

Pio Enea degli Obizzi and the *Opera Torneo* Genre: Toward an Understanding of the Commercialisation of Early Italian Opera
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The contribution of the Marquis Pio Enea degli Obizzi (1592-1674) to the early history of opera was noted first by the 17th-century chronicler Cristoforo Ivanovich. He indicated in his (in)famous *Le memorie teatrali di Venezia* (first published in 1681) that *L'Ermiona*, an 'opera torneo' (opera tournament) performed in Padua in 1636, for which the Marquis contributed to the libretto, had been nothing less than the direct impetus for the inauguration of the first-ever commercial opera house in Venice in the following year.

This paper will first introduce Obizzi, whose activities have been under-investigated in previous scholarship. Then, it will explore the opera tournaments with which the marquis was involved during the 1630s and 40s. The paper will argue that this genre did indeed (as Ivanovich implies) directly influence the formation of commercial opera in Venice. Moreover, drawing on little-known sources, Obizzi's vital role – as a plot deviser – in those productions will be indicated and the significant implications concerning this function in our notion of 'authorship' in the early operatic production will be explored. Finally, it will be proposed that a detailed analysis of Obizzi's works not only enables us to trace the crucial transition which opera of that time took – from court to commercial enterprise – but also suggests new perspectives in relation to our understanding of early opera industry as a whole.