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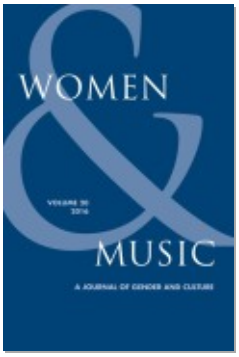

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Robert Kintzel and Charles E. Muntz

Part 1

Vivaldi dominates our view of the musical activities at the Pietà in Venice, but he was not the first composer of significance to be employed there. That honor belongs to Francesco Gasparini (1661–1727), who was engaged as *maestro di coro* in 1701. He expanded the scope of the *ospedale*'s musical activities and hired musicians of distinction, including the virtuoso Vivaldi as *maestro di violino* in September 1703, to instruct its female wards.[1]

In 1701 Gasparini was already an established figure. Born near Lucca, by 1682 he was an organist in Rome, and in 1686 his first opera premiered in Livorno, followed by others for Rome, Genoa, Naples, and Palermo. His first oratorio for the Pietà was *Triumphus misericordiae* of 1701, and his first Venetian opera was staged in 1702. By the time he left the city in 1713, he was Venice's leading composer for the theater, having written twenty-three operas and fifteen oratorios, almost all for the Pietà. In the remaining years of his life, only one more original oratorio, *Anima rediviva* of 1717, and one new opera, *Gli equivoci d'amore e d'innocenza* of 1723, were premiered at Venice.

Gasparini took leave from the Pietà on 23 April 1713, having already determined to go permanently. He resettled in Rome, where he died in 1727. His fame was widely recognized and finds mention in both John Hawkins (*General History of the Science and Practice of Music* [London, 1776]) and Charles Burney, if only in general terms. (The latter, for example, describes some of Gasparini's cantatas as "graceful, elegant, natural, and often pathetic; less learned and uncommon than

1 The Venetian *ospedali* were state institutions for orphaned, illegitimate, or unwanted children. Girls could become virtual permanent residents there. The wards were taught various skills and crafts, but music eventually became the focus of activity, the *ospedali*, particularly the Pietà, functioning almost as conservatories, and their female orchestras were famous throughout Europe.

those of Ales. Scarlatti; but for that reason, more generally pleasing and open to the imitation and pillage of composers gifted with little invention.")[2] His total of about sixty-three operas exceeds Vivaldi's approximate tally of fifty, if not by much by contemporary standards, but his twenty-nine oratorios far surpass in number Vivaldi's own four known works of this type.

Among Gasparini's distinctions while in Venice was the consolidation of the tradition of oratorio at the Pietà (which was immediately continued by Vivaldi in his two known oratorios for the *ospedale*, *Moyses Deus Pharaonis*, RV 643, and *Juditha triumphans*, RV 644, of 1714 and 1716) as its first bona fide *maestro di coro*. His oratorios run the gamut from the Old and New Testaments, including the canonical, the apocryphal, and the hagiographical-historical. They are his most numerous large-scale works after the operas, and he obviously devoted much time and energy to them. Unfortunately, however, as Denis and Elsie Arnold point out regarding the Venetian oratorio in general and his oratorios in particular:

> We know pitifully little of oratorio music from this time. The scores have perished and the librettos are not very informative. . . .
>
> Gasparini's oratorios are an especially sad loss since he was no mean composer, and one surviving oratorio [*S. Maria egittiaca* of 1717] . . . shows him to have been a post–Alessandro Scarlatti figure with a talent for agreeable melody.[3]

Nonetheless, knowledge of the oratorio tradition in Venice did not completely disappear with the end of the Republic in 1797: the Venetian historian Francesco Caffi (1778–1874), for example, wrote about his personal recollections of stories concerning individual *figlie del coro* (i.e., the female musicians), the rivalry of the *ospedali,* and the importance and popularity of the oratorio productions in his unpublished *Notizie per una Storia teatrale* of ca. 1850:

> Oratorii deliziossimi che scritti in lingua latina metricamente, posti in musica dai più renovati musurgi ed accompagnati da pienissima orchestra, esse nel dopo pranzo d'ogni giornata festiva dall'alto de' chiusi lor cori eseguivano a gara nelle stesse lor Chiese dale quali . . . zeppe d'uditori che v'accorean da ogni lato. . . .
>
> Nei tre Ospitali, Incurabili, Mendicanti e Spedaletto, fiorì contemporaneamente la musica; e nella continua lor gara or l'uno or l'altro avea su tre rivali: Trionfò il Pio Luogo La Pietà; sebben vi sedessero musurgi [*sic*] eccellentissimi: Gasparini, Porta, Vivaldi, Sarti, Furlanetti, dalla mediocrità non mai sollevassi nel canto, nei Oratorii, ma largamente vi si rifaceva non poco nel suono: La sua Orchestra era insuperabile.
>
> (They [i.e., the *figlie*] performed the most exquisite oratorios, which were written in metrical Latin, set to music by the most renowned musicians, and accompanied by a full orchestra, after lunch of every feast day from the height of their closed choirs in competition in their own churches, from which . . . throngs of listeners were rushing there from every side. . . .

2 Charles Burney, *A General History of Music* (London, 1789), 635.

3 Denis and Elsie Arnold, *The Oratorio in Venice* (London: Royal Musical Association, 1986), 21–22.

> At the three *ospedali*, Incurabili, Mendicanti, and Derelitti, music flourished at the same time; and in their ongoing competition, now the one and now the other had the advantage over its three rivals: but the charitable institution of the Pietà triumphed; the most outstanding musicians would have been there: Gasparini, Porta, Vivaldi, Sarti, Furlanetti. Any mediocrity in the singing in the oratorios was largely made up for by the instrumental playing: its orchestra was unsurpassed.)[4]

He also provides a structural analysis of oratorios at the Pietà in particular:

> Alla Pietà consisteva l'Oratorio in una azioncella simile al dramma teatrale, ma di sacro argomento, in lingua latina. . . . Eran divisi in due parti: pars prima, pars altera, composte di Recitatvi, Arie, pezzi concertati e Cori. Erano, in una parola, brevi opere sacre.
>
> (At the Pietà, the oratorio was a dramatic piece similar to the theatrical drama but with a sacred subject and in Latin. . . . They were divided into two parts, *pars prima* and *pars altera*, and composed of recitatives, arias, ensembles, and choruses. They were, in a word, short sacred operas.)[5]

As far as the music of these works is concerned, however, there have been largely such general remarks that tend to offer faint praise and little formal analysis. Since our interest here centers on the Pietà and the connection with Vivaldi, and most Venetian works of this type appear to be lost, no attempt is made to conduct any global evaluation *sans* the music. We thus focus on the work with which Vivaldi himself would have been most involved: Gasparini's *Maria Magdalene videns Christum resuscitatum* (Mary Magdalene, a witness to the Resurrected Christ) of 1711, to a text by Vivaldi librettist Giovanni Cendoni, and its Pietà revivals of 1714 and 1717. No music from any of these versions survives.[6]

From the beginning of his tenure, Gasparini enjoyed success with his oratorios. As Eleanor Selfridge-Field notes:

> During the week preceding Christmas of 1701 Gasparini's *Triumphus* [*divinae*] *misericordiae* was reported to have been given every day "by those accomplished *figlie*" whose melody seemed like "the lullabies of the angels at the manger." In July 1702 Gasparini's music for the Feast of the Visitation was cited as having merited "a good measure of applause," as was his [second] oratorio *Prima culpa per redentionem delecta*, which was given at Christmas [of 1702] and repeated on New Year's day, 1703.[7]

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4 Cited in Helen Geyer, *Das venezianische Oratorium, 1750–1820: Einzigartiges Phänomen und musikdramatisches Experiment* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2004–5), 444. English translations in notes 4 and 5 are by Robert Kintzel.

5 Geyer, *Das venezianische Oratorium*, 446.

6 A critical edition of the 1714 version prepared by Robert Kintzel and a parallel English translation by Charles E. Muntz (which constitutes his contribution to the present article) are available at comp.uark.edu/~cmuntz. We thank Francesco Fanna, director of the Istituto Italiano Antonio Vivaldi, for providing a copy of the libretto.

7 Eleanor Selfridge-Field, "Music at the Pietà before Vivaldi," *Early Music* 14, no. 3 (1986): 378, 381. The references to *Triumphus divinae* and the other pieces are from the *Pallade Veneta* (see below).

The appearance and successful reception of his early oratorios for the Pietà can be followed in successive issues of the cultural journal *Pallade Veneta* from the years 1701–3:

[3–10 December 1701]

Alla Pietà [domenica] per la novena si elleggerà da quelle cantanti l'oratorio del Signor Sandrinelli intitolato *Triumphus divinae misericordae*, che con tutto il studio fu posto in musica dal Signor Maestro Gasparini.

(At the Pietà [on Sunday] for the novena, the oratorio of Signor Sandrinelli entitled *Triumphus divinae misericordae*, which was set to music with great skill by Signor Maestro Gasparini, will be taken up by those [female] singers.)

[17–24 December 1701]

Pietà ove da quelle eruditissime figlie viene ogni giorno cantato il già scritto oratorio, che sembra per la loro melodia le nenie degli angeli cantanti nel presepio.

(Pietà, where the already mentioned oratorio [*Triumphus divinae misericordiae*] is sung every day by those most proficient girls, which seems through their melody like the lullabies of the angels in the manger.)[8]

[18–25 March 1702]

Martedí alla Pietà si riciterà il di già scritto oratorio.

(On Tuesday at the Pietà, the already mentioned oratorio [*Triumphus divinae misericordae*] will be performed.)[9]

[1–8 July 1702]

Domenica . . . fu concorso alla Pietà per tal festa con solenne musica di quelle figlie composta dal Signor Gasparini, che nella condizione di maestro di quel coro va sempre meritandosi un ben degno applauso.

(On Sunday . . . there was a crowd at the Pietà for that celebration [the Feast of the Visitation] with solemn music of those girls composed by Signor Gasparini, who in his capacity as *maestro* of the chorus always merits a good round of applause.)[10]

[16–23 December 1702]

L'oratorio intitolato *Prima culpa per redemptionem delecta* [fu] poetizato dal Signor Sandrinelli, posto in musica dal Signor Gasparini ed echeggiato con tutto l'applauso dalle figlie del coro della Pietà.

(The oratorio entitled *Prima culpa per redemptionem delecta* was written by Signor Sandrinelli, set to music by Signor Gasparini, and performed to great applause by the girls of the chorus of the Pietà.)[11]

8 Cited in Eleanor Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta: Writings on Music in Venetian Society 1650–1750* (Venice: Edizioni Fondazione Cini, 1985), 233. The translations for notes 8–12 and 15 are by Robert Kintzel.

9 Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta*, 236.

10 Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta*, 240.

11 Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta*, 248.

[30 December 1702–6 January 1703]

Lunedì venturo le figlie cantanti della Pietà replicheranno il tanto applausibile oratorio poetizato dal Signor Sandrinelli e armonizato del [*sic*] Signor Gasparini.

(Next Monday the girl singers of the Pietà will give another performance of the oratorio [*Prima culpa per redemptionem delecta* or *Jubilum prophetarum ob incarnatione divini verbi*?] written by Signor Sandrinelli and set to music by Signor Gasparini.)[12]

Gasparini's growing reputation at the Pietà, moreover, had already been mentioned in the libretto of his first Venetian opera, *Tiberio, imperatore d'Oriente*, which premiered on 19 February 1702: "the virtue of Sig. Francesco Gasparini, the honored *maestro* of the *donzelle* who sing in the choir of the Pietà, and the suavity of his harmonious notes enriched with various caprices."[13]

The first librettist with whom Gasparini worked was the influential Venetian Bernardo Sandrinelli (16??–17??), who provided him with his first four oratorio texts in the years 1701–4. He produced no fewer than thirteen oratorio texts for Venice between 1683 and 1707, nine of which were for the Pietà; in fact, all the known oratorios performed at that *ospedale* in the period 1683–1704 were set to librettos by Sandrinelli. The earliest of these, a piece on the subject of Mary Magdalene, *La Maddalena che va all'Eremo*, from 1683, is actually for the first recorded oratorio at the Pietà[14]:

1683	?	*La Maddalena che va all'Eremo* (*Oratorio per musica da recitarsi nel Pio Hospitale della Pietà di Venetia*)
1684	?	*Il giuditio universale*
1685	?	*La Maddalena che va all'Eremo*; revival
1687	Spada	*Santa Maria egizziaca penitente*
1694	?	*Altissimum verbi incarnati misterium*
1700	?	*Humana natura reparata*
1701	Gasparini	*Triumphus divinae misericordiae*
1702	Gasparini	*Prima culpa per redentionem delecta*
1703	Gasparini	*Jubilum prophetarum ob incarnatione divini verbi*
1704	Gasparini	*Aeterna sapientia incarnata*.

12 Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta*, 249.

13 Cited in Eleanor Selfridge-Field, *A New Chronology of Venetian Opera and Related Genres* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 251. The translation is hers. For further recent discussion of Vivaldi's oratorios and other dramatic music, see Michael Talbot, *The Sacred Music of Antonio Vivaldi*, Quaderni vivaldiani 8 (Venice: Leo S. Olschki, 1995); Reinhard Strohm, *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi*, Quaderni vivaldiani 13 (Venice: Leo S. Olschki, 2008); and Robert Kintzel's series of articles on Vivaldi's oratorios in the annual *Studi vivaldiani* for 2006, 2007, and 2008.

14 The composer(s) of the music of half of these oratorios remain unknown, but given Spada's effective position as music director at the Pietà during this period, he must be considered a likely candidate.

Sandrinelli's third original text for the Pietà, *Santa Maria egizziaca penitente* of 1687 (on a subject later set by Gasparini in 1717 as *S. Maria Egizziaca* and in 1722 as *La penitenza gloriosa nella conversione di S. Maria Egizziaca*), was an enormous success. It was set by Gasparini's innovative immediate predecessor, *maestro di musica* Giacomo Spada (ca. 1640–1704), who was hired by the Pietà in 1677. The premiere performance of this oratorio is mentioned in an issue of the *Pallade Veneta* for late August 1687 by the editor, Francesco Coli, who was concluding his tour of the *ospedali* by making his first visit to the Pietà:

> Qui pure s'alleva un seminario di verginelle nell'arte della musica e del suono d'ogni più grato instrumento, e vi riescono soggetti cosí vivaci nella voce e manierosi nel canto che recano stupore agl'istessi maestri dell'arte; né credo che si possa altro luogo dar vanto d'havere una muta di strumenti più concertati e più dotti.
>
> In questo luogo pio il dí 28 . . . si cantò un oratorio con tanta sodisfattione del popolo che suppongo necessario doveranno replicarlo più volte, sentendosi la nobiltà e la plebe vaga di satiarne l'udito.
>
> La poesia era del Sig. Bernardo Sandrinelli e la musica del Sig. Don Giacomo Spada. . . . Il titolo dell'operetta era notato cosí: *Santa Maria Egizziaca penitente*.
>
> . . . [R]iuscirono cosí grate nel canto, cosí articolate nella pronuntia, che non restava da bramar di più.
>
> (Here also there is a seminary for young girls to learn the art of music and of playing every agreeable instrument, and it produces performers who are so lively of voice and so accomplished in singing that they stupefy masters of the art; nor do I believe there can be another institution that can boast of having a set of better concerted and more eruditely played instruments.
>
> In this charitable institution on the twenty-eighth . . . an oratorio was sung with such satisfaction to the public that I suppose they will find it necessary to repeat it at other times, the nobility and the commons feeling desirous of satiating themselves with hearing it.
>
> The poetry was by Signor Bernardo Sandrinelli and the music by Signor Don Giacomo Spada. . . . The title of the work was given as follows: *Santa Maria Egizziaca penitente.*
>
> . . . [T]hey [the *figlie*] turned out to be so pleasing in singing and so articulate in pronunciation that no one could ask for more.)[15]

Coli was enthusiastic about the work and also commented on a subsequent performance on 16 September:

> Il dì sedici si replicò il tanto gradito oratorio di *Santa Maria Egizziaca* nella Chiesa dell' ospedale detto della Pietà da quelle virtuosissime fanciulle con tanto grido

15 Cited in Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta*, 183–85. Although the journal makes frequent reference to local musical events and mentions various composers, including Gasparini, it appears that Vivaldi is not specifically named in its pages, despite the fact that works of his are clearly cited.

> d'applauso che non potevano desiderarlo per la propria gloria. Il concorso fa cosí numeroso che, non potendo la chiesa capirne tanti, stavano all'intorno piene le strade e i balconi e fenestre circonvicine colme di populo.
>
> (On the sixteenth the greatly esteemed oratorio of *Santa Maria Egizziaca* was repeated in the church called the Pietà by those most virtuous young girls with such acclaim and applause that they could not desire more for actual glory. The attendance was so great that, the church being unable to accommodate so many, the streets and the balconies and windows nearby were filled to capacity.)[16]

Around 1707 Gasparini turned to a local librettist with whom Vivaldi would also collaborate, Giacomo Cassetti (16??–after 1717), for the oratorio *Sol in tenebris*. For his new oratorio of 1711, *Maria Magdalene*, he chose to work with a writer who was also a Pietà employee, Giovanni Cendoni (1670–1745), the same man who would furnish the text that Vivaldi used for his own first oratorio there, *Moyses Deus Pharaonis*, RV 645, in 1714. Cendoni had recently been hired as finance officer (1710), and the aspiring poet soon established himself as a successful author of texts for productions at the Pietà.[17] There appeared to emerge a constellation of these four individuals, three of whom were under contract to the institution, an on-site "cooperative network" of librettists and composers that might have had a longer-term impact on Vivaldi's career, but it was not to last: Gasparini left Venice in 1713, Cendoni was fired in disgrace in 1716, and Cassetti may have died shortly after 1717.

Nonetheless, Vivaldi stepped into the breach in 1713 and began fulfilling the duties of the absent *maestro di coro* (without ever being formally appointed to that position), most notably by supplying the required oratorios and other sacred works—apparently with some gusto, since the two resulting oratorios, the lost *Moyses* and the surviving *Juditha*, are, respectively, perhaps his largest-scale and most impressive dramatic compositions. Indeed, Vivaldi turned his first full year in this new role, 1714, into the "year of the oratorio" at the Pietà. It began with his first oratorio for Venice, *Moyses* (performance date uncertain, but possibly in the Easter period of March–April). This was soon followed by another oratorio, a revival of Gasparini's Easter oratorio *Maria Magdalene* of 1711, in April–May, which was followed by yet another revival, that of the lost and anonymous *Tobias redux* later that same year. Little attention has been paid to this latter work, and although it is unlikely that Vivaldi composed it, it is at least possible that he revised this version (*editio secunda*). In any event, it was unusual for there to be three "new" oratorio productions at the *ospedale* within a span of months. Vivaldi was probably assisted in these tasks by Pietro Scarpani, the new *maestro di canto* appointed in June 1713, but the extent of his activity as composer is unknown.

The following timeline of events relevant to oratorio production at the Pietà in the period 1710–19/36 encapsulates Vivaldi's role as composer and acting *maestro di coro*:

16 Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta*, 188 (this translation is by Selfridge-Field, as it appears in her article "Music at the Pietà before Vivaldi," 375–76).

17 See Robert Kintzel and Charles E. Muntz, "Vivaldi's Lost Exodus and Epiphany Oratorios, I," *Studi vivaldiani* 6 (2006): 105–58, for details of the works and biographies of Cendoni and Cassetti.

1710	May	Cendoni hired as finance officer
1711	12 April	Gasparini's oratorio *Maria Magdalene* premieres; text by Cendoni
1712	?	Gasparini's oratorio *Moisè liberato dal Nilo*; revival of the 1703 Vienna version
ca. 1712–13	?	Cendoni writes text *Moyses Deus Pharaonis* for Gasparini (a *fede* for the libretto was issued in October 1713), but there is no record of a performance of the work, perhaps never finished
1713	April	Gasparini leaves Venice and Vivaldi takes leave to produce his first opera and oratorio at Vicenza
	June	Pietro Scarpani is hired as *maestro di canto*; he and Vivaldi likely share the responsibilities of the *maestro di coro*
	15 June	Vivaldi's first oratorio *La vittoria navale* premieres at Vicenza
1714	March–April?	Vivaldi's second oratorio *Moyses Deus Pharaonis*, using the Cendoni text, premieres at the Pietà
	April–May	Gasparini's *Maria Magdalene* revived, most likely under Vivaldi's direction (and revision?)
	?	*Tobias redux* composer and librettist unknown, under Vivaldi's direction (and revision or original authorship?)
1715	June	Vivaldi receives bonus for a number of sacred compositions, including a Mass and an oratorio (probably *Moyses*)
1716	March?	Vivaldi's *Juditha triumphans* premieres
	Summer–Fall?	Vivaldi's serenata *Il Mopso* performed at the Pietà?; text by Cendoni
	November	Cendoni dismissed from the Pietà after charge of embezzlement
1717	March	Gasparini's *Anima rediviva* premieres; under Vivaldi's direction?
	April	Gasparini's *Maria Magdalene* revived a second time; directed by Vivaldi? (last known "new" oratorio production at the Pietà until 1736)
1718	January?	Vivaldi leaves Venice to assume position of music director at the court of Mantua
1719	February	C. L. Pietragrua appointed as new *maestro di coro*, holds position until 1726 (no known oratorios)
1726		G. Porta succeeds Pietragrua, holds position until 1737 (only one known oratorio for the Pietà in 1736)

Evidently, Gasparini's *Maria Magdalene* was one of the most successful oratorios staged at the Pietà in the eighteenth century: there was the original version of 1711 and the revivals of 1714 and 1717, and Vivaldi was possibly involved in all three: as music coach to the instrumentalists in 1711 and as music director for the two revivals, which he may have also revised. We have four contemporary references to all three performances. For the initial production of 1711, which can be specifically dated at 12 April, the first Sunday after Easter of that year (5 April), there are two mentions in the *Pallade Veneta* from April and May, the first of which is an announcement of the new work:

> [4–11 April 1711]
>
> Domenica ventura si riciterà alla Pietà da quelle vergini cantanti un oratorio musicale del loro maestro Gasparini, e come che allude alla comparsa fatta dal glorioso redentore alla Madalena in sembianza di giardiniere, cosí può sperarsi che riuscirà fiorito delle più squisite idee melodiche per ricreare e l'orecchio ed il cuore.
>
> (Next Sunday [12 April], those singing virgins will perform at the Pietà a musical oratorio of their teacher Gasparini, and since it makes reference to the appearance by the glorious Redeemer to the Magdalene in the guise of a gardener, it can be hoped that it will be a success, adorned with the most exquisite melodic ideas to delight both the ear and the heart.)[18]

> [25 April-4 May 1711]
>
> Domenica per la terza volta si repplicò la recita del già avvisato oratorio dalle vergini musiche della Pietà, e fu più che mai grande il concorso reso estatico dall'armonia spiritosa di quella tanta varietà d'istromenti.
>
> (On Sunday, for the third time, the aforementioned oratorio was repeated by the musical virgins of the Pietà, and the audience was rendered more ecstatic than ever by the spirited harmony and by the great variety of instruments involved.)[19]

Next is an eyewitness testimony to the success of the 1714 revival, which had repeated performances in the spring of that year, in the form of a handwritten remark on a surviving copy of the libretto held, according to Maria Zorzi, at I-Vnm:

> Ven.ª Quest'oratorio fu ripetuto diverse volte a Ven.ª dalle Vergini dell'ospitale della Pietà con applauso universale e da me infatti con piacere udito l'anno del Sig. 1714 a mesi di Aprile e Maggio. Domenico Zorzi.

18 Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta*, 270. The translations for notes 18 and 19 are by Robert Kintzel.
19 Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta*, 271–72.

(Venice. This oratorio was performed on various occasions in Venice by the virgins of the *ospedale* of the Pietà to universal applause, and, in fact, I myself heard it with pleasure in the months of April and May in the year of our Lord 1714.)[20]

And finally, there is another reference from the *Pallade Veneta*, this time to the second revival of 1717:

[3–10 April 1717]

Martedì doppo pranso le figlie cantanti del coro della Pietà ricitorono con pieno loro applauso e compiuto compiacimento del numeroso uditorio un oratorio del Signore Francesco Gasparini, fu loro maestro, intitolato *Maria Magdalene videns Iesum ressuscitatum*.

(After lunch on Tuesday [6 April], the girl singers of the chorus of the Pietà performed, to the round applause and complete satisfaction of their large audience, an oratorio of Signor Francesco Gasparini, their former teacher, entitled *Maria Magdalene videns Iesum ressuscitatum*.)[21]

The oratorio (and its 1714 revival), moreover, is duly mentioned—albeit with an incorrect indication of the composer's name—in a contemporary literary project by Cendoni's colleague Giovanni degli Agostini (1701–55), librarian at San Francesco della Vigna in Venice, the biobibliographical *Notizie istoriche e critiche intorno alle vite e alle opere degli scrittori viniziani* (also known as the *Istoria degli Scrittori Viniziani*): "*Maria Magdalena, videns Christum resuscitatum. Oratorium musice expositum a Francisco Pasquino. Cantabunt virgines Orphanodochii Pietatis. Venetia, per Bartholomaeum Occhium, 1711 et 1714 in-8.*"[22] Only the first two volumes of this work were published in 1752 and 1754 in Venice, the remaining parts remaining in manuscript at the time of Agostini's death.[23]

Unfortunately, there are few concrete details of Vivaldi's role in the oratorio revivals at the Pietà in the years 1713–17. He most likely acted as musical director for the productions, however, and although it is possible that he simply had the works performed as originally composed, this does not seem consistent with what is known of his personality and his activity as theatrical impresario (a comparison of the printed librettos of *Maria Magdalene* of 1711 and 1714 does reveal, however, that there are only a few minor textual changes/corrections and no apparent

20 Cited in Maria Zorzi, "Saggio di bibliografia sugli oratorii sacri eseguiti a Venezia," *Accademie e Biblioteche d'Italia* 5 (1931): 87. In 1714 Easter Sunday fell on 1 April, which suggests that the initial performance for this revival of *Maria Magdalene* took place in the period 1–8 April (translation by Robert Kintzel).

21 Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta*, 303 (translation by Robert Kintzel). In 1717 Easter Sunday was on 28 March; this particular performance, which was not necessarily the first one of the new run, thus took place two days after the Octave of Easter.

22 The information provided by Agostini is a major source of biographical detail on Cendoni. We learn that his family lived in the Venetian parish of San Martino, where Vivaldi's father, Giovanni Battista, and grandmother Margherita also resided ca. 1671–76 and that he was a student in Padua, where he may have met Giacomo Cassetti, from neighboring Monselice, in the period 1683–88.

23 The reference for the latter, including the entry on *Maria Magdalene*, is MS Venezia, Marc. it. VII 289, pp. 669–70.

structural alterations). That he revised other composers' dramatic works for new productions is clear, for example, from the beginning of his operatic career, with Ristori's *Orlando furioso*, RV 819, to which Vivaldi added his own music in 1714, to the late productions of Hasse's *Demetrio*, RV Anh. 44, and *Alessandro nell'Indie*, RV Anh. 40, in 1737 and his own pasticcio *Rosmira fedele*, RV 731, of 1738 (he even made significant changes to librettos, as with E. Bissari's *La Silvia* in 1721). Would he then have been content merely to reproduce his colleagues' earlier efforts at the *ospedale*, particularly when he was in complete artistic control?

Whether or not his attempt in 1714 to increase the number of oratorio productions at the Pietà beyond the one new oratorio a year under Gasparini—or perhaps the nature of his revivals in particular—was appreciated or even accepted by his superiors is questionable. This was still at a time when, as Selfridge-Field has argued, the instrumental accompaniment of sacred works was considered more ancillary than *de rigeuer*:

> Vivaldi's talents and instincts may have led to the deterioration of his relations with the governors of that institution. His own efforts in the composition of sacred vocal music (psalm settings and motets as well as oratorios) seem in general to date from the first few years following Gasparini's unofficial departure in 1713. Even so, most of the oratorios performed at the Pietà over these next years were revivals of Gasparini's own works.[24]

Indeed, the last two recorded oratorio performances at the Pietà in the period 1717–36[25] were of works not by Vivaldi but by Gasparini: the second revival of *Maria Magdalene* in April 1717, preceded in March by a new Gasparini piece, *Anima rediviva*, as recorded in the respective issue of the *Pallade Veneta:*

> [6–13 March 1717]
>
> Il sudetto martedí poi a ricreazione divota della sudetta Pietà, il doppo pranso si ricitò musicalmente dalle vergini cantanti della Pietà il vaghissimo oratorio del fu Maestro Gasparini intitolato *Anima rediviva*, che riuscí mirabilmente con lode di quelle voci eleganti.
>
> (Then, on the aforementioned Tuesday, for the spiritual recreation of the aforesaid Pietà, the most charming oratorio of the former Maestro Gasparini entitled *Anima rediviva*, was performed after lunch by the singing virgins of the Pietà; it was a marvelous success, with praise for those elegant voices.)[26]

Exactly how a new oratorio by the departed Gasparini came to be put on at this time, which could even be interpreted as a slighting of Vivaldi (who wrote no

24 Selfridge-Field, "Music at the Pietà before Vivaldi," 382.

25 The absence of oratorios in these years is also due to the fact that the Pietà's chapel was then undergoing structural modifications.

26 Selfridge-Field, *Pallade Veneta*, 302 (translation by Robert Kintzel).

more oratorios for the Pietà after this time and chose to leave for Mantua at the beginning of the following year), remains something of a mystery. His two official successors as *maestro di coro*, C. L. Pietragrua (ca. 1665–1726) and Giovanni Porta (ca. 1675–1755), were actually somewhat older men who may have been considered more seasoned—or just more conservative, more tractable—than Vivaldi. Although both composers did write sacred music for the *ospedale*, there were evidently no oratorios by Pietragrua and only one by Porta, *Innocentiæ triumphus seu Genovefa*, in 1736.

In any event, it is clear that the general influence of Gasparini's oratorios at the Pietà was lingering (indeed, Porta had been a student of his predecessor in Venice), and one wonders whether Vivaldi himself played the key role in selecting them for revival or whether he was largely responding to "popular" demand—or that of his superiors. Nor can their specific influence on his own oratorios be overlooked: we recall, for instance, the *Pallade Veneta* account of the original production of *Maria Madalene* in 1711 that makes mention of the effect of the instrumentation and that, at least in this regard, may have been a model for both *Moyses* of 1714 and *Juditha* of 1716: "E fu più che mai grande il concorso reso estatico dall'armonia spiritosa di quella tanta varietà d'istromenti." (The audience was rendered more ecstatic than ever by the spirited harmony and by the great variety of instruments involved.)

Apart from the dating, edition number, and minor spelling differences, the title pages of the librettos of the 1711 version of *Maria Magdalene* and its 1714 revival are essentially identical:

1711 (copies at I-Rsc, D-Sl)	**1714 (copy at I-Vc)**
Maria Magdalene / Videns	MARIA MAGDALENE / VIDENS
Christum / Resuscitatum /	CHRISTVM / RESVSCITATVM /
Oratorium / Musicè expressum /	ORATORIVM / MUSICÈ EXPRESSVM /
à / Francisco Gasparino /	À / FRANCISCO GASPARINO /
Cantabunt Virgines /	CANTABVNT VIRGINES /
Orfanodochii Pietatis //	ORPHANODOCCHI PIETATIS. /
Venetis, MDCCXI /	EDITIO SECVNDA. / VENETIS, MDCCXIV. /
Apud Bartholomaeum Occhium. /	Apud Bartholomeum Occhium. /
Sub Signo Sancti Dominici. //	Sub Signo Sancti Dominici.
Superiorum Permissu. //	Superiorum permissu. //

The cast of "Locutores" (1711) or "Interlocutori" (1714) is the same for both editions and includes eight solo parts (two sung by the same performer) and one choral role for the ensemble. As with the surviving libretto of Vivaldi's *Moyses*

Deus Pharaonis, that for the 1714 production has handwritten entries indicating the names of the performers (on the title page, the name of the author "Joannis Cendoni" has also been entered):

Christus	Silvia (S)	(Elizabeth in *Moyses*; Abra in *Juditha*)
Maria Magdalene	Barbara (S)	(Moses in *Moyses*; Vagaus in *Juditha*)
Martha	Candida (?)	(Aaron in *Moyses*)
S. Petrus	Michielina (A)	(Mary in *Moyses*)
S. Joannes	Polonia (S)	(Pharaoh's Minister in *Moyses*; Holofernes [i.e., Apollonia] in *Juditha*)
Angelus primus	Soprana (A)	(First Wise Man in *Moyses*)
Angelus secundus	Candida (?)	(Aaron in *Moyses*)
Miles	Meneghina (?)	(Second Wise Man in *Moyses*)
Chorus Angelorum	chorus	

The two oratorio productions of 1714 under Vivaldi's supervison, Gasparini's *Maria Magdalene* and his own *Moyses Deus Pharaonis*, had essentially the same cast of soloists (except that the larger-scale *Moyses* has eleven solo parts compared to eight for the former), and three of the principals from both works subsequently took key roles in Vivaldi's *Juditha triumphans* in 1716 (although the title role of Juditha was performed by a "Caterina"). This clearly indicates that there was a considerable degree of continuity among the leading vocalists at the Pietà (it is also likely that the casts of both the 1711 and 1714 productions of *Maria Magdalene* were the same, but that remains to be proved), which is further reflected in the respective ages of the performers, which in 1714 were:

Silvia	(1650–1725)	64
Meneghina	(1659–1730)	55
Barbara	(ca. 1669–1758)	ca. 45
Soprana	(1672–1749)	42
Candida	(1675–1757)	39
Miccielina	(1686–1766)	28
Polonia	(1692–1751)	22

The average age of the soloists was then a little over forty-two—these "singing virgins" were definitely not children—which exceeded that of their diva coun-

terparts on the operatic stage. Based on what we know about the individual performers, we can identify the vocal range of five of the solo roles and extrapolate a likely scoring of sssaaaaa, (female) chorus, orchestra, and continuo for *Maria Magdalene* (compared to sssssaaaaaa, chorus, and orchestra for *Moyses* and ssaaa, chorus, and orchestra for *Juditha*).

The star performer Barbara took the title roles, Moses and Mary Magdalene, in both 1714 oratorio productions at age forty-five. Remarkably enough, she reached the advanced age of ca. eighty-nine, and her life spans the period of the birth and apogee of the oratorio (1687–1717) at the Pietà and the active careers of the "oratorio principals," librettists, and composers there: Sandrinelli, Spada, Gasparini, Cassetti, Cendoni, and Vivaldi. Besides the oratorios of 1711, 1714, and 1716, she appeared in Gasparini's first oratorio for the Pietà, *Triumphus misericordiae*, in 1701 and in his *Jubilum prophetarum ob incarnatione divini verbi* of 1703. Her first recorded performance (at about age seventeen) was in the minor role of Second Angel in the 1687 production of Spada and Sandrinelli's *S. Maria egizziaca*, as indicated in the cast list given in the August issue of the *Pallade Veneta*. In the September issue (cited above), Francesco Coli records his impressions of several *figlie*, including Barbara, after hearing the oratorio for a second time at the *ospedale*:

> So d'averlo accennato a V.S. nella mia [lettera] ultima, ma forse non con quell' espressiva che meritano i passaggi, i trilli, le gorgie, le gratie, e le dolci maniere della mai abastanza lodata Signora Lucretia, Sig. Barbaretta e Sig. Franceschina, anima a spirito delle più grate Sirene di questi mari dell'Adria, instrumentini d'oro su quali Apollo ha roverato tuttle le più alte prerogative della musica.
>
> (I realize that I described this work to Your Excellency in my last [letter], but perhaps not with that eloquence that is merited by the *passaggi*, the *trilli*, the *gorgie*, the graces, and the sweet *maniere* of the never sufficiently praised Signora Lucretia, Signora Barbaretta, and Signora Franceschina, the soul and spirit of the most charming Sirens of this Adriatic Sea, the tiny instruments of gold on which Apollo has established all the highest prerogatives of music.)[27]

A little later and in another context, in November 1687, Coli writes specifically and enthusiastically of the talents of Barbara:

> Tre delle più canore Sirene con grido tale che più non potrà bramarsi anco con l'andare de' secoli. . . . La Sig. Barbaretta traforosella così vivace spiritello, così veloce per il cielo musico, che rapisce con se gl'anime di chi l'ascolta.
>
> (Three of the most able Sirens sang with such acclaim that no more can be desired, even with the passing of the centuries. . . . Signora Barbaretta transforms herself into

27 Selfridge-Field, "Music at the Pietà before Vivaldi," 376. The translations for notes 27 and 28 are hers.

such a vivacious, sweet, gentle spirit, so swiftly conveyed through the musical heavens, that she enraptures the souls of her audience.)[28]

How the remarkable talent of this particular "Mary Magdalene" may have concretely influenced both Gasparini's and Vivaldi's vocal writing may never be known, but her soprano voice must have been a continuing source of inspiration at the Pietà for years.

Part 2

Mary Magdalene is the best-known female figure from the New Testament after the Virgin herself. From the beginnings of Christianity, she has been a crucial and a controversial figure, and in recent years, she has experienced a revival in both scholarly and popular interest.

Besides Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary, the Gospels mention two other Marys associated with Jesus: Mary Cleophas, possibly the sister of Saint Joseph and thus an aunt of Jesus (but also identified with Mary [Maria Jacobae], mother of the apostle James the Lesser), and Mary of Bethany, sister of Lazarus and Martha. The problem is that even from the earliest days, there has been confusion in distinguishing not only these "Marys" but also one or two other unnamed female figures, which is problematic for the interpretation of the figure of Mary Magdalene and thus for her subsequent portrayal in Western art, music, and literature.

In the East, these secondary Marys were considered to be distinct individuals, but in the West, Mary Magdalene was soon confused with Mary of Bethany and the unnamed sinner (understood to be a prostitute) who washed Christ's feet with her hair, which has had permanent consequences for the Western understanding of the Magdalene. This interpretation was sanctioned by Pope Gregory I ca. 595, whereas Origen (ca. 185–ca. 254) from the East "mentions that in his time some supposed 'the woman who was a sinner,' the Magdalen, and Mary of Bethany, to be one and the same person. 'But I,' says he, 'rather think that they were three separate persons.'"[29] Mary Magdalene was thus subject to two misidentifications: with Mary of Bethany and with the anonymous repentant sinner, the archetypal "fallen woman" mentioned in Luke 7:36–50 (this linkage seemed logical, since in the following chapter, Mary Magdalene is said to have been exorcised of seven demons, interpreted by some as the seven vices, particularly, lust).

Not surprisingly, subsequent legend and embellishment contributed to this initial state of uncertainty, which has since found its way into the fabric not only of Christianity but also of all forms of associated artistic expression involving Mary Magdalene, including various musical genres, especially the oratorio.

The Virgin Mother and Mary Magdalene were the objects of widespread veneration in the Middle Ages.

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28 Selfridge-Field, "Music at the Pietà before Vivaldi," 377.

29 S. Baring-Gould, *The Lives of the Saints*, vol. 8, no. 2 (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1914), 508.

> By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the cult of the Virgin was at its height in central Europe. For a century and a half, great cathedrals had been built and dedicated in her honor. The best-loved hymns of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries extolled her virtues and her purity. . . . The figure of the Virgin and the events of her life did not, however, exhaust the religious longing of . . . people for sacred figures with whom they could identify, whose emotions they could feel, and whose attitudes and actions they could imitate. . . . An entirely sexless Virgin was also difficult or impossible for most medieval people to fully identify with.[30]

For her part, Mary Magdalene, seen as a sinner on the same level as ordinary people, became a polar contrast to the unattainable paragon of the Virgin:

> The cult of the Magdalene reached its zenith in Italy, after an earlier peak in France, in the fourteenth century. Her feast day, July 22, was listed in all Roman Catholic missals from the beginning of the thirteenth century; liturgies were composed in her honor, sermons were filled with exempla from her life, and in 1226 an Order of Penitentes de Santa Maria Magdalena was established. . . . On the basis of these scriptural stories, apocryphal and devotional treatises embellished a fleshed-out sacred character whose uninhibited and histrionic gestures provided . . . the perfect foil for the dignified restraint of the Virgin. . . . Mary Magdalene's repentance was presented . . . as the dramatic symbol of the possibility of conversion from great sinfulness to great sanctity; tradition . . . makes [her] a prostitute before her conversion. Mary Magdalene, the sinful woman, the sexual woman, is singularly loved by Christ, and so every sinner can hope for a similar forgiveness and acceptance.[31]

Even earlier, however, and of greater significance as the source of a new type of Western dramatic art distinct from its classical antecedents, was the early medieval liturgical drama that emerged from the interpolation of tropes into canonic sacred ritual. These embellishments, known since the ninth century, could be either sung or spoken and were in common use by the tenth century. Two of the earliest and most popular tropes were associated with the solemnity of Easter and were based on the famous question and admonition addressed to Mary Magdalene by Jesus after the Resurrection in John 20:15 and 17: the *Quem queritis?* ("Woman, why weepest thou? *Whom seekest thou?*") and the *Noli me tangere* ("*Touch me not*; for I am not yet ascended to my Father").

> The most influential and crucial development for the history of drama was the dialogue sung at the beginning of Easter Day Mass, and known from its opening words as the "*Quem queritis?*" trope. The trope consisted of a four sentence dialogue between three people who represented Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, Mary Magdalene and Mary the sister of Lazarus.[32]. . . The purpose of the trope was to recount the New Tes-

30 Margaret Miles, *Images as Insight* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 76, 79–80.

31 Miles, *Images as Insight*, 80–81.

32 Interpretations of which three women (the so-called three Marys) went to the tomb, or even if three were involved, have varied. All four Gospels mention this visitation, but only Mark 16:1 specifies: "And

tament biblical episode in which the three women go to the sepulcher where Jesus was buried and find him gone.[33]

The earliest preserved form of this trope opens with the famous question asked of the three Marys by an angel and their response: "Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, o christicolae? Jesum Nazarenum cruzifixum, o coelicolae." This Easter dialogue became the most popular type of liturgical play, the *Visitatio sepulchri*, an early example with surviving music from Germany being the *In resurrectione Domini* (tenth or eleventh century), with nine sung sections, including those for Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Mary also figures prominently in the Easter Sequence *Victimae Paschali* of ca. 1039:

Dic nobis, Maria, quid vidisti in via?	Tell us, Mary, what did you see on the way?
Sepulcrum Christi viventis, et gloriam	I saw the tomb and the glory of the living and
vidi resurgentis.	resurrected Christ.

From these modest beginnings, the medieval liturgical drama eventually developed into several types of sacred play, variously known as mystery, miracle, and morality plays and usually didactic in purpose, that in the later Middle Ages took on an independent existence outside the liturgy and the church, some even becoming clearly secular in character. The Passion plays performed during Holy Week, in particular, were long among the most important of their kind, and the Latin works were gradually complemented and then largely supplanted by pieces in the vernacular. The famous manuscript collection known as the *Carmina Burana* (ca. 1220–30), for example, includes a Latin Easter play whose most significant scenes, some of which were sung, are those involving the sinner Mary Magdalene, who meets the resurrected Christ and so represents all humanity, and the German *Osterspiel von Muri* of ca. 1250. The figure of Mary Magdalene was thus present from the very inception of a postclassical European dramatic art that bore the seeds not only of staged drama, at first sacred but later secular as well, but also of several dramatic musical forms, especially the oratorio.

Given the popularity of Mary Magdalene from both scripture and legend, it is not surprising that she appears not only in medieval Christian sacred drama but also at the dawn of modern music drama (oratorio and sacred opera). Indeed,

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when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him." Accordingly, the second woman was Maria Jacobae (Mary Cleophas), and the third was Mary Salome, mother of the apostles John and James the Greater. Matthew 28:1 has simply: "In the end of the sabbath . . . came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher." Luke 23:55 mentions only "the women."

33 From the unsigned online article "The Birth of Western European Drama," posted at www.umd.umich.edu/casl/, Department of Humanities/English, University of Michigan–Dearborn, 2008. First accessed in 2012, this particular source is apparently no longer available as of early 2016.

"laments of the Virgin Mary and laments of Mary Magdalene had been central components of the Catholic Church's Passiontide devotions for centuries, prior to being incorporated in the spiritual exercises of the Oratorians in the late sixteenth century. . . . It seems that the Italian Passion-oratorio grew from the fertile seed of the Marian lament."[34] In 1617, for example, the poet G. B. Andreini (1576–1654) wrote a sacred drama entitled *La Maddalena* (later revised as an oratorio) for Mantua, for which several composers contributed music, notably Monteverdi and Salamone Rossi (1570–ca. 1630). A contemporary sacred lament of this type was the *Querimonia di S. Maria Maddalena* of 1631 by D. Mazzochi (formerly described as an "oratorio"). Similar and later examples of this thematic genre include the *Sonetto spirituale* (*Maddalena all'croce*) of 1630 by Frescobaldi; the *Pianto della Maddalena* of the 1640s by Luigi Rossi (ca. 1597–1653); and several written by Charpentier (e.g., the *Dialogus inter Magdalenam et Jesum*) and G. B. Sammartini (the *Pianto di Maddalena al sepolcro* of 1751 and the *Santa Maria Maddalena rappresentante l'anima devotissima verso nostro signore Gesù Cristo nella sua santissima passione* of 1758).

In Germany, Heinrich Schütz set the early Resurrection drama *Die Auferstehung unsers Herren Jesu Christi*, a precursor of the later German Passion-oratorios, for Dresden in 1623; it includes scenes for the three Marys and Mary Magdalene alone. This purely sacred work was followed by two staged dramatic works on the subject of Mary Magdalene that have a quasi-operatic or *Singspiel*-like character: *Die bussfertige Magdalena* (The penitent Magdalene), to a text by August Buchner (1591–1661), performed in Dresden on 22 July 1636, the feast day of the saint and the name day of the Saxon electress Magdalene Sibylle, and a revised version of this piece, the *Theatralische neue Vorstellung von der Maria Magdalena* (New theatrical production of Mary Magdalene), with textual additions by Schütz's colleague at the court of the Duchy of Braunschweig, the poet and scholar J. G. Schottelius (1612–76), performed in Wolfenbüttel on 31 December 1644.[35] Schütz had had a long-standing relationship with this court, and Schottelius was the tutor of the same Duke Anton Ulrich, the novelist and prolific librettist who later became the patron of Georg Caspar Schürmann (ca. 1672–1751), the early promoter of Vivaldi's operatic music in Germany.

Despite its secular setting and occasion, the text of *Die bussfertige Magdalena* was taken from Luke 7, the primary Gospel source of the controversial interpretation of Mary as the notorious sinner. The saint is, however, clearly contrasted with the noble dedicatee, Magdalene Sibylle, who "is praised as a virtuous mother of her country who was never a sinful Magdalene and who is fit to be a model for all who resolve to live a virtuous life" and whom the biblical character actually describes as "ein Muster der Gottsehligkeit und aller Tugend Spiegel" (a model of

34 Victor Crowther, *The Oratorio in Bologna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 87. The biblical source of the lament motif comes from John 20:11: "But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping."

35 Schütz apparently collaborated in writing the music for this version with Duchess Sophie Elisabeth of Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1613–76), a poet and composer; she was the first German woman to have her music published (1651). G. B. Andreini's mother, Isabella (1562–1604), was also active in the theater, both as a writer and as an actress: her *Mirtilla* (Verona, 1588) is the first known pastoral play written by a woman.

piety and mirror of every virtue).[36] "Magdalena's words expressing her tormented repentance, determined conversion, ardent plea for forgiveness, and rapturous rejoicing are reflected in the anguished and then ecstatic rhythm of Buchner's madrigalic verse."[37]

This particular theme and view of Mary Magdalene dominated seventeenth-century Italian dramatic interpretations of the subject, as is evident from the titles of the respective productions staged throughout Italy at the time (all listed in Leone Allacci's *Drammaturgia*, originally of 1666 [Rome] and updated in 1755 [Venice] by Cendoni and colleagues): *Maddalena convertita; Maddalena lasciva, e penitente*; *Maddalena, la peccatrice convertita*; *Maddalena penitente*; *Maddalena pentita*; *Maddalena ravveduta* (repentent), and *Maddalena romita* (the hermit), variously described as *azione dramatica e divota*; *commedia sacra*; *opera spirituale*; *rappresentazione sacra*; and *rappresentazione spirituale*. It is also clear that such works either overlap or intersect the various boundaries of drama and opera and sacred drama and oratorio.

From the mid-seventeenth century onward, there is a long chain of Mary Magdalene oratorios (for Easter/Passiontide or the saint's feast day on 22 July, and in a definite sense lineal descendants of the early forms of liturgical drama) in Italy and other Catholic countries. This chain extends well into the nineteenth century, with, for example, Massenet's *Marie Madeleine* of 1873 for Paris, which was also performed as an opera, blurring the division between the sacred and the secular, as was already the case in the seventeenth century. The theme was also popular in Venice, where the first recorded oratorio at the Pietà was *La Maddalena che va all'Eremo* (1683) and one of the earliest at the Incurabili was *La Maddalena penitente* (1680). In particular, the Venetian Caldara wrote at least three oratorios featuring the Magdalene:

ca. 1698	*Maddalena ai piedi di Cristo* (Venice)
1724	*Morte e sepoltura di Cristo* (Vienna); with Maria Maddalena and Maria di Giacobbe
1730	*La passione di Gesù Cristo, signor nostro* (Vienna); text by Metastasio, with roles for Mary Magdalene, Saint John, and Saint Peter

A survey of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century oratorios including Mary Magdalene as a character reveals both the breadth of treatment of all aspects of the subject, both canonical and legendary, and the popularity of the matter; indeed, few composers of sacred music in the period 1650–1750 did not deal with the topic. We thus see Mary as the devoted follower and confidante of Christ; as

36 The first quote is from Judith Aikon, "Heinrich Schütz's *Die bussfertige Magdalena* (1636)," *Schütz-Jahrbuch* 14 (1992): 14.

37 Aikin, "Heinrich Schütz's *Die bussfertige Magdalena*," 12.

witness to the two cardinal events in his life, the Crucifixion and Resurrection; as annunciator to the apostles; as the lamenting mourner; and as the repentant and "converted" sinner.

1652	anonymous	*La Maddalena lasciva e penitente* (Milan); revised version of Andreini's *La Maddalena* of 1617
1670	anonymous	*La Maddalena penitente* (Bologna)
1680	anonymous	*La Maddalena penitente* (Venice, Incurabili); "da recitarsi il giorno della . . . Santa" (i.e., 22 July)
1683	anonymous	*La Maddalena che va all'Eremo* (Venice, Pietà); text by B. Sandrinelli
1685	A. Gianotti	*La Maddalena pentita* (Modena)
1686	A. Scarlatti	*La Maddalena* (*Il trionfo della grazia overo La conversion di Maddalena*) (Modena); text by Cardinal Pamphili
1686	C. Pallavicino	*Maria Maddalena* (Venice, Incurabili)
1688	C. Giglio	*La Maddalena piangente* (Rome)
1690	G. Bononcini	*La Maddalena à piedi di Cristo* (Modena)
1692	A. Liberati	*L'esiglio di Maddalena* (Rome)
1696	anonymous	*Il trionfo della grazia overo La conversio di Maddelena* (Bologna)
1701	anonymous	*La Maddalena penitente* (Venice, Incurabili)
1704	G. Perti	*La sepoltura di Cristo* (*Maddalena*) (Bologna)
1708	G. F. Handel	*La resurrezione*, HWV 47 (Rome); with roles for Maria Maddalena and Maria Cleofe (performed on Easter Sunday under the musical direction of Corelli)
1711	F. Gasparini	*Maria Magdalene videns Christum resuscitatum* (Venice, Pietà); revived in 1714 and 1717 under Vivaldi's direction
1716	G. H. Stölzel	*Die büssende und versöhnte Magdalene* (Prague)
1723	G. Bononcini	*La conversione di Santa Maria Maddalena* (Bologna)
1725	J. S. Bach	*Easter Oratorio*, BWV 249 (Leipzig); with roles for Maria Magdalena, Maria Jacobi, Petrus, and Johannes
1729	P. Albergati	*Il trionfo della grazia o La conversione di Maddalana* (Bologna); text by Cardinal Pamphili
1736	J. D. Zelenka	*I penitenti al sepolcro del Redentore* (Dresden); text by S. Pallavicino (son of C. Pallavicino, *maestro di coro* at the Incurabili and composer of the 1686 *Maria Maddalena*), with three solo roles: Mary Magdalene, Saint Peter, and King David(!)
1739	G. Saratelli	*Magdalenae conversio* (Venice, Mendicanti); text by Goldoni
1740	B. Galuppi	*Santa Maria Magdalena* (Venice, Mendicanti)

1745	A. Bencini	*La Maddalena al sepolcro* (Rome)
17??	anonymous	*La Maddalena annunziatrice della risurreziuone di nostro Signor Gesù Cristo* (Rome)
1749	N. Jommeli	*La passione di Gesù Cristo* (Rome or Naples); text by Metastasio, with roles for S. Maria Maddalena, S. Giovanni, S. Pietro
1752	F. Bertoni	*In festo S. Mariae Magdalenae* (Venice, Mendicanti)
1758	J. Hasse	*S. Petrus et Sancta Maria Magdalena* (Venice, Incurabili)
1760	G. P. Telemann	*Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu* (Hamburg); with roles for Jesus, Mary, and Thomas
1762	F. Bertoni	*Maria Magdalenae apostola resurrectionis D.N.J.C.* (Venice, Mendicanti)
1763	B. Galuppi	*Maria Magdalena* (Venice, Incurabili)
1769	B. Galuppi	*Tres Mariae ad sepulchrum Christi resurgentes* (Venice, Incurabili)
1774	C. P. E. Bach	*Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu* (Hamburg)

Besides the biblical Marys who served as subjects for Italian oratorio text writers, either alone or in concert (e.g., in I. Prota's *Oratorio* [*Drama sagro . . . in onore di Maria addolorata*] of 1722, with roles for Maria Santissima, Maria Maddalena, and Maria Cleofe; or Galuppi's *Tres Mariae ad sepulchrum Christi resurgentes* of 1769), there were subsequent similarly named and canonized women who became venerated in the Catholic Church and thus also suitable for dramatic treatment in music. To avoid misinterpretations, some distinctions should be made, for instance, in the cases of Maria Egizziaca (Saint Mary of Egypt, ca. 344–ca. 421), a former actress and courtesan in Alexandria who became an ascetic penitent, spending almost fifty years alone in the desert (see, e.g., Gasparini's *La penitenza gloriosa nella conversione di S. Maria Egizziaca* [1722]);[38] and Santa Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi (1566–1607), a member of a wealthy Florentine family who became a Carmelite nun and mystic ascetic (e.g., P. Albergati's *S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi* [1729]).

38 Mary of Egypt is one of three early Christian women who were canonized (the others are Thais of Egypt and Pelagia of Antioch). Legends associated with their lives were popular in the Middle Ages, when they became known as the three "Harlot Saints" because of their alleged lascivious lifestyles and subsequent "conversions" and repentance. Not surprisingly, Mary Magdalene was linked to the trio, all four of whom then served as exemplars of the Christian penitent. Relevant plot themes were frequently cultivated in both music and literature, including operatic treatment in Massenet's *Thaïs* of 1894 and Respighi's *Maria Egizziaca* of 1932. The greater symbolic significance of these "Marian" figures finds its literary apotheosis in Goethe's vision in *Faust, Part II* (1832). In its final scene, there is a Chorus of Penitent Women, from whose ranks three representatives, women of "questionable character," make a final appeal to the Virgin Mary (the Mater Gloriosa, transfigured into the "Eternal Feminine"): the Samaritan Woman (from John 4); the Magna Peccatrix, the unnamed sinner who washed the feet of Christ, traditionally identified with Mary Magdalene; and Maria Aegyptiaca (Maria Egizziaca). A consummate marriage of the arts occurred in 1906, when Mahler incorporated this scene into his Symphony no. 8. Other indications of the contemporary relevance of the figure of Mary Magdalene range from the sacred in Elgar's oratorios *The Apostles*, op. 49 (1903), and *The Kingdom*, op. 51 (1906), to the secular in Puccini's opera *Tosca* (1899), in whose opening scene Cavadarossi is painting a portrait of Mary Magdalene and comparing the beauty of the saintly image with that of his lover Tosca. Current interest in the subject finds expression in Mark Adamo's opera *The Gospel According to Mary Magdalene* of 2013.

Part 3

The musical structure of Gasparini's oratorio *Maria Magdalene videns Christum resuscitatum* is evident from the libretto: it has the standard two-part format and otherwise conforms to the conventions of the genre (although there is a variation in the second number, or "scene," where an aria immediately follows the opening chorus without preceding recitative):

Part I		**Part II**	
(sinfonia)		(sinfonia?)	
I.1	chorus	II.1	recitative and aria
I.2	aria and recitative	II.2	recitative and aria
I.3	recitative and aria	II.3	recitative and aria
I.4	recitative and aria	II.4	recitative and aria
I.5	recitative and aria	II.5	recitative and aria
I.6	recitative and aria	II.6	recitative and aria
I.7	recitative and aria	II.7	recitative and aria
I.8	recitative and aria	II.8	recitative and aria
I.9	recitative and chorus with solo	II.9	recitative and aria
I.10	recitative and aria	II.10	recitative and aria
		II.11	recitative and aria
		II.12	recitative and aria
		II.13	chorus.

The piece opens and concludes with a chorus, and there is one chorus with solo at I.9, but there are no ensembles, the other numbers consisting of twenty arias (thus twenty-three closed numbers) distributed among the eight characters—who do not appear consecutively, except for Christ at II.9 and II.10—as follows:

Catalog of arias

I.2	Mary Magdalene	*Nox infida, cur non fugis?*
I.3	Martha	*Qui voluit, qui potuit*
I.4	Soldier	*Tu dum fles, o plorans vaga*
I.5	Mary Magdalene	*Mi Deus sine te*
I.6	Soldier	*Novus miles cœlestis curiæ*
I.7	Mary Magdalene	*Redde Jesum delitam mei cordis*
I.8	Saint John	*Rumpo moras, et celeripede*
I.10	Saint Peter	*Tu fugisti reliquisti*
II.1	First Angel	*Ite felices*
II.2	Christ	*Quæ nunquam refulsit*
II.3	Saint John	*Sacrum Corpus, carum pignus*
II.4	Mary Magdalene	*Ubi es mi Deus?*
II.5	Saint Peter	*Ad fratres curro*
II.6	Saint John	*Crede fide, corde quæro*
II.7	Soldier	*O quam gratum*
II.8	Martha	*Veni, et videbis*
II.9	Christ	*Postulare quem desperas*
II.10	Christ	*Noli me tangere*
II.11	Mary Magdalene	*Te videre amor meus*
II.12	Second Angel	*Audite mortales*

The title figure, Mary Magdalene, has five arias; Christ, Saint John, and the noncanonical figure of the Soldier get three each; Martha and Saint Peter have two each; and the minor characters of the First and Second Angels have only one each, although the former also has the solo *Indignata quem quæris* embedded in the chorus at I.9. Of the three choruses, the two in Part I, at I.1 and I.9, have the same text, *Sat datum lachrimus*, although, given the arrangement of the iteration, with the A section separated from the B section by recitative followed by a solo from a chorus member instead of the recapitulation of the A section, it is doubtful that the music was the same in both cases; while the third chorus, *Exultate, jubilate cœlestes chori* at II.13, ends the work.

In two places, Cendoni actually provides "stage directions": the first section of the chorus at I.8 has the direction *submissa voce* (with subdued voice), whereas the second section has *altiori voce* (with raised voice), and Martha's recitative *Certe concentus quidam* at I.9 (where she hears a soothing melody coming from the empty tomb) has the indication *pulsentur dulce cithara* (lyres [lutes] play sweetly) for the accompaniment.

The focus of Cendoni's Easter oratorio is clearly Mary Magdalene, who emerged in European artistic treatments of the Passion story as perhaps the principal character after Christ himself. As befits the centrality and seriousness of the subject, his interpretation is essentially an orthodox and canonical one, concentrating on the grieving Mary who becomes witness to the resurrected Christ (rather than on her role as annunciator to the apostles), but he does deviate from the traditional account(s) in certain details.

In comparative terms, *Maria Magdalene* is a smaller-scale work than either Cendoni's *Moyses* or Cassetti's *Juditha* (cf., e.g., the greater use of the chorus in the oratorios by Vivaldi). This is, in part, determined by the relative subject matter. The language employed for *Maria Magdalene*, moreover, is simpler and more direct, which is an appropriate style for a straightforward account of perhaps the most crucial event in the New Testament, the Resurrection and the revelation of that fact to the apostles, than that in *Moyses.* Unlike *Moyses*, furthermore, *Maria Magdalene* is not an allegorical treatment of a canonical incident. In both oratorios, however, Cendoni makes use of a similar device in the form of a nonscriptural character who plays an important role in the denouement, the Minister of Pharaoh in the former and the Soldier in the latter.

Cendoni draws on the scriptural accounts of the Resurrection: the event is recounted in all four Gospels, but he relies primarily on John 20:1–18, which describes the role of Mary Magdalene in the greatest detail. John's version includes Jesus, Mary, the apostles Peter and John (the latter not named but referred to as "the apostle Jesus loved"), and the two angels, all of whom appear in Cendoni's adaptation (this chapter also relates the encounter between Mary and Jesus, whom she at first takes for a gardener, in which he utters the *Noli me tangere*). In what might be considered a bold move, however, he adds to this crucial canonical episode Mary's "sister" Martha and, as a complete invention, a soldier, a guardian of the tomb, who plays a key role in confronting the grieving Mary.

After an opening chorus of angels in which a mourning humanity is admonished to rejoice now that the sacrifice of the Son of God has redeemed it, the focus of the drama shifts to Mary Magdalene, who, as was the case in medieval dramatic treatments, represents all humanity and whose grief at the loss of Jesus is inconsolable.

As the distraught Mary is on her way to the burial site, her sister Martha tries to comfort her. She encounters a soldier at the tomb who asks her the reason for her distress. After explaining that she is seeking her Lord, he announces that he too has become a follower of Christ. After she finds the sepulcher empty, however, she accuses him of stealing the body. Martha hears dulcet tones from a chorus of an-

gels, one of whom tells Mary that her Lord has risen to enter his kingdom. In her agitated emotional state, however, she does not know whether to believe this. The apostles Peter and John arrive and ask why she is with a strange armed man; Martha points to a wondrous melody coming from the tomb, to which both men run.

In Part II, Peter confirms for himself that the body is gone. An angel informs those present that Jesus is now risen and instructs them to go and spread the news of his triumph. As the two apostles are about to leave, Christ himself appears and tells the group that they should no longer grieve but rather rejoice at the new light that fills the world. John wonders if this is truly their resurrected Lord, as does Mary, who, despite her doubts, begins to feel the burden of her sorrow lifted. Inspired by the holy message, John, Peter, and the soldier rush off to Jerusalem to bring the news to their brethren, and Jesus asks Mary why she does not join them. Still torn about whether this figure is Christ or not, she tells Martha to leave after deciding to remain at the tomb and mourn until she determines where he is. Now alone with Mary, Jesus confronts her about her doubt and anguish. She finally realizes that this is indeed Christ and reaches to embrace him, at which he utters the *Noli me tangere* and departs. Once more, Mary is seized by grief, having found Jesus again, only to lose him at the same time. An angel appears, offering the consolation that she and all souls will be reunited with Christ in due course, and a concluding angelic chorus admonishes mortals anew to rejoice now that the sacrifice of the Cross has redeemed them.

The message of this Easter oratorio is as clear as it is fundamental to Christianity: the redemption of humanity through the sacrifice and resurrection of the man Jesus as Christ the Lord. Cendoni emphasizes the role of Mary Magdalene as a humble and fallible representative of all humanity, racked as she is with doubt and despair. She is, nonetheless, accorded the special status by scripture of being the first person to be alone with the risen Jesus, whose short time on Earth has provided the example that those who are filled with faith and love may follow and attain salvation.

What is striking about Cendoni's interpretation of the scriptural account is his use of language expressing the spiritual love between man and God, between Mary and Jesus, in terms more suggestive of earthly love. Whether or not the Old Testament Song of Solomon served him as a model may never be known, but the similarities in diction, tone, and feeling are unmistakable. Compare, for example, the following from the Song:

5:6 I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

5:8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

5:9 Why is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

Mary's sentiments at being parted from her Lord, her "beloved," are expressed in all three of her Part I arias (I.2, I.5, and I.7), in which she experiences the same anguish and desperation at being separated from a lover as the woman in the Song:

Sic amantem	Shades of night,
umbris ludis?	do you mock this lover?
Sic ancillam	Do you destroy
mora perdis?	this servant by your delay?
Ne me sinas diu plorare.	Do not allow me to wail for long.
Mi Deus sine te	My God, to live without you
est vivere ingratum.	is to live without pleasure.
Cor repete ex me,	Reclaim my heart, and
et reddes beatum.	you will restore it to happiness.
Redde Jesum delitiam mei cordis,	Return, Jesus, the delight of my heart,
te precor, exoro:	I pray you, I exhort you:
redde carius	return that secret love
mihi furtum, et gemmis, et auro.	dearer to me than both jewels and gold.
.....	.....
odi vitam	I hate life, unite me
esto jungas meo dulci thesauro.	with my dear treasure.

This style is also employed with the other characters of the drama, even if the feeling is expressed less intensely, for example:

First Angel (**recitative II.1**)

Si eum cupitis videre	If you lovers wish to see him,
anime Christi amantes:	the spirit of Christ, who recently
qui nuper mortuus est, nunc regnat vivus.	has died, who now reigns alive.

Saint Peter (**recitative II.6**)

Et dubitas infide? Ipse jam dixit.	And do you doubt faithlessly, now that he has spoken?

Saint John (**aria II.6**)

Credo fide, corde quæro;	I believe faithfully, I seek with my heart.
sine Christo angor dolore.	Without Christ I am stricken with grief.
Eum videre tandem spero,	I hope to see him at last
et satiari dulci amore.	and to be filled with sweet love.

The Song of Solomon has been the object of a long tradition of exegetical efforts to interpret it on an allegorical level as, for instance, a treatment of the love between God and the people of Israel for Jews or between Christ and the church for Christians. Recently, however, the tendency has been to see it for what it appears to be, a love song, a celebration of the love, both emotional and physical, between a man and a woman—a love that is a gift from God but not a direct manifestation of any divine love. Themes from the Song have been set by several composers, including Palestrina in his 1584 cycle of motets "ex Canticis canticorum" and Bach in his cantata *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, BWV 140, of 1731, whose anonymous librettist combined verses from Philipp Nicolai's traditional Lutheran hymn of the same title with images from the Song, portraying in allegorical terms the marriage of Christ and the Soul. The "amatory" language used is similar to that employed in 1711 by Cendoni, and these duets can be described as love songs between a bride and groom (translations by R. Kintzel):

Duet I

Seele	Wenn kömmst du, mein Heil?	Soul	When are you coming, my salvation?
Jesus	Ich komm, dein Teil.	Jesus	I, your destiny, am coming.
Seele	Ich warte mit brennendem Öle.	Soul	I wait with burning oil lamp.
Seele	Eröffne den Saal.	Soul	Open up the hall.
Jesus	Ich öffne den Saal	Jesus	I am opening the hall
Beide	zum himmlischen Mahl.	both	to the heavenly feast.
Seele	Komm, Jesu!	Soul	Come, Jesus!
Jesus	Komm, liebliche Seele!	Jesus	Come, dear Soul!

Duet II

Seele	Mein Freund ist mein,	Soul	My friend is mine,
Jesus	und ich bin sein.	Jesus	and I am hers.
Beide	Die Liebe soll nichts scheiden.	both	Nothing shall part love.
Seele	Ich will mit dir in Himmels Rosen weiden.	Soul	I want to revel with you in Heaven's roses.
Jesus	Du sollst mit mir in Himmels Rosen weiden.	Jesus	You shall revel with me in Heaven's roses.
Beide	Da Freude die Fülle, da Wonne wird sein.	both	Joy in plenty and bliss will be there.

This same tone and language are equally explicit in the recitative of Jesus:

Recitative II

So geh herein zu mir,	So come here to me,
du mir erwählte Braut!	you my chosen bride!
Ich habe mich mit dir	I have betrothed myself
von Ewigkeit vertraut.	to you from eternity.
Dich will ich auf mein Herz,	I will set you upon my heart,
auf meinem Arm gleich	upon my arm,
wie ein Siegel setzen	like a seal
und dein betrübtes Aug ergötzen.	and delight your saddened eye.
Vergiss, o Seele, nun	Forget now, O Soul,
die Angst, den Schmerz,	the fear, the pain,
den du erdulden müssen!	that you had to endure.
Auf mein Linken sollst du ruhn	You shall rest on my left arm,
und meine Recht soll dich küssen.	and my right shall caress you.

The Cendoni-Gasparini oratorio, in contrast, has no duets; thus, the primary interaction between Jesus and Mary takes the form of dialogue in recitative, but even in Mary's direct address to him, analogous diction and sentiment are maintained (recitative and aria at II.II):

Mary

Quo fugisti amor meus, mi Deus, mi Jesu,	Where have you fled, my love, my God, my Jesus,
tam cito erumpis gaudia?	Do you destroy my joy so quickly?
Sola spes, solus dolor!	There is only hope, only grief!
Qui me afflictam solatur	Who consoles me, stricken
in discrimine tanto?	by such turmoil?
Te videre amor meus	My love, to see you,
quam lætum, suave,	how happy, sweet,
o quam læta sors.	Oh, how happy a chance.
Te perdere mi Deus	To lose you, my God,
quam triste, quam grave,	how sad, how dreadful,
quam perfida mors.	how treacherous is death.

The oratorio *Maria Magdalene videns Christum resuscitatum* is possibly the single musical work of another composer with which Vivaldi was most intensely involved, and that for the longest period of time. Apart from its artistic merits, its popularity at the Pietà is understandable in view of the central role played by Mary Magdalene. For the same reason, Vivaldi's own *Juditha* likely enjoyed similar success there, but details of its reception history are unfortunately lacking. Nonetheless, both works and the numerous similar ones cited clearly reflect the central significance of female religious figures in contemporary dramatic musical art.

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