

## MARIE THÉRÈSE BIANCOLELLI (1723-1802): PARTNERING WITH MARIE JEANNE RICCOBONI

Marijn S. Kaplan

Modern scholars recognize Marie Jeanne Riccoboni (1713-92) as a significant proto-feminist Enlightenment writer whose name and oeuvre were already well known beyond French borders during her lifetime. Most recently, her proto-feminism has been examined in the context of a juxtaposition of her epistolary fiction with her correspondence.<sup>1</sup> Although Riccoboni remained notoriously reticent about her private life, her elaborate correspondence—most of which was not published until 1976<sup>2</sup>—reveals many biographical details, including the steady presence in her life of Marie Thérèse Biancolelli (1723-1802), her theatre colleague, long-term life partner, and professional collaborator. Yet, no substantial modern scholarship has yet been devoted to Biancolelli or to her influence on Riccoboni. Based on several newly uncovered archival documents pertaining to Biancolelli and her family, this essay aims to fill that void and examine through her newly created biography how Biancolelli assisted and supported Riccoboni in her precarious status as a woman living off her pen in eighteenth-century France.

Riccoboni and Biancolelli's life together unfolded on a very small scale in Paris, France, a country which they never left and a city from where they rarely traveled. Both illegitimate daughters of fathers married to women other than their mother, they likely met as colleagues, while actresses at the *Comédie italienne*, around 1738 when Biancolelli had her debut there. They started cohabiting "in 1755 or thereabouts" (Nicholls 12) in an apartment in the rue Poissonnière,<sup>3</sup> which was rented by Biancolelli with Riccoboni as her *pensionnaire*.<sup>4</sup> They moved at least once, together, further south on that same street, as Riccoboni writes to one of her correspondents, the Scottish diplomat Robert Liston, on 1 December 1782: "Je demeure rue Poissonnière, mais non plus *passé le boulevard*. Mettez s'il vous plaît, près la rue de Cléri" (Nicholls 437). Since she does not mention the move in her previous letter to Liston dated 27 May 1779, the move presumably took place between those two letters. Riccoboni died in 1792 still residing in the same street; Biancolelli passed away in 1802 after having relocated.

It has been suggested that the two women living together for more than three and a half decades in the rue Poissonnière formed a couple. Thus, Susan Lanser states that "Riccoboni's own philosophy and indeed the resolution of her private story were openly feminist if not lesbian" (40), and more recently, David Wiles has reiterated claims made by Emanuele De Luca, François Riccoboni [Riccoboni's husband]'s recent biographer, who "surmises that he was gay, and it

seems likely that Marie [Jeanne] was of the same orientation” (149). Although this would explain why they remained childless, the evidence presented is not altogether convincing. It does include an interesting observation, however, about Riccoboni referring to Biancolelli as “Pylades” in two letters written to David Garrick in August and October of 1765 (Nicholls 52, 58).<sup>5</sup> Further analysis of Riccoboni’s correspondence reveals that not surprisingly, in her more business- or publication-oriented letters, she does not refer to Biancolelli much, whereas in her private letters addressed to friends and acquaintances, she does.<sup>6</sup> The reference often occurs in the letter’s signoff, where Riccoboni says that Biancolelli joins her in sending greetings or regards to the addressee, clearly implying that the two know each other. The terms Riccoboni uses to refer to Biancolelli vary with “compagne” being by far the most frequent (136 times) and “amie” the next one (27 times).<sup>7</sup> We note that in a letter written to David Garrick in early October 1766, Riccoboni uses the same title for Biancolelli as for Eva Maria Veigel, the Viennese dancer whom Garrick had wed in 1749 for what appears by all accounts to have been a happy (heterosexual) marriage: “Embrassez pour moi *votre gracieuse compagne*. *La mienne* vous assure l’un et l’autre de sa plus tendre amitié” (Nicholls 89; our italics). She implies that Biancolelli means to her what Garrick’s wife means to him.

Who was Riccoboni’s partner of nearly four decades and how did she support her precarious status as a woman living off her pen in eighteenth-century France? Our study will be divided into three parts organized in chronological order: Biancolelli’s life before she cohabited with Riccoboni, i.e., from her birth until roughly the mid-1750s, a phase that includes her work as an actress at the *Comédie italienne* and her time as a concubine; their subsequent lengthy private and professional partnership until Riccoboni’s death in 1792; and Biancolelli’s final decade until her death in 1802. Newly uncovered archival documents pertaining to Biancolelli and her family begin to sketch her biography, offering context and evidence for her life, the life that she shared with Riccoboni, and the support she provided as Riccoboni started her literary career and became a best-selling author during their decades together.

### **Family, Actress, and Concubine (1723 - ~1755)**

Marie Thérèse Biancolelli was born on 1 July 1723 in the rue Tiquetonne in Paris to Pierre François Biancolelli, nicknamed Dominique (1680-1734), and Marie Thérèse Lalande (1699-1738);<sup>8</sup> a second daughter named Catherine Françoise joined them on 30 April 1726. Pierre François was an “officier du roi” and both parents worked as actors at the *Comédie italienne* (Campardon I, 273-4; Ja1217). Although Biancolelli’s birth certificate lists her as the daughter of “Pierre François Biancolelli et de Marie Thérèse Lalande, *sa femme*” (our italics),<sup>9</sup> archival documents suggest a different marital status and unusual family situation, which were revealed in 1734 after Biancolelli’s father died. At that point, her mother made a deposition against several servants who threatened to accuse her of stealing from his house after his death, denying their assertion by explaining that “depuis plus de quinze ans elle a vécu avec ledit défunt sieur Dominique, bu, mangé, tenu ménage et dépense journalière à frais communs, quoiqu’elle

demeurât dans une autre maison, le tout au vu et au su de la famille du défunt et des voisins” (Campardon I, 275). They had maintained a serious relationship based on sharing a household and costs since around 1719, even though she lived in a separate house.<sup>10</sup> Their two daughters appear to have resided with their father Dominique: when his sister Marie Françoise and her son Charles Dominique de Turgis had all his rooms sealed off (“apposé[s] les scellés”) so that an “inventaire après décès” could be drafted, they purposely excluded one room. It was occupied by Biancolelli and her sister and contained items owned by their mother Marie Thérèse; thus, everything—and they—could be moved to the latter’s home (Campardon I, 276) before becoming part of the “inventaire”. Their mother merely removed what was hers—and with the heirs’ knowledge and permission.<sup>11</sup>

The paradox regarding Biancolelli’s parents’ marital status can be explained by the fact that her father had already married another actress at the *Comédie italienne*, Jeanne Jacqueline Tortoriti (1682-1754), in 1703. According to Thomas-Simon Gueullette, Jeanne Jacqueline had become insane and had to be locked away (39),<sup>12</sup> which explains why Biancolelli’s parents did not get married: divorce was not legal until 1792 and bigamy was also illegal.<sup>13</sup> Newly uncovered archival documents from 1742 show that Biancolelli’s father had placed Jeanne Jacqueline not in an institution but rather a private home for mental health care in 1719, a date that aligns with when Biancolelli’s parents started their relationship. Biancolelli and her sister evidently knew of Jeanne Jacqueline: Another recently uncovered archival document from 1751 entitled “Constitution” records Biancolelli agreeing to a loan of ten thousand *livres* in exchange for an annual interest of 500 *livres* and includes a pledge from her to continue to provide for Jeanne Jacqueline. The latter died on 12 October 1754, “*veuve de Dominique Biancolelli, Comédien Italien, âgée de 72 ans*”, still residing in the home where her husband had placed her in 1719 (*Annonces, affiches, et avis divers* 647; our italics)<sup>14</sup> and supported by his two daughters with Marie Thérèse Lalande, including Biancolelli.

After their mother died on 16 December 1738, Biancolelli and her sister were orphaned at ages fifteen and twelve, respectively. Earlier that year, Biancolelli had had her acting debut at the *comédie italienne*, playing the role of *amoureuse* in *La Surprise de la Haine*, a performance that was very well received: “. . . le principal rôle de la pièce, qu’elle joua avec beaucoup d’intelligence; on lui trouve beaucoup de disposition à devenir un très bon sujet.”<sup>15</sup> Her genealogy thus runs parallel to that of Riccoboni’s husband, Antoine François Riccoboni (1707-72), who was also born into an illustrious theatre family of Italian origin. Like him, Biancolelli continued her family’s professional tradition whereas Marie Jeanne married into the Riccoboni theatre dynasty—in 1734—without previous acting experience or theatrical family ties. After more than two decades on the stage during which they sometimes played side by side in the same play,<sup>16</sup> Biancolelli and Riccoboni both retired from acting in 1761 with an annual royal pension of one thousand *livres* each (Crosby 168-9).

Until she started cohabiting with Riccoboni around 1755,<sup>17</sup> Biancolelli supported herself—and likely also her younger sister, at least until the latter married Pierre Claude Ozanne in 1749—as an actress and as a concubine to

several male patrons. This combination was quite common, as Nina Kushner explains: “Not all theater women were *dames entretenues* . . . However, police inspectors and the public assumed prostitution until they could prove otherwise” (5). Kushner considers Biancolelli’s relationships “concubinage,” meaning that “a man and a woman who are not married to each other share an enduring, intimate life together, usually, but not always, by cohabitating” (176). A police report by the famous inspector Jean-Baptiste Meusnier<sup>18</sup> dated 17 January 1753 includes information on this period of Biancolelli’s life. Given his motivations and goals, Meusnier characterizes her surprisingly well by saying that “*Sa grande passion est la lecture*”—a hobby later confirmed by Riccoboni in her correspondence—while offering detailed information regarding her five patrons since 1738, all noblemen.<sup>19</sup> However, some of the biographical details he provides for Biancolelli are incorrect, such as her age in 1753, not “*trente-cinq à trente-six ans*” but rather twenty-nine, and her sister’s name, which was in fact Catherine Françoise (“*La Demoiselle Biancolelli* . . .”). Meusnier ends his report by saying that over the past six months, “*Il n’est pas question qu’elle ait fait depuis d’autres conquêtes*.” The sexism and voyeurism here and elsewhere in the report, such as the details of her first patron obtaining “*l’honneur de la victoire . . . non sans éprouver une vigoureuse résistance*,” illustrate the eighteenth-century French nascent police surveillance state and social control implemented under Louis XV with the goal of maintaining order in the patriarchy.<sup>20</sup> Pamela Cheek has observed that “The other half of Biancolelli’s life . . . falls outside the inspectors’ scope [because] . . . it appeared to have no impact on the fortunes of patriarchal families” (2016, 127-8). Albeit true, this assertion does not mean that Biancolelli did not undermine the patriarchy in different, proto-feminist ways during the second half of her life and her partnership with Riccoboni.

### **Personal and professional partnership with Riccoboni (~1755 - 1792)**

In an early-1780 letter to the British author Philip Thicknesse, Biancolelli’s life with Riccoboni is described by the latter as follows:

Indépendante, libre, vivant depuis vingt-cinq ans avec une amie, dont l’esprit, l’égalité d’humeur, et le caractère aimable répandent un continuel agrément sur notre société je goûte un tranquille repos. Nous ne connaissons ni les querelles, ni l’ennui ; le mot non, est banni d’entre nous. Les mêmes principes nous guident et rendent naturellement nos volontés semblables. Ainsi une éternelle concorde règne dans notre petit ménage. (Kaplan, *Marie* 150)<sup>21</sup>

The “*petit ménage*” headed by the two women and based on equality, harmony, and stability, excludes men, an unusual arrangement in eighteenth-century France. Its features recall what Mary Louise Pratt has termed a “*feminotopia*,” meaning “*episodes that present idealized worlds of female autonomy, empowerment, and pleasure*” (166-7). As Kaplan has argued, Riccoboni’s use of the word “*repos*” here (and elsewhere in her oeuvre) evokes the famous ending to the *Princesse de Clèves* by Madame de Lafayette—whom Riccoboni admired greatly—and involves similar proto-feminist connotations (*Marie* 34, 80, 100).

This description of Biancolelli's life does not include children, even though Inspector Meusnier mentions in his report that she gave birth to at least four, fathered by her three most recent patrons: the oldest died, the second child's fate is unknown, and he does not provide information about the other two.<sup>22</sup> Assuming these numbers are correct, it would be surprising if any of Biancolelli's children survived into adulthood since Riccoboni, whose first known correspondence reference to Biancolelli dates to 15 May 1765 (Nicholls 45), never mentions the latter's motherhood or children or—given the timeline—potential grandmotherhood or grandchildren. She does recount, however, that Biancolelli becomes a substitute mother after taking in three nieces.<sup>23</sup> On 9 December 1772 Riccoboni writes: “Depuis un an [qu'] elle se voit chargée de deux filles de vingt ans et d'une de huit, entièrement chargée” and then on 11 April 1773: “ses nièces qu'elle a prises dans la maison ne nous permettent plus de songer à nous éloigner de la capitale” (Nicholls 283, 301). Biancolelli's only sister Catherine Françoise had married Pierre Claude Ozanne in 1749 and had died on 4 October 1765 (Nicholls 58 n.1) at age 39. The three nieces mentioned were ages 20 (twins?) and 8 in 1771 so they were likely her daughters with Ozanne. Riccoboni writes on 8 May 1772 in a letter to Robert Liston that “La fortune, le hasard, le sort, s'il en est un, s'attache à persécuter deux pauvres créatures qui n'ont jamais nui à personne. Ma compagne se trouve chargée de deux demoiselles de vingt ans, qui en ce moment n'ont rien dans l'univers” (Nicholls 244), so it is likely that their father, Pierre Claude Ozanne, also died around that time. Notably, two of the nieces—rather than any of Biancolelli's children who might have survived into adulthood—are listed as sole heirs in her 1802 “inventaire après décès”: Camille Anne Elisabeth Ozanne and Louise Antoinette Ozanne. The former is likely one of the older nieces while the latter is probably the younger one; the third is no longer mentioned.<sup>24</sup>

The extent to which Biancolelli's and Riccoboni's lives are intertwined is apparent from the above quote “ses nièces qu'elle a prises dans la maison ne nous permettent plus de songer à nous éloigner de la capitale” (Nicholls 301; our italics). Their mutual influence also extends to their professional lives. An early example dates from the late 1750s after Riccoboni's first novel *Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd* had been published (1757) and is revealed by Biancolelli over three decades later in the only letter known to be written by her, when she sends Jean François de La Harpe an obituary for Riccoboni which he publishes in the *Mercur*e on 20 January 1793. In it, she says:

Elle resta quelque temps anonyme, une indiscretion de ma part la décela ; entendant un jour faire en sa présence un éloge très flatteur de ces mêmes lettres de Fanni, qu'elle écoutait avec un sangfroid que je ne pus imiter, un mouvement involontaire me fit écrire : c'est elle qui les a faites !” (La Harpe 524)

Despite arguably undermining Riccoboni by revealing her identity in an incident that she still remembers three decades later, Biancolelli does support Riccoboni professionally during this phase. In 1762, for instance, Riccoboni published a free translation of Henry Fielding's *Amelia*. In its preface, she describes in a letter to

her publisher Humblot<sup>25</sup> how Biancolelli not only helped her with the translation but also encouraged her to publish it:

... je me perdis si bien qu'il me fut impossible d'en trouver le fil. Une personne plus patiente que moi s'est occupée à le chercher ; a numéroté toutes les petites feuilles éparées dans mon secrétaire ; & parmi le fatras de mes thèmes anglois, a recouvré la suite de ce singulier ouvrage. Elle m'a conseillé de vous l'envoyer. (*Oeuvres*, vol. 2, 120)

Biancolelli thus provides intellectual and physical assistance as well as business advice.

Their shared love of the theatre undoubtedly led Biancolelli and Riccoboni to do a collaborative translation project in 1768/1769. Without formally studying English, they anonymously<sup>26</sup> published two volumes of *Nouveau théâtre anglois* containing French translations of five English comedies. The first volume appeared in November 1768 and included Edward Moore's *The Foundling* (1747) and Arthur Murphy's *The Way to Keep Him* (1760). The second volume came out in early 1769 and had Hugh Kelly's *The False Delicacy* (1768), George Colman's *The Jealous Wife* (1761) and his *The Deuce is in him* (1763). Out of these, Biancolelli translated Moore's (Nicholls 128) and the two Colman plays (Nicholls 142). The translations are premised on the concept of cultural relativism, which Riccoboni first explains in a 7 September 1768 letter to David Garrick,<sup>27</sup> and which led her to remark that "A l'égard de Mr. Colman, [c'est] un massacre abominable que cette traduction de ma compagne" (Nicholls 142). However, the *Mercur de France* reviewed the changes she made very positively:

... plusieurs de ces pièces avec des changements nécessaires pourraient réussir sur notre théâtre ; la traduction se fait lire avec Plaisir ; c'est à Madame Riccoboni que nous la devons ; elle ne se borne pas toujours à rendre fidèlement ses auteurs ; elle leur prête souvent des agréments qu'ils n'ont pas. (97)

Riccoboni, concerned that the original playwrights would dislike the changes, undoubtedly regretted not staying anonymous, but Biancolelli's contributions were not made public. Also in 1768 and again in collaboration with Riccoboni, Biancolelli created the libretto for *Sophie, ou le mariage caché*, a play by Colman and David Garrick, a close friend of theirs. The two women continued to live together until Riccoboni's death but without further known professional collaboration.

### **Life after Riccoboni (1792 - 1802)**

Biancolelli was named Riccoboni's executrix and sole heir in the will she drew up on 25 July 1782 and in which she described theirs as "une noble . . . une attentive . . . une généreuse et constante amitié."<sup>28</sup> Biancolelli lived another ten years after Riccoboni's death in 1792, presumably with her nieces as part of her life. At some point, she moved to the Maison des Dames de St. Chaumont located in the rue St. Denis in a former convent staying with a Sister Saurin, where she died on 14 July 1802.<sup>29</sup> Several noteworthy items appear in her "inventaire après

décès.” First, inspector Meusnier’s bibliophile assessment of her (“Sa grande passion est la lecture”, see above) is confirmed by her owning a library of around five hundred books (!) whose value accounts for about a third of her total estate.<sup>30</sup> Second, among her “Papiers” are thirty-one documents related to Riccoboni’s succession. As they have no value for the “inventaire” they are not catalogued, but the fact that Biancolelli had kept them for ten years attests to the importance of their relationship. Third, she likely suffered a long illness before dying because she owed the “chirurgien pour trente visites la somme de soixante six [sic] francs.”

Newly uncovered archival documents have begun to reveal Biancolelli’s biography and its similarities and intersections with Riccoboni’s. Their life together defies patriarchal and heteronormative conventions as it is built on women’s choices, for instance in terms of selecting their life partners, be they male or female, friends or lovers; educating or training women in the same way as men—as actors or as authors—and having them support themselves and live independently, without men; building female friendships that empower women more than heterosexual marriage; and stimulating and acknowledging female professional and intellectual collaboration. Thus, while Riccoboni’s forty-plus year relationship with Biancolelli has rightfully been called “one of the bright spots in her life” by James C. Nicholls, the editor of her correspondence (12, n. 2), these documents demonstrate that it also needs to be examined specifically for its influence on her precarious career and life as an Enlightenment woman writer.

## University of North Texas

### Appendix

Terms used by Riccoboni to refer to Biancolelli  
in letters written between 1764 and 1784

Term used	Number of times used	Addressee of letter	Date used	Percentage
<i>compagne</i>	136	Liston, Garrick, Bernardin, not Hume	Throughout; Bernardin in Dec. 1784	72.7%
<i>amie</i>	27	Liston, Garrick, Thicknesse, not Hume	Throughout; Thicknesse in early 1780	14.4%
<i>Mademoiselle Biancolelli</i>	11	9 to Liston; 1 to Hume; 1 to Garrick after long silence		5.9%
<i>Mistress Perfection</i>	5	Liston	After August 1772	2.7%

<i>(Mademoiselle) Thérèse</i>	3	Liston	Before 1771	1.6%
<i>Pilades (femelle)</i>	2	Garrick	2 August 1765 & [October] 1765	1.1%
<i>Bon ange</i>	1	Liston	31 July 1774	0.5%
<i>La wise woman</i>	1	Liston	23 January 1771	0.5%
<i>Mrs Prudence</i>	1	Liston	13 January 1771	0.5%

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> In a 2020 monograph by Marijn S. Kaplan entitled *Marie Jeanne Riccoboni's Epistolary Feminism: Fact, Fiction, and Voice*.

<sup>2</sup> In *Mme Riccoboni's Letters to David Hume, David Garrick and Sir Robert Liston, 1764-1783* edited by James C. Nicholls in 1976. For notable exceptions published during her lifetime, see Kaplan *Marie Jeanne Riccoboni's Epistolary Feminism*, Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> As late as 17 October 1777, David Garrick, the actor and theatre manager and another correspondent of Riccoboni's, sends her a letter at "rue Poissonnière au Marbrier du Roy à Paris" (Nicholls 419), the address where he's been sending her letters at least as far back as January 1767 (102).

<sup>4</sup> This financial arrangement is mentioned in Riccoboni's husband's 1772 "inventaire": "... dans l'une desquelles deux chambres demeure ladite Dame Riccobony qui sont tenues à loyer par la Dame Biancolelly, fille majeure chez laquelle ladite dame veuve Riccobony vit en qualité de pensionnaire."

<sup>5</sup> Some Roman authors present Pylades as Orestes's lover while others stress the intensity of their friendship; the boundaries between male friendship and homoeroticism were typically more fluid in Antiquity.

<sup>6</sup> Nicholls covers private letters whereas Kaplan also includes letters to editors and publishers as well as literary colleagues such as Diderot and Laclous.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>8</sup> Her date of birth is given as "around 1691" in several locations (e.g., Campardon I, 273) but in a legal deposition she gives her age as 38 in 1737 (Campardon I, 159).

<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.geneanet.org/registres/view/30498/24>.

<sup>10</sup> The 1719 date coincides with Marie Thérèse de Lalande's arrival in Paris after having performed in the provinces for a few years and her unsuccessful debut at the *Comédie française*, which later led her to the *Comédie italienne* (Campardon 273).

<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the trust between her and his family members is further confirmed by a recently uncovered archival document showing that she drew up her last will and testament four days after Dominique died, on 22 April 1734, and appointed *his* nephew Charles Dominique de Turgis as *her* executor. See document MC/ET/XV/577 from the *Archives nationales*.

<sup>12</sup> Gueullette lists the year of her death incorrectly as 1755.

<sup>13</sup> This did not always stop people from marrying a second time and the bigamy committed by Riccoboni's father offers an interesting case study (Jal 553-4).

<sup>14</sup> Her last name is given erroneously as "Tortorelli" rather than "Tortoriti".

<sup>15</sup> This review appeared in the *Mercure de France* in February 1738, pp. 339-40, but it lists Biancolelli erroneously as “Dlle Lalande . . . fille de la Dlle Lalande” (339), confusing her with her mother, a common mistake.

<sup>16</sup> An example is *Le rival favorable* by de Boissy performed on 30 January 1739. Its review can be found in the *Mercure de France* in March 1739.

<sup>17</sup> Nicholls dates the cohabitation to “1755 or thereabouts” (12), but Ginisty cites a manuscript from 1756 signed by both women with Riccoboni listed as residing in the rue Françoise and Biancolelli in the rue Mauconseil at that time (81). We have been unable to locate the manuscript.

<sup>18</sup> Meusnier’s biography can be found in Piton, vol. 4, pp. 5-11.

<sup>19</sup> Meusnier names the following noblemen in connection with Biancolelli as a concubine: 1) Sieur de Sersay from Brittany, who lived with her for a year. 2) The Count de Murat, captain in the royal cavalry, who did not live with her long, spent a large fortune in Paris, and was subsequently committed to an insane asylum by his family. 3) Sieur d’Hauteville, first captain of the volunteer army in Flanders and chevalier de St. Louis, who lived with her for seven or eight years until 1744 and had a child with her that died. 4) Sieur de Clisson, sub-lieutenant with the Guards, who after ten months also had a child with her whose fate is unknown. His lack of money forced them to separate. 5) Sieur Baudouin de Lamotte, who presided over the third chamber of the Court of Aides and had two children with her. Theirs was a tumultuous relationship and he eventually left her in mid-1752 having put her financial affairs in order and given her an annuity of 1500 *livres*.

<sup>20</sup> See also Kushner, Chapter 1.

<sup>21</sup> Thicknesse had requested the biographical information for his wife Ann, who was writing *Sketches of the lives and writings of the ladies of France . . .* (London: 1780[-1781]) which included a chapter on Riccoboni in volume 3, pp. 203-08. The chapter contains Riccoboni’s letter in both French and English with Ann translating Biancolelli being “une amie” as “a friend”, with a footnote explaining “A female friend” (212).

<sup>22</sup> See note 21 for details.

<sup>23</sup> In her work, Riccoboni ascribes proto-feminist attributes to this role perhaps based on her observations of Biancolelli and her nieces. See Kaplan 2005.

<sup>24</sup> Archival records indicate that Camille Anne Elisabeth Ozanne married Pierre Perron, a painter born in 1749, and that they had an adult daughter, Colette Françoise Sophie Perron, represent them in 1802. Louise Antoinette Ozanne married Georges Aliaume in 1794 (and had divorced him by 1802).

<sup>25</sup> For more on the relationship between Riccoboni and Humblot, see Kaplan “Publication, Authorship and Ownership.”

<sup>26</sup> Riccoboni lists the reason for the anonymity: “On n’y mettra point mon nom, mais Humblot ne se taira pas. Nous sommes convenues qu’il seroit le maître de dire la vérité, et moi la maîtresse de mentir. Tout cela pour éviter la criailerie du peuple traducteur qui va m’arracher les yeux” (Nicholls 122-3). They comprise volumes 7 and 8 of her 1786 *Oeuvres complètes*.

<sup>27</sup> In that letter, she writes: “le goût de toutes les nations se réunit sur de certains points. Le naturel, la vérité, le sentiment intéressent également l’Anglais, le Français, le Russe, et le Turc. Mais l’esprit, le badinage, la saillie, le ton de la bonne plaisanterie, changent de nom en changeant de climat. Ce qui est vif, léger, gracieux dans une langue, devient froid, lourd, insipide, ou grossier dans une autre : la précision, la justesse, sources de l’agrément, ne s’y trouvent plus. Ce qui élèverait un éclat de rire en France pourrait attirer une huée à Londres ou à Vienne” (Nicholls 128). A slightly altered version appears in the preface to volume 1 of the *Nouveau théâtre anglois*.

<sup>28</sup> The will can be found in Archives nationales, Étude XIII, liasse 474. It is also included in Michèle Servien's 1973 doctoral dissertation, p. 212. Biancolelli inherited everything except for three small gifts for Riccoboni's friends, M. and Mme Daugny.

<sup>29</sup> See "Inventaire après décès de la Dlle Biancolelli." Scholars did not uncover information about Biancolelli's later life and death. Thus, Michèle Servien says "Malheureusement nous n'avons pu découvrir ce que cette femme est devenue après le vingt-sept mars 1793, date à laquelle elle signa la déclaration de succession [de Riccoboni]" (216).

<sup>30</sup> ". . . environ ~~six~~ [sic] cinq cents volumes de livres, de différents ouvrages de poésies de belles lettres le tout prisé quatre cent cinquante livres" ("Inventaire après décès de la Dlle Biancolelli"). The collection undoubtedly includes the seventy-five English books Riccoboni owned and of which she sent a list to Garrick (Crosby 171-3).

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