

Performing Power in Oratorio at the Court of D. Maria I (1777-91)

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Resumo

A corte de D. Maria I, em especial em meados da década de 1780, presta-se a um interessante estudo de caso sobre a presença das formas dramático-musicais sacras, como a oratória, entre os projectos de legitimação do poder real. Este artigo procura desenvolver uma primeira abordagem ao patronato da oratória na corte portuguesa, ao longo da segunda metade do século XVIII, como base para compreender as mudanças políticas que ocorreram no contexto das práticas musicais e performativas da corte após 1750. Comparando o período activo do reinado de D. Maria I (r. 1777-91) com o de seu pai e antecessor D. José I (1750-77), este artigo analisa diversas oratórias originais realizadas sob o patrocínio da rainha na década de 1780. Estas obras podem ser enquadradas numa estratégia de afirmação de género pelo poder monárquico, adquirindo as oratórias encomendadas por iniciativa real, neste período, uma dimensão simbólica de auto-afirmação de D. Maria I e sugerindo que a sua legitimação decorreu, em parte, da cuidadosa representação enquanto governante feminina piedosa e da ampliação do ritual musical da corte em torno do seu herdeiro, o Príncipe José, e da sua futura rainha, Maria Benedita.

Palavras-chave

Oratória; D. Maria I; Portugal; Representação; Lisboa; Poder; Cerimónia de corte; Estudos de género e da mulher.

Abstract

The court of Maria I, particularly in the middle years of the 1780s, provides a compelling case study on sacred dramatic musical forms such as oratorio within projects of royal legitimization. This article aims, first, to develop a basic outline of the patronage of oratorio at the Portuguese court in the second half of the eighteenth century, offering a basis for understanding the political, ceremonial, and aesthetic changes that took place in the context of court musical performance after 1750. Situating the active portion of Maria I's reign (r. 1777-91) in a comparative framework against that of her father and predecessor José I (r. 1750-77), the article subsequently examines several original oratorios that Maria I went on to sponsor at her court in the 1780s. Viewed as part of a larger gendered strategy of monarchical power, the oratorios commissioned in the 1780s gain a symbolic dimension relative to Maria I's self-fashioning and suggest that her legitimization came, in part, from the careful representation of the pious female ruler and the amplification of court musical ceremony surrounding her heir, Prince José and his future queen, Maria Benedita.

Keywords

Oratorio; D. Maria I; Portugal; Representation; Lisbon; Power; Court ceremony; Gender and women's studies.

ON JUNE 17, 1782, THE DIRECTOR OF THE PORTUGUESE ROYAL THEATERS, João António Pinto da Silva, sent a request to the Portuguese ambassador in Rome, Diogo de Noronha, at the order of Portuguese Queen D. Maria I:

Our Queen, having news of many sacred musical works sung there [in Rome], by the Fathers of the Congregation [of the Oratorio], as in other places, wishes for Your Excellency to send [...] those works for which [you have] the best information, because, as you well know, always in Lent we have the days of São José and São Bento, and we are totally lacking Oratorios and appropriate Musics for that time.¹

Having received Noronha's response, which included a list of oratorios available to be sent to the Lisbon court, Pinto da Silva replied: 'I received the letter from Your Excellency, dated 8 August, and with it the note regarding the Oratorios that you sent to me, from which Her Majesty selected those that are included on the adjoining list.'² On the list sent by Noronha, Pinto da Silva had marked the queen's choices—indicated by a small 'x' next to the selected titles—and apparently returned that list to him, signaling the works to be forwarded as the following:

Giuseppe riconosciuto - Anfossi
Salomone, Ré d'Israele - Casali
S. Elena al calvario - Anfossi
Pastorale a 4 voci - Casali
L'Ester musica - Sacchini
L'Abigaille - Pigna
Il trionfo di Mardoccheo - Borgho [sic]
Gionata - Pigna

Those works not selected included:

¹ The series of letters discussed in this section can be found in the collections of the Casa Real at the Arquivo Nacional de Torre do Tombo (*P-Lant*) in Lisbon, Portugal. Further discussion of this and other correspondence between representatives of the court in Lisbon and in Rome, including other requests for music, can be found in Manuel Carlos de BRITO, *Opera in Portugal in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989). Pinto da Silva's initial request reads '[A] Raynha Nossa Senhora tendo notícia da muitas Musicas sagradas que ali se cantam, tanto nos P.^{es} da Congregaçam, como em outras partes quer que V. Ex.^a me remeta [...] as de que V. Ex.^a ali tiver melhor informação; porque bem sabe que sempre na Quaresma temos os dias de São José, e de São Bento, e estamos totalmente desprovidos de Oratórias e Músicas próprias daquelle tempo' (*P-Lant*, Casa Real, Lv. 2989, f. 87v). All translations in this article are by the author unless otherwise noted.

² Noronha's reply of August 8 contains a list of oratorios, which I have arranged below according to works selected and unselected (*P-Lant*, Casa Real, Cx. 3505 [unnumbered papers]). I have preserved the spelling of both titles and composer names, as provided in the document. Pinto da Silva's response from September 16, translated above, reads: 'Recebi a carta de V. Ex.^a datada de 8 de Agosto próximo precedente, e com ella a Nota dos Oratorios, que V. Ex.^a me remeteu, dos quaes fez S. Mag.e escolha dos que constão da Relação junta' (*P-Lant*, Casa Real, Lv. 2989, ff. 89v-90r). He presumably returned Noronha's list at this point, with added 'x' markings to indicate desired works.

La passione di Gesù Christo - Melinesch

La passione di Gesù Christo - Jommelli

Morte d' Abele - Piccini [sic]

Gioas - Sacchini

La benedizione di Jacobbe - Casali

L'adorazione de' Maggi per l'Epifania - Casali

S. Filippo Neri musica - Sacchini

L'Isaco - Melinesch

Cantata a due voci per S. Filippo Neri - Casali

Cantata a due voci per L'assunta musica - Casali

La Betulia - Anfossi

After the arrival of the manuscripts to the Portuguese court—in the end, only *S. Elena*, *L'Ester*, and *Il trionfo di Mardoccheo* were sent—Pinto da Silva relayed that the Royal Highnesses had examined the new musical works, agreeing that while they were certainly of the best quality available, ‘already in Italy the quality of composing has declined [one has lost the taste for composing], and that presently their composers are not as good as those that we have here [in Portugal].’³ In the years that followed this correspondence, Maria I went on to sponsor performances of two Lenten oratorios each year on the days of S. José and S. Bento (March 19 and 21, respectively), but the works were almost exclusively original dramas by court librettist Gaetano Martinelli newly set by Portuguese court composers.⁴

This detailed correspondence between the representative of Maria I and the ambassador in Rome raises a number of intriguing questions: Were oratorios indeed lacking—in the sense of physical copies of performable works—at the court? Had oratorios not been utilized previously in court ceremony, or perhaps had previously performed works been lost or deemed inadequate in

³ *P-Lant*, Casa Real, Lv. 2989, f. 98v. Dated May 19, 1783: ‘[R]ecebi por via de João Piaggio o Caixote da Música, que V. Ex.a mandou, a qual passando logo ao poder de Suas Altezas a examinaram com a sua costumada curiosidade, e acharam o mesmo, que V. Ex.a tem avisado, e que aqui se experimenta, de que já em Italia se tem perdido o gosto de Compor, e que presentemente não há Mestres tão bons como que Nos aqui temos’ [I received by way of João Piaggio the box of Music that Your Excellency sent, which passed immediately into the power of Their Highnesses, who examined the music with the usual curiosity, and they agree, as Your Excellency has advised, having tried out the works here, that already in Italy the quality of composing has declined [one has lost the taste for composing], and that presently their composers are not as good as those that we have here [in Portugal]]. It is difficult to translate the phrase ‘se tem perdido o gosto de Compor’ [one has lost the taste for composing], but the phrase suggests either a decline in quality or a change in taste from more antiquated styles to more modern ones. Noronha explains in a letter dated January 18, 1783 that only three of the oratorios were sent because the others were no good, according to Battistini (Giambattista Vazquez, a soprano with ties to the court in Lisbon), who had heard them: ‘Devo advertir a V. M., que a Muzica de Napoles vai toda a que vinha apontada na lista que de Lá recebi, mas pelo que pertence aos Oratorios de Roma, vaó só trez, por que os outros não pareceraó bem a Battistini, a quem ouvi nesta materia’ (*P-Lant*, Casa Real, Cx. 3505, unnumbered papers).

⁴ On Martinelli’s work at the court, see Paulo Mugayar KÜHL ‘Os libretos de Gaetano Martinelli e a ópera de corte em Portugal (1769-1795)’ (PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 1998).

other ways according to subject and changing taste? Moreover, what is one to make of the slight on Italian composers, including the well-known oratorio composer Pasquale Anfossi, and the comparative talents of composers already at employed at the Portuguese court? What might the queen's investment in this particular genre and its "appropriateness" to the needs of court ceremony reveal to us about the goals of performance, representation, and patronage at the Portuguese court in this era?

This article seeks to provide a preliminary response to these questions in two parts. First, a basic outline of the patronage of oratorio at the Portuguese court in the second half of the eighteenth century offers a basis for understanding the political, ceremonial, and aesthetic changes that took place in the context of court musical performance after the end of João V's reign (r. 1707-50). While this outline focuses on the active portion of Maria I's reign (r. 1777-91),⁵ her period of rule is set in a comparative framework against that of her father and predecessor José I (r. 1750-77). Second, the court of Maria I, particularly in the middle years of the 1780s, provides a compelling case study on sacred dramatic musical forms such as oratorio within projects of royal legitimization. Examined more closely, the oratorios that the queen went on to sponsor at the Portuguese court offer multidimensional readings of her self-representation, as well as suggest the strong hand of Maria I in determining the representational content of music at her court—an influence already apparent in the 1782 correspondence to Rome. Of the eight works selected by the queen for trial at the court, three apparently feature female subjects—S. Elena, Abigail, and Esther—and a fourth, *Il trionfo di Mardocheo*, would also have focused the subject of Esther. Of the works not selected, only Anfossi's *La Betulia* would have concentrated on a female subject (Judith). In the newly-composed works that Maria I went on to sponsor, powerful and pious women—including the Old Testament Queen Esther—appear almost immediately; considered within the broad outlines of her musical patronage, indeed, these works suggest that perhaps the queen had an eye toward both the spiritual and feminine in her musical self-fashioning.

Oratorio in the Ceremony of the Portuguese Court after 1750

Oratorio, broadly defined as a musical drama on a religious theme performed without staging in the manner of a concert, formed a consistent part of ceremonial repertoire at the Portuguese court

⁵ Maria I officially reigned as queen of Portugal from 1777 until her death in 1816. However, when Maria I's mental health deteriorated in the early 1790s, Maria's second son prince João took over, signing official royal documents for his mother from 1791. In 1799, he would officially become Prince Regent, and in 1816, King João VI. The failing health of Maria I, and the subsequent rule of João VI have been examined extensively in the literature, though most treatments focus on João VI's decision to transfer the Portuguese court to Brazil to evade the French Invasions of 1807. For a general treatment and bibliography, see Ângelo PEREIRA, *D. João VI, príncipe e rei*, 4 vols. (Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional da Publicidade, 1953), and Ana Maria RODRIGUES (ed.), *D. João VI e o seu tempo* (Rio de Janeiro, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1999).

across the eighteenth century.⁶ As elsewhere in Europe, in Portugal court oratorio largely paralleled in musical style opera of the same period and served to supplant secular operatic productions for court ceremony during religious seasons. At the court in Lisbon, the determining factor of the timing of court ceremony was the celebration of royal name days and birthdays; thus, the more-or-less random coincidence of the ceremonial calendar with the yearly religious calendar transformed during each reign, and to some extent dictated the nature of associated musical performances. During the reign of João V, the most important dates of court ceremony fell between June and October, a relatively straightforward period in the religious calendar, and musical productions for royal onomastic and birthday celebrations in this period tended to remain secular in character.⁷ However, in the subsequent reign, both José I and his queen celebrated name days and birthdays in late March, a period that coincided frequently with the solemn season of Lent. These dates included José I's name day on March 19 and the queen Mariana Vitória's birthday on March 31. In the reign

⁶ Works in Portugal and elsewhere are variously referred to in the existing documentation as *oratorio*, *drama sacro*, *componimento sacro*, and even *serenata*, which is often associated with secular works. Portuguese sources often refer to a single work by multiple, sometimes conflicting terms, such that financial documents from the archive of the Casa Real (Royal House) in Lisbon's Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo note the rehearsal of a 'Serenata, or Oratorio for the day of S. José' on March 14, 1772 ('Serenata, ou Oratoria do dia de S. Joze.' *P-Lant*, Casa Real, Cx. 3100 [unnumbered papers]). This article takes into account all works that, despite a wide variety of designations, treat the dramatic portrayal of sacred subjects in the concerted manner typical of oratorio.

The most complete treatment of the history of oratorio and related genres in Europe is: Howard E. SMITHER, *A History of the Oratorio*, 4 vols. (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1977-2000). Originating in Italy in the seventeenth century, the Italian oratorio has received considerable attention in the scholarly literature, and many outstanding studies provide necessary background for this article; the scholarly literature cited here focuses especially on the Roman context, which provided the main model for Portuguese works in this era. On the significance of the Roman Oratory at Santa Maria in Vallicella, the site of many important eighteenth-century oratorio performances—including the works forwarded by Noronha—see Joyce L. JOHNSON, *Roman Oratorio, 1770–1800: The Repertory at Santa Maria in Vallicella* (Ann Arbor, MI, UMI Research Press, 1987); Arnaldo MORELLI, "'Un bell'oratorio all'uso di Roma": Patronage and Secular Context of the Oratorio in Baroque Rome', in *Music Observed: Studies in Memory of William C. Holmes*, edited by Colleen Reardon and Susan Parisi (Warren, MI, Harmonie Park Press, 2004), pp. 333-51; Arnaldo MORELLI, "'Il muovere e non il far maravigliare." Relationships between Artistic and Musical Patronage in the Roman Oratory', *Italian History and Culture*, 5 (1999), pp. 13-28; Arnaldo MORELLI, *Il tempio armonico: Musica nell'Oratorio dei Filippini in Roma (1575-1705)*, *Analecta Musicologica*, 27 (Laaber, Laaber Verlag, 1991); Paola BESUTTI (ed.), *L'oratorio musicale italiano e i suoi contesti (secc. XVII-XVIII): Atti del convegno internazionale, Perugia, Sagra musicale umbra, 18-20 settembre 1997* (Florence, L. S. Olschki, 2002); Stephanie TCHAROS, *Opera's Orbit: Musical Drama and the Influence of Opera in Arcadian Rome* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011); Saverio FRANCHI (ed.), *Percorsi dell'oratorio romano: Da 'historia sacra' a melodramma spirituale: atti della giornata di studi* (Rome, IBIMUS, 2002). On the issue of terminology, see Howard SMITHER, 'Oratorio and Sacred Opera, 1700-1825: Terminology and Genre Distinction', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 106 (1980), pp. 88-104. Smither's writing predates any significant research into the genre in Portugal, and he dedicates only a few paragraphs to the region. For the most recent research dedicated to the oratorio in Portugal, see my dissertation, 'Appropriate Musics for that Time: Oratorio in the Exchange of Power at the Portuguese Court' (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2014), as well as Iskrena YORDANOVA, 'Contributos para o estudo do oratório em Portugal: Contexto de criação e edição crítica de 'Morte d'Abel' de P. A. Avondano (1714-1782)' (PhD diss., Universidade de Évora, 2013). Studies of both opera and liturgical music in Portugal have mentioned previously oratorios without giving them much specific attention. For oratorio in relation to opera at the Portuguese court the period in question here, see BRITO, *Opera in Portugal* (see note 1), and for the relationship of oratorio to sacred repertoires in Portugal, see, for instance, Cristina FERNANDES, 'O sistema produtivo da música sacra em Portugal no final do Antigo Regime: A Capela Real e a Patriarcal entre 1750 e 1807', 2 vols. (PhD diss., Universidade de Évora, 2010).

⁷ For a more comprehensive list of royal name days and birthdays at the Portuguese court, see BRITO, *Opera in Portugal* (see note 1), p. 122.

of Maria I from 1777, moreover, the celebration of the name days of heir apparent Prince José, also on March 19, and his wife Princess Maria Benedita on March 21 added to the complicated overlap of the ceremonial and religious calendars. A list of the dates of Lenten seasons in the period of 1750-77 placed alongside documented musical productions, given in Table 1, clarifies the complexity of the relationship between court ceremony, musical performance, and concerns of religious propriety across the era.⁸

During the period of José I's rule leading up to the Lisbon Earthquake (1750-5), Lenten productions maintained a secular focus with performances of operatic works by David Perez, a highly regarded composer at the court, for the queen's birthday on March 31.⁹ Large-scale operatic works matched these three spectacles for the king's birthday on June 6 from 1753 to 1755, making the celebratory season of March 31 to June 6 among the court's most spectacular in each of those three years. Yet, a portion of this celebratory season from mid-March to early June typically (though not always) fell within Lent. The court was well aware of the decorum required of the solemn religious season, demonstrated in their regular journey to the royal palace and theater at Salvaterra to pass the Carnival season in preparation for a more austere period upon return.¹⁰ The only timeframe in which secular productions and galas alike appear to have been strictly prohibited at court was during Holy Week, from Palm Sunday (*Domingos de Ramos*) to Easter Sunday (*Páscoa*). For instance, in 1752, the *Gazeta de Lisboa* reported that the queen's birthday 'could not be celebrated on the 31st of March, on which day she turned 35 years old, and was celebrated instead yesterday [April 3, the Monday after Easter].'¹¹ Since Holy Week in 1752 fell that year between March 26 and April 2, the queen waited until Easter Monday, which began the *Primeira oitava*, or first week after Easter, to hold the hand-kissing ceremony. In other years, the queen's birthday fell precisely on Easter Monday, as in 1755, when Holy Week fell between March 23 and March 30. In that year, the queen's birthday marked a momentous musical occasion—the opening of the ill-fated *Ópera do Tejo*, inaugurated with a performance of David Perez's *Alessandro nell'Indie*.

⁸ In Tables 1 and 2, the dates of Lent are followed by the date and title of the work performed where available. Otherwise, genre label from existing documentation is provided. Where known, I also list librettist/composer and the place of performance. For non-musical sources (financial records, printed journals, etc.), I have included the appropriate reference. For serenatas, operas, and other secular musical productions, I have included only general source references unless more specific sources are useful to the central purpose of this article; for oratorios (in boldface type), I have included more detailed sources. Most of the secular sources are cited in more detail in a (now incomplete) chronology of both sacred and secular works in BRITO, *Opera in Portugal* (see note 1).

⁹ These performances included Perez's *L'Olimpiade* in 1753, *L'Ipermestra* in 1754, and *Alessandro nell'Indie* (1755).

¹⁰ The tradition of operatic performance at Salvaterra is also discussed in BRITO, *Opera in Portugal* (see note 1).

¹¹ *Gazeta de Lisboa*, 14 (April 4, 1752), p. 271. 'O aniversario do nascimento da Rainha nossa Senhora, que se nam [sic] pode festejar no dia 31 de Março, em que cumpriu 35 anos, se festejou tambem hontem [sic]. Toda a corte beijou a mão a mesma Augustissima Senhora, e os Ministros estrangeiros a cumprimentaram, assegurando dezejar-lhe a vida mais dilatada.'

Year	Dates of Holy Week	Dramatic Musical Performance(s) at Court
1751	April 4-11	March 19: Hand-kissing ceremony only Location: Paço da Ribeira ¹² Source(s): <i>Gazeta de Lisboa</i> (GL) March 31: Hand-kissing ceremony only Location: Paço da Ribeira Source(s): GL
1752	March 26-April 2	March 19: N/A March 31: Royal gala (no music reported) Location: Paço da Ribeira Source(s): GL
1753	April 15-April 22	March 19: 'Serenata' Librettist/Composer: Anonymous Location: Paço da Ribeira (queen's chambers) Source(s): GL March 31: <i>L'Olimpiade</i> (dramma per musica) Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/David Perez Location: Paço da Ribeira (king's chambers) Source(s): GL, various manuscript and printed sources ¹³
1754	April 7-14	March 19: N/A March 31: <i>L'Ipermestra</i> (dramma per musica) Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/David Perez Location: Paço da Ribeira, Teatro do Forte Source(s): GL, various manuscript and printed sources
1755	March 23-30	March 19: 'Serenata' Librettist/Composer: Anonymous Location: Paço da Ribeira Sources: GL March 31: <i>Alessandro nell'Indie</i> (dramma per musica) Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/Perez Location: Ópera do Tejo Sources: GL, various manuscript and printed sources
All productions cease following the earthquake in November 1755 and appear to resume around Carnival 1763. The <i>Gazeta da Lisboa</i> further suspended printing from 1761 to 1778, complicating the documentary source history of the era. <i>P-La</i> court sources (financial records, etc.) vary in consistency through 1777.		
1763	March 27-April 3	March 19: N/A March 31: [likely performance] <i>L'Isacco, figura del Redentore</i> (Oratorio) Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/Luciano Xavier dos Santos Location: 'Real Teatro da Corte' ¹⁴ Source(s): <i>P-La</i> (manuscript score); <i>I-Rsc</i> (libretto)
1764	April 15-22	N/A
1765	March 31-April 7	N/A
1766	March 22-30	March 19: N/A March 31: <i>L'incognita perseguitata</i> (drama giocoso) Librettist/Composer: Giuseppe Petrosellini/Niccolò Piccini Location: Teatro da Ajuda Source(s): various manuscript and printed sources
1767	April 12-19	N/A

¹² The Paço da Ribeira, the court's palace, was located in the center of Lisbon until its destruction in 1755; thereafter, the court moved to a new palace outside Lisbon in the Ajuda neighborhood. Post-earthquake sources occasionally note the new performance location as the 'Teatro da Ajuda' though it is not entirely clear whether this theater was located in the new palace or outside of it.

¹³ For these sources (and similar indications below), see BRITO, *Opera in Portugal* (see note 1) chronology.

¹⁴ Joaquim José MARQUES, *Cronologia da ópera em Portugal* (Lisbon, A Artística, 1947), p. 101. This performance and its location are discussed in detail below.

1768	March 27-April 3	March 19: N/A March 31: <i>Solimano</i> (dramma per musica) Librettist/Composer: Anonymous/Perez Location: Teatro da Ajuda Source(s): various manuscript and printed sources *12 performances given through June 6 (king's birthday)
1769	March 19-March 26	March 19: 'Oratorio da Paixão' (Passion Oratorio) Librettist/Composer: N/A Location: Palácio da Ajuda ¹⁵ Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i> , Casa Real, Cx. 3502 (financial records) March 31: <i>L'amore industrioso</i> (dramma per musica) Librettist/Composer: Anonymous/João de Sousa Carvalho Location: Teatro da Ajuda Source(s): various manuscript and printed sources *10 performances given through December
1770	April 8-15	March 19 and 31: 'Serenata' Librettist/Composer: Anonymous Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i> , Casa Real, Cx. 3100 The same work was apparently repeated on both days; no indication of whether the work was sacred or secular in nature.
1771	March 24-31	March 19: N/A March 31: <i>Semiramide</i> (dramma per musica) Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/Niccolò Jommelli Location: Teatro da Ajuda Source(s): various manuscript and printed sources
1772	April 12-9	March 19: 'Serenata, ou Oratoria' (serenata or oratorio)¹⁶ Librettist/Composer: N/A Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i> , Casa Real, Cx. 3100 March 31: <i>Pastorella illustre</i> (serenata) Librettist/Composer: N/A Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i> , Casa Real, Cx. 3100
1773	April 4-11	March 19: <i>Imeneo in Atenas</i> Librettist/Composer: N/A Location: N/A Source(s): various manuscript and printed sources March 31: <i>Cerere placatea</i> (festa teatrale) Librettist/Composer: Anon./Niccolò Jommelli Location: N/A Source(s): various manuscript and printed sources
1774	March 27-April 3	N/A
1775	April 9-16	March 19: N/A March 31: <i>Li napoletani in America</i> (dramma giocoso) Librettist/Composer: Francesco Cerlone/ Niccolò Piccini Location: Teatro da Ajuda Source(s): various manuscript and printed sources
1776	March 31-April 7	No musical performances (José I died in February)

Table 1. Dramatic musical performances for royal celebrations during Lent, Holy Week, and the Octave of Easter (week after Easter) with dates of Holy Week listed, 1750-77; oratorios are in bold type

¹⁵ Performance location given in *P-Lant*, Casa Real, Cx. 3502 (unnumbered papers).

¹⁶ Throughout the *P-Lant* sources, the work is referred to as either 'serenata ou oratoria' or more simply, 'oratoria.' While it seems clear that 'serenata' was occasionally used as a general term for musical performances both secular and sacred in character, there is little evidence that the use of the term 'oratoria' signified anything other than a sacred musical drama.

Given the inconsistency of documents in the immediate post-earthquake period through the early 1770s, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about music at court in this era. Nonetheless, as musical performances resumed at court after 1755, the oratorio seems to have eventually become one solution to the conflict of royal and religious ceremony. Although it is unclear precisely when musical performances recommenced at court following the earthquake, among the earliest musical documents from the post-earthquake period is an existing manuscript score of Luciano Xavier dos Santos's *L'Isacco, figura del Redentore*, which identifies the year 1763 and dedicatee (Queen Mariana Vitória) on its title page. In that year, the queen's birthday fell within Holy Week (see Table 1), which could have prompted the use of a sacred music drama in lieu of an operatic production.¹⁷ Aside from religious concerns, the choice could also have been practical. Displaced from the ruined central palace, the Paço da Ribeira, and the crumbled Ópera do Tejo, the court lacked the facilities to stage elaborate dramatic spectacle at court.¹⁸ Court financial records confirm the performance of subsequent oratorios at court for the king's name day on March 19 in 1769 and 1772; in 1769, March 19 fell during Holy Week, though in 1772 it did not. Moreover, just as often as oratorio seems to take the place of otherwise secular performances due to a conspicuous overlap with Holy Week, secular performances hold ground: the 1768 and 1771 performances of *Solimano* and *Semiramide*, respectively, complicate any overarching theory about music and religious appropriateness.¹⁹

After José I's death, Maria I implemented with increasing regularity oratorio productions as a solution to court galas during Lent, particularly for the royal name day celebrations of Prince José and his wife Maria Benedita, as well as the queen mother Mariana Vitória's ongoing birthday productions through her death in 1781. Drawing on financial records—more comprehensive and rigorously maintained in the period after Maria I's ascent to the throne—as well as existing scores and libretti, Table 2 compiles a chronology of the documented Lenten musical performances during the active period of Maria I's reign from 1777 to 1791.

¹⁷ *P-La*, 48-III-5/6. Unfortunately, financial records or printed libretti do not exist to confirm this performance. In 1874 Marques identified the work as being performed in the 'Real Teatro da Corte' in 1763; without further documentary evidence Brito later labeled the performance 'doubtful.' MARQUES, *Cronologia da ópera* (see note 14) p. 101, first published as a series of articles in the *Arte Musical* of 1874; BRITO, *Opera in Portugal* (see note 1), p. 173. For the reasons listed above, I would argue that this work remains a possible performance for March 31, 1763. Moreover, the work matches the burgeoning oratorio style at the Portuguese court, as discussed below.

¹⁸ The new royal residence in the Ajuda, the *Real Barraca*, was destroyed by fire in 1794, but an existing drawing of the floor plan reveals a 'Caza da Musica' that would have suited small performances such as serenatas or oratorios. Pedro Gomes JANUÁRIO, 'Giovanni Carlo Sicinio Galli Bibena: Teatro Real da Ajuda', *ARTiTEXTOS* 5 (December 2007), pp. 37-51. The drawing is held at *P-Ln* (Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal) (Iconografia, D. 28R.). See FERNANDES, 'O sistema produtivo da música sacra' (see note 6) for more on court performance forces in this period.

¹⁹ As a highly problematic subject fraught with religious underpinnings, the performance of *Semiramide* on Easter Sunday in 1771 could have perhaps served as a clever compromise for Queen Mariana Vitória. On the subject of *Semiramide*, see Wendy HELLER, 'The Queen as King: Refashioning *Semiramide* for *Seicento Venice*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 5/2 (1993), pp. 93-114; and her chapter 'Semiramide and Musical Transvestism', in *Emblems of Eloquence: Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003), pp. 220-62.

Year	Dates of Holy Week	Court Musical Productions from Lent to end of Holy Week
1777: No court ceremony; mourning for José I through early 1778.		
1778	April 14-19	<p>March 19: 'Chamber music' Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3107, Lv. 503, Lv. 504²⁰</p> <p>March 21: 'Chamber music' Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3107, Lv. 503, Lv. 504</p> <p>March 31: <i>Gioas, Rè di Giuda</i> Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/António da Silva [Gomes e Oliveira] Location: Palácio de Queluz²¹ Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3107, Lv. 503, Lv. 504; <i>P-Ln</i>, <i>P-Cug</i>, <i>BR-Rn</i> (libretti); <i>P-La</i> (manuscript score, two copies)</p>
1779	March 28-April 4	<p>March 19: 'Chamber music' Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3111, Lv. 504, Lv. 505</p> <p>March 21: 'Chamber music' Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3111, Lv. 504, Lv. 505</p> <p>*April 5: <i>Gli orti esperidi</i> (serenata, for Queen Mother's birthday) Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/Jeronimo Francisco de Lima Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3112, Lv. 504, Lv. 505; <i>Br-Rn</i> (libretto); <i>P-La</i> (manuscript score)</p>
1780	March 19-26	<p>March 19: <i>Oratória da Paixão</i> Librettist/Composer: [Metastasio/Niccolò Jommelli?]²² Location: [Palácio da Ajuda] ('no Paço') Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Lv. 504, Lv. 505²³</p>

²⁰ The *P-Lant* sources in this table are all financial records, which range in detail from a single receipt to entire folders of documents. When all documents exist, the financial records in this period are spread across a meticulous system of checks and balances. In this scheme, the boxes (Cx.) contain loose papers organized by months, which consist of detailed receipts for each musical performance—carriages, cost of refreshments, individual receipts for work (such as copying of a musical part), etc. The books (Lv.) are shorter, summarized accounts of the same costs found in the boxed documents (whereas, for instance, receipts in the Cx. sources will document the cost of each carriage, the Lv. sources will only give the total cost of all the carriages in sum).

²¹ It is not exactly clear why this production took place at the Palácio de Queluz. The palace in Queluz, outside Lisbon, was a secondary royal palace and a frequent summer home to the court of Maria I. The renovation and establishment of this palace became a major project of King Pedro III. Other sources have listed this performance location as the Palácio da Ajuda (BRITO, *Opera in Portugal* (see note 1), for instance). Yet, across all the financial records (*P-Lant*, Casa Real, Cx. 3107), the performance location is listed as the Palace in Queluz, which could certainly have accommodated an oratorio performance in its 'Sala da Serenata' (a room used for moderately sized musical performances).

²² *P-Lant* receipts for the Passion Oratorio and Miserere performed on March 19 and 21 in this year lack any mention of composer or librettist. A *Miserere* by Jommelli remains preserved in *P-EVp* (Biblioteca Pública, Évora) (CLI/22-8 n.º 4) and resembles an oratorio in musical style. The libretto, moreover, functions as a poetic paraphrase of the *Miserere* text by the Neapolitan Saverio Mattei. See David CRANMER, 'Os fundos musicais', in *Tesouros da Biblioteca Pública de Évora*, coordenated by João Ruas (Lisboa, Medialivros, 2005), p. 109. Jommelli's Passion setting would be performed at the court in 1790, and financial documents suggest that the work was a repeat performance—as will be discussed below, repeated works were given only a single rehearsal in this period, and no copying or printing of music and libretti appears to have been necessary. It seems possible that the performances for March 19, 21, and 31 in this year were all settings by Jommelli, who, as is well known, dealt extensively with the court in Lisbon from the 1750s to the 1770s. BRITO, *Opera in Portugal* (see note 1), pp. 39-45, and Marita McClymonds, *Niccolò Jommelli: The Last Years, 1769-1774* (Ann Arbor, MI, UMI Research Press, 1980).

²³ The detailed financial records (Cx.) for January–June 1780 could not be located in the archive's holdings; the short, summary financial records found in Lv. 504 and Lv. 505 provide overall costs but neglect to provide indications of composer or title of the work.

		<p>March 21: ‘Miserere’ Librettist/Composer: [Saverio Mattei/Niccolò Jommelli?] Location: [Palácio da Ajuda] (‘no Paço’) Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Lv. 504, Lv. 505; <i>P-EVp</i> (manuscript score)</p> <p>March 31: <i>L’isola disabitata</i> (serenata) Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/Jommelli Location: [Palácio da Ajuda] (‘no Paço’) Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Lv. 504, Lv. 505; <i>P-Ln</i>, <i>EVp</i> (libretti); <i>P-La</i> (manuscript score)</p>
1781	April 8-15	No musical performances; death of Mariana Vitória
1782	March 24-31	<p>March 19: <i>Gioas, Rè di Giuda</i> (‘repetição’; repeat)²⁴ Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/António da Silva [Gomes e Oliveira] Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Lv. 504, Lv. 506²⁵</p> <p>March 21: Stabat Mater Composer: Joseph Haydn Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Lv. 504, Lv. 506</p>
1783	April 13-20	<p>March 19: <i>Il Passione di Gesù Christo Signor Nostro</i> Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/Luciano Xavier dos Santos Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3124, Lv. 507, Lv. 508; <i>P-Cul</i>, <i>P-EVp</i> (libretti); <i>P-La</i> (manuscript score)</p> <p>March 21: <i>Salome, madre de sette martiri maccabei</i> Librettist/Composer: Gaetano Martinelli/João Cordeiro da Silva Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lant</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3124, Lv. 507, Lv. 508; <i>BR-Rn</i>, <i>I-Rsc</i> (libretti); <i>P-La</i> (manuscript score)</p>
1784	April 4-11	<p>March 19: <i>Il ritorno di Tobia</i> Librettist/Composer: Giovanni Gastone Boccherini/Franz Joseph Haydn Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lan</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3131, Lv. 507, Lv. 508; <i>BR-Rn</i>, <i>P-Lac</i>, <i>P-Ln</i>, <i>P-EVp</i> (libretti)</p> <p>March 21: <i>Gioas, Rè di Giuda</i> (repeat) Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/Silva [Gomes e Oliveira] Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lan</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3131, Lv. 507, Lv. 508</p>
1785	March 20-7	<p>March 19: <i>Il trionfo di Davidde</i> Librettist/Composer: Gaetano Martinelli/Braz Francisco de Lima Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lan</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3137, Lv. 508, Lv. 509; <i>BR-Rn</i>, <i>P-Cul</i>, <i>I-Rsc</i>, <i>US-Wc</i> (libretti); <i>P-La</i> (manuscript score)</p> <p>March 21: <i>Salome</i> (repeat) Librettist/Composer: Martinelli/Cordeiro da Silva Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lan</i>, Casa Real, Cx. 3137, Lv. 508, Lv. 509</p>
1786	April 9-16	<p>March 19: <i>Ester</i> Librettist/Composer: Gaetano Martinelli/António Leal Moreira Location: Palácio da Ajuda</p>

²⁴ Financial records describe works as ‘repetição’ (repeat) when the court, apparently, already possessed the work in hard copy and had performed it in recent years. It seems that no new libretti were printed for subsequent performances.

²⁵ Like the records for early 1780, the detailed financial records (Cx.) for January–June 1782 could not be located.

		Source(s): <i>P-Lan</i> , Casa Real, Cx. 3143, Lv. 508, Lv. 509; <i>BR-Rn</i> , <i>I-Rsc</i> , <i>P-EVP</i> , <i>P-Lac</i> (libretti); <i>P-La</i> (manuscript score) March 21: <i>Il trionfo di Davide</i> (repeat) Librettist/Composer: Martinelli/Lima Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lan</i> , Casa Real, Cx. 3143, Lv. 508, Lv. 509
1787	April 1-8	No musical performances; death of Pedro III
1788	March 16-23	N/A ²⁶
1789	April 5-12	No musical performances; death of José
1790	March 28-April 4	March 21: <i>Oratoria da Paixão</i> (Passion) Librettist/Composer: Metastasio/Jommelli Location: Source(s): <i>P-Lan</i> , Casa Real, Cx. 3156, Lv. 511
1791	April 17-24	March 21: <i>Ester</i> (repeat) Librettist/Composer: Martinelli/Moreira Location: Palácio da Ajuda Source(s): <i>P-Lan</i> , Casa Real, Cx. 3160, Lv. 511

Table 2. Dramatic musical performances for royal celebrations during Lent, Holy Week, and the Octave of Easter (week after Easter) with dates of Holy Week listed, 1777-91; oratorios are in bold type.

From Table 2 a clearer picture emerges of the growing importance of oratorio as a court genre through 1786, as well as the system of oratorio production that evolved during those years. In the Lenten season, Maria I appears to have imposed more strictly the performance of sacred music drama, sponsoring oratorio performances over secular serenata or opera. The queen mother's birthday in 1778, for instance, was celebrated with an oratorio, even though it took place on March 31, two weeks before Holy Week; in subsequent years, the celebration was held off completely until after Easter and assumed a secular perspective. With the death of the queen mother in 1781 signaling the end of ceremony on March 31, the court's celebratory season shifted yet again, giving greater focus to the celebrations of March 19 and 21 after the customary mourning period. Whereas March 31 sometimes fell after Easter, the new dates of focus in mid-March occurred consistently during Lent and sometimes Holy Week. Lacking musical works appropriate to performance during the Lenten season at court—and with a disappointing selection sent from Rome in 1782—Maria I pursued new commissions from within the Portuguese court establishment.

The system of oratorio production that emerged under Maria I was simple. With the exception of 1783, in which two new works were performed, each year, a new oratorio celebrated the day of S. José (March 19), while a repeated work celebrated the day of S. Bento (March 21), just three days later. From 1783 to 1786, this schema resulted in four new works by Portuguese composers, three of which featured new dramas by court poet Gaetano Martinelli: Santos's Passion oratorio (1783) on the well-known libretto by Metastasio, Cordeiro da Silva and Martinelli's *Salome* (1783),

²⁶ No *P-Lant* records exist and no libretti or manuscript scores have been located for this year.

Lima and Martinelli's *Il trionfo di Davidde* (1785), and Moreira and Martinelli's *Ester* (1786).²⁷ The performance of Haydn's *Il ritorno di Tobia* in 1784 stands out against the growing corpus of new works by Portuguese composers in this period. It remains unclear how the court came to perform this work in particular, but in its structure and style, the work matches in most ways the developing oratorio aesthetic demonstrated in the newly-composed works, as discussed below.²⁸

In general, the new compositions by Portuguese composers adhere to the style of Italian oratorios of the 1720s to 1760s, as described by Smither, with early Classical style predominant but occasionally mixed with late Baroque qualities.²⁹ The early Classical style had achieved popularity at the Portuguese court during the reign of José I, an avid patron of Italian opera and the composer Jommelli, especially.³⁰ In the new oratorios composed for Maria I a similar aesthetic prevails. Overall, simple, tuneful melodies in balanced phrases are decorated by light ornaments, including frequent use of the 'Scotch snap', and transparent homophonic textures predominate. A limited harmonic vocabulary supplies a slow moving harmonic rhythm marked by the occasional use of chordal figures such as Alberti bass. Works are divided into two large structural parts, and the works as a whole alternate passages in recitative, both simple and obbligato styles, with aria or ensemble. Choruses appear more frequently than in older works. At the same time, some elements of Baroque style remain, in oratorio more so than in contemporaneous opera, with a mixture of chordal homophony and brief contrapuntal passages in the oratorio choruses particularly common. Developments in musical style found in Italian oratorios from the 1760s to the 1780s were slow to catch on at the Lisbon court, with the exception of the expansion of aria types beyond the standard da capo and dal segno forms typical of the late Baroque and early Classical eras.

Despite their varied musical authors, the four new works are striking in their consistency of vocal and instrumental setting, as shown in Table 3.

²⁷ My comments and analyses here are derived from the manuscript musical scores and printed libretti now held at various institutions, mostly in Portugal. For complete sources, see: KUNTZ, "'Appropriate Musics for that Time'" (see note 6), Appendix (Chronology).

²⁸ SMITHER, *A History of the Oratorio* (see note 6), vol. 3, pp. 160-81. Though the manuscript score from the 1784 Portuguese court performance is apparently lost, a printed libretto indicates that the work performed was Haydn's original 1775 version, which was written for and performed at Vienna's Tonkünstler-Societät. By 1784, Haydn had revised the work to include two new choruses 'Svanisce in un momento' and 'Ah gran Dio!' though neither text appears in the Portuguese printed libretto and made numerous cuts. It is unclear how the original orchestration (which possibly numbered more than 180 performers in its first performance) was translated to the Portuguese context, which rarely included more than thirty performers.

²⁹ See SMITHER, *A History of the Oratorio* (see note 6), vol. 3, pp. 1-198; and JOHNSON, *Roman Oratorio, 1770-1800* (see note 6).

³⁰ As is well known, Jommelli dealt extensively with the court in Lisbon from the 1750s to the 1770s. See BRITO, *Opera in Portugal* (see note 1), pp. 39-45, and Marita McClymonds, *Niccolo Jommelli: The Last Years, 1769-1774* (Ann Arbor, MI, UMI Research Press, 1980).

1783 (<i>Passione</i>)	1783 (<i>Salome</i>)	1785 (<i>Davidde</i>)	1786 (<i>Ester</i>)
Characterizations, Performers, and Vocal Setting			
Vocal Setting: SSST	SSSAT	SSSTB	SSSAT
<i>Pietro</i> Carlos Reina [S]	<i>Salome</i> Reina [S]	<i>Davidde</i> Reina [S]	<i>Assuero</i> Reina [S]
<i>Maddalena</i> Giovanni Ripa [S]	<i>Giacobbe</i> Ripa [S]	<i>Gionata</i> Ripa [S]	<i>Ester</i> Ripa [S]
<i>Giovanni</i> Fedele Venturi [S]	<i>Simone</i> Venturi [S]	<i>Eliabo</i> Vicente Marini [S]	<i>Harbona/Athach</i> Marini [S]
	<i>Matatia</i> Ansano Ferracuti [A]		<i>Mardocheo</i> Ferracuti [A]
<i>Giuseppe</i> Luigi Torriani [T]	<i>Antioco</i> Torriani [T]	<i>Saule</i> Torriani [T]	<i>Aman</i> Torriani [T]
		<i>Goliath</i> Taddeo Puzzi [B]	
Orchestration (number of obbligato parts)			
Violin (2)	Violin (2)	Violin (2)	Violin (2)
Viola (2)	Viola (2)	Viola (2)	Viola (2)
	Violoncello (1)		
	Flute (2)	Flute (2)	Flute (2)
Oboe (2)	Oboe (2)	Oboe (2)	Oboe (2)
Bassoon (2)	Bassoon (2)	Bassoon (2)	Bassoon (2)
Trombe/Corni (various)	Trombe/Corni (various)	Trombe/Corni (various)	Trombe/Corni (various)

Table 3. Vocal and instrumental settings in newly-composed Portuguese court oratorios (1783, 1785, 1786)

Surveying the vocal settings in Table 3, it is worth pointing out that the four or five dramatic roles in each work are voiced for three soprano parts and one or two additional alto, tenor, or bass parts. In spite of the adherence to Italian musical styles, the vocal setting of these works may provide some clue regarding the apparent declining taste for Italian music. All performances at the Portuguese court being fulfilled by male vocalists, in these years Carlos Reina and Giovanni Ripa—two of the court’s premier castrati—performed the lead roles, both male and female, which were set consistently for soprano voice; other soprano roles also included young and noble figures, sung by various castrati such as Fedele Venturi and Vicente Marini.³¹ Across these works, castrato Ansano Ferracuti contributed the alto parts, Luigi Torriani fulfilled the tenor roles, which included tyrants and otherwise malicious figures in the dramas, and Taddeo Puzzi provided the bass role in 1785’s *Il trionfo di Davidde* as the giant Goliath. It is worth noting that by the 1780s all-castrato casts were not necessarily the norm at European courts as dramatic musical settings moved increasingly away from the Baroque emphasis on the high voice for both male and female roles. For instance,

³¹ This practice is consistent with castrato performance roles in Italy and elsewhere. For a recent overview of the European culture of castrati, see Martha FELDMAN, *The Castrato: Reflections on Natures and Kinds* (University of California Press, 2015).

considering the performance at the Lisbon court of Jommelli's SATB setting of Metastasio's *Passion* libretto in 1790 (and possibly earlier, in 1780; see Table 2), it is telling that Luciano Xavier dos Santos's 1783 setting of the same text opts for an SSST voicing. Even more striking is the 1784 performance of Haydn's *Il ritorno di Tobia*, which in the composer's setting uses the following voicing: Tobit (B), Anna (A), Tobias (T), Sara (S), the Angel Raphael (S) and an SATB chorus. The manuscript music used at the performance in Lisbon is lost, but the printed libretto lists the singers of each role as follows, indicating that the male roles of Tobit and Tobias were transposed to soprano:

Tobit - Innocenzo Schettini (S)
 Anna - Ansano Ferracuti (A)
 Tobia - Carlo Reina (S)
 Sara - Giovanni Ripa (S)
 Angel Raphael - Vincenzo Marini (S)
 Chorus³²

Brito, discussing the documentation regarding the hiring of singers for Lisbon in this era, notes the extensive problems that beset representatives of the Portuguese court in Rome, who were tasked with hiring singers for the Lisbon court in the last decades of the 1700s. According to their reports, good singers were ever more scarce, and ever more demanding in terms of their contracts, increasingly aged, and all the time less willing to accept engagements in locations such as Lisbon.³³ Their correspondence often disparaged the talent of available vocalists and frequently coupled such criticisms with commentary on the decadent state of music in Italy in general. In July 1782, Diogo de Noronha reported to have heard many operas all over Italy, at more than ten individual theaters, with nothing new to report in regard to the music being composed and no singers of note either. The comment on the state of music in Italy is difficult to reconcile; while the court continued to model its music on Italian standards and claimed to seek out works of the highest quality, there seems to have endured a preference for Baroque voicing. The lasting preference for high voices perhaps clarifies the obvious prejudice for Portuguese composers, who continued to write roles tailored for the voices of specific castrati at the court in Lisbon.

Whatever the meaning of the growing distaste for Italian works, Portuguese royal investment in the oratorio productions for March 19 and 21 in the middle years of the 1780s is considerable. Existing receipts provide details of the developing economy behind this new period of oratorio

³² *P-Ln*, T.S.C. 166 P. It is not clear if the chorus was also altered or remained SATB.

³³ BRITO, *Opera in Portugal* (see note 1), pp. 64-8.

production. From 1782, annual costs for the two celebrations totaled between 400\$000-600\$000 reis, with the breakdown of associated costs for the new works of 1783 to 1786 given in Table 4.³⁴

Cost/Year ³⁵	1783 (<i>Passione</i>)	1783 (<i>Salome</i>)	1785 (<i>Davidde</i>)	1786 (<i>Ester</i>)
Carriages (for two rehearsals and a performance)	40\$800	37\$600	39\$200	42\$400
Copying of music (including cost of paper, labor, etc.)	33\$900	36\$720	42\$510	51\$290
Printing and binding of libretti	20\$160	32\$550	28\$980	32\$750
Refreshments for musicians at two rehearsals	5\$280	2\$800	2\$940	2\$160
Composition	96\$000 (new)	None	96\$000 (new)	96\$000 (new)
Libretto	6\$400 (copy only)	6\$400 (copy only)	48\$000 (new)	48\$000 (new)
Payment for singers (24\$000/each)	96\$000 (4 singers)	144\$000 (5 singers and same pay for accompanist)	120\$000 (5 singers)	120\$000 (5 singers)
Total	299\$540	260\$070	377\$630	392\$600

Table 4. Breakdown of total costs for newly-composed Portuguese court oratorios (1783, 1785, 1786)

The costs associated with each performance were, in part, due to the commission of new works, which required two rehearsals instead of the single rehearsal typical of occasional works already performed at court. With an extra rehearsal came added costs: carriages to accommodate travel of musicians, including the composer, librettist, and one or more copyists, as well as refreshments for each rehearsal and pay for the server. The creation and performance of new works also brought further financial requirements in the production of new printed libretti and manuscript musical scores and parts, as well as payment to the librettist and composer. The copying of the new music involved a concerted effort, whether for a newly composed or existing work. In 1784, for instance, the court employed seven named persons (including court copyists and some of the orchestra) and an unspecified number of ‘others’ to copy the score and parts of Haydn’s *Il ritorno di Tobia*.³⁶ Perhaps indicating the size of the audiences at such events, receipts indicate that court printer

³⁴ The unit of currency in eighteenth-century Portugal was the *real* (pl. *reis*). Following Brito, \$480 reis was the equivalent of a *cruzado novo*, which was the equivalent of 2s 8 1/2d according to Richard TWISS, *Travels through Portugal and Spain in 1772 and 1773* (London, 1775). These totals pale in comparison to the cost of operatic productions, which could total upward of 4:000\$000 reis; the 1776 production of *Alessandro nell’Indie* for King José I’s birthday, for instance, cost 4:238\$807, and the entire run of operas at Salvaterra that same year totaled 24:469\$191. Nonetheless, the newly-prominent productions for March 19 and 21 from 1783 absorbed the costs of the works typically performed on March 31 for the queen mother’s birthday to her death in 1781, investing a greater sum in the production of oratorios than had occurred in previous years.

³⁵ The documents containing these records (all unnumbered papers) can be found in *P-Lant*, Casa Real, Cx. 3124 (1783), Cx. 3131 (1784), Cx. 3137 (1785), and Cx. 3143 (1786).

³⁶ *P-Lant*, Casa Real, Cx. 3131, Lv. 507 and 508.

Miguel Manescal and binder Joaquim Joze da Veiga provided 313 libretti for the March 19 performance in 1783, 407 libretti in 1784, 403 libretti in 1785, and 401 libretti in 1786. In each year, seven to ten of the libretti for the royal family were specially printed and bound on finer paper at a higher cost. Instrumental forces also grew slightly in this period, ranging from twenty to thirty musicians, although the number of vocalists matched previous tradition (four or five vocalists, typically). Had a series of royal deaths not disrupted royal ceremony from 1786, it seems likely that similar works would have continued to be produced by Portuguese court composers across subsequent years.

Oratorio as Self-Fashioning at the Court of D. Maria I

Judging by the receipts detailed above, the court of Maria I went to some expense to amplify the celebration of the prince heir José and princess Maria Benedita with musical performances that were necessarily sacred in character. The oratorios that resulted seem to betray an intentional (albeit short lived) system of production that is notable, moreover, in that it centers precisely on these heirs, not on the reigning monarchs Maria I and Pedro III. Secondary figures at court—siblings or offspring of the king and queen, even heirs, and sometimes other nobles—occasionally enjoyed musical performances at court for celebratory events such as birthdays and weddings. However, while performances, especially of new works at court for the king and queen’s name day and birthday celebrations can be documented with some regularity in each reign, few other members of the royal family enjoyed the regular annual performance of new works, and the record of such performances is inconsistent at best.³⁷ Importantly, Pinto da Silva conveyed the explicit need of works for March 19 and 21 and relayed that “appropriate” works did not exist at court; following the model of previous reigns, works for these dates would not have been necessary at all. Considering Maria I’s rise to power and the specific representational politics of her reign may give some possible explanation of the oratorios’ emerging importance in the yearly ceremony of Maria I’s court. While it is impossible to surmise the full extent of her intervention in the creation of the oratorios under study here, the correspondence that began this article implies at least some oversight by the queen in terms of content and aesthetic.

Queen Maria I, eldest of four offspring—all daughters—born to José I, acceded the Portuguese throne in 1777 as the kingdom’s first undisputed queen regnant.³⁸ To secure the royal line in spite of

³⁷ See BRITO, *Opera in Portugal* (see note 1), Chronology. The continued celebration of queen mother Mariana Vitória’s birthday on March 31 after José I’s death in 1777, as well as a few documented performances for her birthday during the reign of João V, is a notable exception to what seems a more general rule.

³⁸ For discussion of Maria’s ascent, the anxiety over a queen regnant, and the process of marriages described here, see Luísa V. de Paiva BOLÉO, *D. Maria I: A rainha louca* (Lisbon, Esfera dos Livros, 2009).

the lack of male offspring, José I orchestrated the marriage of Maria I to her uncle, his brother, the Infante D. Pedro (later Pedro III), just days before José I's death in 1777. Later, Maria I's first born son, the crown prince José, was married at age fifteen to his thirty-year-old aunt Maria Benedita, Maria I's sister. These royal maneuverings would prove controversial—Maria's marriage in particular caused a breach with Rome—and futile.³⁹ When the heir apparent José died tragically in 1786, Maria I's second son, João became heir to the throne and went on to rule as prince regent from 1799, though he effectively governed from 1792 when the queen's health rapidly deteriorated. He would ultimately become King of Portugal and Brazil, ruling alongside Carlota Joaquina of Spain, with Maria I's death in 1816.

Maria I was heralded as a particularly pious ruler, known by the royal epithet 'A Piedosa' (The Pious), throughout her reign.⁴⁰ The efforts of her extreme piety were on full display in Lisbon, where, for instance, she fervently promoted veneration of the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus—the most significant artistic project of her reign, the basilica of the Sagrado Coração (Sacred Heart, also known as the *Basílica da Estrela*), remains a celebrated emblem of this devotion.⁴¹ Reports of her devotion also circulated in Italy, where Portuguese diplomats abroad secured her requests, including music, aimed at bolstering the functioning of ecclesiastical institutions associated with the monarchy. As has been demonstrated thoroughly in the scholarly literature, Maria I meant to return the Portuguese court chapel to the rigorous liturgical ceremonies of Rome, as had been the norm during the reign of her grandfather João V, who was also known for his religious fervor, and at whose court Maria was raised. In emulation of her grandfather, she returned the monarchy to a project of symbolic legitimization, which Fernandes argues 'had its greatest public visibility in the context of liturgical-musical ceremony [...] an important tool at the service of the monarchy that came to be amply reinforced during Maria I's reign.'⁴²

The use of sacred dramatic musical forms in the legitimization projects of European monarchs of the early modern period have already been well documented in other contexts, including those specifically lead by women patrons from around the same time.⁴³ The emergence of Lenten tragedy

³⁹ Angela DELAFORCE, *Art and Patronage in Eighteenth-Century Portugal* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 373. The marriage of niece and uncle required permission from Rome, and the papal nuncio Giacinto Acciaiuoli disputed the arrangement. The dispute was resolved after the death of Clement XIII in 1769.

⁴⁰ She was later known as 'A Louca' (The Mad) due to much-noted issues with mental health.

⁴¹ DELAFORCE, *Art and Patronage* (see note 39), pp. 372-6.

⁴² FERNANDES, 'O sistema produtivo da música sacra' (see note 6), pp. 26-7.

⁴³ The study of women's patronage is today extensive. My work is particularly indebted to Kelley HARNES, *Echoes of Women's Voices: Music, Art, and Patronage in Early Modern Florence* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005), which demonstrates that early modern women in positions of power often utilized religious heroines and emblematic women from the bible in artistic productions to project themselves as women whose power and authority derived, ultimately, from God. At the seventeenth-century Medici court, for instance, the Archduchess Maria Magdalena oversaw the production of various virgin martyr spectacles (Saint Agatha and Saint Ursula, for instance) and court poet

in 1780s Naples, for instance, bears a striking resemblance to the tradition of oratorio performance that emerged under Maria I.⁴⁴ Lenten tragedy—a staged form of sacred drama popularized at the Teatro di San Carlo in the late 1780s—developed through the specific support of Maria Carolina, queen of Ferdinand IV, who cultivated the genre as a means of her own ‘myth-making’. In his analysis of Sernicola and Guglielmi’s Lenten tragedy *Debora e Sisara*, DelDonna demonstrates that the representation of Debora, Old Testament prophetess, mapped skillfully onto Maria Carolina’s desired cultural image as a regal leader with ultimate authority in both state and spiritual matters: ‘In no uncertain terms Maria Carolina is Debora and therefore the queen in the real world of contemporary Naples is the equal in leadership, strength, and authority to her spouse, Ferdinand IV. Although this is a profound statement of feminism and female sovereignty, the point is to underline Maria Carolina’s unimpeachable role in governance of the kingdom.’⁴⁵ While the development of Lenten tragedy is unique to the context of late eighteenth-century Naples, and comes just slightly after the period of oratorio composition at the Portuguese court discussed in this article, Maria I showed some interest in the model of Naples from the early 1780s. In the same correspondence with which the Portuguese court received the three oratorios from Rome discussed in the introduction, several serenatas also arrived from Naples.⁴⁶ Maria I also saw the construction and opening of the Teatro de São Carlos, inaugurated in Lisbon in 1793, modeled on its Neapolitan predecessor. Sernicola and Guglielmi’s *Debora e Sisara* would be performed there just three years later, although likely without staging.⁴⁷ In both contexts, Lisbon and Naples, a woman-centered representation of power became a standard for works unprecedented in previous reigns.

Viewed as part of a larger gendered strategy of monarchical power, the oratorios commissioned in the 1780s gain a symbolic dimension relative to Maria I’s self-fashioning. In part, her legitimization seems to have come from the amplification of court musical ceremony surrounding the heir and his future queen, with Maria I’s ability to demonstrate the longevity of the court bolstering her own claim to power. This self-fashioning thus required the symbolic representation of

Andrea Salvadori’s *La Giuditta*. Anthony DelDonna’s chapter on Maria Carolina of Naples, discussed below, provides a strong contemporary model. Recently, the subject of female musical and artistic patronage at the Portuguese court has been studied by Manuela Morilleau de OLIVEIRA, ‘As mulheres da família real portuguesa e a música: Estudo preliminar de 1640 a 1754’ (Master’s thesis, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2011). Although Oliveira’s work does not extend to the period under discussion here, her work supports the hypothesis that queens such as Maria I took part in similar self-representation as those Italian patrons already well studied.

⁴⁴ The best study of Lenten tragedy can be found in Anthony DELDONNA, *Opera, Theatrical Culture and Society in Late Eighteenth-Century Naples* (Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2012).

⁴⁵ DELDONNA, *Opera, Theatrical Culture* (see note 44), p. 160.

⁴⁶ *P-Lant*, Casa Real, Cx. 3505 [unnumbered papers]

⁴⁷ On Lisbon’s Teatro de São Carlos and the period of opera (and oratorio) production in Portugal after 1792, see David CRANMER, ‘Opera in Portugal 1793-1828: A Study in Repertoire and its Spread’ (PhD diss., University of London, 1997). By this point, Debora, read symbolically, would likely not have mapped onto Maria I, but rather Carlota Joaquina, to whom the theater was dedicated.

the heir (and his future court) as a stable extension of the current power structure. In some ways, this project had straightforward outcomes. The oratorios for March 19 based on emblematic male figures, such as young kings, as in *Gioas, Rè di Giuda* or *Il trionfo di Davide*, or pious and dutiful sons, as in Haydn's *Il ritorno di Tobia*, are interpreted easily as emulating the namesake of the celebrations, prince José. Moreover, João Cordeiro da Silva's *Salome, madre dei sette Maccabei* (1783), premiered on March 21, the day of S. Bento, sets the story of the mother of the seven Maccabean martyrs, who watched each of her sons die for their faith in turn. The work can be read as a symbolic tribute to Maria Benedita, the future Queen Consort who would have sought to secure the monarchy with sons of her own.⁴⁸ Other oratorios from this time period are common enough to remain inconspicuous—settings of the Passion, for instance, remain popular across the century. António Leal Moreira's *Ester* (1786), based on the intervention of Queen Esther at the court of Ahasuerus to save the Jewish people of her realm, proves more complicated as a dedicatory work to a young crown prince and problematizes any general understanding of the representational content of the oratorios for March 19 and 21. Yet the subject seems to have been important to Maria I—two of the three oratorios sent from Rome in 1783 told the Old Testament story of Esther.

The work can be understood better within the broader outlines of Maria I's musical patronage. A brief survey of the musical productions for the queen's birthday celebrations on December 17 each year, shown in Table 5, suggests that the queen sought to render an image of her religious, moral, and political virtues in specifically feminine dramatic representation.

Year	Title	Composer	Librettist
1777	<i>La Pace fra la Virtù</i>	David Perez	Anonymous
1778	<i>Il Ritorno di Ulisse in Itaca</i>	David Perez	M. Martelli
1779	<i>Per l'Augustissima...</i>	Marcello Bernardini	Luigi Godard
1780	<i>Edalide e Cambise</i>	João Cordeiro da Silva	Anonymous
1781	<i>Enea in Tracia</i>	Jerónimo Francisco de Lima	Gaetano Martinelli
1782	<i>Penelope</i>	João de Sousa Carvalho	Gaetano Martinelli
1783	<i>Tomiri</i>	João de Sousa Carvalho	Gaetano Martinelli
1784	<i>Esione</i>	Luciano Xavier dos Santos	Gaetano Martinelli
1785	<i>Nettuno ed Egle</i>	João de Sousa Carvalho	Anonymous
1787	<i>Artemisia, Regina di Caria</i>	António Leal Moreira	Gaetano Martinelli
1789	<i>Lindane e Dalmiro</i>	João Cordeiro da Silva	Gaetano Martinelli
1790	<i>Axur, Re di Ormus</i>	Antonio Salieri	Lorenzo da Ponte
1791	<i>Attalo, Re di Bitinia</i>	Ferdinando Robuschi	Antonio Salvi

Table 5. Dramatic musical productions for Maria I's birthday gala (December 17), 1777-91

⁴⁸ KÜHL, 'Os libretos de Gaetano Martinelli' (see note 4), pp. 128-9. Perhaps the work meant to underscore the princess's desire for children.

This table of productions reveals that the court of Maria I patronized new works—many by the same court composers and librettist as the oratorios discussed above—on a wide variety of female characters, including the historical and mythological queens Penelope (1778, 1782), Tomyris (1783), and Artemisia (1787). The creators of *Ester*, Martinelli and Moreira, were also the artistic team behind the creation of *Artemisia*, and in the libretto's opening *argomento*, the librettist makes clear that the story of Artemisia I of Caria, who demonstrated her heroism as a Persian naval commander, represents Maria I: 'The heroism of Artemisia is the principal action of the Drama, an allegorical argument to celebrate the glorious day of Our August Queen Maria I's birth.'⁴⁹ In the serenata *Penelope* (1782), the work recounts the mythological marriage of Queen Penelope to Ulysses, king of Ithaca.⁵⁰ In this version, the libretto dramatizes the emotional distress of Queen Penelope, torn between her loyalties to her father and her new husband, treating in turn the queen's virtuous dedication to the sources of her power. As a new composition by Sousa Carvalho and Martinelli, the work's opening *argomento* clearly positions the queen (Penelope, and by extension, Maria I) as the central figure in the 1782 work. In an earlier production of the same dramatic subject (*Il ritorno di Ulisses in Itaca*, which focuses less on the development of the queen, Penelope), Maria I apparently proposed the addition of the character Minerva, as made clear in a note appended to the libretto: 'As the present production serves to celebrate the glorious birthday of our Most Noble Queen D. Maria I, so by the command of Her Majesty has been added to this drama the character of Minerva, whom always occupied the adventures of Ulysses.'⁵¹ Descending with a machinery of clouds at the end of the work, Minerva praised the noble heritage of Lusitanian heroes and monarchs to the arrival of 'a Heroine, an August Maria / Magnanimous, Benevolent, Illustrious, and Pious.'⁵²

Considering Martinelli and Moreira's *Ester*, the musical depiction of a queen seems an unlikely choice for the prince heir's name day—as opposed to, for instance, the easy sense made of a story like *Il trionfo di Davidde*. As described in the Old Testament, the story of Queen Esther can be summarized briefly as follows: Queen Esther heroically risked her own life by defying proper

⁴⁹ 'O heroísmo da Artemisia está a acção principal do Drama, um argumento allegórico para celebrar o glorioso dia do nascimento da Nossa Augusta Rainha Maria I.' *BR-Rn* (Biblioteca Nacional de Brasil, Rio de Janeiro), Música, A-XV, A786 (libretto). A manuscript score is held at *P-Ln*, C.N. 168/169. Though the work's opening *argomento* clearly identifies the story as that of Artemisia I of Caria, who demonstrated her heroism as a Persian naval commander, Artemisia II of Caria remains a more well-known figure—the devout widow of Mausolus, whose grief at his death caused her to drink his ashes and construct an immense monument in his honor. Given the king's recent death, perhaps both images would have resonated in the overlapping images of Artemisia and Maria I.

⁵⁰ See *P-Ln*, M. 1045 P. (printed libretto).

⁵¹ 'Dovendo servire la presente rappresentazione per festeggiare il glorioso giorno natalizio della nostra Augustissima Regina Donna MARIA I., così per comando della detta Maestà Sua si è aggiunto a questo componimento il Personaggio di Minerva, il quale si occupò sempre nelle avventure di Ulisse...' *P-Ln*, 1034 P.

⁵² 'un Eroina, / Un' Augusta MARIA / MAGNANIMA, CLEMENTE, INCLITA, e PIA.'

submission at the court of her husband, King Ahasuerus, to save the Jewish people in the realm from persecution.⁵³ Esther had entered the court as a member of the king's harem and ultimately gained his favor to be named queen, all the while concealing her Jewish identity, following the advice of her cousin and guardian Mordecai. When Haman, one of the king's advisers, noticed that Mordecai, a Jew, did not properly bow to the king, he devised a plan to persecute Jews in the realm. Learning this, Esther entered the king's inner court, an action beyond her privilege, and invited him to a banquet, where she later revealed Haman's plot. King Ahasuerus condemned Haman to hang on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai, and Esther was heralded as a protector of the Jewish people.

The libretto prepared by Martinelli lacks an overt statement of allegory, as found above in *Artemisia, Regina di Caria*. As observed by Kühn in his study of Martinelli's libretti for the Portuguese court, the figure of Queen Esther (Ester) only appears to play a moderate role in the work, while the narrative focus and the most arias go to Mordecai (Mardocheo).⁵⁴ Mordecai performs three arias—at the beginning and end of the first act and in the middle of the second act; Esther, Ahasuerus (Assuero), and Haman (Aman) each perform two arias over the course of the work, while Harbona (confidant of Ahasuerus, newly added to the drama by Martinelli) performs only one in the beginning of the second act.⁵⁵ While Mordecai receives more musical material in Martinelli and Moreira's oratorio than any other character, it seems useful to consider Esther and Ahasuerus as part of a single conceptual whole—two sides of the same royal coin. Both in the biblical story and in the oratorio, the two rulers are co-dependent; Esther cannot enact the deliverance of the Jewish people without the help of the king, yet the king would never have learned of Haman's plot without the queen's intervention. Musically, Ahasuerus and Esther together occupy a greater space in the oratorio than any other character. They sing four arias between them at the most crucial moments in the work. While Mordecai frames and propels the action of the first part, Esther takes center stage to close the act and transforms across the work into an ennobled and heroic figure. The ultimate impetus and moral underpinning of Esther's transformation is the role of Ahasuerus—the noble, if misled, king who is likewise transformed in his understanding of both love and betrayal.

Ester perhaps served a number of goals at the court of Maria I. First, the noble actions of King Ahasuerus—performed by the *primo uomo* castrato Carlos Reina—suggest that the character served

⁵³ For a comprehensive account and study of the biblical book of Esther, see Carey A. MOORE, *Esther* (Garden City, Doubleday, 1971).

⁵⁴ KÜHL, 'Os libretos de Gaetano Martinelli' (see note 4), p. 128.

⁵⁵ The character Athach, the principle eunuch of the Queen Esther, also appears in the work. As indicated in the libretto, Vincenzo Marini (soprano) sang both the parts of Harbona and Athach.

in the allegorical symbolism of prince José. The famed castrato's roles regularly seemed to overlay images of kingship onto the young prince. In ultimately revealing Esther's transformation in the work, however, the pairing of King Ahasuerus with Queen Esther suggests a deeper moralizing effect and perhaps communicates a lesson on the relationship between the male and female royal counterparts. A queen could rule effectively, even boldly, by the side of a benevolent king.

Conclusion

The tradition of oratorio performance established by Maria I at the Portuguese court in the mid-1780s met an untimely demise in the early 1790s. In the late 1780s, the monarchy had endured a series of crises, including several particularly devastating royal deaths: the death of the king consort Pedro III in 1786 and the death of the prince heir José, as well as his sister, the princess Maria Ana Vitória in 1788. Dark and uneasy years were to follow at court, reviving the anxiety over royal succession that Maria I had worked to control in part by artistically amplifying her image as a powerful feminine figure in a nonetheless predominantly male royal universe.

The oratorio thus remained a vital, often necessary force, in the ongoing negotiation of power at the Portuguese court throughout the late eighteenth century. Patrons such as Maria I considered the genre not only necessary court ceremony within particular seasons of the religious calendar, but specifically sought out and sponsored the creation of new works. Such works can offer insight into the representational politics of their patrons, insofar as their roles in self-fashioning can be surmised. In the case of D. Maria I, the queen's investment in this particular genre may reveal to us that her goals of performance, representation, and patronage aimed at lifting up the image of the pious female ruler—whether a queen or a mother, an Esther or a Salome—as an ultimate expression of appropriateness and power.

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