held by du Châtelet and Voltaire at Cirey, had given Frederick a reputation as someone devoted to the life of the mind. This being the case, it had been assumed that, once he came to the throne, intellectual pursuits would take centre stage at his court. That he had invited the best minds of Europe to join this court once he became King had appeared to confirm this assumption. Those who had accepted his offer, such as Maupertuis and Algarotti, had done so with the belief

that they would be appreciated for their intellectual talents, and would be called upon to use them in the service of the King. However, to them and to others who had joined the court, it quickly became apparent that this was not the case. In 1740, just months after he had come to the throne, Frederick had become involved in the First Silesian War. The devotion of all his attention to this war shattered the image he had created of himself as a monarch who valued intellectual pursuits above all else.

Frederick's total preoccupation with this war had had another damaging effect on his relationship with the intellectuals he had invited to join his court: the idleness in which he left them as a result had led them to feel underappreciated. Disappointed with the utter lack of progress in the reestablishment of the Berlin Academy (the promise of an important role in which had convinced him to come to Berlin in the first place), Maupertuis left Frederick's court in 1741. Voltaire left in the same year; not only had he not been assigned any important tasks, he had not even been invited to join the court in any permanent capacity. Frustration with the lack of concrete duties assigned to him had also been among the reasons that Algarotti had left Berlin for Dresden in 1742.

Specific embarrassments each of these three scholars had suffered at the hands of Frederick had provided further indication of how little he appreciated them. The humiliation that Maupertuis had suffered at having been taken a prisoner of war had been the catalyst for his departure from Berlin. Voltaire had been embarrassed as well: while Maupertuis and Algarotti had been invited to Berlin within days of Frederick's accession, Voltaire had only received his

invitation much later, and once he had arrived there, unlike Maupertuis and Algarotti, he had not been offered a position at court. Humiliation had also been the last straw for Algarotti: that Frederick had sent him on an impossible mission to Turin, recalling him when he did not complete it successfully, pushed Algarotti to leave Berlin for Dresden in search of a better position.

Just after Algarotti had taken up residence in Dresden in 1742, Frederick had made several efforts to convince the Venetian to return to his service. An analysis of these attempts makes clear that Algarotti was indeed disappointed that Frederick put war ahead of intellectual concerns. It also reveals that his displeasure and embarrassment at the way in which he had been treated were so great that nothing could have convinced him to return to Prussia at that time.

As Frederick's correspondence with Algarotti in 1742 suggests, Frederick was aware that Algarotti did not approve of his having abandoned intellectual pursuits in favour of military glory. Certainly, he made great efforts to convince Algarotti that the opposite was true. Writing shortly after Algarotti had arrived in Dresden, Frederick stated that, once the war was over, he planned to devote himself to the arts.¹²⁹³ Perhaps in order to demonstrate his devotion to literature, shortly thereafter, Frederick sent Algarotti two poems he had written while waiting for a battle to begin at Selowitz, one contrasting the beauty of his natural surroundings at the moment with the horrors of war, and the other on the subject

¹²⁹³ "...la paix venue, je me rendrai aux arts..." Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1851), 34, Frederick II to Francesco Algarotti, [no date]. Although this letter is undated, the editor of *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand* places it chronologically between a letter Algarotti wrote to Frederick from Dresden, dated 29 January 1742, and another Algarotti wrote to Frederick from the same location, dated 9 February 1742.

of the forthcoming battle.¹²⁹⁴ Upon receiving news from Algarotti that he planned to dedicate his life to intellectual pursuits, Frederick had praised him, identifying such a life as among the happiest he could imagine, and had reasserted his intentions to pursue a similar lifestyle, once the war was over.¹²⁹⁵ In response to these overtures, Algarotti complimented Frederick on his ability to keep his cool well enough to write poetry while awaiting battle: “We have always admired heroes who have slept deeply the night before a battle; what will people say about Your Majesty, who writes verses while preparing for combat?”¹²⁹⁶ Algarotti had also expressed his sincere hope that Frederick would carry out his intentions of returning to intellectual pursuits; that, once the war was over, Berlin would cease to be the Sparta of Europe, and would become its Athens.¹²⁹⁷ However, Frederick had not managed to convince him that he valued the life of the mind above his military endeavours. Asking Frederick whether he meant to spend the rest of his life fighting wars, Algarotti had sent him a poem of his own, in which war is described as a horror, and honour in connection with military pursuits, as a misplaced feeling:

War is nothing more,
Than the horror of the Earth.
Honour is nothing more,
Than boredom and error...¹²⁹⁸

¹²⁹⁴ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII.*, 39-40, Frederick II to Algarotti, Selowitz 20 March 1742.

¹²⁹⁵ Ibid., 51, Frederick II to Algarotti, Camp de Brzezy 29 May 1742.

¹²⁹⁶ “On a beaucoup admiré des héros qui dormaient profondément la nuit avant une bataille; que sera-ce de V.M., qui, se préparant au combat, fait des vers...” (Ibid., 41, Algarotti to Frederick II, Dresden 3 April 1742).

¹²⁹⁷ Ibid., 36, Algarotti to Frederick II Dresden 9 February 1742.

¹²⁹⁸ “Altro non è la guerra,/ Che l’orror della terra./ Altro non è l’onore,/ Che noja [sic] ed errore...” (Ibid., 41-42, Algarotti to Frederick II, Dresden 3 April 1742).

It seems that Frederick had also sensed that his lack of appreciation for Algarotti's talents had contributed to driving the Venetian away. Accordingly, he sought to praise Algarotti for his abilities, and to create the impression that he greatly appreciated them. In April of 1742, Frederick attempted to commission Algarotti to convince Italian opera singer Pinti to join the Prussian court, saying Algarotti's ability to overcome obstacles made him the perfect candidate for such a task.¹²⁹⁹ Although Algarotti refused the commission, he thanked Frederick for the compliment, stating that having received praise from so important a person as Frederick increased his chances of attaining immortality among posterity.¹³⁰⁰ In response, Frederick had assured him that the renown he had across Europe for his published works meant that Algarotti's name was sure to live on after death regardless of whether it was associated with his own.¹³⁰¹ Shortly thereafter, Frederick had sent Algarotti a poem he had written in his honour.¹³⁰² In it, he praised Algarotti for being interesting company.¹³⁰³ The poem concludes with a compliment-laden plea to Algarotti to return to Prussia and Frederick's court:

Oh, too charming mortal! Oh, too loveable mortal!
Sacrifice the shah and the Chouli-Kans for me,
Leave Iceland and the volcanoes;
That I may forever have the ineffable pleasure,
Throughout the course of the forthcoming years,
To hear your speeches, to read your prose,
And to sing your divine verses...¹³⁰⁴

¹²⁹⁹ Ibid., 44, Frederick II to Algarotti, Chrudim en Boheme 18 April 1742.

¹³⁰⁰ Ibid., 46, Algarotti to Francesco II, Dresden 2 May 1742.

¹³⁰¹ Ibid., 47, Frederick II to Algarotti, Chrudim 10 May 1742.

¹³⁰² Ibid., 58, Frederick II to Algarotti [no date]. The editor of *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand* places this undated letter is undated chronologically between two letters that Frederick wrote Algarotti, one dated 18 July 1742, the other, 10 August 1742.

¹³⁰³ Ibid., 58, Frederick II to Algarotti [no date].

¹³⁰⁴ "O mortel trop charmant! ô mortel trop aimable! Sacrifiez pour moi les schah, les Chouli-Kans,/ Laissez l'Islande et les volcans;/ Et que j'aie à jamais le plaisir ineffable,/ Durant la trame

In a subsequent letter, Frederick likened Algarotti to the Northern Lights, capable of illuminating the people of Prussia with his knowledge.¹³⁰⁵

Frederick had also attempted to use guilt and threats to lure Algarotti back to Prussia. His employment of these tactics to this end suggests that he failed to realize that his autocratic approach to his relations with those in his service had also contributed to the Venetian's decision to leave his court. Frederick had addressed his first letter to Algarotti after the latter's arrival in Dresden to "the most inconstant and uncaring [man] in the world."¹³⁰⁶ In it, he had stated that, if Algarotti's plans for the future did not involve living in Prussia, then he did not care what he did.¹³⁰⁷ In a later letter, he expressed his annoyance that Algarotti had not accepted his offers to set him up comfortably in Berlin, and suggested that he did not appreciate his generosity in making them: "Apparently you have forgotten all the offers I have made you...to give you a solid arrangement in which you would even have had the opportunity to be pleased by my generosity."¹³⁰⁸ When Frederick suggested that not having offered Algarotti enough money was the reason he would not come back to his court, Algarotti had responded that he was insulted by Frederick's suggestion that Plutus (the

de mes ans,/ D'entendre vos discours, de lire votre prose,/ Et de chanter vos divins vers..." Ibid., 58-59, Frederick II to Algarotti [no date].

¹³⁰⁵ Ibid., 59, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 10 August 1742.

¹³⁰⁶ "Cygne le plus inconstant et le plus léger du monde" Ibid., 34, Frederick II to Algarotti [no date]. Frederick's nickname for Algarotti was the Swan of Padua.

¹³⁰⁷ Ibid., 34, Frederick II to Algarotti [no date].

¹³⁰⁸ "Apparemment que vous avez oublié toutes les offres que je vous ai faites...de vous faire un établissement solide dans lequel vous auriez même eu lieu d'être content de ma générosité." Ibid., 59, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 10 August 1742.

personification of wealth) could attract him back to Prussia.¹³⁰⁹ In response to this, Frederick had stated he was so insulted by the tone of Algarotti's letter that he should never have written to him again.¹³¹⁰ Warning Algarotti that this would be his final offer, he asked the Venetian under which conditions he could convince him to return to his court.¹³¹¹ Perhaps sensing that Algarotti hoped to obtain a position at the court of Augustus III, Frederick told Algarotti to forget affairs and tasks that he was not meant for, and instead to consider the stable pension and freedom he was offering.¹³¹² He concluded the letter by prohibiting Algarotti from ever asking him for patronage again, should he refuse his offer.¹³¹³

Given that Algarotti had been frustrated at the lack of gainful employment offered to him by Frederick in the past, it had certainly been a mistake for Frederick to tell Algarotti to forget about affairs and jobs not meant for him. In addition, his insistence that the offer he was making was a good one, and his attempts to make Algarotti feel guilty and foolish for not accepting it, may have suggested to Algarotti that, should he return to Prussia, he would not be treated any differently than he had been previously. Certainly, Algarotti's ever-constant search for financial backing may have made Frederick's offer of a generous and stable pension seem attractive. However, although Frederick had promised Algarotti personal freedom along with this pension, his treatment of the Venetian in the past, and his use of guilt and threats in his letters, made Algarotti realize

¹³⁰⁹ Ibid., 60, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 10 August 1742, 60, Algarotti to Frederick II, Dresden 24 August 1742.

¹³¹⁰ Ibid., 61, Frederick II to Algarotti, Salzthal 10 September 1742.

¹³¹¹ Ibid., 61, Frederick II to Algarotti, Salzthal 10 September 1742.

¹³¹² "Ne pensez point aux affaires et aux emplois qui ne vous conviennent point, mais à une bonne pension et beaucoup de liberté." Ibid., 61, Frederick II to Algarotti, Salzthal 10 September 1742.

¹³¹³ Ibid., 61, Frederick II to Algarotti, Salzthal 10 September 1742.

that the acceptance of a pension from Frederick would actually require him to forgo personal liberty. Indeed, finding a position in which he was respected and appreciated for his talents had meant more than money to Algarotti at this time. Pointing out that a stable pension and liberty were rarely things that went together, and expressing his gratitude at Frederick's generosity in offering him both, he declined to return to Frederick's service.¹³¹⁴ No letter was exchanged between the two thereafter until 1747.

Change in atmosphere and attitude: why Maupertuis and Voltaire decided to return

However disillusioned Maupertuis, Voltaire, and Algarotti had become with life at Frederick's court, all three would eventually return to his service, Maupertuis in 1745, Algarotti in 1747, and Voltaire in 1750. Just as they had had similar motivations for having left Frederick's court in the first place, Voltaire and Maupertuis shared common reasons for returning. Certainly, both had been dissatisfied with the positions they had held just prior to returning to Prussia. Although Maupertuis's personal correspondence does not reveal his reasons for wanting to return to Berlin, in 1744, it was he who took the first steps in re-establishing his relationship with Frederick.¹³¹⁵ That he did so suggests that he

¹³¹⁴ Ibid., 63, Algarotti to Frederick II, Dresden 17 September 1742.

¹³¹⁵ Mary Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth: Maupertuis and the Sciences in the Enlightenment* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 228-9. Frederick was engaged in the Second Silesian War at this time, in which he was allied with France in his fight against Austria. Maupertuis convinced French ministers Coigny and d'Argenson to employ him as emissary to Frederick, when there was good news to report in the war. Accordingly, in

was unhappy with his life in Paris, and was in search of a more congenial situation. Accordingly, when Frederick offered him the presidency of the Berlin Academy in late 1744, Maupertuis gladly accepted the position.¹³¹⁶ Voltaire does not state his reasons for returning to Prussia in 1750 explicitly in his correspondence, either.¹³¹⁷ Although he had been intending to visit the King for some time, following the death of du Châtelet in 1749, Voltaire began to envision this visit as a more long-term arrangement. Indeed, the despair he felt at the loss of his long-time companion may have contributed to his decision to seek a change in situation. However, the intellectual liberty, and appreciation for his talents, that he believed life at Frederick's court would offer, also appear to have been important factors in this.¹³¹⁸ Writing to the Duke of Richelieu shortly after his return to Prussia, Voltaire said, "I am treated as well by the King of Prussia as I am treated badly at home."¹³¹⁹ He mentioned that Frederick had offered him a pension, and that he had decided to accept it.¹³²⁰

Indeed, opportunities for more favourable arrangements aside, the change in the intellectual atmosphere of Prussia that occurred with the end of the Second Silesian War would have played a crucial role in attracting Maupertuis and Voltaire back to Frederick's court. The war had ended with the signing of the Treaty of Dresden on December 25, 1745. Eager to rebuild his reputation as a

December, Maupertuis travelled to Berlin to report news of the war to Frederick. He received a warm reception there, both from Frederick and the court.

¹³¹⁶ Ibid., 229.

¹³¹⁷ Christiane Mervaud, *Voltaire et Frédéric II : une dramaturgie des Lumières, 1736-1778*, Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century. 234. (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1985), 181.

¹³¹⁸ Ibid., 170, 180.

¹³¹⁹ "Le Roi de Prusse me traite aussi bien qu'on me traite mal chez moi" (Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. XVIII (1750)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1956), 142, Voltaire to Louis Arnaud François Du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu, [c. 31 August 1750.]

¹³²⁰ Ibid., 142, Voltaire to the Duke of Richelieu, [c. 31 August 1750].

philosopher-king, Frederick had then turned his attention to intellectual pursuits.¹³²¹ In part, this involved engaging in studies and producing works. For instance, he set about improving his written French, a task for which he sought out the assistance of Voltaire,¹³²² and wrote historical and philosophical papers to be read at meetings of the Berlin Academy.¹³²³ However, another, more significant, aspect of this change in direction was his attempt to build a court made up of intellectuals, just as he had attempted to do during the early years of his reign. Frederick's efforts to convince Maupertuis, Voltaire, and Algarotti to return to Prussia fit in with this scheme. In order to facilitate the attraction of intellectuals to his kingdom, Frederick supported the re-establishment of the Berlin Academy (officially, l'Académie des Sciences et Belles-Lettres) in 1746, and named himself its official protector.¹³²⁴ By showing himself to be personally interested in the fortunes of the academy, its reestablishment also contributed to Frederick's efforts to promote himself as an intellectual.¹³²⁵

In combination with these undertakings, from the mid-1740s on, Frederick also sought to become known as a promoter of intellectual and religious freedom.¹³²⁶ To this end, he offered his protection to thinkers facing persecution from the authorities in their own countries, such as Julien Offroy de La Mettrie, author of the banned *L'Homme Machine*, who joined his court in 1748.¹³²⁷

Because there was no university in the city, Berlin had no tradition of learned

¹³²¹ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 233, 240.

¹³²² Mervaud, *Voltaire et Frédéric II*, 175.

¹³²³ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 243.

¹³²⁴ Mary Terrall, "The Culture of Science in Frederick the Great's Berlin," *History of Science* 28, no. 4 (1990), 339, 342, 348.

¹³²⁵ Ibid., 343-344.

¹³²⁶ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 233.

¹³²⁷ Ibid., 233.

authority.¹³²⁸ Censorship was also virtually non-existent in the city. All of these factors came together to create an atmosphere in which intellectuals were freer than they would have been in other places to pursue their work in whatever manner suited them, and to study controversial subjects.¹³²⁹ Such an atmosphere is one that would have been very attractive to thinkers of the time. Certainly, both Maupertuis and Voltaire appreciated the scholarly freedom that life at Frederick's court offered. The prospect of being able to pursue his own work freely had been one factor (among many) that had led Maupertuis to return.¹³³⁰ Voltaire, too, found the liberty with which he could work at Frederick's court to be an attractive aspect of the atmosphere there. Writing to Charles Augustin Feriol, Comte D'Argental in 1751, Voltaire noted that were he not constantly suffering from illnesses, living at Frederick's court would be the equivalent of living in paradise, for, in addition to being invited to brilliant dinners with Frederick and other intellectuals every night, he was free to pursue his own work all day long.¹³³¹

The new importance that Frederick began to accord to intellectual matters at this time was accompanied by a change in the way he made use of the intellectuals in his service. Previously, he had left them in idleness, conveying the impression that he did not think their talents useful for anything other than glorifying him by their presence at his court. Although he continued to treat the members of his court as though they were under an obligation to obey him,

¹³²⁸ Hans Arasleff, "The Berlin Academy under Frederick the Great," *History of the Human Sciences* 2, no. 2 (1989): 194.

¹³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 194.

¹³³⁰ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 230.

¹³³¹ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. XX (August 1751-July 1752)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1956), 119, Voltaire to Charles Augustin Feriol, Comte D'Argental, 27 [April] 1751.

Frederick also began to take measures to demonstrate that he appreciated them for their skills.¹³³² In addition to conferring honours on them, as he had done before, beginning in the mid-1740s, he also assigned them tasks that made use of their abilities.¹³³³ Indeed, Maupertuis's position as president of the Berlin Academy was more than just an honorary title. This post came with several responsibilities regarding all aspects of the operation of the academy, including the management of its financial affairs.¹³³⁴ It also gave him a great deal of power, giving him authority over all members of the academy.¹³³⁵ Contrary to what he had experienced during the time he spent at Frederick's court in 1740 and 1741, Maupertuis was kept very busy in his new role almost from the moment he accepted it. Indeed, shortly after his return to Prussia, he was given the responsibility of writing a new constitution for the academy in preparation for its re-inauguration.¹³³⁶ Voltaire was assigned the post of official grammarian to Frederick upon his return to court in 1750.¹³³⁷ Unlike Maupertuis's presidency of the Berlin Academy, this position did not give Voltaire any power. However, it did demonstrate that Frederick appreciated Voltaire's skills as a writer, and wished to make use of them.

The circumstances under which Algarotti returned to Frederick's court in 1747 were very similar to those which impelled Maupertuis to return, and would lead Voltaire to do so as well. As Algarotti's attempts to secure a position in Italy

¹³³² Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 233.

¹³³³ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹³³⁴ ———, "The Culture of Science in Frederick the Great's Berlin," 342.

¹³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 342.

¹³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 342.

¹³³⁷ Mervaud, *Voltaire et Frédéric II*, 184.

between 1744 and 1746 indicate, he had become dissatisfied in his role as war councillor to Augustus III. The new atmosphere that Frederick sought to create at his court beginning in the mid-1740s addressed all the issues that had led Algarotti to leave his service in the first place. As he had promised Algarotti he would do when the Second Silesian War ended, Frederick had re-devoted himself to intellectual pursuits. Frederick's promotion of scholarly freedom in his kingdom would have appealed to Algarotti. In addition, Frederick had demonstrated that he appreciated the abilities of the intellectuals in his service by assigning them important tasks to which they could apply their talents. It was all these factors in combination that convinced Algarotti to return to Prussia.

Selling the new Frederick: wooing Algarotti back

Frederick's efforts to convince Algarotti to return to Prussia began in 1746. The issues addressed in these negotiations make clear that Frederick now understood that, in addition to having let intellectual matters take a back seat to military affairs, his autocratic approach to his relationship with Algarotti had been a crucial factor in the latter's decision to leave Prussia for Dresden in 1742. Rather than contacting Algarotti directly, Frederick made use of Maupertuis as an intermediary through which to convince Algarotti to return to his court.¹³³⁸ Given

¹³³⁸ The original copies of Maupertuis's letters to Algarotti may be found at the Biblioteca Comunale di Treviso, MS 1258. Many of these letters have been reprinted in Francesco Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti*, vol. 16 (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1794). While some of these letters bear the dates on which they were written in their complete form (for example, 1 janvier 1747), others bear only the date and the month (for example, 1 octobre), while others still have only the day of the week and the date (for example, Dimanche 26). The order in which the letters are arranged in BST MS 1258 is followed in *Opere del Conte Algarotti*. However, the content of these letters

the manner in which their relationship had ended, Frederick had thought that Algarotti's reception of his overtures would be more favourable if they came from Maupertuis. Maupertuis had left Frederick's service in 1741 for the same reasons Algarotti had in 1742. This would have made his praises of the new state of affairs in Prussia, and his satisfaction with his new position there, more credible, all the more so because, unlike Frederick, Maupertuis did not stand to benefit in terms of prestige from Algarotti's return to Prussia.

The tactics that Maupertuis would use to persuade Algarotti to come back to Prussia included demonstrating that Frederick had changed his attitude towards intellectual pursuits and those who undertook them, praising Algarotti for his abilities, and trying to make Algarotti feel guilty for not returning. These were very similar to the tactics Frederick had employed in his failed attempt to convince Algarotti to return to his service in 1742. These strategies had failed at this time because Algarotti remained convinced that, if he returned, his life at Frederick's court would not have been any different than it had been before. However, through the use of the same strategies, Maupertuis would manage to convince Algarotti to return to Prussia. That these same tactics met with success the second time around suggests that Algarotti believed Maupertuis's claims that Frederick's attitude, and conditions at his court, had really had changed.

Maupertuis's attempts to lure Algarotti back to Prussia on Frederick's behalf began with a letter he wrote to the Venetian in May of 1746. In it,

indicates that this order is not always chronologically accurate. For references to letters on lacking a year in the date, the year in which I suspect they were written is followed by a question mark, and placed in square brackets (for example, [1746?]). In the first citation given for each of these letters, I provide an explanation of my reasons for thinking they were written in a given year.

Maupertuis informed Algarotti of the changed that had taken place in Frederick: now that the Second Silesian War had come to an end, Frederick was dedicating himself entirely to “the pleasures... of the spirit and of good company.”¹³³⁹

Describing his feelings about the new intellectual atmosphere in Prussia, Maupertuis wrote “...imagine the glory of bearing the love of the sciences and letters in the middle of an army, and of inspiring love of [these disciplines in others].”¹³⁴⁰ He went on to assure Algarotti that he was very happy with his life at Frederick’s court, and particularly with the praise and appreciation he was receiving from the King.¹³⁴¹ In this and subsequent letters, Maupertuis made great efforts to praise and flatter Algarotti, both on Frederick’s behalf as well as his own. Maupertuis told his friend that Frederick had asked him to tell Algarotti that he would be very pleased to see him.¹³⁴² He also told Algarotti that, if he knew how Frederick praised him, he would not hesitate to accept an offer of a position at his court.¹³⁴³ Maupertuis took care to make his own feelings for

¹³³⁹ “plaisirs...de l’esprit et de la bonne compagnie” (Francesco Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 16* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1794), 211, Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis to Francesco Algarotti, Potsdam 12 May [1746?].) The pretext of the letter was to thank Algarotti for the book he had sent. The book in question is not identified by name. It could have been *Congresso di Citera*, the *Saggio sopra la durata de’ regni de’ re di Roma*, or the new edition of the *Newtonianismo*. Given Maupertuis’s interests, it was likely either the *Saggio sopra la durata de’ regni de’ re di Roma* or the new *Newtonianismo*. Algarotti would be awarded the Order of Merit, and the position of chamberlain at Frederick’s court, in April of 1747. Given that, in this letter, Maupertuis tries to sell the merits of life in Berlin to Algarotti in order to persuade him to return, this letter must date before April of 1747, and after Maupertuis’s return to Prussia in 1745. Given that the *Congresso di Citera* and the *Saggio sopra la durata de’ regni de’ re di Roma* had both appeared in late 1745, and that the new *Newtonianismo* had appeared in early 1746, this letter could only have been written in 1746.

¹³⁴⁰ “...songez à la gloire d’apporter au milieu d’un armée le gout [sic] des sciences et des lettres, et de l’y faire aimer” (Ibid., 212, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 12 May [1746?].)

¹³⁴¹ Ibid., 211, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 12 May [1746?].

¹³⁴² “Le Roi m’a chargé de vous dire qu’il seroit charmé de vous voir” Ibid., 213, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 12 May [1746?].

¹³⁴³ “Si je pouvois vous rendre les termes dans les quels sa Majesté m’a parlé de vous, vous prendriez aussitôt la poste” Ibid., 219, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Berlin 1 October [1746?]. In the letter, Maupertuis tells Algarotti that seeing him again would help relieve the suffering he was

Algarotti plain to his friend as well. He reminded Algarotti that he loved him, and told him that the sight of the forest in Potsdam where they used to walk together evoked sadness in him, as it reminded him that Algarotti was no longer near him.¹³⁴⁴ However, he told his friend, he hung onto the hope that they would soon see each other again.¹³⁴⁵ Following the death of his father, Maupertuis told his friend that he would be greatly consoled if Algarotti would come to Prussia to see him, and to refuse this request would be cruel, given the state of his grief.¹³⁴⁶ However, he assured Algarotti, his belief that he would be happy living in Prussia, and not his desire to see him, were his chief motivation in trying to convince him to return to Frederick's service.¹³⁴⁷ After months of pleading, Maupertuis's efforts finally met with success. In October of 1746, he received a letter from Algarotti indicating that he would make the trip to Prussia once he had obtained permission from Augustus III to do so.¹³⁴⁸ By March of 1747, Algarotti had arrived in Berlin.¹³⁴⁹

experiencing as a result of the "coup affreux" he had experienced. This "coup affreux" is likely the death of his father, which took place in mid-1746. Therefore this letter was likely written in 1746.

¹³⁴⁴ Ibid., 212, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 12 May [1746?]; 214, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 23 June [1746?]. That Maupertuis points out, in the latter letter, that he and Algarotti were not living in the same city suggests that this letter was written prior to Algarotti's return to Prussia in 1747; because its aim is to convince Algarotti to come back to Prussia, it must have been written in 1746.

¹³⁴⁵ Ibid., 214, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 23 June [1746?].

¹³⁴⁶ Ibid., 217-218, Maupertuis to Algarotti, from the Elbe 13 September [1746?]. Maupertuis's father died in 1746; therefore, this letter must be from that year.

¹³⁴⁷ Ibid., 211, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 12 May [1746?].

¹³⁴⁸ Ibid., 219, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Berlin 1 October [1746?]. In this letter, Maupertuis expresses his joy that he will finally see Algarotti again. He also seeks to reassure Algarotti that obtaining permission from Augustus III to visit would not be difficult.

¹³⁴⁹ Frederick wrote to Algarotti in March of 1747 to say he was pleased to hear Algarotti had finally arrived in Berlin, and would be even more so once Algarotti had joined him in Potsdam. See Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 64, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 18 March 1747.

Algarotti presumably wanted to assess whether things really had changed at Frederick's court before making a commitment to remain, however, as it seems that Algarotti had arrived in Berlin without having formally agreed to return to Frederick's service: Frederick wrote to him from Potsdam shortly after his arrival to ask what his plans for the future were.¹³⁵⁰ He also inquired as to whether Algarotti was working as war councillor to Augustus III.¹³⁵¹ Indeed, Frederick would have known that he had been. He may also have known that Algarotti had hoped for, and been refused, the position of court chamberlain in Dresden, for he would offer the Venetian this very position during his visit to Berlin. While Maupertuis's praises for the new state of affairs at Frederick's court had been responsible for convincing Algarotti to come to Berlin, being offered the post he had been refused in Dresden may have been what convinced him to stay. Having agreed to accept the position, Algarotti was formally named court chamberlain on April 11, 1747.¹³⁵² Shortly thereafter, the Order of Merit was conferred upon him.¹³⁵³ In order to commemorate these events, Frederick wrote a poem in Algarotti's honour. Perhaps in order to underline his appreciation for Algarotti's intellectual abilities, he included the following lines in it:

You, who the Graces and Laughter
Created to charm and to please,
To instruct others through your writings,
And not to counsel war,
Receive these new titles,
This position and this character,

¹³⁵⁰ Ibid., 65, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 18 March 1747.

¹³⁵¹ Ibid., 65, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 18 March 1747.

¹³⁵² ———, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XIV* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1850), VIII.

¹³⁵³ Ibid., VIII.

More worthy of the author of the *Congresso di Citera*.¹³⁵⁴

Keeping options open through the maintenance of networks: Algarotti's intellectual pursuits

It would seem that Frederick was sincere in his appreciation of Algarotti's intellectual abilities. In combination with the new duties Frederick would assign him, the King would also allow him the free time necessary to pursue studies on topics of his choosing. However, mindful that the conditions of royal patronage had been a disappointment to him before, Algarotti sought to keep his options open. Although Algarotti had achieved a great deal of renown over the course of his career, a renown that would have been increased by the honours Frederick had bestowed upon him after his return to the Prussian court, Algarotti continued to employ a strategy he had made use of throughout his career to ensure that the works he wrote during this time would come to the notice of the widest audience possible: that of dedicating them to illustrious people. Certainly, Algarotti would have wanted his works to be noticed, regardless of whether or not he harboured hopes of finding a new position through them. However, given that his renown was such that people would be likely to read his work even if he did not take this extra step to promote it, his use of the same tactic he had employed in the past in order to draw attention to his work with a view to finding a source of financial backing suggests that he was still keeping his options open.

¹³⁵⁴ “Vous que les Grâces et les Ris/ Formèrent pour flatter et plaire,/ Pour instruire par vos écrits,/ Et non pour conseiller la guerre,/ Recevez ces titres nouveaux,/ Cet emploi et ce caractère,/ Plus dignes de l'auteur du *Congrès de Cythère*.” Ibid., 109, “Au Comte Algarotti. En lui envoyant la clef de Chambellan et l'ordre pour le mérite” (April 1747).

Among the intellectual projects that Algarotti devoted his attention to during this period was a series of letters on a variety of topics, including philosophy, poetry, painting, and the fine arts.¹³⁵⁵ Although he addressed these letters to various associates of his, he wrote them with the aim of addressing posterity.¹³⁵⁶ In addressing these letters to his illustrious contacts, Algarotti may have hoped to ensure that people of both present and future generations would read them. One of these letters, on the topic of writing in a language other than one's mother tongue, was addressed to noteworthy intellectual Saverio Bettinelli.¹³⁵⁷ While living in Brescia from 1739 to 1744, Bettinelli had formed a learned academy along with, among others, Angelo Maria Querini.¹³⁵⁸ Given that Algarotti was also acquainted with Querini, it is perhaps through the latter that Algarotti had come to know Bettinelli. In 1748 Bettinelli had moved to Venice, where he held a prominent place in the intellectual community.¹³⁵⁹ The contents of this letter would form the basis of Algarotti's 1750 *Saggio sopra la necessità di scrivere nella propria lingua*, which he would also dedicated to Bettinelli.¹³⁶⁰

Among the other works Algarotti wrote at this time was a new collection of poetry, entitled *Epistole in versi*.¹³⁶¹ As had been the case with his 1733 *Rime*,

¹³⁵⁵ ———, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 85, Algarotti to Frederick II, 2 May 1750.

¹³⁵⁶ "ce sont des lettres à la posterité, autant que des lettres à des amis" Ibid., 85, Algarotti to Frederick II, 2 May 1750.

¹³⁵⁷ Francesco Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti cavaliere dell'ordine del merito e ciambellano di S.M. il Re di Prussia. Vol. X* (Cremona: Lorenzo Manini Regio Stampatore, 1784), 101, Francesco Algarotti to Saverio Bettinelli, Berlin 26 June 1750.

¹³⁵⁸ "Bettinelli, Saverio," in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 832.

¹³⁵⁹ Ibid., 832.

¹³⁶⁰ ———, "Saggio sopra la necessità di scrivere nella propria lingua," in *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 4* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1791).

¹³⁶¹ ———, "Epistole in versi," in *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. I* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1791). Although he had hoped to publish the work by December of 1750, various delays meant that it did not appear until much later, in late 1758. See Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti cavaliere*

many of the poems contained in the *Epistole* were written in honour of people of note. These included Frederick, Anna Ioannovna, Augustus III, Doge of Venice Pietro Grimani, Eustachio Zanotti, the deceased Eustachio Manfredi, Voltaire, and Marco Foscarini. The collection was also dedicated to an illustrious person: noteworthy author and salonnière Anne-Marie Fiquet du Boccage.¹³⁶² Certainly, in attracting the attention of the admirers of these people would have been one of his aims in the publication of this volume.

Keeping Algarotti satisfied: his official duties at Frederick's court

While Algarotti was attempting to keep his options open, Frederick attempted to ensure that the Venetian would remain in his service by demonstrating how much he valued his talents. Frederick had undervalued these talents in the past. Rather than assigning Algarotti important duties which would take advantage of his abilities, Frederick had left him, and the other intellectuals in his service, in idleness, making it plain that their main duties were to keep him company and bring him prestige by their presence at his court. This had been one of the reasons that Algarotti had left his service in 1742. However, contrary to the idleness in which he had left Algarotti during his previous stay at the Berlin court, Frederick made assigned several tasks that were well suited to his abilities.

dell'ordine del merito e ciambellano di S.M. il Re di Prussia, Vol. X, 89, Francesco Algarotti to Saverio Bettinelli, Berlin 30 January 1750, 113, Algarotti to Bettinelli, Berlin 3 October 1750.

¹³⁶² For more on du Boccage, see Valérie Lastinger, "Du Bocage (or Du Boccage), Anne-Marie Fiquet," in *The Feminist Encyclopedia of French Literature*, ed. Eva Martin Sartori (Westport, Conn.; London: Greenwood Press, 1999).; P. Laignel-Lavastine, "Du Bocage (Marie-Anne Le Page, dame)," in *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises. Le Dix-huitième siècle, A-K*, ed. Georges Grente, et al. (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1960).

As had been the case when he was at Frederick's court previously, the official definition of what Algarotti's duties as court chamberlain entailed was quite vague: "to procure me all sorts of *agréments* for my person."¹³⁶³ In fact, it seems that the simple desire for Algarotti's company had been a strong motivating factor in Frederick's attempts to convince the Venetian to return to his court. Shortly before issuing the official announcement that Algarotti had accepted the post of court chamberlain, Frederick wrote to his sister Wilhelmina to tell her Algarotti had agreed to return to his service. He told Wilhelmina that he was very pleased about this because, "... when it comes to wit, I would be hard-pressed to find someone better than Algarotti in all of Europe."¹³⁶⁴ However, as Maupertuis had attempted to demonstrate in his letters to Algarotti, Frederick no longer called intellectuals to his court simply on account of their entertainment value, but had come to understand that intellectuals could provide worthwhile services to him. In appointing Maupertuis to the presidency of the Berlin Academy, Frederick likely hoped to take advantage both of Maupertuis's scientific knowledge, and of his renown, which could help to attract potential academicians to Berlin. Likewise, Frederick assigned Algarotti various projects that made use of his talents and high profile. In particular, Frederick appears to have been interested in exploiting Algarotti's talents in the field of fine arts. While the tasks that Frederick assigned Algarotti made use of the knowledge and skills that he had in this field, an examination of these tasks reveals that the networks Algarotti had

¹³⁶³ Quoted in Giles MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great: A Life in Deed and Letters* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 191.

¹³⁶⁴ "... quant à l'esprit, j'aurais peine, dans toute l'Europe, de trouver mieux que lui." Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XXVII, première partie* (Berlin: Imprimerie Royale (R. Decker), 1856), 179, Frederick II to Wilhelmina, Margravine of Bayreuth, Potsdam 7 April 1747.

formed, and his ability to make use of them, was of equal importance in Frederick's eyes.

Among the duties that Frederick assigned to Algarotti was that of collecting art for the royal gallery.¹³⁶⁵ Certainly, that Algarotti had worked as an art collector for Augustus III demonstrated that he had the skills, taste, and knowledge necessary to carry out such a commission. Indeed, the reputation that Algarotti had made for himself as an art collector was such that Frederick's sister Wilhelmina also sought to take advantage of his expertise. When seeking to purchase some particular antique statues, Wilhelmina asked Algarotti to assess their value for her, so she could be certain that the seller was not trying to cheat her.¹³⁶⁶ However, the time Algarotti had spent working as an art collector for Augustus III had also enabled him to form a vast network in the art world. Indeed, the establishment of this network had been a crucial element to his success in this endeavour. This being the case, the contacts that Algarotti had formed, in addition to his abilities, would have played a large role in influencing Frederick's decision to accord him this task. Indeed, given that Algarotti was to carry out this duty from Prussia, these contacts in Italy became even more crucial, particularly that with Bonomo. Acting on Francesco's behalf, Bonomo made purchases and arranged for art to be shipped to Prussia.¹³⁶⁷

¹³⁶⁵ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 192.

¹³⁶⁶ BCT MS 1259 Wilhelmina to Algarotti, Bayreuth 19 November 1747. This letter was identified by the archivist at the Biblioteche Comunali di Treviso as being simply from "Bayreuth." It was presumably written by Wilhelmina, who lived there with her husband, the Margrave of Bayreuth, who she mentions in the letter (it seems one of the statues she was sending Algarotti had "somehow" become damaged in the Margrave's apartments).

¹³⁶⁷ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 2 May 1750, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 30 May 1750.

Algarotti also carried out assignments of an architectural nature for Frederick. As was the case with art collecting, part of the reason that Frederick assigned Algarotti tasks that fell into this category was in order to take advantage of the good taste he was thought to possess. Algarotti's knowledge of architecture would also have made him a desirable candidate for such undertakings. Since his return to Frederick's court, he had become increasingly interested in architecture, and had begun studying this subject in great depth.¹³⁶⁸ One of the architectural duties that Frederick assigned Algarotti, that of designing houses for the streets of Potsdam, would have taken advantage of both his good taste and architectural knowledge. During Algarotti's absence from Prussia, Frederick had decided to have a new palace, Sanssouci, constructed in Potsdam, which he would use as a retreat for himself and all his favourites.¹³⁶⁹ Knobelsdorff, who had been the Superintendent of Royal Buildings at the time, had been given the responsibility of overseeing the construction of the palace.¹³⁷⁰ When Knobelsdorff withdrew from public life in 1749 due to illness, Frederick assigned the task of designing houses for the streets that surrounded Sanssouci to Algarotti.¹³⁷¹ Algarotti was able to complete this assignment, sending Frederick designs he had made for three houses in August of 1749.¹³⁷²

¹³⁶⁸ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 192. In 1756, Algarotti would turn the results of these studies into a treatise on architecture, entitled *Saggio sopra l'architettura* (Francesco Algarotti, "Saggio sopra l'architettura," in *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 3* (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1791).)

¹³⁶⁹ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 188.

¹³⁷⁰ The preliminary sketch of this building had been made by Frederick himself, who had come up with the idea for the palace while having a picnic on the future site of it in 1743. Although construction began in April of 1745, the exterior of the building was not completed until November of 1747, and its interior, not until July of 1748. See Ibid., 188, 189, 199.

¹³⁷¹ Ibid., 192.

¹³⁷² Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 66, Algarotti to Frederick II, Potsdam 9 August 1749.

However, Frederick's desire to make use of Algarotti as an intermediary through which to gain access to the Venetian's networks also appears to have played a crucial role in his decision to assign Algarotti projects of an architectural nature. One way in which Frederick took advantage of Algarotti's networks in this regard was to have Algarotti make use of them in order to obtain various architectural plans and treatises. For instance, in 1751, at Frederick's request, Algarotti arranged for his contacts in Italy to send him the plans for the Pitti palace in Florence, and a new edition of Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio's *Quattro libri dell'architettura*, which was being printed in Venice.¹³⁷³ In 1752, through Sir Thomas Villiers, English ambassador to the court of Augustus III, Algarotti was able to secure a copy of the plan of the house of a certain Mr Wade.¹³⁷⁴ Algarotti also made use of his connection with Lord Burlington, with whom he had travelled to St. Petersburg, to obtain architectural plans for the palace at Chiswick and the Egyptian room at York for Frederick.¹³⁷⁵

Frederick also made use of Algarotti's connections to his architectural advantage in connection with the construction and decoration of St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin. Given that this cathedral, work on which began in 1747, was the first Catholic Church to be built in Berlin since the Reformation,¹³⁷⁶ it seems likely that Frederick had decided to have it built in order to contribute to his reputation as a protector of religious freedom. Algarotti had well-established

¹³⁷³ Ibid., 90, Algarotti to Frederick II, Potsdam 4 August 1751.

¹³⁷⁴ Ibid., 93, Algarotti to Frederick II, Potsdam 11 April 1752,

¹³⁷⁵ Ibid., 91, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 13 December 1751; 93-94, Algarotti to Frederick II, Potsdam 11 April 1752.

¹³⁷⁶ "St. Hedwig's Cathedral." In *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2010). Encyclopædia Britannica Online: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/517241/St-Hedwigs-Cathedral> (consulted June 7, 2010).

ecclesiastical and artistic networks in Italy, both of which could be of use to Frederick in this endeavour. In particular, Algarotti's relationship with Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini seems to have been of the greatest interest to Frederick in this regard. Querini was an associate of Carlo Lodoli, Algarotti's childhood teacher in Venice; in part because of this connection, Algarotti and Querini had formed a friendship in Rome in 1734.¹³⁷⁷ Presumably at Frederick's request, Algarotti initiated a correspondence with Querini on the subject of the proposed church in April of 1749.¹³⁷⁸ The two would continue to correspond on this topic for the next three years. Over the course of this time, Algarotti made use of Querini as an intermediary through which to engage the services of Roman architect and sculptor Carlo Marchionni to sculpt a series of marble statues for the church.¹³⁷⁹ Due to Algarotti's efforts, Querini would donate five hundred gold ducats towards the construction of the church in late 1751, and would donate additional money for the construction of its façade in 1752.¹³⁸⁰

Fondness for Algarotti may have been part of what motivated Querini to make these donations. However, it appears that, in doing so, Querini also sought to win the favour of Frederick. Just as Frederick had made use of Algarotti as an intermediary through which to convince Querini to support the construction of the church in Berlin, Querini attempted to make use of his relationship with Algarotti in order to gain the favour of Frederick. After having made the first donation

¹³⁷⁷ Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters; A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1980), 320.

¹³⁷⁸ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Potsdam 11 April 1749.

¹³⁷⁹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Potsdam 11 April 1749; Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Potsdam 5 September 1749.

¹³⁸⁰ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 91, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 13 December 1751; 94, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 20 April 1752.

towards the construction of the church in 1751, Querini also wanted to make a gift of two medals to Frederick.¹³⁸¹ Rather than simply sending them to the monarch, he asked Algarotti whether he thought it advisable to do so.¹³⁸² In asking Algarotti about this, Querini may have hoped that his friend would mention it to Frederick, with the result that Frederick would pay more attention to the gift, and receive it more favourably once it arrived, because of Querini's association with Algarotti. Indeed, Algarotti did inform Frederick of Querini's intention to make him a gift of medals, and Frederick said he would welcome it.¹³⁸³ In exchange for his second donation, Frederick promised Querini (through Algarotti) that an inscription would be engraved on the façade of the church in the Cardinal's honour.¹³⁸⁴ However, Algarotti's influence did not help Querini to win any favour beyond this from the King. Although Frederick had been happy to accept Querini's money and gifts, Querini's association with Algarotti did not translate into a favourable view of the cardinal on the part of the King. In a letter to Algarotti, Frederick delivered the following back-handed compliment to Querini, in reference to the donations he had made towards the construction of the church:

Even if Cardinal Querini is not the greatest cardinal in the universe, or the best author to read, or the intellectual whose company is the most enjoyable, he is still a "good devil" whose self-love and desire for immortality leads him to undertake charitable acts that are useful to the human race.¹³⁸⁵

¹³⁸¹ Ibid., 91, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 13 December 1751.

¹³⁸² Ibid., 91, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 13 December 1751.

¹³⁸³ Ibid., 91, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 13 December 1751; 92, Frederick II to Algarotti, Berlin 15 December 1751.

¹³⁸⁴ Ibid., 94, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 20 April 1752.

¹³⁸⁵ "Si ce cardinal Querini n'es pas le premier cardinal de l'univers, l'auteur le meilleur à lire, le savant le plus agreeable à fréquenter, il est toutefois un bon diable à qui l'amour-propre et le désir de l'immortalité font faire des actions charitables et utiles au genre humain." Ibid. 97, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 24 September 1752.

The universal usefulness of networks: Algarotti's associates seek to exploit their connection with him

Frederick and Querini were not the only ones of Algarotti's associates that sought to take advantage of their relationship with him in order to expand their own networks. Algarotti's appointment to the position of court chamberlain, and the conferral upon him of the order of merit, were announced in the Berlin newspapers on 2 May 1747.¹³⁸⁶ Although Algarotti was already well known, and well connected, in European intellectual circles at this time, the announcement of his receipt of these honours in the press would have advertised the prestigious place he held at court to a wide audience. Consequently, following these announcements, Algarotti's associates sought in increasing numbers to take advantage of their connection with him in order to advance their own careers. Over the course of his own career, Algarotti had sought to associate his name with those of his illustrious contacts numerous times, and in numerous ways, in order to attract the attention of, and to be well received by, people familiar with the illustrious person in question. Among those associates of Algarotti who enjoyed some degree of renown, most had not been in a position to offer him financial backing of any kind. This being the case, he had sought instead to take advantage of his connections with them in order to form contacts with people in their networks who would be in a position to do so. Algarotti's associates sought a similar service from him: although he was not in a position to offer patronage of any kind to anyone, many of his more illustrious contacts were. Algarotti's

¹³⁸⁶ ———, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XIV*, VIII.

associates therefore hoped to make use of Algarotti as an intermediary through which to form contacts with his more powerful friends. In doing so, they made use of many of the tactics Algarotti had employed in trying to highlight his associations with others in order to expand his own networks.

One manner in which Algarotti's associates sought to draw attention to their relationship with him was by asking him to write them letters of recommendation. In working as an art collector for Augustus III, and then for Frederick, Algarotti had built an extensive network among art collectors and artists, particularly in Venice. For those among his acquaintances who were travelling to Venice on art-related business, access to this network would have been quite valuable, and a letter of recommendation from Algarotti could help them to gain it. When planning a trip to Venice in 1750, Swedish court sculptor Jacques-Philippe Bouchardon and Superintendent of Buildings to the King of Sweden de Aldenrantz asked Algarotti for a letter of recommendation.¹³⁸⁷ Two years later, Berlin court painters Harper and Bernhard Rode asked Algarotti for a letter of recommendation for their travels to Italy, where they were going in order to perfect their painting techniques.¹³⁸⁸ Algarotti wrote letters for both groups of travellers, addressed to his brother Bonomo, in which he asked Bonomo to help them in any way possible.¹³⁸⁹

In addition to seeking to gain access to entire networks of Algarotti's, his associates also tried to use him as an intermediary through whom to gain the

¹³⁸⁷ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 25 October 1750.

¹³⁸⁸ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 25 April 1752.

¹³⁸⁹ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 25 October 1750; Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 25 April 1752.

attention of specific illustrious people with whom he was acquainted. One of these was Maupertuis. In his capacity as president of the Berlin Academy, Maupertuis was responsible for selecting new members for the academy.¹³⁹⁰ Although the membership of foreign candidates had to be approved by the academicians, they never refused anyone Maupertuis suggested.¹³⁹¹ Accordingly, scientists seeking to collaborate with, or gain membership to, the Berlin Academy sought in various ways to secure Algarotti's help in this regard.

Algarotti's friends at the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna were among those who sought to take advantage of Algarotti's connection to Maupertuis, even before Algarotti's official return to Frederick's court. Given that they already held pensioned positions at the Istituto, the establishment of some kind of collaboration with the Berlin Academy, rather than gaining personal membership to it, was their most likely motivation. Just as Algarotti had done in asking Antioch Cantemir to send a copy of the *Newtonianismo* to Anna Ioannovna on his behalf in 1739, the members of the Istituto would seek to make use of Algarotti as an intermediary through whom to present their work to Maupertuis. In highlighting their connection with Algarotti in this way, the members of the Istituto may have hoped that Maupertuis would devote serious attention to their work as a result.

In February of 1747, Algarotti sent a copy of the *Comentarii*, the journal of Istituto, to Maupertuis on behalf of its members.¹³⁹² Unfortunately for the

¹³⁹⁰ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 242-3.

¹³⁹¹ Ibid., 243.

¹³⁹² Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 16*, 205-6, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 28 February [1747?]. Maupertuis does not identify the book that Algarotti sent him by name.

Bolognese scholars, on this occasion, their attempts met with equally little success as Algarotti's attempts to impress Anna with his *Newtonianismo* had. Although Maupertuis did in fact read the journal, he was not impressed by its contents, and indicated as much in a letter to Algarotti on the subject.¹³⁹³ The journal contained abstracts of papers that had been presented at Istituto meetings rather than the full papers themselves, which Maupertuis took as an indication that the full papers were superficial in nature.¹³⁹⁴ He also interpreted their publishing of abstracts rather than full papers as a sign of laziness on the part of the members of the Istituto.¹³⁹⁵ Perhaps most damning of all, his perception of the quality of the work presented in the *Comentarii* led him to conclude "that there are no longer any Lucretiuses, Catulluses, or Algarottis in Italy."¹³⁹⁶

This was not the only time that Istituto members would ask Algarotti to present their work to Maupertuis on their behalf. In 1750, Eustachio Zanotti sent Algarotti two books. One was a copy of a work he had just completed, which was based on calculations he had done when he and Algarotti had studied together at Bologna in their youth.¹³⁹⁷ Presumably, this was the *Ephemerides motuum coelestium ex anno 1751, in annum 1762, ad meridianum urbis Bononiae*

However, the way in which he describes it leaves little doubt that it was the *Comentarii*. He refers to the book as a collection of the activities of "l'Institut," and identifies "Zanotti" (who was the perpetual secretary of the Istituto delle scienze) as the author of the introduction to the journal.

¹³⁹³ Ibid., 205-6, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 28 February [1747?].

¹³⁹⁴ Ibid., 206, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 28 February [1747?].

¹³⁹⁵ Ibid., 206, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 28 February [1747?].

¹³⁹⁶ "qu'il n'y a plus ni de Lucreces, ni de Catulles, ni d'Algarotti en Italie" (Ibid., 206, Maupertuis to Algarotti, Potsdam 28 February [1747?].)

¹³⁹⁷ Museo Biblioteca Archivio Bassano del Grappa (MBAB) Epistolario Gamba, III.A.10 cc. 297. Eustachio Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 6 October 1750.

*supputatae ec. auctoribus Eustachio Zanotto ec. et sociis ad usum Instituti.*¹³⁹⁸

The other was a book by Eustachio's uncle Francesco Maria Zanotti.¹³⁹⁹

Eustachio asked Algarotti to show Francesco Maria's book to Maupertuis, and to Voltaire.¹⁴⁰⁰ Although he did not mention it outright, given that his own book was scientific in nature, he may have hoped that Algarotti would submit it to Maupertuis at the same time as Francesco Maria's book.

The members of the Istituto were not the only men of science who attempted to make use of Algarotti as an intermediary through which to establish some form of scientific collaboration with Maupertuis. In late 1747, an unidentified mathematician wrote to Algarotti on the subject of a mathematical equation and its solution.¹⁴⁰¹ Although the author of the letter also expressed an interest in knowing Algarotti's thoughts on this subject, he asked Algarotti to show the equation to Maupertuis in order to get his opinion on it.¹⁴⁰²

¹³⁹⁸ Eustachio Zanotti, *Ephemerides motuum coelestium ex anno 1751, in annum 1762, ad meridianum urbis Bononiae supputatae ec. auctoribus Eustachio Zanotto ec. et sociis ad usum Instituti* (Bononiae: typis Constantini Pisarri, 1750).

¹³⁹⁹ MBAB Epist. Gamba, III.A.10 cc. 297 Eustachio Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 6 October 1750. Francesco Maria Zanotti had recently assisted in re-establishing Rome's artistic academy, the Accademia di San Luca. As a result, he had been invited by Pope Benedict XIV to give an address to mark the occasion. This address had received a great deal of praise, and had been subsequently published. Francesco Maria Zanotti had then composed a second, anonymous address, which argued against what he had stated in the first. Subsequently, he wrote a third address, in defense of the first. All three addresses were then published together in a book, which was the book Eustachio Zanotti had sent to Algarotti. For more on this, see Dino Provenzal, *I Riformatori della bella letteratura italiana: Eustachio Manfredi, Giampietro Zanotti, Fernand' Antonio Ghedini, Francesco Maria Zanotti*, Studio di storia letteraria Bolognese del sec. XVIII (Rocca S. Casciano: Licinio Cappelli, editore, 1900), 140-2.

¹⁴⁰⁰ MBAB Epist. Gamba III.A.10 cc. 297 Eustachio Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 6 October 1750.

¹⁴⁰¹ BCT MS 1259 ? to Algarotti, Venice 27 December 1747. This letter was identified by the archivist at Treviso as being simply from "Venice." Its author is presumably a mathematician, as the subject of the letter is a mathematical equation. Additionally, the letter contains several algebraic equations to explain this first equation.

¹⁴⁰² BCT MS 1259 ? to Algarotti, Venice 27 December 1747.

In seeking to get Algarotti to present their work to Maupertuis on their behalf, other scholars hoped that this would result in their being elected to the Berlin Academy. One person with this motivation in mind was Gian (or Giovanni) Lodovico Bianconi, personal physician to Joseph d'Hesse-Darmstadt, Prince-Bishop of Augsburg.¹⁴⁰³ Algarotti likely began corresponding with Bianconi on the recommendation of Eustachio Zanotti, under whom Bianconi had studied mathematics in Bologna.¹⁴⁰⁴ In 1748, Bianconi sent Algarotti a treatise on electricity that he had written, asking Algarotti to present it to the Berlin Academy in the hope that it would gain him membership to that institution.¹⁴⁰⁵ Perhaps in part because the two did not know each other well, Bianconi employed various tactics in an effort to increase the likelihood that Algarotti would comply with his request. These, all of which involved an element of flattery, were similar in nature to those Algarotti had made use of previously when trying to gain the attention and assistance of people of note.

Early in his career, Algarotti had arranged for the publication of the works of people of note, such as Francesco Maria Zanotti and Frederick the Great.¹⁴⁰⁶ His main motivation in doing so was likely to increase his own renown by associating his name with those of the illustrious authors in question. However, another motivation of his was likely to gain the favour of the people whose work

¹⁴⁰³ Bianconi (b. 1717) would relocate to Dresden in 1750, where he would become personal physician to Augustus III. He would later become an advisor and librarian to the monarch, in addition to collecting paintings from Italy for his gallery. See Vittorio Criscuolo, "Giovanni Lodovico Bianconi et le *Journal des savans d'Italie* (1748-1749)," *El Argonauta Español* 6 (2009). [pages unnumbered] <http://argonauta.imageson.org/document133.html>

¹⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰⁵ BCT MS 1258 Gian Lodovico Bianconi to Algarotti, Augusta 12 January 1748. Bianconi had written the treatise in French in order to better accommodate the members of the academy.

¹⁴⁰⁶ For more on this, see chapter one for Zanotti and chapter five for Frederick.

he was arranging to have published, as publication would ensure that their work would be exposed to a wide an audience. Bianconi used a similar approach when trying to get Algarotti to present his electrical treatise to the Berlin Academy. At this time, Bianconi was in the process of putting together a new journal, entitled the *Journal des savans d'Italie*. The aim of the journal, which would feature reviews of various works published in Italy, was to expose these works to an international audience.¹⁴⁰⁷ In order to ensure that the journal was accessible to the widest possible readership, the articles contained therein were to be written in French.¹⁴⁰⁸ In the same letter in which he asked for Algarotti's help in getting elected to the Berlin Academy, Bianconi informed Algarotti that the first issue of the *Journal des savans d'Italie* would contain a review of his *Saggio sopra la durata de' regni de' re di Roma*.¹⁴⁰⁹ Certainly, the inclusion of such a review would be beneficial to the fortunes of Bianconi's journal: given the level of renown that Algarotti had achieved over the years, people would have been interested in reading about his work. However, the intended scope of the journal was such that having a review of his *Saggio sopra la durata de' regni de' re di Roma* in it would have served to increase the work's exposure. Bianconi also invited Algarotti to submit articles of his own authorship for future issues of the

¹⁴⁰⁷ BCT MS 1258 Bianconi to Algarotti, Augsburg 12 January 1748. Another aim of this undertaking was to alleviate Bianconi's boredom which, he told Algarotti, flourished more in Augsburg than anywhere else "Per passare il tempo, e alleggerire la noia, che, secondo me in questo paese di Augusta più che altrove fiorisce..."

¹⁴⁰⁸ BCT MS 1258 Bianconi to Algarotti, Augsburg 12 January 1748. The *Journal des savans d'Italie* would have a very short life, lasting only from 1748 to 1749, during which time just three issues were published. See Criscuolo, "Giovanni Lodovico Bianconi et le *Journal des savans d'Italie*."

¹⁴⁰⁹ BCT MS 1258 Bianconi to Algarotti, Augsburg 12 January 1748.

journal.¹⁴¹⁰ Bianconi may have hoped that in, providing Algarotti with opportunities to increase the readership of his work, he would be more amenable to fulfilling his request for assistance.

In addition to the subtle flattery involved in publishing a review of Algarotti's work, and soliciting submissions from him, Bianconi also employed this tactic in a more forthright fashion. When suggesting that Algarotti write articles for the *Journal des savans d'Italie*, he noted that their inclusion in the periodical would contribute to the honour of their shared land of origin.¹⁴¹¹ In addition to this, Bianconi dedicated his electrical treatise to Algarotti.¹⁴¹² Certainly, part of Bianconi's motivation in doing this would have been to curry favour with Algarotti, just as Algarotti had sought similar results in dedicating his works to illustrious people in the past. However, Algarotti had also had other aims in mind when dedicating his works to those more renowned than himself, aims that Bianconi likely sought to achieve with his dedication of his electrical treatise to Algarotti. By dedicating his work to the Venetian, Bianconi could show that a relationship existed between them, thereby increasing the chances that the Berlin Academy would take notice of him. Finally, by dedicating his work to Algarotti, Bianconi could attract readers that were admirers of Algarotti.

¹⁴¹⁰ BCT MS 1258 Bianconi to Algarotti, Augsburg 12 January 1748.

¹⁴¹¹ "...con ciò darmi mano ad onorare la bella patria nostra" (BCT MS 1258 Bianconi to Algarotti, Augusta 12 January 1748)

¹⁴¹² BCT MS 1258 Bianconi to Algarotti, Augusta 12 January 1748.

Bianconi's efforts do not appear to have had the desired effect, however. In 1749, he wrote Algarotti to thank him for having tried to get him elected to the Berlin academy,¹⁴¹³ suggesting that this enterprise had ended in failure.

Algarotti's associates also sought to use him as an intermediary through whom to gain access to Frederick. Some of these acquaintances hoped that Algarotti could secure employment for them at Frederick's court. For instance, when Italian violinist Pasquale Bini was in need of employment, his teacher, the famed Giuseppe Tartini wrote to Algarotti in hopes that the Venetian could secure his pupil a position in Frederick's orchestra.¹⁴¹⁴ Others sought to exploit Algarotti's connection with Frederick in order to advance their literary careers. In 1752, the Marquis Girolamo Grimaldi, minister of Spain in Stockholm, wrote to Algarotti with a request for assistance.¹⁴¹⁵ He had just completed the manuscript of a book.¹⁴¹⁶ Just as Bianconi had sought to increase the success of his treatise on electricity by dedicating it to Algarotti, Grimaldi planned to dedicate his work to Frederick.¹⁴¹⁷ Grimaldi asked Algarotti to inform Frederick of this intended dedication on his behalf.¹⁴¹⁸ This would demonstrate that Grimaldi was an associate of Algarotti's, something Grimaldi may have hoped would ensure that Frederick would pay close attention to his work, and look upon it favourably.

¹⁴¹³ BCT MS 1258, Bianconi to Algarotti, Augusta 12 March 1749.

¹⁴¹⁴ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 75, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 15 September 1749. Algarotti obliged Tartini by recommending Bini to Frederick, but it is unclear whether Frederick decided to engage him.

¹⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 92, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 3 February 1752. Grimaldi, of Genovese origin, had worked as Genovese ambassador to Spain from 1739 until 1746. In 1749, Ferdinand VI engaged Grimaldi's services as Spanish ambassador to Stockholm. He would hold this post until 1753. See G. Benzoni, "Grimaldi, Girolamo," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani. Vol. 59* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2002), 543-5.

¹⁴¹⁶ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 92, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 3 February 1752.

¹⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 92, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 3 February 1752.

¹⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 92, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 3 February 1752.

However, Algarotti's intercession did not have the desired effect. Algarotti did tell Frederick that Grimaldi planned to dedicate his book to him in order to add further glory to the King's reputation among intellectuals.¹⁴¹⁹ However, Frederick responded that he had heard neither of Grimaldi nor of his book, and was indifferent to the news of this planned dedication.¹⁴²⁰

The most noteworthy person who sought to use her association with Algarotti in order to gain Frederick's favour was Parisian salonnière and author Anne-Marie Fiquet du Boccage. She and Algarotti had met when he had visited her Parisian salon.¹⁴²¹ Beginning in 1749, she sought to gain Frederick's attention, through Algarotti, in order to advance her literary career. Indeed, Frederick's support in this regard could be quite useful: given his renown, and reputation for being a man of letters, his endorsement of her work would likely increase its readership. Included in this expanded readership would likely be several members of Frederick's court, among which some of the best minds of Europe could be found.

Du Boccage employed many of the same tactics that Algarotti had used in trying to achieve this end. First, she sent Algarotti a copy of something she had been working on, in order to get his opinion of it: her *Le Paradis Terrestre*, a paraphrasing of Milton's *Paradise Lost*.¹⁴²² Given that Algarotti was a well-known author, it made sense for her to ask him to review her work, as having the

¹⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 92, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 3 February 1752.

¹⁴²⁰ Ibid., 93, Frederick II to Algarotti [February 1752].

¹⁴²¹ Laignel-Lavastine, "Du Boccage (Marie-Anne Le Page, dame)," 396. For more on the relationship between Algarotti and du Boccage in the late 1750s, see Carlo Calcaterra, "Madama du Boccage e Francesco Algarotti: *La Colombiade*: Tradotta da undici accademici trasformati," in *Il Barocco in Arcadia e altri scritti sul settecento* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, editore, 1950).

¹⁴²² Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 16.*, 399, Anne-Marie du Boccage to Francesco Algarotti, Paris 1 February 1749.

endorsement of such a famous figure would help increase its readership. In order to secure his commentary, du Boccage praised Algarotti's erudition. She told him that one reason she wanted to know what he thought of *Le Paradis Terrestre* was that she wanted to know how her work measured up to the English-language original, which she knew Algarotti had read.¹⁴²³ However, by her own admission, she had a second motivation in sending her work to the Venetian, one which involved making a name for herself at Frederick's court. She told Algarotti that his approval of her work would mean a great deal to her because, "it will give me credit at the witty court at which you shine."¹⁴²⁴

Algarotti did offer du Boccage his opinion of *Le Paradis Terrestre*, and it was very complimentary. He told her he had never seen something so beautiful come out of France, and that the French should be grateful that she had given them such a work.¹⁴²⁵ The quality of the work was such, he said, that Italians should honour her above the learned women of Italy.¹⁴²⁶ He informed her that he had shown the work to Frederick, who had also expressed a great deal of admiration for it.¹⁴²⁷

Having done du Boccage the favour of commenting on her work and showing it to Frederick, Algarotti felt entitled to ask her for a service in return. Along with his response he sent her a letter that he asked her to submit to the

¹⁴²³ Ibid., 399, Marie-Anne du Boccage to Francesco Algarotti, Paris 1 February 1749.

¹⁴²⁴ "il me mettroit en credit dans la cour spirituelle ou vous brillez" Ibid., 399, Marie-Anne du Boccage to Francesco Algarotti, Paris 1 February 1749.

¹⁴²⁵ "Mr. Girard marchand français m'a remis ces jours passez votre *Milton* et votre lettre. Jamias, madame, il n'est rien sorti de plus beau de chez-lui." "La France doit être charmé des nouvelles beautez que vous avez transmis dans sa langue." Ibid., 399-400, Algarotti to Du Boccage, Potsdam 15 February 1749.

¹⁴²⁶ "...l'Italie, madame, doit vous mettre a juste titre au dessus des Gambara, des Colonna..." Ibid., 400, Algarotti to Du Boccage, Potsdam 15 February 1749.

¹⁴²⁷ Ibid., 400, Algarotti to Du Boccage, Potsdam 15 February 1749.

Journal de Trevoux for publication.¹⁴²⁸ Perhaps thinking that accomplishing this task would increase the chances that Algarotti would speak favourably of her at Frederick's court, du Boccage set about trying to fulfil this request. Du Boccage did try to get the letter published in the *Journal*; however, the Jesuits who ran the journal refused to do so.¹⁴²⁹ As a compromise, Du Boccage convinced the editors of *Mercure de France* to publish the letter instead.¹⁴³⁰ Although his letter would not receive as much international attention as it would have were it published in the *Journal de Trevoux*, du Boccage assured Algarotti that its appearance in *Mercure de France* would nonetheless provide it with a great deal of exposure in France.¹⁴³¹ That du Boccage had been motivated in this undertaking in part by hopes that Algarotti would help her become better known to Frederick is evident from the various complimentary things she said about the King in this letter to the Venetian regarding the *Mercure de France*. She identified Frederick as, "a King who is as admirable a man of letters as he is a great statesman."¹⁴³² She also claimed that everyone in France was praising Frederick's prose, poetry, and government.¹⁴³³ Perhaps in order to ensure Algarotti's continued assistance in her efforts to increase her renown at Frederick's court, she employed flattery once

¹⁴²⁸ Ibid., 400, Algarotti to Du Boccage, Potsdam 15 February 1749. Algarotti does not specify what the contents of the letter intended for the *Journal de Trévoux* are in this letter to du Boccage.

¹⁴²⁹ Ibid., 401, Du Boccage to Algarotti, Paris 20 April 1749.

¹⁴³⁰ Ibid., 401, Du Boccage to Algarotti, Paris 20 April 1749.

¹⁴³¹ Ibid., 401, Du Boccage to Algarotti, Paris 20 April 1749.

¹⁴³² "un Roi aussi aimable homme de lettres, que grand homme d'état" Ibid., 402, Du Boccage to Algarotti, Paris 20 April 1749.

¹⁴³³ Ibid., 401, Du Boccage to Algarotti, Paris 20 April 1749

more in her conclusion to the letter, in which she told Algarotti: “I am not at all surprised that [Frederick] wanted you to attach yourself to him.”¹⁴³⁴

Algarotti would indeed continue to assist du Boccage in her efforts to promote herself in Prussia. Later in 1749, du Boccage sent Algarotti some copies of *Les Amazones*, a tragedy she had written.¹⁴³⁵ Du Boccage asked Algarotti to present a copy of this work to Frederick.¹⁴³⁶ Algarotti obliged this request, telling Frederick that this gift of a copy of *Amazones* was intended as a homage of the kind that, in du Boccage’s words, “all authors owe to those who surpass and protect them.”¹⁴³⁷ Algarotti informed her that, as instructed, he had presented one of these copies to Frederick.¹⁴³⁸ In her subsequent letter, du Boccage thanked Algarotti for presenting her work to Frederick, and asked Algarotti to continue to make use of the copies of *Les Amazones* she had sent him in whatever way would be “most advantageous to my fame.”¹⁴³⁹

Given that Algarotti was a renowned intellectual, securing his praise of would have been beneficial to the scholarly reputations of Algarotti’s associates.

¹⁴³⁴ “Je ne suis point étonnée qu’il ait desiré de vous attacher à sa personne” Ibid., 402, Du Boccage to Algarotti, Paris 20 April 1749.

¹⁴³⁵ Algarotti told Frederick that he had received these copies from du Boccage in the following letter: Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 77, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin September 19 1749.

¹⁴³⁶ Ibid., 77, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin September 19 1749.

¹⁴³⁷ “[un hommage] (ce sont ces propres paroles) que tout auteur doit à celui qui les surpasse et les protège” Ibid., 77, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin September 19 1749.

¹⁴³⁸ Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Vol. 16*, 405, Algarotti to Du Boccage, Berlin 4 November 1749.

¹⁴³⁹ “[Ella ne farà l’uso che crederà] più vantaggioso alla mia fama.” Ibid., 402, Du Boccage to Algarotti, Paris 2 January [1750?]. The editor of the volume in which this letter appears identifies it as being dated 2 January 1760. However, this appears to have been an error. That she thanks Algarotti for having given her work to Frederick in this letter is an indication of this. What is more, the editor places this letter between one from Algarotti to du Boccage dated 4 November 1749 and one from du Boccage to Algarotti dated 1 September 1756. That the letter in question would be the only one in this collection not placed in chronological order were the date of 1760 correct suggests that the dating of this letter in this volume is a typographical error.

However, given that Algarotti could not offer his associates financial backing of any kind, they also sought to make use of their relationships with him in order to gain access to contacts of his who could provide them with this. In seeking to attract the attention of Algarotti's illustrious associates, particularly Maupertuis and Frederick, Algarotti's lesser-known contacts sought to make use of their relationships with him by using the same tactics he had employed in seeking to expand his own networks through association. These included asking for letters of recommendation, flattery, and making use of Algarotti as an intermediary through whom to draw the attention of the illustrious to their work. This demonstrates that these were tactics commonly used by scholars seeking to establish reputations for themselves. That Algarotti's associates thought that advertising their relationships with him could be beneficial to their careers also illustrates the immense level of fame he had achieved by this time.

Some people never change, part one: Algarotti attempts to find a new position

In addition to making use of his networks to assist others during his second tenure at Frederick's court, Algarotti sought to make use of these networks to his own advantage. For all the changes that Frederick had made in the way he dealt with intellectuals in his service, it seems that Algarotti quickly grew dissatisfied with his life at the Prussian court. Beginning in 1747, the very year of his return to Berlin, Algarotti sought to make use of his contacts in order to find a new source of financial backing. In doing so, he made use of the strategies he had

employed throughout his career when in search of a new source of patronage. As had been the case when he had tired of being war councillor to Augustus, Algarotti directed these efforts towards securing a position in Italy. Indeed, many Italian scholars established themselves in Italy after gaining international renown through travels undertaken early in their careers, including several of Algarotti's associates. Antonio Conti had spent time in France, England, and Holland from 1713 to 1726 before settling in Venice.¹⁴⁴⁰ Antonio Cocchi, whom Algarotti had met in 1733, had also travelled to England, Holland, and France before pursuing his career as a medical doctor in Florence.¹⁴⁴¹ Angelo Querini, from whom Algarotti had obtained financial support for the construction of the Catholic church in Berlin, had spent time in Germany, Holland, England and France before settling in Venice.¹⁴⁴² Prior to establishing himself as an engraver and art collector in Venice, Antonio Maria Zanetti the Elder, who had assisted Algarotti in his efforts to purchase art for Augustus III, had undertaken travels to Paris, London, and Vienna.¹⁴⁴³ While the repeated disappointments Algarotti had experienced during his tenure at the German courts were likely the main motivation behind his attempts to find a position in Italy, the career paths of his

¹⁴⁴⁰ Umberto Renda and Pietro Operati, "Conti, Antoinio," in *Dizionario storico della letteratura italiana* (Turin: Paravia, 1959). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dc5> (consulted July 26, 2010).

¹⁴⁴¹ Pietro Capparoni, "Antonio Cocchi," in *Profili bio-bibliografici di medici e naturalisti celebri italiani dal sec. XV al sec. XVIII*, vol. 2 (Troma: Ist Serono, 1928). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=20d9> (consulted August 22, 2010).

¹⁴⁴² Pietro Gini, "Querini, Angelo Maria," in *Enciclopedia biografica: i grandi del cattolicesimo* (Rome: Ente librario italiano, 1955-1958). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=20dc> (consulted August 22, 2010).

¹⁴⁴³ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 341.

above-mentioned associates may have encouraged him to believe he would be successful in this endeavour.

Algarotti was granted permission from Frederick to travel to Italy in 1747, and again in 1748.¹⁴⁴⁴ His activities during both of these visits suggest that their purpose may have been to attempt to secure a pensioned post in the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna. When preparing to take the first of these trips in the latter half of 1747, Algarotti made plans to meet up with Eustachio Zanotti in Venice.¹⁴⁴⁵ Given that Eustachio Zanotti would later ask Algarotti to present the work of his uncle Francesco Maria to Maupertuis, Eustachio's intention in setting up this rendez-vous may have been to discuss the possibility of using him as an intermediary through whom to gain access to the president of the Berlin Academy. However, Algarotti may have hoped that this meeting with Eustachio Zanotti, who was a member of the Istituto, would help him to secure a position at this academy. Algarotti's activities during his second trip to Italy, taken in 1748, provide even stronger evidence that he hoped to obtain such a post. Algarotti had obtained permission to travel to Italy in order to observe an archaeological dig that was taking place at the time in Herculaneum.¹⁴⁴⁶ However, rather than devoting himself to the observation of this dig, Algarotti spent the majority of his time in Bologna, much to Frederick's irritation. Writing to his sister Wilhelmina shortly after Algarotti's return to Prussia, Frederick complained, "he does not know any more about Herculaneum than us; he remained in Bologna almost the

¹⁴⁴⁴ Museo Civico Correr (MCC) MS PD c.549 c/308 Eustachio Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 22 August 1747; BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, di Villa 3 Sept 1748.

¹⁴⁴⁵ MCC MS PD c.549 c/308 Eustachio Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 22 August 1747.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XXVII, première partie*, 212, Frederick II to Wilhelmina, Berlin 19 January 1749.

entire time, where he studied [Herculaneum] just as well as he could have done here.”¹⁴⁴⁷

The biggest indication that Algarotti was trying to secure a position in Italy while he was a member of Frederick’s court is that he published yet another edition of the *Newtonianismo* in 1750.¹⁴⁴⁸ Algarotti had sought to remind people of his authorship of this work by publishing a new edition of it every time he had been in search of a new post in the past. He had done so in 1739, when he hoped to obtain a position at the court of Anna Ioannovna in St. Petersburg, and more recently, in 1746, when he had become dissatisfied with his position as war councillor to Augustus III. Algarotti dedicated the 1750 edition of his work, which was printed in Berlin, to Frederick. Certainly, one of his motivations in doing so may have been to underline his association with the King to those who read the work. Indeed, Algarotti had made use of dedication to this end many times before. However, another aim of this dedication appears to have to flatter Frederick, in order to ensure his continued favour. In it, Algarotti identifies Frederick as the “greatest Prince on Earth.”¹⁴⁴⁹ Algarotti’s attempts at flattery appear to have been successful: in a letter to his brother Bonomo, he boasted that Frederick was quite pleased with the dedication.¹⁴⁵⁰

Algarotti made several changes to his work in this new edition. As he pointed out in the dedication to Frederick, he had learned, “the most difficult art

¹⁴⁴⁷ “il ne sait pas plus sur Herculaneum que nous autres; il n’a Presque pas bougé de Bologne, où il a étudié comme je crois qu’il aurait pu le faire de meme ici” Ibid., 212, Frederick II to Wilhelmina, Berlin 19 January 1749.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Francesco Algarotti, *Dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione* (Berlin: Nella Reale stamperia di Gio: Goffredo Michaelis, 1750).

¹⁴⁴⁹ “plus grand Prince de la Terre” Ibid., X.

¹⁴⁵⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 1 February 1750.

of all, the art of erasing.”¹⁴⁵¹ Indeed, he had eliminated a significant amount of the historical digressions contained in the work, making the focus on its scientific elements clearer.¹⁴⁵² Perhaps in order to illustrate this, he abandoned the old title, *Il Newtonianismo per le dame*, in favour of a more basic one: *Dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione*. In undertaking these revisions, he stated in the dedication, he had examined all the past reviews of the *Newtonianismo* in order to address the criticisms others had made of it.¹⁴⁵³

In a letter written to Saverio Bettinelli in January of 1750, Algarotti credited the former's criticisms, along with those of Alessandro Fabri and Gregorio Bressani, with being the main inspiration for the revisions he had made to the *Newtonianismo*.¹⁴⁵⁴ Specifically, he told Bettinelli that the comments all three had made had encouraged him to make the work more straightforward.¹⁴⁵⁵ In making this admission to Bettinelli, Algarotti may have been hoping that he, Fabri, or Bressani could help improve his career prospects in Italy. Indeed, all three figured prominently on the Italian intellectual scene. As previously noted, Bettinelli was an influential figure in the Venetian intellectual community.¹⁴⁵⁶ Fabri, a poet and member of several learned academies, was also an intellectual of

¹⁴⁵¹ “cet Art le plus difficile de tous, l'Art d'effacer” Algarotti, *Dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione*, IV.

¹⁴⁵² Franco Arato, *Il secolo delle cose: scienza e storia in Francesco Algarotti* (Genova: Marietti, 1991), 63.

¹⁴⁵³ Algarotti, *Dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione*, VI-VII.

¹⁴⁵⁴ ———, *Opere del Conte Algarotti cavaliere dell'ordine del merito e ciambellano di S.M. il Re di Prussia*. Vol. X, 89, Francesco Algarotti to Saverio Bettinelli, Berlin 30 January 1750. Bettinelli had found the work to be too poetic. See ———, *Opere del Conte Algarotti cavaliere dell'ordine del merito e ciambellano di S.M. il Re di Prussia*. Vol. X, 102, Algarotti to Bettinelli, Berlin 26 June 1750.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti cavaliere dell'ordine del merito e ciambellano di S.M. il Re di Prussia*. Vol. X, 89, Algarotti to Bettinelli, Berlin 30 January 1750.

¹⁴⁵⁶ “Bettinelli, Saverio.”, 832.

note.¹⁴⁵⁷ In addition to this, he was the secretary of the Bolognese senate, which may have led Algarotti to believe that Fabri could help him secure a governmental post.¹⁴⁵⁸ Bressani, whom Algarotti had met during the former's brief visit to Berlin in 1749, was a well-known philosopher and writer.¹⁴⁵⁹ Algarotti had copies of the *Dialoghi* sent to all three men.¹⁴⁶⁰ He later reported to Bonomo that Bettinelli and Fabri had liked the book, and that he was pleased to have received praise from men who were so well-known for their erudition.¹⁴⁶¹ However, beyond this, sending copies of the *Dialoghi* to Bettinelli, Fabri, and Bressani did not yield any immediate results in Algarotti's search for a new position.

In May of 1750, Francesco sent several of the *Dialoghi* to Bonomo with instructions to distribute them to specific people.¹⁴⁶² The people to whom Francesco asked Bonomo to send the work also suggests that he hoped to make use of this book in order to find a source of financial backing in Italy. Some of these intended recipients were well connected in the Venetian government, suggesting that Algarotti wished to attract their attention in hopes of obtaining a position in this government. One was Pietro Grimani, Doge of Venice, in whose honour Algarotti had written a poem for inclusion in the *Epistole in versi*.¹⁴⁶³ Another was Carlo Foscari, who had been Procurator of San Marco since

¹⁴⁵⁷ Vincenzo Caputo, "Fabri (o Fabbri), Alessandro," in *I poeti italiani dall'antichità ad oggi: dizionario biografico* (Milan: Gastaldi, 1960). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1b59> (consulted June 6, 2010).

¹⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Giammaria Mazzuchelli, "Bressani (Gregorio)," in *Gli scrittori d'Italia cioè notizie storiche, e critiche intorno alle vite, e agli scritti dei letterati italiani. Vol. II* (Brescia: Giambattista Bossini, 1763). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1b4d> (consulted June 3, 2010).

¹⁴⁶⁰ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 2 May 1750.

¹⁴⁶¹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 23 July 1750.

¹⁴⁶² BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 2 May 1750.

¹⁴⁶³ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 2 May 1750.

1741.¹⁴⁶⁴ Foscarini was known to be a supporter of literature and of the sciences.¹⁴⁶⁵ While the results of Algarotti's attempts to win the favour of Grimani are unknown, his efforts to attract Foscarini's attention with the *Dialoghi* do not appear to have been fruitful: in 1752, Foscarini would publish *Della letteratura veneziana*, a work that would receive international praise.¹⁴⁶⁶ Although the work included accounts of the writings of authors both dead and alive, Algarotti's works were not mentioned therein.

Algarotti also instructed his brother to send copies of the *Dialoghi* to people known for their scholarly pursuits who were not connected to the Venetian government. One was poet and Duke of Ferrara Alfonso Varano.¹⁴⁶⁷ Another was Giammaria Mazzuchelli, a well-known intellectual in Brescia who had been a member of the learned academy that Bettinelli and Querini had formed in the city.¹⁴⁶⁸ Although Varano's reaction to Algarotti's work is unknown, sending the *Dialoghi* to Mazzuchelli does appear to have had an impact: in 1753, Mazzuchelli would publish the first volume of his *Gli scrittori d'Italia cioè notizie storiche, e critiche intorno alle vite, e agli scritti dei letterati italiani*, a work which he intended to be a comprehensive dictionary of the most noteworthy Italian

¹⁴⁶⁴ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 2 May 1750. Foscarini would become Doge of Venice in 1762.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Marco Foscarini, *Della letteratura veneziana* (Venice: Tipi di T. Gattei, 1854), XII-XV, XVII, XX. Foscarini would become Doge of Venice in 1762.

¹⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, XVIII.

¹⁴⁶⁷ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 2 May 1750. For more on Varano, see Vincenzo Caputo, "Varano (di) don Alfonso, dei duchi di Camerino," in *I poeti italiani dall'antichità ad oggi: dizionario biografico* (Milan: Gastaldi, 1960). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1b50> (consulted June 3, 2010).

¹⁴⁶⁸ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 2 May 1750, "Bettinelli, Saverio," 832.

authors.¹⁴⁶⁹ Mazzuchelli included an extensive entry on Algarotti in this work.¹⁴⁷⁰

Given the fame Algarotti had achieved by this time, both in Italy and abroad, it is quite likely that Mazzuchelli would already have heard of him. Even so, that Algarotti had send Mazzuchelli a copy of the *Dialoghi* in 1750 may have encouraged him to include the Venetian in his *Gli scrittori d'Italia*.

Significantly, another person to whom Francesco asked Bonomo to send a copy of the *Dialoghi* was the Abate Ortes.¹⁴⁷¹ Ortes is the man to whom Algarotti's former teacher Francesco Maria Zanotti suggested he contact regarding religious objections to his work when he was revising the *Newtonianismo* in 1745.¹⁴⁷² By noting, in the dedication to the 1750 edition of the work, that he had taken all past criticisms of the work into consideration when undertaking the revisions for the new edition, Algarotti may have been trying to make clear that he took the Church's objections to his work seriously, and had attempted to address them. As the prohibition against his book may have been part of the reason that Algarotti had been unable to secure a position in Venice, perhaps Algarotti hoped that the changes he had made to the *Dialoghi* would be sufficient to encourage Ortes to help him have it taken off the *Index*. These efforts

¹⁴⁶⁹ Giammaria Mazzuchelli, *Gli scrittori d'Italia cioè notizie storiche, e critiche intorno alle vite, e agli scritti dei letterati italiani*, vol. I, Part I (Brescia: Giambattista Bossini, 1753). Only the volumes dealing with authors whose last names began with A and B would be published, as Mazzuchelli's death in 1763 prevented him from completing this undertaking (Vittorio Turri, "Mazzuchelli Giammaria," in *Dizionario storico manuale della letteratura italiana (1000-1900): compilato ad uso delle persone colte e delle scuole* (Turin: Parvia, 1928). WBIS online, <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1b5c> (consulted June 5, 2010).

¹⁴⁷⁰ Giammaria Mazzuchelli, "Algarotti (Francesco)," in *Gli scrittori d'Italia cioè notizie storiche, e critiche intorno alle vite, e agli scritti dei letterati italiani. Vol. I, Part I* (Brescia: Giambattista Bossini, 1753).

¹⁴⁷¹ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 2 May 1750.

¹⁴⁷² For more on this, see chapter six.

would be to no immediate avail, however, as the decision to prohibit the book was only revisited in 1758, at which time the prohibition of it was upheld.¹⁴⁷³

Although the *Dialoghi* did not win Algarotti a new source of financial backing in Italy, it did win him a great deal of praise from his associates there. While much of this praise could certainly have been genuine, it may also have been motivated by self-interest. At Francesco's request, Bonomo had sent three copies of the *Dialoghi* to Francesco Maria Zanotti.¹⁴⁷⁴ Writing to his former pupil, Zanotti told Algarotti that he had shown these copies to as many people as he possibly could.¹⁴⁷⁵ While he had undertaken these efforts to increase the exposure of Algarotti's work in part in order to assist his former pupil, Zanotti confessed that the desire to increase his own honour, as the teacher of the book's author, had also been a motivation.¹⁴⁷⁶ Assuring Algarotti that the quality of his work was such that he would be remembered and praised among generations to come, he expressed the hope that, through his association with Algarotti, he would also achieve immortality.¹⁴⁷⁷ Algarotti's former classmate Eustachio Zanotti's praise for the work was similarly effusive. Writing to ask Algarotti for a copy of the *Dialoghi*, Eustachio Zanotti reported that he heard the

¹⁴⁷³ Crisuolo, "Giovanni Lodovico Bianconi et le *Journal des savans d'Italie*."

¹⁴⁷⁴ MBAB Epist. Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1494, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Algarotti, Venice 20 June 1750.

¹⁴⁷⁵ MBAB Epist. Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1494, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Algarotti, Venice 20 June 1750.

¹⁴⁷⁶ MBAB Epist. Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1494, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Algarotti, Venice 20 June 1750.

¹⁴⁷⁷ MBAB Epist. Gamba X.A.4 cc. 1494, Francesco Maria Zanotti to Algarotti, Venice 20 June 1750.

work was receiving universal applause from all those who read it.¹⁴⁷⁸ He concluded the letter by telling his friend that he was “the honour of...Italy.”¹⁴⁷⁹

Some people never change, part two: the old Frederick resurfaces

While en route to Prussia from Herculaneum in 1748, Algarotti wrote to his brother to say that, although his journey had been a pleasant one thus far, he was “approaching the worst roads of all, those which lead back to Berlin.”¹⁴⁸⁰ Although it could have been literal, the meaning of this statement was quite likely also figurative. Frederick had changed the way he made use of the intellectuals in his service, but he had not changed his attitude toward them. In the past, Frederick had treated the members of his court as though they were under an obligation to keep him company whenever he saw fit. For instance, while fighting the First Silesian War, Frederick had insisted that Maupertuis join him at the front lines in order to help him pass the time when not engaged in battle.¹⁴⁸¹ Beginning with his requests to travel to Italy, Algarotti made one excuse after another to spend time away from Frederick. The King’s reaction to these requests reveals that the expectations he had regarding the obligations of the intellectuals in his service to entertain him had not changed. While Frederick did grant many of Algarotti’s requests to travel, he was often suspicious of the motivations behind

¹⁴⁷⁸ MBAB Epist. Gamba III.A.10 cc. 297, Eustachio Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 6 October 1750.

¹⁴⁷⁹ “l’onore della nostra Italia” MBAB Epist. Gamba III.A.10 cc. 297, Eustachio Zanotti to Algarotti, Bologna 6 October 1750.

¹⁴⁸⁰ “incorirono le pessime strade, le quali ci condurranno fino quasi a Berlino” BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Augusta 31 December 1748

¹⁴⁸¹ For more on this, see chapter five.

these requests, and jealous that Algarotti wanted to spend time in the company of others.

In late 1749, Algarotti informed Frederick that he had fallen ill.¹⁴⁸² This being the case, he told the King, he would have to remain in Berlin rather than travelling to Potsdam to be with him.¹⁴⁸³ Perhaps in order to demonstrate that he was making efforts to get well as soon as possible, he informed Frederick that he had begun following a doctor-prescribed regimen.¹⁴⁸⁴ However, it seems these measures were insufficient, as he wrote to Frederick only a few days later that he had experienced two “*faiblesses*” since he last wrote.¹⁴⁸⁵ As a result, he had been advised by Lieberkühn, the most celebrated physician in Berlin, to take the waters of the Eger,¹⁴⁸⁶ requiring that he spend even more time away from Potsdam.

It is plausible that Algarotti was indeed unwell; in fact, he complained of his illness to his brother as well.¹⁴⁸⁷ However, he may also have been taking advantage of his condition in order to spend time away from Frederick. Certainly, Frederick seemed to think this was the case. He told Algarotti that he had had the same illness himself before, and that it was not a dangerous one.¹⁴⁸⁸ However, he must have found Algarotti’s claim to illness at least somewhat credible, as he

¹⁴⁸² Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 67, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 27 August 1749.

¹⁴⁸³ Ibid., 67, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 27 August 1749.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 67, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 27 August 1749.

¹⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 67, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 27 August 1749.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 68, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 27 August 1749. “Taking the waters” constitutes bathing in water thought to be beneficial to one’s health, in this case, the water of the Eger river.

¹⁴⁸⁷ BCT MS 1256A Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Potsdam 5 September 1749.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 68, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 1 September 1749.

advised Algarotti to follow a specific diet in order to get well, and to follow the advice of Lieberkühn regarding the waters of the Eger.¹⁴⁸⁹

Algarotti did indeed take the waters of the Eger.¹⁴⁹⁰ Upon completing this treatment, however, rather than returning to Potsdam, he asked Frederick for permission to visit the Prince of Lobkowitz at Sagan, claiming that the active outdoor life he would experience there would accelerate his recovery.¹⁴⁹¹

Frederick agreed to let him go on the condition that Algarotti spend eight days in his company upon his return.¹⁴⁹² The trip, from which Algarotti returned late, did not cure him of his illness.¹⁴⁹³ Upon his return to Berlin, Algarotti reported that he would travel to Potsdam to visit Frederick shortly.¹⁴⁹⁴ However, he told the King, he was still required to follow a strict diet, which meant he could not partake in the elaborate dinners Frederick held each night.¹⁴⁹⁵

Algarotti's late return, in combination with his professed inability to take part in the dinners at Potsdam, provoked an angry reaction from Frederick. Accusing Algarotti of being obsessed with famed ballerina Giovanna Cortini-Denis, otherwise known as "la Pantaloncina" ("the Little Pantalooned One"), he sent the Venetian a poem expressing his anger.¹⁴⁹⁶ In it, he suggested that the cause of Algarotti's symptoms was not physical illness, but love sickness:

I think that the sickness
That has made you nervous and turned you into a dreamer

¹⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 68, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 1 September 1749.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 72, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 11 September 1749.

¹⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 76, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 17 September 1749. Sagan was located Prussian Silesia (modern-day Poland).

¹⁴⁹² Ibid., 77, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 19 September 1749.

¹⁴⁹³ Ibid., 78, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 23 September 1749.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 78, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 23 September 1749.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 78, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 23 September 1749.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 79, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 25 September 1749.

Rather than threatening your life
 Has only to do with your heart.
 During the night, during the day,
 Before my incredulous eye appears
 A certain sickness that we call love...¹⁴⁹⁷

It is unclear whether Algarotti was actually in love with la Pantaloncina.

Certainly, he had been very excited to learn that she had agreed to enter Frederick's service in March of 1749, writing to Bonomo to report this news to him.¹⁴⁹⁸ Anticipating her arrival, Algarotti had asked his brother to send him a pair of stockings, which he planned to give to Corini-Denis as a gift.¹⁴⁹⁹ He would later mention an opera in which she had performed at court in a letter to his brother, stating that she had given a tremendous performance.¹⁵⁰⁰ Whether Frederick's accusations were well-founded or not, he made his resulting anger very plain to Algarotti:

How I am irritated that this sickness is getting the better of you!
 When you have so many talents,
 So much wit and so many charms...¹⁵⁰¹

Ignoring Algarotti's claims to illness, Frederick told him he would be glad to see him in Potsdam.¹⁵⁰²

Algarotti would continue to use illness as an excuse to spend time away from Frederick. In January of 1750, Frederick's *Essai sur les lois* was read before

¹⁴⁹⁷ "Je pense que la maladie/ Qui vous rend inquiet et rêveur/ Au lieu d'attaquer votre vie/ Ne s'attache qu'à votre coeur./ Pendant la nuit, pendant le jour./ Paraît à mon oeil incrédule/ Certain mal qu'on nomme l'amour...." Ibid., 79, FII to FA Potsdam Sept 25 1749.

¹⁴⁹⁸ BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Potsdam 1 March 1749.

¹⁴⁹⁹ "manichetti" BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Potsdam 11 April 1749.

¹⁵⁰⁰ "dove la Pantaloncina si fa grande onore" BCT MS 1256A, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 6 December 1749.

¹⁵⁰¹ "Que je suis irrité que ce mal vous excède!/ Lorsqu'on possède vos talents./ Tant d'esprit et tant d'agéments..." Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 80, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 25 September 1749.

¹⁵⁰² Ibid., 80, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 25 September 1749.

the Berlin Academy.¹⁵⁰³ Although Algarotti was in Berlin at the time, he did not attend, claiming that a chest cold had prevented him from leaving his bed.¹⁵⁰⁴ Perhaps in order to keep on Frederick's good side, Algarotti asked whether Frederick might deliver a private rendition of the reading for him, claiming he did not want to miss out on the opportunity to hear it.¹⁵⁰⁵ In typical angry fashion, Frederick refused this request, and instead sent Algarotti a copy of the *Essai*, which he was preparing for publication, and asked him to provide his comments on it.¹⁵⁰⁶ That Frederick was annoyed must have been clear to Algarotti, as he responded with his comments on the *Essai*, all positive, the day after Frederick had sent it to him.¹⁵⁰⁷

Old habits die hard: a poisonous atmosphere emerges

Algarotti was not the only intellectual in Frederick's service to be dealt with in an authoritarian manner. In 1750, Voltaire entered into Frederick's service as court poet and French tutor.¹⁵⁰⁸ Accordingly, he joined the inner circle of Frederick's favourites at the court in Potsdam. This group, comprised of Maupertuis, Algarotti, Voltaire, La Mettrie, d'Argens, d'Arnaud, Pöllnitz and Darget is immortalized in Adolph von Menzel's 1850 painting *Die Tafelrunde*, or *The Roundtable*. Initially, Voltaire was happy living at Frederick's court.¹⁵⁰⁹ In a

¹⁵⁰³ Ibid., 83, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 22 January 1750.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 83, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 22 January 1750.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 83, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin 22 January 1750.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 83, Frederick II to Algarotti, [22 January 1750].

¹⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 84, Algarotti to Frederick II, 23 January 1750.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Mervaud, *Voltaire et Frédéric II*, 175.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 184.

letter written to the Duke of Richelieu shortly after his arrival, Voltaire described the dinners held by Frederick as agreeable affairs, where the conversation was always instructive, and identified those who attended them, including Algarotti, as excellent company.¹⁵¹⁰ Indeed, Voltaire's former jealousy of Algarotti seems to have dissipated by this time, as he appears to have greatly appreciated the Venetian's society. Writing to his niece in 1751, Voltaire said that he, Algarotti, and D'Argens lived as brothers at Potsdam,¹⁵¹¹ and described the relationship the three shared in these exact terms to the Duke of Richelieu in 1752.¹⁵¹² However, it would not take long for this happy state of affairs to turn sour. During the course of Voltaire's time in Prussia, the atmosphere at Frederick's court would become positively poisonous. Certainly, Voltaire's own conduct was in large part to blame for this. For instance, his inability to get along with La Mettrie drove the latter to return to France on an extended leave.¹⁵¹³ However, Frederick's authoritarian attitude towards the intellectuals in his service contributed greatly to the unpleasant environment at his court.

Frederick's selfish and demanding attitude regarding his courtiers is evident from the way in which he approached the negotiations that resulted in Voltaire joining his service. These negotiations began in 1749, by which time du Châtelet, aged forty-one, had become pregnant.¹⁵¹⁴ This age being considered

¹⁵¹⁰ Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. XVIII (1750)*, 142-3, Voltaire to the Duke of Richelieu, [c. 31 August 1750].

¹⁵¹¹ "Nous vivons comme frères..." ———, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. XX (August 1751-July 1752)*, 71, Voltaire to Denis, Potsdam 29 October [1751].

¹⁵¹² *Ibid.*, 341, Voltaire to the Duke of Richelieu, Potsdam 10 June [1752].

¹⁵¹³ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 213.

¹⁵¹⁴ Judith P. Zinsser, *La Dame d'Ésprit: A Biography of the Marquise Du Châtelet* (New York: Viking, 2006), 270.

quite advanced for pregnancy, du Châtelet feared she would die in childbirth.¹⁵¹⁵ This being the case, although the father of the baby was poet Jean-François de Saint-Lambert, Voltaire decided to remain by du Châtelet's side until she had given birth.¹⁵¹⁶ He relayed this information to Frederick, saying he could not accept the King's offer of patronage until the baby had been born.¹⁵¹⁷ Greatly annoyed by this, Frederick expressed his frustrations in a letter to Algarotti in which he said of Voltaire, "It is really too bad that such a cowardly spirit is attached to such a great genius. He has the kindness and mischievousness of a monkey."¹⁵¹⁸ He even went so far as to call him a "blackguard."¹⁵¹⁹ However, he informed Algarotti, he decided not to communicate his thoughts to Voltaire for the moment, as he still wanted Voltaire's assistance in studying French elocution.¹⁵²⁰ In the same letter, Frederick also attacked du Châtelet for her role in keeping Voltaire from him. He remarked snidely that du Châtelet had given birth to a book (her translation of the *Principia*), but had yet to give birth to her baby.¹⁵²¹ He speculated that perhaps, due to her total immersion in her work, she would forget to give birth all together, or that, "if the [child] does appear, it will be a volume of collected works."¹⁵²²

¹⁵¹⁵ Ibid., 270, 272.

¹⁵¹⁶ Ibid., 277.

¹⁵¹⁷ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 208.

¹⁵¹⁸ "C'est bien dommage qu'une âme aussi lâche soit unie à un aussi beau génie. Il a les gentillesse et les malices d'un singe." Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 74, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 12 September 1749.

¹⁵¹⁹ "scélérat" Ibid., 74, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 12 September 1749.

¹⁵²⁰ Ibid., 74, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 12 September 1749.

¹⁵²¹ "La du Châtelet est accouchée d'un livre, et l'on attend encore l'enfant" Ibid., 74, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 12 September 1749.

¹⁵²² "si l'embryon paraît, ce sera des œuvres mêlées" Ibid., 74, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 12 September 1749.

Shortly thereafter, du Châtelet gave birth to a baby girl, and died days later as a result.¹⁵²³ Voltaire was terribly distraught. Writing to Frederick, Voltaire lamented that he has lost a friend of twenty-five years, “a great man whose only fault was being a woman.”¹⁵²⁴ Algarotti was also affected by du Châtelet’s death. In a letter to Frederick, he said that he was deeply saddened that Voltaire had lost what he might never find again: a woman who he loved, and with whom he could spend his life.¹⁵²⁵ As he told Frederick, such things are “irreplaceable to those who do not command armies and govern states.”¹⁵²⁶

In expressing his feelings to Frederick on this matter, Algarotti may have been trying to elicit some compassion for Voltaire from the King, who was annoyed that du Châtelet’s death would delay Voltaire’s arrival at his court even further. Algarotti acknowledged this, saying, in the same letter, that he was sorry that this turn of events would mean that Frederick would have to wait even longer for his French lessons to begin.¹⁵²⁷ However, his attempts to win the monarch’s sympathy for Voltaire failed. In his response to Algarotti, Frederick remarked that, “Voltaire expresses his affection too strongly, which makes me think he will be consoled quickly.”¹⁵²⁸

¹⁵²³ Zinsser, *La Dame d'Ésprit*, 279. The baby also died a short while later.

¹⁵²⁴ “un grand homme qui n’avoit de défaut que d’être femme” Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. XVII (1749)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1956), 188, Voltaire to Frederick II, Paris 15 October 1749.

¹⁵²⁵ “Je le [Voltaire] plains réellement d’avoir perdu ce qu’il ne retrouvera peut-être jamais: ...une femme qu’on aime, et avec qui on passait sa vie” Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 76, Algarotti to Frederick II Berlin September 17 1749.

¹⁵²⁶ “irreparable pour ceux qui ne commandent pas des armées et ne gouvernent pas des États” Ibid., 76, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin September 17 1749.

¹⁵²⁷ Ibid., 77, Algarotti to Frederick II, Berlin September 17 1749.

¹⁵²⁸ “Voltaire déclame trop dans son affection, ce qui me fait juger qu’il se consolera vite” Ibid., 77, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam September 19 1749.

Just as had been the case with Algarotti, once Voltaire joined the Prussian court in 1750, Frederick became increasingly despotic in his attitude towards him. Perhaps the greatest example of this is the manner in which he treated Voltaire in the latter's very public dispute with Maupertuis over the treatment of mathematician Samuel König by the Berlin Academy in 1752. Frederick's involvement in this quarrel made it plain that he intended to control his courtiers at all costs. The manner in which Frederick would intervene in this dispute would ultimately cause Voltaire to leave the King's service in 1753.

In 1751, Maupertuis published a new edition of *Essai de Cosmologie*, or *Essay on Cosmology*. This work dealt with the principle of least action, the discovery of which, and elaboration upon, Maupertuis considered to be his life's work.¹⁵²⁹ In the same year, König, a foreign member of the Berlin Academy published *Nova acta eruditorum*, in which he argued that, contrary to Maupertuis's belief, the principle of least action could not be universally applied. At the same time, König claimed that Leibniz, and not Maupertuis, had been the first to discover this principle. The Berlin Academy set up an inquiry into this matter, asking König to produce the letter, allegedly written by Leibniz, upon which his assertion was based. König did hand over a copy of the alleged letter to the Academy, but the original could not be found, leading mathematician Leonhard Euler, who headed the inquiry, to conclude that the letter König had given them was a forgery. This ruling was approved by the membership in 1752, causing König to sever all ties with the academy. A pamphlet war ensued

¹⁵²⁹ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 299. The principle of least action is a principle which is used to obtain equations of motion in mechanics.

between König and Berlin academicians Euler and Jean Bertrand Merian, who had been newly elected to the metaphysics class of the Academy. Unexpectedly, Voltaire joined the dispute on the side of König, publishing an anonymous satire of the academy's ruling against the Swiss mathematician, entitled "Réponse d'un académicien de Berlin à un académicien de Paris," in the September 1752 issue of *Bibliothèque raisonnée*. This sparked a quarrel between Voltaire and Maupertuis, with Frederick coming to the defence of the latter, that would become one of the most talked-about quarrels in the eighteenth century.¹⁵³⁰

Voltaire's reasons for joining this dispute had little to do with physics. Indeed, Voltaire did not care about the principle of least action, not having the mathematical ability to fully understand it.¹⁵³¹ Rather, he was motivated by his sense, real or imagined, that Frederick preferred Maupertuis to him. Voltaire was jealous of Maupertuis's position as president of the Berlin Academy,¹⁵³² and, from the moment he had arrived in Prussia, the two had been competing for Frederick's attention.¹⁵³³ As a result, tensions between them already ran high before Voltaire had published his anonymous satire. Shortly after returning to Frederick's court, Voltaire wrote to the Duke de Richelieu to say that Maupertuis had become "truly unsociable."¹⁵³⁴ Writing to Jeanne Grâce de Bosc du Bouchet, Comtesse d'Argental, about Maupertuis in 1752, Voltaire said, "The desire to

¹⁵³⁰ Terrall, *The Man who flattened the Earth: Maupertuis and the sciences in the Enlightenment*, 292-302.

¹⁵³¹ Terrall, *The Man who flattened the Earth: Maupertuis and the sciences in the Enlightenment*, 303.

¹⁵³² MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 223.

¹⁵³³ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 293.

¹⁵³⁴ "à la vérité insociable" Voltaire, *Voltaire's Correspondence. Vol. XVIII (1750)*, 143, Voltaire to Duke of Richelieu, [c. 31 August 1750].

please does not figure into his geometrical calculations.”¹⁵³⁵ Voltaire’s animosity toward his old friend is especially evident from his reaction to the news that Maupertuis had fallen ill in 1752. Upon hearing this, Voltaire wrote to Charlotte Sophia of Aldenburg, Countess Bentinck to inquire as to whether Maupertuis was actually in danger of dying.¹⁵³⁶ He told the Countess that, should Frederick offer him the presidency of the Berlin Academy in the event of Maupertuis’s death, he planned to refuse it, suggesting Algarotti for the post instead.¹⁵³⁷ The Countess Bentinck had moved to Berlin by 1750.¹⁵³⁸ Having established a correspondence with Maupertuis prior to this time, she was sometimes a guest at dinners he held at his residence in that city.¹⁵³⁹ Knowing that the Countess was an associate of Maupertuis’s, he may have expected (and hoped) that she would communicate his callous feelings to the ailing mathematician. Maupertuis had taken some stabs at Voltaire as well. He had blocked the election of the abbé Raynal, one of Voltaire’s favourites, to the Berlin Academy.¹⁵⁴⁰ When La Mettrie died in 1751, Maupertuis had told Voltaire that he should consider applying for the newly vacated position of court atheist, a comment to which Voltaire had taken offence.¹⁵⁴¹

¹⁵³⁵ “L’envie de plaire n’entre pas dans ses mesures géométriques” (———, *Voltaire’s Correspondence. Vol. XX (August 1751-July 1752)*, 243, Voltaire to Jeanne Grâce de Bosc du Bouchet, Comtesse d’Argental, Potsdam 14 March [1752].)

¹⁵³⁶ ———, *Voltaire’s Correspondence. Vol. XXI (August-December 1752)*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1957), 78, Voltaire to Charlotte Sophia of Aldenburg, Countess Bentinck, Potsdam 29 September [1752].

¹⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, 78, Voltaire to Charlotte Sophia of Aldenburg, Countess Bentinck, Potsdam 29 September [1752].

¹⁵³⁸ Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond, *Charlotte Sophie Countess Bentinck. Her Life and Times, 1715-1800* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1912), 44.

¹⁵³⁹ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 7 n. 16, 233.

¹⁵⁴⁰ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 223.

¹⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 223.

Perhaps Voltaire saw this dispute between König and the Berlin Academy as an opportunity to discredit Maupertuis in the eyes of Frederick.¹⁵⁴² However, as the protector of the Berlin Academy, Frederick saw Voltaire's satire as an affront to his honour.¹⁵⁴³ Accordingly, he came to the defence of Maupertuis. In the ensuing conflict between himself and Voltaire, Frederick employed increasingly harsh tactics in an effort to force Voltaire into submission.

Although Voltaire denied having written the "Réponse d'un académicien de Berlin à un académicien de Paris," everyone knew that he was the author, including Frederick.¹⁵⁴⁴ Hoping to silence his courtier, Frederick published his own pamphlet, "Lettre d'un académicien de Berlin à un académicien de Paris." Like Voltaire, he had published the pamphlet anonymously, but after having the royal coat of arms stamped on the second edition of it, it was evident that it had been written by the King. Voltaire responded by publishing another attack on Maupertuis, *Diatribes du docteur Akakia*, which he had printed on the royal printing press, using a fake permission. Enraged, Frederick ordered all copies of this work to be seized and burned.¹⁵⁴⁵ He also made Voltaire sign a declaration to the effect that he would not to write libels against anyone, especially famous men of letters, and that he would not attack Frederick in any way.¹⁵⁴⁶ However, Voltaire reneged on this agreement almost immediately: he had more copies of *Diatribes du docteur Akakia* printed in Leiden, which he then had distributed in

¹⁵⁴² Ibid., 223.

¹⁵⁴³ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 303.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 302.

¹⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., 303-304.

¹⁵⁴⁶ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 224.

both Prussia and France.¹⁵⁴⁷ Accordingly, Frederick stepped up his efforts to force Voltaire to cease and desist. He had all copies of this second edition of *Diatrbie du docteur Akakia* seized and burned in the public squares of Berlin on Christmas Eve just as mass let out in order to maximize the number of people who would be witness to this event.¹⁵⁴⁸ He then had the ashes delivered to Maupertuis.¹⁵⁴⁹

This public display of Frederick's intolerance for disobedience led Voltaire to take the decision to leave Prussia and never return.¹⁵⁵⁰ In March of 1753, he was given permission to return to France temporarily. However, Frederick would not allow Voltaire to leave his kingdom without ensuring that he had learned never to cross him again. Frederick insisted that Voltaire return his contract of engagement, his chamberlain's key, and the cross he had received when the order of merit had been conferred upon him prior to his departure. He also forbade Voltaire to leave without returning the copy of Frederick's *Oeuvres de poésie* that he had given him.¹⁵⁵¹ On the pretence of not having returned these items, the book of poetry in particular, Frederick had Voltaire arrested once he reached Frankfurt.¹⁵⁵² When, following eight hours of interrogation, Voltaire did not produce the book, he was placed under house arrest.¹⁵⁵³ Although the book was eventually discovered in Voltaire's luggage, he was still not permitted to

¹⁵⁴⁷ Terrall, *The Man who Flattened the Earth*, 304.

¹⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., 304.

¹⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 304.

¹⁵⁵⁰ Mervaud, *Voltaire et Frédéric II*, 226-7.

¹⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 229-230. This collection of Frederick's poetry contained several insulting remarks about other rulers. For this reason, and given the falling-out they had had, Frederick did not want Voltaire to remain in possession of the book after leaving Prussia. See MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 228.

¹⁵⁵² Mervaud, *Voltaire et Frédéric II*, 230.

¹⁵⁵³ MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 229.

leave Frankfurt. After an unsuccessful attempt at escape and an extended period of detention, Frederick finally granted Voltaire permission to leave his kingdom. Voltaire had been humiliated.¹⁵⁵⁴

The disagreeable atmosphere at court that this episode illustrates, in combination with his dissatisfaction at his own situation in Prussia, would ultimately lead Algarotti to plead illness in order to return to Italy in 1753, leaving Frederick's service forever.

Conclusion: there's no place like home

Desperate to escape this atmosphere of duplicity and these public shows of force, Algarotti began making plans to return to Italy in early 1752. He announced his intention to travel to his homeland to his brother Bonomo in March of that year, saying he hoped to depart after the wedding of the King's brother in June.¹⁵⁵⁵ However, Algarotti initially encountered difficulties in convincing Frederick to grant him permission to leave. Being unable to depart in July, he announced his intentions to both Bonomo and Bettinelli to be in Italy by September.¹⁵⁵⁶ But this was not to be: in September, Francesco wrote to Bonomo to say that his departure had yet again been delayed.¹⁵⁵⁷ Eventually, however, Algarotti convinced Frederick to let him go, claiming that pressing personal

¹⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., 229.

¹⁵⁵⁵ BCT MS 1256B, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Potsdam 25 March 1752.

¹⁵⁵⁶ BCT MS 1256B, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Potsdam 29 July 1752; Algarotti, *Opere del Conte Algarotti cavaliere dell'ordine del merito e ciambellano di S.M. il Re di Prussia. Vol. X*, 133, Algarotti to Bettinelli, Potsdam 22 July 1752.

¹⁵⁵⁷ BCT MS 1256B, Francesco Algarotti to Bonomo Algarotti, Berlin 9 September 1752.

affairs were in need of his attention there.¹⁵⁵⁸ Although, he told Algarotti, he could not imagine what these affairs might consist of, Frederick granted him permission to depart for Venice in February of 1753 and remain there until October of that year.¹⁵⁵⁹

Frederick's conviction that Algarotti would return to Prussia is likely what had led him to grant the Venetian permission to leave. Indeed, Frederick remained convinced that Algarotti would return to his service even after he had departed for Italy, writing to him in March to ask that he bring a block of marble from Herculaneum.¹⁵⁶⁰ However, Algarotti, it seems, had no intention of returning to Prussia. The events of König-Maupertuis-Voltaire quarrel of 1752 are likely in large part to blame for this, as is evidenced by Algarotti's willingness to return to Italy without having secured a new post for himself there prior to his departure.

An examination of what transpired during Algarotti's second tenure at the Berlin court reveals the vital role that networks played in efforts to advance one's interests in the eighteenth century. Frederick had made use of Algarotti as an intermediary through whom to secure the assistance of the Venetian's associates, from whom Algarotti acquired art, architectural treatises and plans, and financial and artistic support for the construction of the Catholic Church in Berlin on Frederick's behalf. Many of Algarotti's lesser-known contacts had also sought to take advantage of their relationships with Algarotti, with a view to advancing

¹⁵⁵⁸ Frederick II, *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand. Vol. XVIII*, 97, Frederick II to Algarotti, no place, no date [1752]. The editor places this letter chronologically between one written by Frederick to Algarotti on 24 September 1752 and one written by Algarotti to Frederick on 7 February 1753.

¹⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., 97, Frederick II to Algarotti, no place, no date [1752].

¹⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 100, Frederick II to Algarotti, Potsdam 25 March 1753.

their careers. They sought to highlight their association with him in order to draw attention to themselves and their work, and in order to form contacts with those of his more powerful friends, such as Maupertuis and Voltaire. In doing so, they employed many of the tactics that Algarotti had made use of throughout his career in order to increase his renown and expand his networks, suggesting that these tactics were commonly used by scholars seeking to establish reputations for themselves in eighteenth-century Europe.

In comparison to the state of affairs during Algarotti's first tenure at the Berlin court, Frederick had changed his attitude regarding the value of intellectuals. Rather than engaging them simply in order to keep him company and bring prestige to his court, Frederick had begun to appreciate, and make use of, the talents of the scholars in his service. He had appointed Maupertuis to the presidency of the Berlin Academy, and had provided him with the necessary resources for its operation. Rather than leaving Algarotti in idleness, Frederick had assigned Algarotti several tasks, including collecting art for the royal galleries, designing houses for the streets of Potsdam, acquiring various architectural treatises and plans, and securing financial and artistic support for the construction of the Catholic Church in Berlin. However, as Frederick's treatment of both Algarotti and Voltaire demonstrates, his expectation that the scholars in his service would submit to his every whim remained unaltered. Frederick had tried to control Algarotti's movements, demanding on several occasions that he set all his own plans aside in order to spend time with him, and reacting in a selfish and jealous manner when he refused. When Voltaire ignored his order to

desist in his persecution of Maupertuis, Frederick had made plain the lengths to which he would go in order to ensure that his courtiers would submit to his will, making a public display of his displeasure with Voltaire by burning the latter's book, and humiliating him by having him imprisoned when he tried to leave the kingdom. For Algarotti, this negative aspect of life at Frederick's court outweighed all the advantages of being in the King's service, bringing him to the decision that having no financial backing was preferable to patronage which came with such restrictive strings attached.

Contrary to his promise, Algarotti did not return to Prussia in October of 1753. It appears that Algarotti resorted to his previous tactic of citing health concerns in order to explain his prolonged absence: in a letter written in October of 1753, Frederick, annoyed that the Algarotti had not yet left in Italy, told him that doctors in Padua were the same as doctors in the rest of Europe.¹⁵⁶¹ For a brief period, Algarotti continued to pretend that he had every intention of returning to Prussia. In November, he wrote to Frederick to say that, although a short trip to Vicenza had made him so ill that he had had to spend two days in bed, he was determined ignore the advice of his doctors, who told him it was imperative for his health that he spend the winter in Italy.¹⁵⁶² However, Algarotti would never return to Prussia. His alleged poor health would keep him in Italy for the next eleven years, until his death in 1764. Although it is possible that he was indeed ill (his death would be caused by tuberculosis) it seems more likely that he had come to the conclusion that remaining in Italy, even without an

¹⁵⁶¹ "Vous voyez que les médecins de Padoue ont le sort de tous les autres de l'Europe" Ibid., 102, Frederick II to Algarotti, (October 1753).

¹⁵⁶² Ibid., 102-103, Algarotti to Frederick II, Padua 12 November 1753.

immediate position, was preferable to the price of the prestige that came along with being a member of Frederick's court.

Conclusion: The effect of historical forces on Algarotti's legacy

At the time of his death in May of 1764, Francesco Algarotti was recognized throughout the intellectual circles of Europe. His intellectual talents and his networking abilities had enabled him to be invited to spend time with, and to receive acclaim from, leading thinkers in Bologna, Padua, Florence, Rome, Paris, Cirey, London, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Dresden, and Venice. Having published numerous works, and made use of strategies that fell into the often-overlapping categories of association, print, and travel he had achieved his ambition to become a renowned writer. His association with various groups, such as the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna, the Freemasons in Florence, the scholars at Cirey, and the courts of Frederick II and Augustus III, had given him the reputation of a scholar worthy of attention. His relationships with certain illustrious thinkers, such as Manfredi, the Zanottis, Maupertuis, du Châtelet, Voltaire, Lord Hervey, Wortley Montagu, Cantemir, and Frederick II had had a similar effect. While he sometimes made use of letters of introduction to make these relationships known to others (particularly at the beginning of his career), he also made use of print in order to advertise these associations, primarily through dedications of his works to these individuals. He employed a similar tactic in trying to get the attention of people he wished to know. By writing dedications full of praise, such as he had done in dedicating the 1739 edition of the *Newtonianismo* to Anna Ioannovna, and writing laudatory poetry to illustrious personages, he hoped to gain the favour of these influential people, or at the very

least, that of their admirers. By travelling throughout Europe in search of conditions more favourable to the achievement of his intellectual goals, Algarotti was able to form and cement relationships with scholars who could help him to realize these aims. He would continue to appeal to his network of associates for assistance throughout his career whenever he sought a new position, just as lesser-known scholars and artists would try increasingly to engage his assistance the more renowned he became.

In June of 1764, Voltaire wrote a letter to the *Gazette littéraire* announcing Algarotti's death.¹⁵⁶³ In it, he describes Algarotti's achievements, identifying him as, "one of the greatest connoisseurs of painting, sculpture, and architecture in all of Europe," and praises him for the various works he wrote, making special mention of his *Newtonianismo* and *Viaggi di Russia*, and of his works dealing with history and poetry.¹⁵⁶⁴ Voltaire also lauds Algarotti for his cosmopolitanism, saying that he "belonged to Europe."¹⁵⁶⁵ Although Algarotti had left Frederick's service in 1753, Frederick, too, wanted to honour Algarotti's accomplishments following his death. He paid for the erection of a monument at the Algarotti's gravesite in Pisa (*see Figure 2*), on which the following inscription appears: "Here lies Newton's disciple and Ovid's equal."

In addition to the monument Frederick had erected at Algarotti's grave site in Pisa, at least two other public tributes to Algarotti's memory can be seen in

¹⁵⁶³ Voltaire, "Lettre aux auteurs de la *Gazette littéraire*," in *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire. Vol. 26* (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1893). Originally published in *Gazette Littéraire*, 27 June 1764.

¹⁵⁶⁴ "M. Algarotti était un des plus grands connoisseurs de l'Europe en peinture, en sculpture, en architecture." Ibid., 47-48.

¹⁵⁶⁵ "...il appartenait à l'Europe." Ibid., 47.

Italy today. Both of these are in his native city of Venice. On the city's Lido, there is a street named after him (*see Figure 3*). In Venice proper, the State Institute of Tourism is rather appropriately called the Istituto Tecnico Statale per il Turismo F. Algarotti (*see Figures 4 and 5*). However, Algarotti's present degree of renown is very far from that which he enjoyed in his own time.

Following his death, Algarotti's legacy came to be viewed increasingly negatively by Italians. Algarotti is featured in a historical novel entitled *Cento anni*, originally published in 1868-1869.¹⁵⁶⁶ The way in which its author Giuseppe Rovani presents Algarotti demonstrates the negative light in which the Venetian had come to be seen by that time. In a scene that is set in 1750, a party is held in honour of Algarotti's arrival in Venice. In it, one of the characters asks to know who the "pallid, skinny little thing with the necklace, the medallions, and the cross on his chest" is.¹⁵⁶⁷ He is told that this person is Algarotti, who is then described with a touch of sarcasm as, "member of all the universities, and of all the academies that ever were, that are, and that ever will be; astronomer, poet, painter, architect, violinist...Of many people it is usual to ask what they are...in his case, one ought rather to ask what he is not."¹⁵⁶⁸ In a knowing wink to the reader, the speaker adds, "his real worth will only be known fifty, and better yet, one hundred years from now."¹⁵⁶⁹ Indeed, in describing Algarotti, Rovani notes

¹⁵⁶⁶ Giuseppe Rovani, *Cento anni*, vol. 1 (Milan: Rizzoli & c, 1934).

¹⁵⁶⁷ "...e dimmi chi è quell cosino là, smilzo e pallido, colla collana e il medaglione e la croce in petto." Ibid., 242.

¹⁵⁶⁸ "membro di tutte le università, socio di tutte le accademie che furono, che sono e che saranno: astronomo, poeta, pittore, architetto, suonatore di violino...Di molti si suol dire che cosa è...di costui bisogna dire che cosa non è." Ibid., 243.

¹⁵⁶⁹ "Tuttavia quell ch'ei valga davvero, lo si conoscerà da qui a cinquanta, e meglio ancora da qui a cento anni." Ibid., 243.

that Algarotti was a leading figure in the sciences and the arts.¹⁵⁷⁰ However, Rovani attributes this not to Algarotti's talents, but to an "extraordinary gift of fortune."¹⁵⁷¹ At the party, Algarotti engages an erudite woman in conversation. He bounces from one topic to the other, from science to art, because, says Rovani, he wanted to astound everyone he met with the incredible versatility of his knowledge.¹⁵⁷² He talks the woman's ear off throughout an entire violin recital, causing Rovani to exclaim, "Oh, you are such a bore, dear Count Algarotti!"¹⁵⁷³ Indeed, the image that Rovani presents of Algarotti is striking in its difference from the glowing terms in which Voltaire and Frederick described him following his death.

As Geoffrey Cubitt remarks in his 2007 work *History and Memory*, the world is full of monuments built with the aim of commemorating people who have been forgotten nonetheless.¹⁵⁷⁴ From the time of his death, Algarotti has been in increasing danger of becoming just such a person. Fame is based on achievement, but what constitutes achievement changes over time.¹⁵⁷⁵ Thus, in order for historical figures to retain their renown, their achievements must continue to be relevant, and those whose accomplishments no longer have meaning cease to be considered important.¹⁵⁷⁶ Indeed, the significance of a historical personage changes as the years pass, from being about that person's

¹⁵⁷⁰ "sedeva Re di tutti i regni delle scienze e delle arti" Rovani, *Cento anni.*, 238-239.

¹⁵⁷¹ "straordinario benefico di fortuna" Ibid., 238.

¹⁵⁷² Ibid., 256.

¹⁵⁷³ "Oh, che noia, caro signore conte Algarotti" Ibid., 258.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 145.

¹⁵⁷⁵ Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 10.

¹⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 15.

chronological place in history to being about their symbolic place in the past of a given community, that which they have come to represent.¹⁵⁷⁷ This being the case, when social or political changes occur within a community, the perceived significance of people who had lived in that community changes as well.¹⁵⁷⁸

An examination of the historical fortunes of Frederick the Great demonstrate the role that changing circumstances, and the reinterpretation of achievements to give them contemporary significance, play in determining how, or if, a person will be remembered. Already during his lifetime, Frederick was considered to be a military hero, having managed to defeat the combined powers of Europe alone during the Seven Years War.¹⁵⁷⁹ This image of him persisted beyond his death, although in a somewhat altered fashion. When, following the relinquishment of Prussia and the other German lands from Napoleonic control, the inhabitants of these lands began to consider themselves Germans, and Frederick was transformed into a champion of the German state. That Frederick had lived his entire life in French was ignored, and his personality traits were altered to make him more German.¹⁵⁸⁰ Because part of this remodelling process involved identifying Frederick as the father of Prusso-German militarism, his international reputation suffered as a result of the First World War. When he was later made a hero of the National Socialists, Frederick's international standing

¹⁵⁷⁷ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 213.

¹⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 214.

¹⁵⁷⁹ Giles MacDonogh, *Prussia: The Perversion of an Ideal* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994), 36.

¹⁵⁸⁰ For example, although his favourite meal was actually macaroni and champagne, it was said to have been sausages and beer. See Ibid., 4.

was further damaged.¹⁵⁸¹ The idolization of Frederick by the National Socialists led to a vilification of the King by the Allies during the Second World War. When Nazi Germany collapsed, Frederick fell from grace with it.¹⁵⁸² After 1945, the eighteenth century was neglected by German historians in favour of the study of Germany's recent past.¹⁵⁸³ However, thanks to a revival of interest in Prussian history among German historians beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a truer historical portrait of Frederick has since emerged.¹⁵⁸⁴

Algarotti's achievements have also been reinterpreted over time in accordance both with changing perceptions of history, and with changing societal conditions.¹⁵⁸⁵ In addition to the various studies of Algarotti's life and works that have been undertaken, he is the subject of numerous entries in Italian biographical dictionaries published from 1753 to 1960.¹⁵⁸⁶ Examining what the authors of

¹⁵⁸¹ While the image that had been constructed of Frederick by this time made him an ideal idol for the National Socialists, his actual views made him anything but. This is especially true where religion is concerned. Religious toleration had been Prussian policy since the seventeenth century. When he acquired control of Silesia the number of Catholics in his kingdom increased tremendously. As long as they demonstrated their loyalty to Prussia, Frederick was determined to make them feel welcome. Although he was not Catholic himself, Frederick had a Catholic church built in Berlin. In 1773, Frederick welcomed to Prussia the Jesuits who had been banished from everywhere else, including Rome. Prussia was the first German state to tolerate the Jews. When Frederick invaded Silesia, he extended the protection the Jews received in Brandenburg to his new province. Frederick's desire to give equal opportunity to all religions even led him to consider building a mosque in Berlin. Voltaire accused Frederick of excessive tolerance, an accusation which Frederick took as a compliment. See *Ibid.*, 337-339, 344-345.

¹⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, 3-6.

¹⁵⁸³ Theodor Schieder, *Frederick the Great*, trans. Sabina Berkeley and H. M. Scott, Friedrich der Grosse. English (London; New York: Longman, 2000), ix.

¹⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, ix; MacDonogh, *Prussia*, 9. For an account of the manner in which the significance of historical figures was reinterpreted to fit contemporary ideals in the French context, see David Avrom Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2001).

¹⁵⁸⁵ Padoa recognized that these changes played a role in Algarotti's loss of renown. See Marco Padoa, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della sua nascita," *Ateneo Veneto* Anno XXXVI- Vol 1- Fasc 1 e 2, gennaio-aprile (1913): 6.

¹⁵⁸⁶ *Gli Scrittori d'Italia cioè notizie storiche, e critiche intorno alle vite, e agli scritti dei letterati italiani* (1753); *Notizie istoriche degli intagliatori* (1809); *Galleria dei letterati ed artisti più illustri delle provincie austro-venete che fiorirono nel secolo XVIII* (1822); *Cenni biografici intorno ai letterati illustri italiani* (1837); *Biografia degli italiani illustri nelle scienze, lettere ed*

these studies and entries thought Algarotti's achievements to be, and their views of them, both demonstrates the significance Algarotti was thought to have at the time of writing and illuminates the reasons that this significance changed over time.

For many writers of biographical dictionary entries on Algarotti, the relationships he had with illustrious figures are a major mark of his importance. The change in the manner in which these friendships are portrayed by these writers over time demonstrates that Algarotti was viewed increasingly negatively as the years went by. While in earlier entries these friendships are portrayed as being based on the other party's great esteem for Algarotti, or at least as being mutually beneficial, in later entries Algarotti's role in these relationships is portrayed in a rather different manner. Writing in 1757, Mazzuchelli makes special note of the love and admiration Algarotti's associates had for him.¹⁵⁸⁷ Giovo also describes Algarotti's friendships as having been precipitated by admiration for Algarotti's merit in his 1783 *elogio* of the Venetian.¹⁵⁸⁸ While those writing earlier in the nineteenth century also note that admiration for

arti nel secolo XVIII, e de' contemporanei (1838); *Biografia degli artisti* (1840); *Panteon Veneto o di alcuni veneti illustri* (1860); *La Scienza politica in Italia* (1865); *Biografie di scrittori ed artisti musicali bergamaschi nativi od oriundi* (1875); *Biografia dei viaggiatori italiani colla biografia delle loro opere* (1882); *Dizionario degli italiani all'estero* (1890); *Dizionario degli scrittori d'Italia* (1925); *I Viaggiatori veneti minori* (1927); *Dizionario storico manuale della letteratura italiana (1000-1900)* (1928); *Dizionario degli scrittori italiani classici, moderni e contemporanei* (1939); *Scrittori e idee: dizionario critico della letteratura italiana* (1956); *Dizionario di italiani all'estero* (1956); *Dizionario storico della letteratura italiana* (1959); *I Poeti italiani dall'antichità ad oggi* (1960).

¹⁵⁸⁷ Giammaria Mazzuchelli, "Algarotti (Francesco)," in *Gli scrittori d'Italia cioè notizie storiche, e critiche intorno alle vite, e agli scritti dei letterati italiani. Vol. I, Part I* (Brescia: Giambattista Bossini, 1753), 479.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Conte Giovanni Battista Giovo, "Elogio del Conte Francesco Algarotti, Cavaliere dell'Ordine del Merito, e Ciambellano di Sua Maesta Prussiana," in *Opere del Conte Algarotti cavaliere dell'ordine del merito e ciambellano di S.M. il Re di Prussia, vol. X* (Cremona: Lorenzo Manini Regio Stampatore, 1784), 5.

Algarotti's qualities is what made people seek his friendship,¹⁵⁸⁹ as the century progressed the dynamics of these relationships were portrayed in an increasingly negative fashion. In an article written in 1886, Achille Neri depicts Algarotti as having forged his relationships with Frederick and Voltaire not out of any genuine admiration for these two men, but only to make use of their renown to further advance his own career.¹⁵⁹⁰ By the twentieth century, biographical dictionary entries portray these relationships as being based entirely on the benevolent condescension of Frederick and Voltaire, and as being of benefit to Algarotti only.¹⁵⁹¹

Like Algarotti, with the passage of time many of his Italian associates have come to be seen as increasingly less important. The view that Italy did not play a significant role in the Enlightenment is in part to blame for this. This is

¹⁵⁸⁹ Giovanni Gori Gandellini, "Algarotti (Il Conte Francesco)," in *Notizie istoriche degli intagliatori. Vol. 5* (Siena: Torchj d'Onorato Porri, 1809). WBIS online, <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010); Bartolommeo Gamba, "Francesco Algarotti Veneziano," in *Galleria dei letterati ed artisti più illustri delle provincie austro-venete che fiorirono nel secolo XVIII* (Venice: Alvisopoli, 1822). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010); Francesco Zambrini, "Algarotti (Francesco)," in *Cenni biografici intorno ai letterati illustri italiani: o breve memorie di quelli che co' loro scritti illustrano l'italico idioma* (Faenza: Montanari e Marabini, 1837). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010); Filippo de Boni, "Algarotti (Francesco)," in *Biografia degli artisti* (Venice: Gondoliere, 1840). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010); Giuseppe Veronese, "Francesco Algarotti," in *Panteon veneto o di alcuni veneti illustri* (Venice: Merlo, 1860). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010); Ferdinando Cavalli, "Francesco Algarotti," in *La scienza politica in Italia. Vol. 4* (Venice: Antonelli, 1865). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010).

¹⁵⁹⁰ Achille Neri, "Francesco Algarotti diplomatico," *Archivio storico italiano, serie IV* (1886): 231.

¹⁵⁹¹ Ugo E. Imperatori, "Algarotti, Francesco," in *Dizionario di italiani all'estero: dal sec. XIII sino ad oggi* (Genoa: Emigrante, 1956). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010); Vincenzo Caputo, "Algarotti, Francesco," in *I poeti italiani dall'antichità ad oggi: dizionario biografico* (Milan: Gastaldi, 1960). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010).

reflected in the shift in emphasis from Algarotti's Italian friendships to Algarotti's foreign friendships in writings about him. Although Mazzuchelli mentions Algarotti's relationships with Voltaire, du Châtelet, Frederick II, and Augustus III, he appears to consider Algarotti's friendships with then-famous Italians, such as Manfredi, the Zanottis, Beccari, and Cocchi, to be more noteworthy.¹⁵⁹²

Writing only thirty years after Mazzuchelli, Giovio also draws a great deal of attention to Algarotti's famous friends. However, he clearly thought that his friendships with foreigners were his most significant: Giovio describes those friendships first, before going on to discuss how important Algarotti was to Manfredi and Zanotti.¹⁵⁹³ The vast majority of those writing biographical dictionary entries on Algarotti in the nineteenth century also attribute part of his significance to his friendships with Manfredi and Zanotti, and the admiration both men had for Algarotti.¹⁵⁹⁴ However, other Italians with whom Algarotti had relationships do not make the cut, and by the twentieth century, neither Manfredi nor Zanotti appear in Algarotti's list of associates, either. Accordingly, while the idea that friendships are an important indicator of Algarotti's significance remains constant over the period in question, the change in perception of the basis of these friendships has resulted in a change in the perception of his significance as well.

¹⁵⁹² Mazzuchelli, "Algarotti (Francesco)," 479-482.

¹⁵⁹³ Giovio, "Elogio del Conte Francesco Algarotti," 5.

¹⁵⁹⁴ Gandellini, "Algarotti (Il Conte Francesco)." WBIS online; Zambrini, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online; Emilio de Tipaldo, "Algarotti (Francesco)," in *Biografia degli italiani illustri nelle scienze, lettere, ed arti del secolo XVIII, e de' contemporanei. Vol. 6* (Venice: Alvisopoli, 1838). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010); Veronese, "Francesco Algarotti." 300; Giovanni S. Mayr, "Francesco Algarotti," in *Biografie di scrittori ed artisti musicali Bergamaschi nativi od oriundi* (Bergamo: Pagnoncelli, 1875). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010).

Changing perceptions of Algarotti's contributions to the history of ideas have also played a role in his loss of renown. Another aspect of Algarotti's life that is taken by authors of biographical dictionary entries to be demonstrative of his importance is his intellectual production. Opinions vary as to which of Algarotti's works was his greatest, usually in accordance with the particular focus of the biographical dictionary in question. While some state that his work on art was his most original,¹⁵⁹⁵ others believe that his *Viaggi di Russia* merits this distinction.¹⁵⁹⁶ However, the majority of writers consider the *Newtonianismo* to be Algarotti's most noteworthy work, praising him for the intelligence that it took to write about such a complicated subject in such a clear and appealing way, and for having been able to write it at such a young age.¹⁵⁹⁷ Indeed, Algarotti's *Newtonianismo* has been identified as one of the most read works in the eighteenth century;¹⁵⁹⁸ even those writers who do not consider it his most important work at least make reference to it.

¹⁵⁹⁵ Zambrini, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online; de Tiplado, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online; de Boni, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online.

¹⁵⁹⁶ Padoa, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della sua nascita," 18.; Enrico M. Fusco, "Algarotti, Francesco," in *Scrittori e idee: dizionario critico della letteratura italiana* (Turin: Soc. Editrice internazionale, 1956). WBIS online

<http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010).

¹⁵⁹⁷ Mazzuchelli, "Algarotti (Francesco)," 484-485; Gandellini, "Algarotti (Il Conte Francesco)." WBIS online; Giovio, "Elogio del Conte Francesco Algarotti, Cavaliere dell'Ordin del Merito, e Ciambellano di Sua Maesta Prussiana," 8; de Tiplado, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online; Veronese, "Francesco Algarotti." WBIS online; Cavalli, "Francesco Algarotti." WBIS online; Pietro Amat di S. Filippo, "Francesco Algarotti," in *Biografia dei viaggiatori italiani colla biografia delle loro opere. Vol. I* (Rome: Alla sede della società, 1882). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010); Decio Cinti, "Algarotti, Francesco," in *Dizionario degli scrittori italiani classici, moderni e contemporanei* (Milan: Sonzogno, 1939). WBIS online

<http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010).

¹⁵⁹⁸ Franco Arato, *Il secolo delle cose: scienza e storia in Francesco Algarotti* (Genova: Marietti, 1991), 55. By 1812, it had also gone through sixteen Italian-language editions. It was translated into Russian before it was even published, and into English, French, Swedish, German, and Portuguese shortly thereafter.

That so many considered his authorship of the *Newtonianismo* to be Algarotti's most significant achievement may have contributed to his present-day fall from grace, for many reasons. First, although Algarotti undertook serious scientific study while in Bologna, his having popularized scientific knowledge in the *Newtonianismo* is sometimes taken as proof of his intellectual superficiality.¹⁵⁹⁹ Second, because of its title, the *Newtonianismo* is sometimes mistaken as misogynistic, although undeservedly so. Finally, until fairly recently, scientific popularizations were considered to be the purview of literary scholars rather than of historians of science, resulting in the obscurity of the *Newtonianismo* and its author.¹⁶⁰⁰

Algarotti's works may be responsible for his loss of significance in two other ways. The first has to do with their content, which is sometimes described as lacking in originality. According to Niccolo Tommasèo, one of Algarotti's harshest critics, rather than expressing any new ideas, Algarotti simply repeats what others have said; however, instead of condensing the ideas of others, in Tommasèo's opinion, he uncritically amassed them in his work.¹⁶⁰¹ According to Margherita Siccardi, author of *L'Algarotti critico e scrittore di belle arti*, this judgement of Algarotti has contributed a great deal to the loss of prestige he has sustained.¹⁶⁰² Although she describes Tommasèo's criticism of Algarotti as

¹⁵⁹⁹ Padoa, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della sua nascita," 7.

¹⁶⁰⁰ Massimo Mazzotti, "Newton for Ladies: Gentility, Gender and Radical Culture," *British Journal for the History of Science* 37, no. 2 (2004): 121. For more on this disparity, see also Marta Féher, "The Triumphal March of a Paradigm: A Case Study of the Popularization of Newtonian Science," *Tractrix* 2 (1990): 93-94.

¹⁶⁰¹ Niccolo Tommasèo, *Storia civile nella letteraria, studii* (Rome, Turin, Florence: Ermanno Loescher, 1872), 345.

¹⁶⁰² Margherita Siccardi, *L'Algarotti critico e scrittore di belle arti* (Asti: Paglieri & Raspi, 1911), 28.

severe, it would seem that she actually agrees with him: the number of citations he used in his work led her to accuse Algarotti of thinking that an idea could not be of value unless it had been previously expressed by some authority.¹⁶⁰³

Certainly, she is not the only person to agree with Tommasèo on this issue.

Writing in 1838, biographical dictionary writer and editor De Tiplado pointed to the over-abundance of Greek and Latin citations contained in Algarotti's works as one reason that they were no longer being read.¹⁶⁰⁴ Padoa, too, states that Algarotti was excessive in his citation of the classics, citing them much more often than his contemporaries did.¹⁶⁰⁵

The other reason Algarotti's works may be a cause of their author's present-day obscurity has to do with the style in which they are written. Some biographical dictionary writers attack Algarotti for what they perceive to be a lack of eloquence in his writing, identifying his writing style as flowery, tiresome to read, lacking in conciseness, cold, and forced.¹⁶⁰⁶ Reasons they offer to explain this include that he was lacking in literary talent, that he was emotionless, and that this style of writing was in keeping with the society, lifestyle, and custom of his time.¹⁶⁰⁷

¹⁶⁰³ Ibid., 106-107.

¹⁶⁰⁴ de Tiplado, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online.

¹⁶⁰⁵ Padoa, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della sua nascita," 7.

¹⁶⁰⁶ Siccardi, *L'Algarotti critico e scrittore di belle arti* 97, 99; Giovanni Casati, "Algarotti, Francesco," in *Dizionario degli scrittori d'Italia: dalle origini fino ai viventi. Vol. I* (Milan: Ghirlanda, 1925). WBIS online

<http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010); Vittorio Turri, "Algarotti, Francesco," in *Dizionario storico manuale della letteratura italiana (1000-1900): compilato ad uso delle persone colte e delle scuole* (Turin: 1928). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010).

¹⁶⁰⁷ Siccardi, *L'Algarotti critico e scrittore di belle arti* 97, 103; Turri, "Algarotti, Francesco." WBIS online.

These criticisms reflect the change in literary taste brought about by the advent of Romanticism, and the subsequent backlash against the Enlightenment, a period of which Algarotti is often described as being representative.¹⁶⁰⁸ In contrast to the over-stylized, long-winded prose they perceived as characteristic of the Enlightenment, nineteenth-century intellectuals, allegedly more interested in content than style, favoured prose that was cleaner and more straightforward.¹⁶⁰⁹ During this time, the Enlightenment glorification of reason came to be frowned upon in favour of being more in touch with one's emotions, a mental outlook which was thought to be more natural. This attitude persisted with the advent of the twentieth century. Changes in the manner in which Algarotti's character is described reflect this new dislike of ornate, wordy prose, and the enshrinement of feelings over reason. In his 1783 *elogio*, Giovio discusses Algarotti's contemporaries' opinion of him. According to Giovio, Algarotti did not let his erudition, for which he was well-known, go to his head; rather, because he was a *bello spirito*, those who knew him found his company to be quite enjoyable.¹⁶¹⁰ A negative perception of eighteenth-century culture on the part of Italians is clearly in part to blame for the negative view that developed of Algarotti, and of his subsequent loss of renown. This is certainly suggested by Rovani's description of the eighteenth century and Algarotti's place in it in *Cento anni*: "The society of mutual flattery was not a recent invention. It also flourished in the previous

¹⁶⁰⁸ Padoa, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della sua nascita," 23; Casati, "Algarotti, Francesco." WBIS online.

¹⁶⁰⁹ Padoa, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della sua nascita," 8.

¹⁶¹⁰ Giovio, "Elogio del Conte Francesco Algarotti, Cavaliere dell'Ordin del Merito, e Ciambellano di Sua Maesta Prussiana," 6-7.

century, and Algarotti could certainly have been its president.¹⁶¹¹ Writing in the twentieth century, Siccardi describes Algarotti as cold, and criticizes him for having let reason, rather than feelings, be his guide in his writing.¹⁶¹²

That the advent of Romanticism contributed to Algarotti's loss of renown is evident from the way in which some writers discuss him in relation to that intellectual movement. In an effort to defend Algarotti's reputation, some early nineteenth-century writers of biographical dictionary entries depict him as a figure worthy of admiration by Romantics rather than of dismissal as representative of the Enlightenment. They do so by drawing attention to certain character traits that they attribute to Algarotti, such as genuineness, affability, and sincerity.¹⁶¹³ These traits, which were thought to be desirable by Enlightenment thinkers, were also considered to be admirable by Romantics. Writing in the early twentieth century, Ambrogio, too, attempts to defend Algarotti from criticism motivated by anti-Enlightenment attitudes by identifying him as the closest precursor to Romanticism among his contemporaries.¹⁶¹⁴ That so many writers thought it necessary to depict Algarotti as having qualities worthy of admiration by Romantics certainly suggests that this intellectual trend contributed to Algarotti's loss of prestige.

Much in the way that the change in the intellectual climate impacted perceptions of Algarotti's significance in the nineteenth century, so too did the

¹⁶¹¹ "La società di mutuo incensamento non è un'invenzione di questi ultimi anni. Essa fioriva anche nel secolo passato, e l'Algarotti ne poteva a buon diritto essere il presidente." Rovani, *Cento anni*, 247.

¹⁶¹² Siccardi, *L'Algarotti critico e scrittore di belle arti* 63, 130.

¹⁶¹³ Gandellini, "Algarotti (Il Conte Francesco)." WBIS online; de Tipaldo, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online.

¹⁶¹⁴ Aldo Ambrogio, *L'estetica di F. Algarotti* (Siracusa: Stab. Tip. Cav. S. Santoro, 1924), 148.

change in political climate at this time, in the form of the advent of nationalism, Italian nationalism in particular. Without a doubt, this new political attitude had a negative impact on assessments of Algarotti's importance. While cosmopolitanism was an attitude admired by many during the Enlightenment, as early as the 1640s opponents of cosmopolitanism emerged, thinking that adopting this ideology would result in proponents of it not being able to identify with their countries of origin, thereby preventing them from being good citizens.¹⁶¹⁵

Because Algarotti spent so much time living in foreign lands, he was thought to have been more interested in what was happening abroad, both culturally and intellectually, than in what was happening in Italy.¹⁶¹⁶ His knowledge of foreign languages was also frowned upon. Writing in 1872, Tomassèo accused Algarotti of having mutated Italian customs with his use of the French language.¹⁶¹⁷

That his time spent abroad, and his knowledge of foreign languages and customs, caused Algarotti to be seen in a negative light is further evidenced by the attempts of some biographical dictionary writers to defend his actions. One, writing in 1809, states that Algarotti's parents sent him away to study, not due to a lack of suitable instructors in Venice, but due to their desire to enable their son to see the great capitals of the world.¹⁶¹⁸ Another, writing in 1875, explains that Algarotti undertook his travels, during which he learned about the traditions and conditions of various places, observed the different landscapes of different regions, admired monuments, and conversed with the learned writers and famous

¹⁶¹⁵ Margaret C. Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 2.

¹⁶¹⁶ Padoa, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della sua nascita," 7.

¹⁶¹⁷ Tommasèo, *Storia civile nella letteraria, studii*, 345.

¹⁶¹⁸ Gandellini, "Algarotti (Il Conte Francesco)." WBIS online.

artists, because his intelligence and affability enabled him to do so.¹⁶¹⁹ That Algarotti was able to form friendships with all the most noteworthy foreign intellectuals, all of whom contributed to his fame, is seen by many of these writers to excuse his desire to live abroad.¹⁶²⁰ This desire is also defended with the assertion that, while conditions were such in Algarotti's time that it was difficult for scholars to find a suitable position in Italy, the leaders of the places to which Algarotti travelled appreciated his intellectual qualities.¹⁶²¹ Should Algarotti, one writer asks, be blamed for having known how to cultivate benevolence, honours, and titles from illustrious men, particularly given that he gained these not through flattery, but through his intelligent and spirited works?¹⁶²²

Another angle taken by biographical dictionary writers to defend Algarotti against nationalist attacks was to demonstrate that Algarotti was admired by his Italian contemporaries. They point out that many Italian universities and academies sought his membership, and that his presence was desired at many Italian courts, the sovereigns of which heaped honours and praise upon him.¹⁶²³

Some of the things Algarotti did while in the employment of foreign kings may also have contributed to his negative posthumous reputation among Italians.

¹⁶¹⁹ Mayr, "Francesco Algarotti." WBIS online.

¹⁶²⁰ Gamba, "Francesco Algarotti Veneziano." WBIS online; Mayr, "Francesco Algarotti." WBIS online.

¹⁶²¹ de Tipaldo, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online.

¹⁶²² "Dovrà elgi essere accusato perchè ha saputo conciliarsi benevolenza, onori, e titoli dai grandi? O non dovrà anzi agognarvi ognuno, quando tenti di meritargli non con striscianti e vili adulazioni, ma con dette opere di genio e colle doti di spirito?" Mayr, "Francesco Algarotti." WBIS online.

¹⁶²³ de Tipaldo, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online; Gamba, "Francesco Algarotti Veneziano." WBIS online; Filippo Piccinini, "Algarotti (Francesco)," in *Dizionario storico universale, ovvero biografia degli illustri e memorandi i quali furono dal principio del mondo fino ai dì nostri, edizione italiana. Vol. I* (Naples: Tip. Gaetano Nobile, 1841). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010); Zambrini, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online.

One of these was the diplomatic mission to Turin that he undertook for Frederick in 1742, during which Algarotti spied on Italians in order to provide information to the foreign king. Another was his acquisition of art for the royal galleries in Dresden. While Algarotti provided commissions to several Italian artists when charged with this duty, he also purchased several Old Master paintings from Italian collections on behalf of Augustus III. The purchase of Italian paintings by art collectors acting on behalf of foreign patrons during the eighteenth century was later viewed in a very negative light.¹⁶²⁴ Indeed, this is exactly what Algarotti had done: he had removed historically and culturally significant works of art from Italy for the benefit of a foreign monarch.

That Algarotti was perceived to lack loyalty to Italy is evident from the lengths some writers went to in order to demonstrate Algarotti's love for his native land. Several make special note of his trip to Florence, which, they claim, he undertook in order to gain a better knowledge of the Italian language.¹⁶²⁵ They are adamant that his love of Italy is obvious in his works, which, according to them, defend Italian values, and were intended to instruct foreigners on, and provide them with an appreciation for, the excellence of Italians in all fields.¹⁶²⁶

These writers also take Algarotti's return to Italy at the end of his life as evidence

¹⁶²⁴ Giancarlo Roversi, "Il Commercio dei quadri a Bologna nel Settecento," *L'Archiginnasio: bulletino della biblioteca comunale di Bologna* LX (1965): 452.

¹⁶²⁵ Zambrini, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online; Piccinini, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online; de Tipaldo, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online; Turri, "Algarotti, Francesco." WBIS online; Umberto and Pietro Operati Renda, "Algarotti, Francesco," in *Dizionario storico della letteratura italiana, nuova ed., riveduta e aggiornata* (Turin: Paravia, 1959). WBIS online <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/saveUrl.jsf?type=biographic&value=1dde> (consulted July 28, 2010).

¹⁶²⁶ Padoa, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della sua nascita," 57; Carlo Calcaterra, "Francesco Algarotti nel secondo centenario della nascita," in *Il Barocco in Arcadia e altri scritti sul settecento* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, editore, 1950). 168; Fusco, "Algarotti, Francesco." WBIS online; Renda, "Algarotti, Francesco." WBIS online.

of his love for his native land: according to them, falling ill re-awakened his fondness for, and affectionate memories of, Italy.¹⁶²⁷

Yet another reason that Algarotti is no longer perceived to be as significant as his contemporary fame would seem to warrant is that he wrote a little about a great deal of subjects, rather than a great deal about a few. His having done so has led to him being accused of superficiality. Those who have written on Algarotti have contributed to this perception of him by focusing on one or two aspects of his work in their studies rather than discussing Algarotti's achievements as a whole. Dissemination of historical data increases the chances of it surviving by increasing the number of places in which it would have to be destroyed in order for it to be totally eliminated.¹⁶²⁸ However, the dissemination of items breaks up the whole of which they were part. With the absence of this overarching structure, the items disseminated come to be viewed as less significant, and therefore disposable. When data are concentrated in one location, the possibility that connections will be drawn between them is greater. These connections give it an increased significance, contributing to its chances of survival.¹⁶²⁹ Where the study of Algarotti's life is concerned, the ramifications of the choice of dissemination over concentration have been devastating. While focusing on one aspect of Algarotti's work demonstrates his importance in that particular field, it does so at the expense of his larger achievement, which is that he was able to write insightfully in so many different fields. When his writings

¹⁶²⁷ de Tipaldo, "Algarotti (Francesco)." WBIS online; Turri, "Algarotti, Francesco." WBIS online; Renda, "Algarotti, Francesco." WBIS online.

¹⁶²⁸ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 183.

¹⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

are considered as a whole, however, the importance of his contribution to the intellectual currents of the eighteenth century becomes more evident.

It is in the sum of Algarotti's achievements, both intellectual and otherwise, that his importance in the intellectual history of the eighteenth century lies. In a century in which scholarship was becoming increasingly international, and the market for, and reach of, printed material was considerably widened, the conditions faced by aspiring writers were in flux. Algarotti's example illuminates both the structures behind these conditions, and the strategies that could be employed in order to overcome them, in a pan-European context.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Figures



Francesco Algarotti

Figure 1: Francesco Algarotti, by Giovanni Boggi.
(From Algarotti, *Opere scelte*, v. 1 (Milan: Dalla società tipografica de' classici italiani, 1823). Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Francesco_Algarotti.jpg)



Figure 2: Monument at the site of Francesco Algarotti's grave, Camposanto, Pisa, Italy. (Photograph taken by Cheryl Smeall, May 2008.)



*Figure 3: Street sign for via F. Algarotti, Lido of Venice, Italy.
(Photograph taken by Cheryl Smeall, May 2008.)*



*Figure 4: Istituto statale per il turismo F. Algarotti, Venice, Italy.
(Photograph taken by Cheryl Smeall, February 2007.)*



Figure 5: Plaque on the façade of the Istituto statale per il turismo F. Algarotti, Venice, Italy.
(Photograph taken by Cheryl Smeall, February 2007.)

Appendix 2: Cast of characters

A:

Albrizzi, Giambattista (1698-1777)

Venetian publisher and editor of the *Novelle della repubblica delle lettere*.

Algarotti, Bonomo

Art collector, and brother and guardian of Francesco Algarotti.

Algarotti, Maria

Mother of Francesco and Bonomo Algarotti.

Algarotti, Rocco (d. 1726)

Wealthy merchant and father of Francesco and Bonomo Algarotti.

Augustus III (1696-1763; r. Elector of Saxony 1733-1763, r. King of Poland 1734-1763)

Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. Algarotti was a member of the King's court from 1742 until 1747, first as art collector, and then as war councillor.

B:

Baltimore, Lord Charles Calvert (1699-1751)

Chosen by King George I to attend the wedding of the niece of Czarina Anna Ioannovna in St. Petersburg in 1739. Algarotti travelled to St. Petersburg in his company.

Bassi, Laura (1711-1778)

First European woman to hold a university post (at the University of Bologna), and second European woman to earn a university diploma (also from the University of Bologna). Algarotti wrote a poem in honour of her graduation, which appeared in his 1733 *Rime*.

Bettinelli, Saverio (1718-1808)

Italian intellectual who had formed a learned academy in Brescia along with, among others, Angelo Querini. The changes Algarotti made to his 1750 *Dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione* were based in part on Bettinelli's criticisms of previous editions of the *Newtonianismo*. Algarotti dedicated his *Saggio sopra la necessità di scrivere nella propria lingua* to Bettinelli.

Bianconi, Gian (or Giovanni) Lodovico (1717-1781)

Italian medical doctor and scientist and author of the *Journal des savans d'Italie*. Bianconi dedicated a treatise dealing with electricity to Algarotti.

Bordoni, Faustina (1697-1781)

Italian opera singer at the court of Augustus III. Algarotti met Bordoni in Dresden in 1742.

Brühl, Count Heinrich von (1700-1763)

Favourite minister of Augustus III, who entrusted him with the direction of the royal art collections from 1733 on. It was to Brühl who Algarotti reported when working as an art collector for Augustus.

C:

Cantemir, Anitoch (1708-1744)

Poet and Russian resident in London. Cantemir translated Algarotti's *Il Newtonianismo per le dame* into Russian. Algarotti met Cantemir in London in 1736.

Celsius, Anders (1701-1744)

Swedish inventor of the Celsius temperature scale. Algarotti met Celsius in Rome in 1734 and travelled to France in his company in that same year.

Chiaveri, Gaetano (1689-1770)

Italian architect and designer of the court church in Dresden. Algarotti met Chiaveri in Dresden in 1742.

Clairaut, Alexis Claude (1713-1765)

French mathematician and member of the expedition sent to Lapland by the Académie des sciences in 1735. Algarotti met Clairaut in Paris in 1734.

Cocchi, Antonio (1695-1758)

Medical doctor and Florentine freemason. Algarotti met Cocchi during his time in Florence in 1733.

Conti, Antonio (1677-1749)

Venetian noble and writer. Algarotti met Conti in Venice in the 1730s, at which time he had written a sonnet in his honour.

Crudeli, Tommaso (1703-1745)

Poet and Florentine freemason imprisoned in 1738 as a result of the Papal ban on this organization. Algarotti met Crudeli during his time in Florence in 1733.

D:

De Sylvestre (or Silvestre), Marie

Wife of Dresden court painter Louis de Silvestre. Algarotti befriended her during his time at Augustus's court.

Dereham, Thomas:

English resident in Rome. Dereham invited Algarotti to write an account of his public demonstration of Newton's optical experiments for the *Philosophical Transactions* and wrote an Italian translation of Desaguliers's response to Rizzetti.

Desaguliers, John Theophilus (1683-1744)

Father of Thomas. FRS, freemason, and Newtonian. J.T. Desaguliers wrote a response to Rizzetti, which both Dereham and Algarotti translated into Italian (Algarotti's translation remained unpublished).

Desaguliers, Thomas (1725?-1780)

Son of John Theophilus. FRS and mathematician. T. Desaguliers travelled to St. Petersburg with Algarotti and Lord Baltimore in 1739.

du Boccage, Anne-Marie Fiquet (1710-1802)

Parisian salonnière and author. Du Boccage made use of Algarotti as an intermediary through whom to attract Frederick's attention to her work.

du Châtelet, Emilie (1706-1749)

French Newtonian and translator of Newton's *Principia*. Algarotti met du Châtelet in France in 1734.

E:

Euler, Leonhard (1707-1783)

Chair of Mathematics at the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. Originally from Switzerland. Euler joined the court of Frederick II in Berlin in 1741 and would become a member of the Berlin Academy of Sciences.

F:

Fabri (or Fabbri), Alessandro (1691-1762)

Poet, secretary of the Bolognese senate, and member of several learned academies. Algarotti's revisions for his 1750 *Dialoghi sopra la luce, i colori, e l'attrazione* were based in part on Fabri's criticisms of earlier editions of the *Newtonianismo*.

Folkes, Martin (1690-1754)

English FRS, member of the Society of Antiquaries, and freemason. Folkes recommended Algarotti for membership to the Royal Society in 1736. Algarotti met Folkes in Rome in 1734.

Fontenelle, Bernard le Bovier de (1657-1757)

Perpetual secretary of the Académie des sciences and author of the 1686 popularization of Cartesian science for women *Entretiens sur la pluarlité des mondes*. Algarotti dedicated the first edition of *Il Newtonianismo per le dame* to Fontenelle.

Franchini, Abate Giulio (1694-1759)

Representative of Cosimo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany, in Paris. Algarotti met Franchini in Paris in 1734.

Frederick II (The Great) (1712-1786, r. 1740-1786)

King of Prussia. Algarotti was a member of his court from 1740 to 1742, and again from 1747 to 1753.

G:

Galiani, Celestino (1681-1753)

Early Roman Newtonian and author of *Epistola de gravitate et Cartesianis vorticibus*. Chaplain Major of Naples beginning in 1731.

H:

Heinecken, Carl Heinrich von (1707-1791)

Leading Prussian art scholar and chief consultant of Heinrich von Brühl in his efforts to build up the royal art collections in Dresden. Algarotti met Heinecken while a member of the court of Augustus III.

Hervey, Lord John of Ickworth (1696-1743)

English poet and Member of Parliament. Algarotti met Hervey in London in 1736.

K:

Keyserlingk, Dietrich von (1713-1793)

Prussian linguist, poet and member of the court of Frederick II. Algarotti met Keyserlingk in Rheinsberg in 1739.

Knobelsdorff, Georg Wenzeslaus von (1699-1753)

Prussian architect. Knobelsdorff designed Frederick's palace at Rheinsberg. In his capacity as Superintendent of Royal Buildings, he oversaw the building of Sanssouci, Frederick's palace in Potsdam. Algarotti met Knobelsdorff in Rheinsberg in 1739.

L:

Leprotti, Monsignor Antonio (1685-1746)

Roman intellectual and physician to the Pope. Algarotti attended Leprotti's *conversazioni* in Rome in 1734.

Lodoli, Padre Carlo (1690-1761)

Venetian intellectual and Algarotti's classics teacher in Veince.

M:

Manfredi, Eustachio (1674-1739)

Renowned astronomer and founder of the Accademia degli Inquieti, which would later become the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna. Manfredi was Algarotti's teacher of astronomy and geometry at the Istituto.

Marsigli, Luigi Ferdinando (1658-1730)

FRS and founder of the Accademia Clementina of Bologna. Meetings of the Accademia delle Scienze took place in Marsigli's home beginning in 1705, as did meetings of the Accademia delle Scienze of Bologna, until 1711.

Mattielli, Lorenzo (1678/1688?-1748)

Italian sculptor at the court of Augustus III. Algarotti met Mattielli in Dresden in 1742.

Maupertuis, Pierre-Louis Moreau de (1698-1759)

French mathematician and head of the expedition to Lapland organized by the Académie des sciences. President of the Berlin Academy and formulator of the principle of least action. Algarotti met Maupertuis in Paris in 1734.

Migliavacca, Giovanni Ambrogio (b. ca. 1720)

Italian poet at the court of Augustus III. Algarotti met Migliavacca in Dresden in 1742.

Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley (1689-1762)

English woman of letters and introducer of inoculation against smallpox to the western world. Algarotti met Wortley Montagu in London in 1736.

Morgagni, Giambattista (1682-1771)

Scientist at the University of Padua and president of the Accademia delle Scienze of Bologna before it became the Istituto delle Scienze in 1714. Algarotti first met Morgagni in Bologna in the 1720s, but cemented his relationship with him during his time in Padua in 1732.

P:

Pallavicini (or Pallavicino), Stefano Benedetto (1672-1742)

Italian poet at the court of Augustus III. Algarotti met Pallavicini in Dresden in 1742 and later edited his collected works, publishing them under the title *Vita di Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini* in 1744.

Piazzetta, Giambattista (1682-1754)

Venetian artist. Algarotti commissioned Piazzetta to paint a painting for the gallery of Augustus III, and made use of Piazzetta as an intermediary through whom to purchase art for the royal galleries.

Q:

Querini, Cardinal Angelo Maria (1680-1755)

Italian Cardinal. Querini had formed a learned academy with, among others, Saverio Bettinelli in Brescia. Querini donated money for the construction of St

Hedwig, the Catholic church in Berlin, in the early 1750s. Algarotti met Querini in Rome in 1734.

R:

Ratta, Marchesa Elisabetta Hercolani (d. 1760)

Protector of Bolognese intellectuals and author of poetry under the pen name Aglaura. Ratta financed the publication of Algarotti's 1733 *Rime*.

Rizzetti, Giovanni (1675-1751)

Treviso scientist. Author of *De luminis affectionibus specimen physico mathematicum*, which argued that Newton's optical theories were incorrect. Algarotti performed Newton's optical experiments in public, at the request of the Royal Society, in order to counter the claims made by Rizzetti in this work.

Rossi, Ventura (or Bonaventura):

Italian art collector in the service of Augustus III beginning in at least 1741. Rival of Algarotti during the latter's time as art collector for Augustus III. Rossi and Algarotti met in Venice in the 1743.

S:

Smith, Joseph (1682-1770)

English resident in Venice and one of the most important collectors of Venetian art in the eighteenth century.

T:

Tiepolo, Giambattista (1696-1770)

Celebrated Venetian painter. Algarotti commissioned Tiepolo to paint a painting for the royal gallery in Dresden and made use of him as an intermediary through

whom to purchase art for this collection. Algarotti met Tiepolo in Venice in 1743.

V:

Voltaire, François-Marie Arouet de (1694-1778)

Internationally-renowned French intellectual and author of (among many other works) *Letters philosophiques* and *Éléments de la philosophie de Neuton*. Algarotti met Voltaire in Paris in 1735.

Z:

Zanetti, Antonio Maria the Elder (1679-1767)

Venetian engraver and art collector. Algarotti made use of Zanetti as an intermediary through whom to collect art for the royal galleries in Dresden.

Zanotti, Eustachio (1709-1782)

Son of Giampietro and nephew of Francesco Maria. Algarotti's classmate at the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna and his travel companion during his trip to Florence in 1733. E. Zanotti would become a renowned astronomer and lecturer on this topic at the Istituto in 1739.

Zanotti, Francesco Maria (1682-1777)

Brother of Giambattista and uncle of Eustachio. Algarotti's teacher of mathematics and philosophy at the Istituto delle scienze in Bologna and author of *Della forza attrattiva delle idee*.

Zanotti, Giampietro (1674-1765)

Brother of Francesco Maria and father of Eustachio. Artist, art critic, and member of the Bolognese art academy, the Accademia Clementina. G. Zanotti arranged Algarotti's 1733 *Rime* for publication and wrote the letter to Ubertino Landi that served as the work's introduction.

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