

The Music Chapel of Empress Eleonora II. Source-related Difficulties in Researching the History of an Italian-dominated Institution in Vienna (1657-1686)¹

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After the death of her husband Ferdinand III in 1657, Eleonora Gonzaga founded her own music chapel (Kapelle) of 25 musicians, most of whom were from Italy. With her musicians, the widow became a focus of cultural life at the Viennese court until her death in 1686. The fact that Eleonora's court archives have been lost presents some difficulties in reconstructing the history of her Kapelle. Some of the few remaining sources include an undated list of names and salaries of people engaged at the court, as well as a collection of decrees. Due to the scarcity of primary sources, research into Eleonora's court music must turn to secondary sources such as letters or envoy reports. To some degree, the musicians can be derived from the court accommodation records (Hofquartierbücher), and various parish registers provide biographical details. Finally, it is often necessary to draw on materials from Italian archives.

Introduction

Eleonora II of the ducal family Gonzaga of Mantua was Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III's third wife. After her husband's death on 2nd April 1657 a court was established for her. The foundation of a court for a widowed empress was usual in those days and the legal prerequisites for this had already been established in the marriage contract. The remaining empress required a complete court for the entire period of her widowhood in order to obtain an appropriate provision until the end of her days. Her court was, however, formally subordinate to that of the ruling emperor.²

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2. Michael Pölzl, "Kaiserin-Witwen in Konkurrenz zur regierenden Kaiserin am Wiener Hof 1637-1750. Probleme der Forschung" ("Empress widows in competition with the reigning empress at the Viennese Court from 1637 to 1750. Problems of research,") *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* 67, no. 2 (2012): 172-175.

The widowed empress's court comprised a *Musikkapelle* (music chapel). With her musicians, Eleonora, due to her fine sense of artistry, became a focus of cultural life at the Viennese court from 1657 until her death in 1686. Her Kapellmeisters (musical directors) were chronologically (1) Giuseppe Tricarico (1657-1662), (2) Pietro Andrea Ziani (1662-1669), (3) Antonio Draghi (1669-1681) and (4) Giovanni Battista Pederzuoli (1682-1686). She supported the great musical passion of her step son, the ruling emperor Leopold I, by regularly organizing concerts and performances of musical dramatic works and arranging religious festivals with ceremonious music. Eleonora had a significant position in the history of the oratorio. It is thanks to her that this then still young sacred genre from Rome was established in Vienna. The exceptionally pious widow regularly had oratorios performed in her private chapel until her death. Her musicians' oratorio repertory included works either created at the imperial court or imported from Italy. Especially in the early years of oratorio performance in Vienna, complete compositions were imported from Rome at Eleonora's behest.

Since Empress Eleonora's archives of her court including account books were lost, it is difficult to reconstruct the history of her *Musikkapelle*.³ Some of the few remaining sources providing insight into the Empress's court include several lists of the court and a collection of decrees, in which letters of passage and testimonials for individual members of the *Kapelle* are contained. Due to the unfortunate condition of source material we are required to look at secondary sources such as letters or envoy reports.

Sources and Historical Reconstruction

To some degree, the members of the *Kapelle* can be derived from the official death records of the city of Vienna and from the court accommodation books (Hofquartierbücher), in which various accommodation requests of court servants are recorded. Church registers supply us with biographical details. Finally, it is often necessary to look at material from Italian archives, for example to determine the moment of commencement of one's duties. In the following I would like to point out how difficult our source material situation is and at the same time sketch the history of the *Kapelle*.

3. Herbert Seifert, "Die Musiker der beiden Kaiserinnen Eleonora Gonzaga" ("The musicians of the two Empresses Eleonora Gonzaga,") in *Texte zur Musikdramatik im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Aufsätze und Vorträge (Texts on dramatic music in the 17th and 18th centuries. Essays and lectures)*, ed. Matthias J. Pernerstorfer (Vienna: Hollitzer, 2014), 633.

The lists of the court that have been passed on date back to the 1670s and 1680s. In these with just one exception only the number of musicians and the sum of their annual salary is recorded. According to that Eleonora's *Musikkapelle* was about half the size of the emperor's court music. It had a total of 25 members, 1 Kapellmeister, 20 musicians, 1 copyist, 1 instrument maintainer, 1 spenditore and 1 bellows treader. Its total annual income amounted to 21.452 florin.⁴

The above-mentioned exception is a list of the Austrian State Archives, in which the names and quarterly salaries of 16 members of the *Musikkapelle* are mentioned.⁵ This source is undated, its creation can however be limited to a narrow period of time, since both the musician and copyist Alessandro Riotti as well as the court preacher Abate Filippo Maria Bonini are listed. We know from the report of an Italian envoy that the Italian Bonini arrived at the Viennese court on 20th July 1670 to take service with the Empress,⁶ and the death records of the city of Vienna testify that Riotti died on 27th March 1672 as one of Eleonora's servants in Vienna.⁷

As can be gathered from Eleonora's court's list, her *Kapelle* consisted predominantly of Italians. This is confirmed by the mentioned collection of decrees, in which there is a document that is connected to the foundation of the *Kapelle*. This is a letter of passage issued by the empress on 8th August 1657 for her Kapellmeister Giuseppe Tricarico hired in Italy and other musicians not mentioned by name for their journey from Italy to Vienna. In it each reader of the document is summoned to grant Tricarico and the other musicians along with servants, horses and luggage safe travel on their journey and to be of assistance when necessary.⁸

From the court accommodation books we learn that Tricarico arrived in Vienna with a total of eight musicians in the autumn of 1657. Upon their arrival Eleonora's stepson Leopold ordered per decree the accommodation of the musicians in bourgeois housing.⁹ The names of the musicians were not mentioned herein either. Only the court accommodation book of 1658 shows

4. Marko Deisinger, "Mäzenin und Künstlerin. Studien zu den Kunstbestrebungen der Kaiserin Eleonora II. am Wiener Hof (1651-1686)" ("Patron and artist. Studies on the art aspirations of Empress Eleonora II. at the Viennese Court (1651-1686),") *Acta Musicologica* 85, no. 1 (2013): 46.

5. Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Ältere Zeremonialakten 3, no. 18.

6. Deisinger, "Mäzenin und Künstlerin ...," 54.

7. Seifert, "Die Musiker der beiden Kaiserinnen ...," 659.

8. Marko Deisinger, "Giuseppe Tricarico – Ein Kapellmeister auf Reisen. Von Rom über Ferrara nach Wien" ("Giuseppe Tricarico - A Kapellmeister traveling from Rome via Ferrara to Vienna,") *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 48 (2006): 382-383.

9. Vienna, Hofkammerarchiv, Quartierbuch 54, fol. 6 and 11r.

the names of some musicians of Eleonora's *Kapelle*, who probably arrived with Tricarico because they are not previously provable to have been at the Viennese court. These are the Italian Alessandro Riotti and Jacomo Venturini.¹⁰ Other early members of the *Kapelle* that follow from the court accommodation books are Carlo Seliprandi, Georg Christoph Perger and Johann Caspar Molitor, all of whom had already been actively working for the Habsburg Family in Vienna before Eleonora's *Kapelle* had been founded.¹¹

Another early member of the *Kapelle* was Antonio Draghi born in Rimini, who had a perfect career in Vienna. A large number of remaining compositions and libretti bespeak of his career; he began as a singer on duty to Empress Eleonora, became a Kapellmeister in her service all the way to conductor of emperor Leopold's court music. When Draghi came to Vienna, where he stayed until the end of his days, is apparent from an Italian source. This concerns an entry into an accounting book of Draghi's last Italian employer, of the *Accademia della Morte* in Ferrara.¹² According to which Draghi received 23.15 lire at the end of February 1658 for services rendered by order of this music institution in the previous month. Furthermore the entry shows that Draghi was about to move to Vienna and that he received 40 lire for his colleague Antonio Tricarico, who was meanwhile living in Vienna and to whom the *Accademia della Morte* still owed the sum.¹³

10. Ibid., fol. 32r and 39v.

11. Seifert, "Die Musiker der beiden Kaiserinnen ...," 653, 658 and 660. Johann Caspar Molitor also served as regens chori at Maria am Gestade in Vienna from 1659 to 1676, see Peter Erhart, "Die Kirchenmusik an Maria am Gestade in Wien bis 1783. Nach den Wiener und Passauer Dokumenten (Teil 1)" ("The church music at Maria am Gestade in Vienna until 1783. According to the Vienna and Passau documents (Part 1),") *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* 67, no. 1 (2012): 14-19.

12. Many invoices are published in Sergio Monaldini, "Gli anni ferraresi di Antonio Draghi" ("Antonio Draghi's years in Ferrara,") in "*Quel novo Cario, quel divin Orfeo.*" *Antonio Draghi da Rimini a Vienna* ("That novo Cario, that divine Orpheus." *Antonio Draghi from Rimini to Vienna*), ed. Emilio Sala and Davide Daolmi (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2000): 29-34. An unpublished invoice signed by Draghi, dated July 24, 1655, is located in Ferrara, Archivio Storico Diocesano, Fondo Arciconfraternita della Morte ed Orazione, Filze di Recapiti 1647-1656, busta 5. Draghi was employed at the *Accademia della Morte* from 1652 to 1658. In this period he also sang in Padua, Venice and Bergamo. For his engagements at Santa Maria Maggiore of Bergamo in 1657 see Paola Palermo and Giulia Pecis Cavagna, *La cappella musicale di Santa Maria Maggiore a Bergamo dal 1657 al 1810* (*The musical chapel of Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo 1657-1810*) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 346.

13. Marko Deisinger, "Auf den Spuren des Violinisten Antonio Tricarico: Gallipoli – Rom – Ferrara – Wien" ("In the trail of the violinist Antonio Tricarico: Gallipoli - Rome - Ferrara - Vienna,") *Wolfenbütteler Barock-Nachrichten* 40, no. 2 (2013): 171.

The violinist Antonio Tricarico, who was originally from Gallipoli, was Giuseppe Tricarico's brother and also worked for the empress for several years. This can be determined from a testimonial that the empress Eleonora had issued on 28th September 1662 for the two brothers, who were returning to Italy.¹⁴ The Venetian Pietro Andrea Ziani became Eleonora's new Kapellmeister. We obtain information about his recruitment from a letter that the emperor Leopold wrote to his ambassador in Venice, Count Humprecht Johann Czernin on 1st September 1662. A report of the resident of Mantua Francesco Tinti in Venice testifies to the fact that Ziani left his home town Venice at the beginning of October 1662 in order to work for the Empress;¹⁵ from a source in Innsbruck we learn that he travelled to Vienna over Hall in Tyrol upon the Danube.¹⁶ The first sign of his presence at the court can be found in the cardinal Ernst Adalbert of Harrach's daily notes, in which there is talk of a rehearsal with Eleonora's new Kapellmeister which took place on 31st October 1662.¹⁷

The exact date that Giovanni Battista Pederzuoli took up his duties in Eleonora's *Kapelle*, which he directed from 1682 until its end in the year 1686, can also be determined with the help of foreign archive material. Pederzuoli, who was born in Chiari, worked for the Basilica Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo as organist and Kapellmeister just before his services in Vienna began. From a request brought forth on 4th February 1665, in which he asked his Italian employer for dismissal, it follows that the Habsburger had already requested his services in October 1664, which he had not yet been able to fulfil since he was still obliged by contract to work in Bergamo.¹⁸ In Vienna Pederzuoli initially took over the position of Eleonora's organist, which Carlo Cappellini had previously held. As can be seen from the remaining account books of the emperor's court, Cappellini had changed to Leopold's *Kapelle*, where he obtained a very high salary.¹⁹

Even if in the emperor's account books only musicians who were paid by the emperor appear, we can nevertheless obtain revealing information about

14. Ibid., 173.

15. Marko Deisinger, "Ein Leben zwischen Musik, höfischem Zeremoniell und Politik. Zur Biographie und Kompositionstechnik Giuseppe Tricaricos" ("A life between music, court etiquette and politics. On the biography and compositional technique of Giuseppe Tricarico,") *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 55 (2009): 43.

16. Seifert, "Die Musiker der beiden Kaiserinnen ...," 663.

17. Deisinger, "Mäzenin und Künstlerin ...," 49.

18. Palermo and Pecis Cavagna, *La cappella musicale di Santa Maria Maggiore ...*, 9697 and 445-446.

19. Paul Nettl, "Zur Geschichte der kaiserlichen Hofmusikkapelle von 1636 bis 1680 (III)" ("On the history of the Imperial Court Music Orchestra from 1636 to 1680 (III),") *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 19 (1932): 37.

individual musicians of Eleonora's *Kapelle*. This is for example the case when one of the Empress's musicians changed to the emperor's *Kapelle*. Here one must mention besides Cappellini above all Antonio Draghi, who at the beginning of 1682 was taken over as Kapellmeister by Leopold. Moreover the emperor's account books occasionally record exceptional expenditure that Leopold spent on gifts for his step mother's musicians for services rendered solely to him; for example, both her Kapellmeister, on 10th November 1660 and her organist, on 21st June 1664 each received a gold necklace.²⁰ Neither musician was mentioned by name. Their identities, however, can be deduced from the historical context: Giuseppe Tricarico in the first case, and Carlo Cappellini in the second.

Biographical details of Eleonora's musicians can be gathered from church registers. From the Schotten Church's Wedding book we learn that Pederzuoli married Cecilia Gorani, on 15th January 1669 in this church.²¹ She was the daughter of the violinist Carlo Gorani who likewise worked in Eleonora's *Kapelle*. Among the marriage witnesses were the Empress's Kapellmeister at the time, Pietro Andrea Ziani, the alto singer and composer, Sebastiano Moratelli, yet another member of Eleonora's court music²² and the imperial bass singer Giacomo Muratori.

It is noticeable that all the people who took part in the wedding ceremony were Italian. Moreover, all of the marriage witnesses were from the bridegroom's professional surroundings. That this was not a unique case is verified by other church registers that document wedding ceremonies. Thus it can be gathered from the St. Stephen's cathedral's wedding book that the Italian singer Raffaele Caccialupi, who was working for the Empress, married Vittoria Seliprandi on 29th April 1659. The bride was a relative of the singer Carlo Seliprandi, who was originally from Mantua and worked for the Empress as well. The Italians Carlo Cappellini and Antonio Draghi acted as witnesses to the marriage, who were both likewise the bridegroom's music colleagues.

Caccialupi himself took over the position as witness to a marriage in June 1661 at Antonio Draghi's wedding to Livia Cristina Seliprandi, yet another relative of Carlo Seliprandi's. Also here the Italian musician colleagues remained completely among themselves. The second witness to the marriage was once again Carlo Cappellini.²³

20. Ibid., 34, 36.

21. Vienna, Pfarre Schotten, Heiratsbuch 10, fol. 51v.

22. Seifert, "Die Musiker der beiden Kaiserinnen ...," 651, 654-655 and 663-664.

23. Herbert Seifert, "Da Rimini alla corte di Leopoldo. L'opera di Draghi in ambito viennese" ("From Rimini to Leopold's court. The work of Draghi in the Viennese context,") in *Texte zur Musikdramatik im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert (Texts on*

Eleonora's court composers' achievements are reflected in the numerous remaining music manuscripts and libretti. A part of the repertoire were works of all typical genres and forms of those days: operas, oratorios, *sepolcri* as well as church - and chamber music works. The birthday operas that Eleonora arranged regularly until 1666 for Leopold at her summer residence the Favorita should be pointed out. After 1666 the ruling Empress always appears as organizer.²⁴

Above all in the field of sacred music the devout Eleonora played an important role. She made a music-historically significant contribution to the maintenance of the *sepolcro*, by regularly staging a work of this Viennese special form of the *sacra rappresentazione* on Maundy Thursday in front of the Holy Sepulchre in her chapel. Noteworthy, not least, are her merits pertaining to the promotion of the oratorio.²⁵ In his final report written on 27th September 1661 the Venetian Ambassador Alvise Molin ascribed the introduction of this music genre in Vienna to her.

From one of Eleanora's letters, that she wrote to her brother Carlo II, Duke of Mantua, we know that she had oratorios imported from Rome and performed at the court. This is confirmed by a few remaining scores but above all by the libretti that were published upon the Viennese performances. Although all the oratorios libretti published in Vienna between 1661 and 1662 were anonymous many of the texts could be identified by means of comparative analysis as Roman poetic works that had been set to music by such well-known Roman composers as Marco Marazzoli, Giovanni Francesco Marcorelli, Carlo Caproli or Giovanni Bicilli.

As an example the *Oratorio di Daniele profeta* shall be mentioned, which was heard in Eleonora's chapel in the Advent of 1662. The Viennese libretto, a unique copy of which is preserved in the Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica at Bologna, mentions neither the poet nor the composer. The text corresponds to the text of a composition that has been passed on in three English archives and is ascribed to Giacomo Carissimi in two cases. Moreover, a handwritten version of the libretto had been kept in the Vatican. In the field of research it is for the most part presumed that this Oratorio is *historia di Daniele*, composed by Pompeo Colonna and set to music by Carissimi which was performed on 8th March 1656 in Queen Christina of Sweden's Roman Palazzo.

dramatic music in the 17th and 18th centuries), ed. Matthias J. Pernerstorfer (Vienna: Hollitzer, 2014), 472.

24. Herbert Seifert, *Die Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof im 17. Jahrhundert (The opera at the imperial court of Vienna in the 17th century)* (Tutzing: Schneider, 1985).

25. Deisinger, "Mäzenin und Künstlerin ...," 45-46 and 52-54.

After 1663 the import of complete oratorios from Rome decreased while the domestic production of oratorios increased. This is proven by libretti and music manuscript scores, which have been kept in the Austrian National Library.²⁶

The question whether all of the oratorios, Viennese performances, of which are verified by anonymous libretti, were imported from Italy is justified, must however be negated. This can be demonstrated with the example *Oratorio d'Assalonne punito*, that was sung during lent in 1663 in Eleonora's chapel and which was repeated at the same place at an uncertain date sometime between 1674 and 1685.²⁷ While neither the poet nor the composer are mentioned in the libretto for the first performance,²⁸ their names appear on the title page of the libretto for the second performance.²⁹ Here we are looking at an Oratorio, which was created in Vienna; it was written by the Viennese court preacher Vito Lepori and composed by Eleonora's Kapellmeister Pietro Andrea Ziani. The same information is to be found on an undated music manuscript score of the Oratorio that has been kept in the Austrian National Library.³⁰

Final Remark

In conclusion may it be stated that Eleonora II influenced the cultural life at the Viennese court like no other widowed Habsburg Empress ever had.³¹ This fact is attributed to her strongly developed appreciation of art and the

26. Marko Deisinger, "Römische Oratorien am Hof der Habsburger in Wien in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts. Zur Einführung und Etablierung des Oratoriums in der kaiserlichen Residenz" ("Roman oratorios at the Habsburg court in Vienna in the second half of the 17th century. On the introduction and establishment of the oratorio in the imperial residence,") *Musicologica Austriaca* 29 (2010): 92-97.

27. Seifert, *Die Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof ...*, 584 and 672-673.

28. Bologna, Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica (formerly Civico museo bibliografico musicale), Lo. 5949.

29. Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, I 28.900; Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Misc. 2482.

30. 18854 Mus. Hs. (*Oratorio di Assalone punito*).

31. Michael Pözl, "Der Witwenstand von fünf Kaiserinnen am Wiener Hof (1637-1750)" ("The widowhoods of five empresses at the Viennese Court (1637-1750),") in *Frühneuzeitforschung in der Habsburgermonarchie. Adel und Wiener Hof – Konfessionalisierung – Siebenbürgen* (Early Modern Age Research in the Habsburg monarchy. Nobility and Viennese Court - Confessionalization - Transylvania), ed. István Fazekas, Martin Scheutz, Csaba Szabó and Thomas Winkelbauer (Vienna: Institut für Ungarische Geschichtsforschung, 2013): 51-70.

fairly long period of her widowhood of almost 30 years, during which she was successfully able to realize many of her artistic endeavours. With her musicians, Eleonora became a focus of cultural life at the Viennese court. She arranged concerts and performances of musical dramatic works and had religious festivals adorned with celebratory music. It is thanks to her that the musical genre of the oratorio was established in Vienna. Eleonora had oratorios imported from Rome and performed in her chapel. After her death in 1686, Leopold I and his successors, Joseph I and Charles VI, continued to cultivate the oratorio. It is extremely unfortunate that the archives of Eleonora's court were lost, as the presence of such documentation could have exposed the full extent of her generous patronage.

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