

EVIDENCE FOR THE TWO PRINCIPAL SPELLINGS OF COURCELLE / CORSELLI  
from preparation of the author's article on the composer as found in the Revised  
New Grove Dictionary of Music, in an email to Stanley Sadie of July 2, 1996.  
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#### EVIDENCE FOR THE USE OF CORSELLI

1. The principal argument for the Corselli spelling is the collection of scores in the Archives of the Royal Palace in Madrid, catalogued under the Italianate spelling. More scores carry the name Corselli than Courcelle, but none is thought to be a signature. Preliminary hand writing analysis indicates that the titles are NOT in the hand of the author and therefore must be as suspect as any other emendations to the scores. Of the two operas for which scores do exist only one is attributed, that, *Farnace*, in Italian and to "Courcelle." It is germane to the discussion to recall here the lack of standardization in spelling, especially in Spain, during this period. The name in question is found in various documents, including court documents, as Courcelle, Courcele, Courcelli, Courselle, Corzell, Corcelli, Corceli, Corseli, and Corselli, and in one probable instance, Cursell [7/28/98 add 1478/329 Tiple 1 part Courseli [1739]]. There is no documented explanation for the change to an Italianate spelling, although speculation in Barbieri is that it was based on Spanish pronunciation or transliteration (clearly the case with 'Cursell'). I conclude from all this that the Spanish copyists and cataloguers wrote the name as they heard it pronounced in Spanish 'a la Español and that subsequent cataloguers made no change.

2. A host of writers who have used the Corselli spelling as a result of point 1.

3. That he is known as Corselli, an argument which is not supported by fact: Courcelle is not known by other than a handful of readers of music history.

#### EVIDENCE FOR THE USE OF COURCELLE

1. The composer consistently used the French spelling, Courcelle, wherever his signature was required. This is supported by my own observation and that of various writers. Solar-Quintes begins his article with the statement, "He called himself Courcelle and not Corseli" [note this variant]. In all his writings he signed his French name; Corseli appears in only one memorial, but it is not an autograph."

2. Courcelle's four daughters carried the name "Courcelle," as given in various testaments.

3. Recent and other works from Spain, Italy and France, the three countries most concerned with the composer, and which use "Courcelle."

- Maria Salud Álvarez Martínez. *José de Nebra Blasco: Vida y obra* (Zaragoza: Institución «Fernando el Católico», 1993). This appears to be a definitive view of the life and works of this composer.
- Yves Bottineau. *L'art de cour dans l'Espagne de Philippe V 1700-1746*. (Paris: Mémoires du Musée de L'Ile-de-France Château de Sceaux, 1993). I regard this work as definitive; it is an extremely well researched book, with an extensive bibliography.
- Claudio Sartori "Libretti Italiani a Stampa dalle Origini al 1800, I: Catalogo Analitico con 16 Indici" (Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli Musica, 1993), lists Courcelle, Francesco, with a reference at Corselli.
- Lolo Begoña. *La Música en la Real Capilla de Madrid: José de Torres y Martínez Bravo (h. 1670-1738)* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1988). I have recently spoken with Begoña about her reasoning. He was of French parents, and the documents she has seen, particularly those he signed, use that name.
- Antonio Martín Moreno. *Historia de la música española, 4. Siglo XVIII* (Madrid: Alianza Música, 1985). One in the series of music histories published in Spain, and the principal, if not only, history dedicated to the century in Spain.
- *Dizionario Enciclopedico Universale della Musica e dei Musicisti* (Turin: 1985)
- Franco Rossi. *Le Opere Musicali della Fondazione "Querini-Stampalia" de Venezia : Cataloghi di Fondi Musicali Italiani* (Turin, 1984)
- *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (1973).
- Jose Lopez Calo. *Catálogo Musical del Archivo de la Santa Iglesia Catedral de Santiago* (Cuenca: Instituto de Música Religiosa, 1972)
- A 1751 Palace inventory: "Fran.co Courcelle, signed by Cardinal Mendoza"
- *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* (Rome 1956, Vol.III, col.1638) "COURCELLE (in Spagna noto per lo piú come CORSELLI."
- N. Pelicelli. An article entitled "Francesco Courcelle" in "Musicisti in Parma nel secolo XVIII: la cappella della Steccata," in "Note d'archivio per la storia musicale," ed Raffaele Casimiri. ( xi/1 (Gennaio-Marzo 1934)), 39.
- Aria collection in Paris Bibliothèque Nationale [only reference to the composer in that great library]. "Arie del Sig. Francesco Courcelle."
- 1761 In the Antonio Soler theoretical treatise "Llave de la Modulacion, etc" is found a dedication by [and printed, not signed, twice on the page] "D. **Francisco Courcelle**, Maestro de la Real Capilla, etc"

#### CONFUSION DUE TO A LACK OF RESEARCH ON AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE COMPOSER

- Robert Eitner *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Quellen-Lexikon der Musiker und Musikgelehrten der christlichen Zeitrechnung bis Mitte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*. (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1959). There are two entries, 1 for each spelling, indicating an apparent ignorance that one and the same composer is concerned.
  - p 66: Corselli, Francesco.
  - p 85: Courcelle, Francesco.
- 1986 Charles H. Parsons. *The Mellen Opera Reference Index* (1986 ), lists both Corselli and Courcelle, each with operas composed under the appropriate name, but with b & d dates wrong in each case.
- Franz Stieger. "Opernlexikon" (Tutzing: Verlegt bei Hans Schneider, 1977). Same mistake as Parsons.

## EVOLUTION OF A NAME

This list is by no means exhaustive, rather places dates on some of the various spellings. The more works I look at the more instances of Courcelle I find.

The works that accompanied Courcelle to Madrid from Spain came with the attribution “Francesco Courcelle,” “Franc.o de Courcelle,” “Francesco Courcelle,” etc.

1726 Missa «Servite Domino in laetitia», D, 1726 «Messa / a Quattro Voci con / Stromenti / De **Monsieur Courcelle** / 1726» on the title page. Work written in Italy, but today found in the Archives of the Palacio Real.

1729 «Messa a Cinque Voci concertata con V. V. et Hautbois de **Francesco Courcelle**». Work written in Italy, but today found in the Archives of the Palacio Real.

1733 moves to Spain

1738 «Duo de Navidad...**Mro. Corzelle**» If we, of course, take the Castillian pronunciation into account, this is a transliteration, spoken, “korthélé” or Corselli. 745/410 (ref to folios in Catalogue of Archive Palacio Real)

1738 «Cantada ["Sibila de Cumas Ytaliana, La..."] ...**Mro: Corcelle**»

1739 «Lamentation Primera, “In Cena Domini” Maestro **Courselle**»

«Farnace / Damma per Musica / Di D;n Fran;co **Courcelle** / Mtro di Capella di S.M.C.ca», «Originale» of 1739

1740 «Navidad de 1740» «**Courcelle**»

1743 «Cantata de Navidad...**Mro. Courcelle**»

1744 lamentation, cover page is **Courcelle**, dossier is **Corselli**, top of 1st music page **Corselli Ctlg Archivo No 783, 784 & 786** the same. 788 is **Corselli, Courcelle, Courcelle**

1743 Villancico de Navidad...«**Mro. Courcelle**» 860

1746 On the cover of ‘Cantata Solo’ part, «**Mro: Courcele**», 1st score page: «de D.n f. **Corselli**» 825

1750 Three Antifons by **Courcelle**

1752 Pay record **Courcelli**

1766 “Motetes a4.o” «f.co **Courcelle**»

1772 Misa "Jubilémus Deo" «Missa a8. con VV.s, V.a oboes, y trompas / Jubilemus Deo. / de f.co **Courcelle Archivo Ctlg No 576**