

YES, VIRGINIA, ANOTHER *BALLO TRAGICO*: THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF
PORTUGAL'S *BALLET D'ACTION* LIBRETTI FROM THE FIRST HALF OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

The Real Theatro de São Carlos de Lisboa employed Italian choreographers from its inauguration in 1793 to the middle of the nineteenth century. Many libretti for the ballets produced for the S. Carlos Theater have survived and are now housed in the National Library of Portugal. This dissertation focuses on the narratives of the libretti in this collection, and their importance as documentation of ballets of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, from the inauguration of the S. Carlos Theater in 1793 to 1850. This period of dance history, which has not received much attention by dance scholars, links the earlier baroque dance era of the eighteenth century with the style of ballet of the 1830s to the 1850s.

Portugal had been associated with Italian art and artists since the beginning of the eighteenth century. This artistic relationship continued through the final decades of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. The majority of the choreographers working in Lisbon were Italian, and the works they created for the S. Carlos Theater followed the Italian style of *ballet d'action*. Libretti are documented accounts of choreography of this period and contain important information regarding the style of the ballets produced in Lisbon. The narratives of the ballets in these libretti reveal the style of works produced in Lisbon from the late eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth

centuries: the *ballet d'action* that relied on the use of pantomime and gestures to tell stories. The importance of pantomime in ballets of the period covered in this investigation becomes evident in the analysis of several scenarios of ballets produced in Lisbon. This salient characteristic of ballets of the period emerges through the plot developments of the *ballets d'action* produced in Portugal.

Dedicated to
Ary de Souza Pinheiro
in memoriam
and
Gianni F. LaManna
with appreciation and gratitude

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Fields of Study

Major Field: Dance Studies

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INTRODUCTION

I first encountered a collection of ballet libretti at the National Library of Portugal when I was conducting research there as a recipient of a three-month fellowship grant of the National Library and the Luso-American Foundation for Development. Ms. Catarina Latino, the director of the Music Collection in the library, called my attention to these libretti, which sparked my curiosity. Through those three months I spent in the library, I was able to read all of the libretti – more than two hundred. These *ballet d'action* libretti are invaluable tools in understanding the history of dance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their unique value in establishing the place of Portugal in the history of ballet presents a new challenge in dance history, which inspired me to focus my dissertation on the narratives of their ballets.

I selected the libretti of ballet scenarios staged in the Real Theatro de São Carlos in Lisbon from the late eighteenth through the first half of the nineteenth century, delimiting my inquiry from the inauguration of the theater in 1793, to the end of Queen Maria II's reign, in 1853. These dates were chosen because they not only represent a definable chronological order, but also because the largest number of libretti material clusters within this period. I also chose to focus solely on the libretti of ballets created for the S. Carlos Theater for the same reasons; they are the most numerous and fall within

the same time frame. Scholars who focus on this time period and on libretti do not mention Portugal in their writings, and Portuguese scholars who have investigated the history of dance of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries have not focused on the narrative content of ballet libretti. Their value in re-constructing the dance scene in Portugal during this time period is intensified by the fact they are often the only documents on these decades of theatrical performance – reviews are scarce, writings on dance are equally rare, and sources on dance history in Portugal are practically non-existent. The National Library of Portugal collection then provides written documentation of ballets staged at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos during a period of ballet's experimentation with the *ballet d'action*, or pantomime ballets. The narratives in the libretti give us pictorial evidence of what the ballets of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries looked like, and reveal the importance of the use of pantomime in ballet during that time. The written stories of the libretti are a form of choreography: they are tangible documents of *ballets d'action*.

The time period that delimits this study is pragmatic as well as thematic. From the foundation of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos until the 1850s, Portugal underwent distinct and fundamental changes within its political system – from a monarchy at the end of the eighteenth century to a liberal constitutional monarchy by 1826, which was maintained for the remainder of the time period on which I focused my inquiry. It was in this turbulent and seemingly inhospitable artistic atmosphere that many artists hired from various theaters in Italy created, directed, and often performed in their ballets in Lisbon. Because the choreographers working at the S. Carlos Theater in Lisbon were Italian, an examination of Italian ballet libretti in the Harvard Theater Collection in the Houghton

Library provided me the opportunity to compare narratives of ballets by the same choreographers in Italy to determine similarities to the ones they created in Portugal.

The *ballet d'action* period in the history of dance is still understudied compared to the baroque and romantic periods, which have received more attention. And while much has been written about ballet in Europe, particularly France and England, very little has been published about dance in Portugal, even by Portuguese researchers. Portuguese dance history scholars have concentrated primarily on the latter part of the nineteenth century, and on into the twentieth century, most of them focusing on the twentieth century. The few sources that do mention the earlier periods of dance history in Portugal do not mention *ballet d'action* or their narratives. More recent scholarship has rarely dealt with the development of dance prior to the twentieth century. A few scholars have delved into the history of music, focusing on opera at the court, and have touched on the presence of Italian dancers in Portugal; however, their focus was on music, and dance was only incidental in their writings.

Titles on Portuguese dance history are scarce; however, two works written on the subject of Portuguese dance history in earlier time periods that are pertinent to my study are Daniel Tércio Ramos Guimarães' *História da Dança em Portugal – dos Pátios das Comédias à Fundação do Teatro São Carlos*, and Maria Helena de Abreu Coelho's *A Dança Teatral no Primeiro Período Romântico Português, de 1834 a 1856*. The time period on which my research focuses is not covered in Tércio's work, while Coelho's overlaps it by sixteen years. Coelho's focus, however, was not on the narratives of the ballets, but on the broader context of dance in that time period. Tércio's research focuses on iconographic sources found in the dance scenes painted on panels of blue *azulejos*

(tiles) throughout Portugal. His research is limited, he recognizes, by the fact that he is not a dancer and comes to the subject from the field of philosophy and language. He also points out that the scarcity of sources on dance history in Portugal renders his work incomplete. My study bridges the gap between these two other dissertations on the history of dance in Portugal.

A historical inquiry inherently requires the use of historical, qualitative research methodologies. My investigation relied on traditional methods of collecting data, combining primary sources such as the libretti in Portuguese and Italian, published dance manuals, memoirs, and journals. Books on dance history and the history of Portugal, as well as theses and articles, provided invaluable information on which to anchor my own findings. As the evidence of dance activity in past centuries in Portugal is fragmentary, I have combined various sources in order to re-construct some of its aspects. For the biographies of choreographers working in Lisbon during the early nineteenth century, I relied on dance history publications such as Ivor Guest's titles on the romantic period, Italian publications both in print form and online, and Italy's National Library Services Catalog online, which provided information on choreographers and their works in several Italian theaters. While this data is not complete – the narratives of the libretti are not included – it is a more detailed cataloguing system than most, for it links all Italian libraries and their available materials, and also includes a significant amount of information on each of the libretti such as date, city, choreographer, and list of dancers for each production. This online catalog proved invaluable in providing information on the works by various Italian choreographers who worked in Lisbon in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Sources on ballet training and technique were fundamental in helping me visualize the ballets of the period. Thus, a survey of the development of ballet technique in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was fundamental in forming images of the dances that were performed at the court of Portugal. Gennaro Magri's *Theoretical and Practical Treatise on Dancing* (1779) gives a documented account of Italian dance technique toward the end of the eighteenth century, and as such, was helpful in forming a visual image of the dancing in the ballets staged in Portugal. Related to the same period, *The Grotesque Dancer on the Eighteenth Century Stage – Gennaro Magri and His World* explores this Italian style of dance and is another valuable secondary source in understanding the choreography that was presented on stages in Lisbon. This work, edited by Rebecca Harris-Warrick and Bruce Alan Brown, includes an array of essays on topics related to Italian theatrical dancing. This is an important aspect of technique to be considered when discussing Portuguese dance of this period, because Italian dancers and choreographers brought this same style to the works they staged for the S. Carlos Theater in Lisbon.

Because the productions in Portugal in the latter part of the eighteenth century were in the *ballet d'action* style, ballets staged in Portugal at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were heavily dependent on pantomime and gestures. On this topic Giannandrea Poesio's dissertation *The Language of Gesture in Italian Dance from Commedia dell'Arte to Blasis*, which thoroughly examines the use of gesture and pantomime in Italy, proved invaluable. Richard Ralph's *The Life and Works of John Weaver* and Carlo Blasis' *Studi sulle Arti Imitatrici* (1844) illustrate the use of mime and gesture in the development of ballet, and were important sources in my investigation.

Carlo Blasis's *Code of Terpsichore*, (1828) which has been examined by dance historians as a way to understand the technical aspects of ballet training and to identify details pertaining to it, supplemented the manuals I relied on for further visual understanding of the period. Sandra Noll Hammond's writings introduce some of the needed explanation of dancers' quest for technical development in the early nineteenth century, bridging the gap between the baroque and the romantic ballet styles. In "Clues to Ballet's Technical History from the Early Nineteenth-Century Ballet Lesson," for example, she delineates the details pertaining to technique during Blasis' time. She examines exercises that are included in some ballet masters' writings and compares their use of terminology as well as descriptions of the execution of steps. Her various articles draw on her expertise in the history of technique to describe the style that gradually evolved into what we recognize today as ballet; they were instrumental in my study, and necessary tools by which to gain insight into the technique of this time period.

Edward Nye's publications on the narratives of libretti and the *ballet d'action*, *Mime, Music, and Drama on the Eighteenth-Century Stage* and "'Choreography' is Narrative: The Programmes of the Eighteenth-Century *Ballet d'Action*," were fundamental in pointing out many important facets of the narratives of the ballets in pantomime. Although he discusses ballets from the previous century, his work is still pertinent to my study of the action ballets in Portugal. Judith Chazin-Bennahum's *Dance in the Shadow of the Guillotine* also explores the ballet stories in post-revolutionary France until 1801 and helps to contextualize developments in Portugal. Marian Smith's *Ballet and Opera in the Age of Giselle* and *La Sylphide: Paris 1832 and Beyond* offer

insight into this time period. Both of these works help the understanding of the connection between pantomime and ballet in the early nineteenth century.

Secondary sources in the form of published histories of dance provided the context for the development of dance in Portugal. Among these is Marian Hannah Winter's compilation of dancers and choreographers in her unmatched *The Pre-Romantic Ballet*, in which she delineates the trajectory of several families of choreographers and performers, some of whom were employed by the Portuguese court. Ivor Guest's various publications, including *Ballet Under Napoleon*, *The Ballet of the Enlightenment: The Establishment of the Ballet D'Action in France, 1770-1793*, *The Romantic Ballet in Paris*, and *The Romantic Ballet in England*, provided a significant understanding of dance in France and England during the time period covered by this study.

This dissertation examines the contents of the libretti in the National Library of Portugal and their value and contribution to the understanding of the *ballet d'action* in both Portugal and the rest of Europe. Because many of the choreographers employed in Portugal during this time period came from other European cities where they had already staged various works – and sometimes restaged works of their mentors – the Portuguese libretti not only help the understanding of dance in Portugal, but also help in the further understanding of dance in other European centers, Italy in particular. Some of the ballet masters and choreographers were well-known in Italy prior to their appointments in Portugal, which in some cases lasted for several years. Others were hired as dancers, but became choreographers during their time in Lisbon, and continued to create works for various theaters in Italy upon their return. The strong connection between the Italian and the Portuguese ballets of this time period is evident through the comparison of libretti in

the National Library of Portugal and the Italian libretti in the Harvard Theatre collection. The presence of Italian dancers, dancing masters, and choreographers in Lisbon since the early eighteenth century established a long link to the Italian style of ballet in Portugal that lasted for over a century. Portuguese ballets of the period, like Italian ballet, concerned itself with issues surrounding its own reality, as the summaries of the *ballet d'action* narrative in the libretti demonstrate. Secondary sources on Italian ballet in the works of Kathleen Kuznick Hansell, Debra H. Sowell, Ornella Di Tondo, and several other Italian authors were essential in establishing the strong relationship between the two countries.

The libretti in the National Library of Portugal are written in Portuguese, while the Italian ballet libretti in the Houghton Library at Harvard University are in Italian. All translations of the texts of the libretti in both languages, as well as translations of secondary sources such as books and articles, are my own. As with all translations, interpretation is an inherent element of the process. The styles of both languages from two centuries ago presented a challenge in rendering my translations both faithful to the original and comprehensible in the twenty-first century. I tried to keep the translations as close to their original as possible, while at the same time updating them to current language use for the reader's ease of understanding. Even though at times my English translation does not literally correspond to the original, I hope that my approximations have not detracted from, but rather enhanced their meaning.

Because it was customary to translate names at that time, several different names and their spellings appear in various libretti, which can be confusing. Variations in spelling of various words, including names, were also numerous, sometimes occurring

within the same libretto. I have maintained the original spelling of words in titles and subtitles of ballets as they appear in the libretti, even if there are apparent typographical errors. However, I chose to use the Italian spelling of the names of choreographers, rather than their corresponding Portuguese versions. For the purpose of consistency I chose to follow Italian scholars' use of the modern Italian spelling where the old ones were used.

I have divided this study into four chapters: the first introduces the political and cultural climate in Lisbon from the eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century; the second provides brief biographical information on the choreographers who worked in Lisbon during the time period of this inquiry; the third discusses the relevance and importance of *ballet d'action* libretti to dance research; and the fourth describes ballet scenarios in the libretti collection of the National Library of Portugal.

Chapter one discusses the political context in which the beginning of the Portuguese court's love for opera flourished when it was brought to Lisbon by João V in the beginning of the eighteenth century. I begin this chapter in a much earlier time period than the focus of my investigation to both demonstrate the importance of opera in court entertainment in Portugal during one of the most prosperous and brilliant epochs in Portugal's history, and establish the long-lasting connection of the Portuguese court to Italian artists that started at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Three monarchs ruled Portugal from the end of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century in a period marked by turbulence in Europe during the Napoleonic expansion and the subsequent changes that ensued. These political transitions and the most significant episodes and events in Portuguese history contextualize the inauguration of the S. Carlos Theater in Lisbon in 1793. The inaugural ballet for the opening performance is described

and analyzed in this chapter for it marks the beginning of the *ballet d'action* on the stage of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos.

Chapter two introduces the choreographers who were brought to Portugal, often as dancers at first, who created the ballets that were presented on the Lisbon stage. Within their brief biographies, I also introduce some of the main ballets they created in Portugal and in Italy, some of which are discussed in detail in chapter four. In this study I used the word choreographer to refer to both the creator of the dance sequences and mimed portions of these ballets, and the person who devised the plots for their narratives. The term choreography in earlier times referred to the writing of dance by use of symbols as defined by R. A. Feuillet in his 1700 publication of the system of dance notation of the eighteenth century. The term choreography in our current use of the word has a much more recent connotation, as the term no longer refers to someone who “writes” the steps down in any form or notation system, but refers instead to the way sequences of steps are woven together to form a whole within a ballet. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the term was also used to refer to the “composer of the dramatic action” as Edward Nye points out in chapter seven of *Mime, Music and Drama on the Eighteenth-century Stage*. Nye also argues that the twentieth century meaning of the word choreography was acquired in the nineteenth century and points out Blasis’s 1820 Treatise as an early example of the modern use of the term. Dancers working for the S. Carlos in Lisbon already referred to themselves as choreographers in the prefaces to the libretti as early as 1826. Therefore, given their own identification as choreographers within the works they created, the term seems appropriate.

Chapter three discusses the *ballets d'action* libretti as primary sources of documentation of ballets that were created for the Real Teatro de S. Carlos. An overview of the importance of pantomime in ballets of the time period is included, as well as examples of narratives that help identify movement in their stories. Within chapter three I answer some of the questions pertaining to the relationship between movement and words that logically surface when one reads these libretti: What language in the libretti can be interpreted as movement or *action*? What can be interpreted as dance? To what extent is the action intrinsic in the narrative of these ballets? I use portions of the stories to highlight words that indicate movement within the stories found in the narratives of *ballets d'action*. These excerpts used to interpret words as movement, rather than dialogue in spoken word, pave the way for the narratives discussed in the next chapter.

In chapter four I analyze the contents and stories of the libretti and include portions of the plots to illustrate the different genres prevalent in the ballets produced in Lisbon in the first half of the nineteenth century. Common themes are grouped in six most frequently recurring categories: politically related, mythological, historical, serious and dramatic, comic, and romantic. A comparison of Portuguese and Italian libretti further identifies the styles that were most often staged in Lisbon. I also discuss the frequent repetition of themes, stories, and plots and their meaning and implications.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to spend three months in Lisbon during the summer of 2009 in which to study the collection of libretti at the National Library of Portugal, a time that also allowed me to visit various museums, palaces, and historical sites. Being able to physically experience these various locales placed my research in

context. The immensity of the Palace of Mafra, for example, is only comprehended in person. Its colossal dimensions transcend photographic records. The commerce square on the bank of the Tagus River was once a center animated with activity – various ships brought the world to Portugal and distributed Portuguese goods from its various colonies to the world. It is a legacy from the eighteenth century; a café from the 1780s still exists within one of its colonnades. Most rewarding was the opportunity to see an opera in the S. Carlos Theater in the historical center of Lisbon and experience its size, decoration, and the royal box which has been restored.

My inquiry is not a comprehensive look into the development of dance in Portugal during this time period, but rather, an interpretation of the texts of the libretti and their significance in the development of ballet at the end of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. My investigation, I hope, sheds light on the close relationship between the Portuguese productions and the Italian style of ballet in Italy during this time, and the contributions of the Portuguese productions and their choreographers to dance history in Europe, and, most importantly to dance history in Portugal.

CHAPTER 1

TURMOIL, MADNESS, INAUGURATION – LISBON AT THE TURN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1.1 Setting the stage: the social-historical-political scene in Portugal

Portugal, a small country on the farthest western point in Europe, is bordered by Spain to the north and east, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west, and thus relatively isolated from the rest of the continent. Due to the country's geographical position, it is often confused with Spain and all things Spanish, including language. However, Portugal's survival as an independent country and national cultural identity has depended on its very distinct features and characteristics. It is one of the oldest European countries, with boundaries that have remained virtually unchanged for more than six centuries.¹

From the early twelfth century Portugal was a unified, sovereign nation-state. Although it was ruled by the Spanish King for sixty years in the last part of the seventeenth century, Portugal maintained, even during that time period, its independent government, language, culture, and its colonies overseas.² Portugal had already developed its distinct language by the fourteenth century, being one of the first European states to accomplish the distinction between using a secular language – Portuguese – for

government, and a separate one – Latin – for the church, something true of only a few of the European states of that time.³ Portugal is perhaps best known for its role in the age of discoveries during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and its contributions to the art and science of navigation.⁴ During this time Portugal became Europe's richest kingdom and a world power in territorial expansion overseas, acquiring an empire that stretched from Asia to South America.

Portugal enjoyed another period of great wealth at the end of the seventeenth century when gold and diamond mines were discovered in the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil. This discovery marks the beginning of a transition into a prosperous eighteenth century, which would stretch to the beginning of the nineteenth century and end with the departure of the royal court to Rio de Janeiro in 1807 to escape Napoleon's invasion.⁵ These developments are intrinsically linked to the development of artistic taste and trends in Portugal. The gold from Brazil allowed King João V (1706-1750) to spend lavishly on the importation of several artists and numerous luxury items, including Italian opera, his favorite form of entertainment. Although the wealth of the Portuguese royal court diminished by the end of the eighteenth century, the custom and taste for opera that had been planted by the monarch would continue to be part of court life in Lisbon through the middle of the following century.

Several important political and cultural changes took place in Portugal in the last decade of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries: the discovery of gold and diamonds in Brazil – Portugal's largest and most productive colony; the earthquake of 1755, which required the re-building of Lisbon and the implementation of reforms in all areas, including education and foreign policy; Queen Maria I's madness,

which opened the way for the regency of Prince João VI; the political developments in Europe after the French Revolution, which culminated in the Portuguese royal family's fleeing to Brazil in 1807; the court's return to Lisbon in 1821, leading to Brazil's claim for independence in September 1822; the problem of succession after King João VI's death in 1826 resulting in a civil war that lasted until 1834; and the political instability that marked Queen Maria II's reign. All of these events give context to Portugal's position in relationship to the arts.

During the time period encompassed in my investigation of the *ballet d'action*, Portugal was ruled by five different monarchs – Dona Maria I (1777-1816), Dom João VI (as Prince Regent from 1792-1816, as King from 1816-1826), Pedro IV (1826-34), Miguel (1828-1834), and Maria II (1829-1853). However, a look at the reigns of the two preceding kings, Dom João V (1707-1750) and Dom José I (1750-1777), is essential in understanding the later developments at the turn of the nineteenth century. The culturally fertile eighteenth century contrasts with the more difficult and turbulent nineteenth century, which inevitably brought financial and political consequences for Portugal. These circumstances contributed to shaping the cultural life of Lisbon during this period, and are fundamental to examine in Portugal's artistic expansion. Against a backdrop of turmoil, economic struggle, and overall unrest, a myriad of *ballets d'action* were produced on the stage of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos.

1.1.1 Planting the seeds: Dom João V and Dom José I

Since the beginning of the eighteenth century Dom João V had developed a taste for all things Italian, including music and opera. He spent great sums hiring Italian artists throughout his long forty-four year reign in the first half of the century. Unable to realize his dream of making a grand tour due to his duties in the position of king, as well as his unstable health,⁶ Dom João proceeded to import from abroad all that he could afford. Russell-Wood points out that “internationalism was a strong feature of Portugal during the reign of Dom João V,”⁷ as records of the expenditures of his court demonstrate. One of the greatest influences on the king of Portugal was none other than Louis XIV, the monarch whom Dom João tried to emulate throughout his reign. Just like in the court of Louis XIV, João V’s court rituals were “deliberately theatricised,” and his extravagant displays of pomp were particularly emphasized when “commemorating anniversaries and rites of passage within the royal family.”⁸ The wealth of the court can be surmised from the astonishing production of gold in Brazil: in the seventy years of the most abundant excavations its mines yielded as much as the rest of the American continent between 1493 and 1850⁹ – an impressive amount indeed. Such sums allowed the king to bring culture and fashion from abroad. The king’s courtiers followed suit. The nobility and the higher classes who could afford to do so also adopted and imported Italian and French customs in their “clothing, wigs, jewelry, gold watches, cosmetics and toiletries.”¹⁰ During Dom João V’s reign this foreign influence was noticeable also in the visual and performing arts. The Portuguese royalty, nobility, and public in general developed a taste

for all things Italian, music and opera in particular, an enthusiasm which would last for over a century and a half.

To fulfill his ambition of being the Portuguese *Roi Soleil* and support his artistic dreams, the monarch had access to resources and products from Portuguese territories in three continents: “diamonds, gold, and fine woods from Brazil, silks from China, precious stones and ebony from India and Ceylon, and ivory from Africa.”¹¹ This rich array of materials could then be transformed into works of art, jewelry, clothing and costuming, furniture, carriages, table services, and more. But beyond the acquisition of materials, Dom João V was also genuinely interested in fostering learning and intellect which he demonstrated both by bringing foreigners to work in Portugal, and by sending a number of talented Portuguese artists and intellectuals abroad. Among examples of his efforts in patronage are the publication of the *Vocabulário Portuguez e Latino* (1712-1721), according to Russell-Wood, a “landmark in European lexicography,” and the employment of foreign servants to aid in the organization of a museum of natural history.¹² During this time works published in the Portuguese language grew, totaling fifty-four percent of all publications in Portugal by 1760; and, in this same period literacy among women increased significantly as well.¹³ The king was interested in the sciences, particularly astronomy, geography, and mathematics, and imported equipment to found an observatory from which an eclipse was observed in 1724.¹⁴ Through all of these efforts, Dom João V turned his country into a power recognized by the other European nations.

One of King João V’s most ambitious projects, the great monastery of Mafra, is a massive example of architectural grandeur that took thirteen years to complete. It was

decorated throughout with more than fifty Italian sculptures. These were of “a high level of competence with a great deal of individual talent of the highest order” carved by more than twenty different Italian artists whose works also grace the Church of São Roque in Lisbon.¹⁵ Considered to be one of the largest European buildings,¹⁶ the Mafra palace and convent are architectural masterpieces that survived the 1755 earthquake – their immensity still impresses.

The king spent lavishly on a wide variety of goods and artifacts: carriages with velvet seats, gilded decorations, and painted panels; silverware service sets from England and Paris; and uniquely designed jewelry crafted by fine Portuguese silver and goldsmith artists who used gold, diamonds, and rare stones from Brazil.¹⁷ A great lover of music, Dom João V did not spare expenditures to hire singers, composers, and players to work at his court – as a result, Lisbon became famous all over Europe for its excellent music and musicians during his reign.¹⁸ From Italy he also imported opera, hiring artists for court entertainment. Dom João V had the good fortune of governing a wealthy country during a period when ostentation was a measure of power and he utilized all that he had at his disposal to impress. He left a legacy of art and artistry that has outlasted his reign by over two hundred and sixty years, much of which can still be seen in museums in Portugal and many European cities.

Dom João V was succeeded by his son José in 1750. Like his father, Dom José was prepared to pay any sum necessary to bring some of the best artists from Rome and other parts of Italy to his court, and soon after ascending the throne he began new negotiations to hire Italian opera artists. In addition, the architect Giovanni Carlo Bibiena, the composer David Perez, several painters and designers, the ballet master Andrea

Alberti, and the dancer Giuseppe Salomoni¹⁹ were brought to Lisbon to support the opera productions. Andrea Alberti was also known as *Il Tedeschino*, in reference to his connection with the German-Austrian circuit,²⁰ which perhaps indicates that the seeds of the *ballet d'action* were being sown in Lisbon as early as the 1750s. By the time he reached Lisbon, Giuseppe Salomoni was a well-recognized ballet master who had provided excellent training for the dancers at the Viennese court before Gasparo Angiolini arrived there.²¹ He would later be known as Giuseppe Salomoni di Portogallo, due to his three-year appointment in Lisbon.

Keeping to his father's already established custom, Dom José continued to bring several necessary items from Italy to support his court opera. These were not limited to costumes and music – various other articles were imported as well, including “music scores, libretti, ornaments, instruments, strings, and even wick for the candles.”²² Correspondence between the director of the Royal Theaters in Portugal and Niccola Piaggio, who negotiated contracts and acquisition of materials, gives us an idea of the sorts of materials he imported: silver fringes, fine white voile from Bologna, fine Parisian gauze, silver embroidery, assorted sequins of various sizes and weight, sheets of silver and gold [fabric] in different sizes, fake red heels, lace in gold and silver, and twenty four strings of large pearls in white, red and yellow color (not specified if pearls were real).²³ Along with the long roster of various items for costuming and decorations, there are requests for items such as macaroons and pasta, olives from Marseille,²⁴ chocolates, dry mushrooms, and seeds,²⁵ to name a few. Some of these letters included rudimentary sketches, swatches, and sequins for costume decorations pinned onto the pages – these

are particularly interesting as they render a tangible as well as a pictorial evidence of these opera productions.

Shortly after becoming King of Portugal, however, Dom José I was faced with Lisbon's most devastating catastrophe in history – the earthquake of 1755 and its aftermath, which left enormous lacunae in various facets of Portuguese history, art, and culture. After the lavish expenditures of his father during the first half of the eighteenth century, the new king needed to institute pragmatic measures to deal with a disaster that would shake all areas of Portuguese court life. Thus, the reign of Dom José I is marked by many changes, as emphasized by Kenneth Maxwell in his assessment of Portugal in the eighteenth century:

The period, especially after the 1750s, is seen in Portugal as being the very embodiment of the enlightenment. Among the elements emphasized is the legislative activity that left few aspects of Portuguese life untouched. This included the establishment of the first system of public, state-supported education, the root and branch reform of the ancient university at Coimbra, the reduction of the Inquisition's power, the modernization of the military, the abolition of slavery in Portugal (but not in the colonies)... Above all, the reconstruction of Lisbon after the devastating earthquake of 1755 is held up as a model of enlightenment town planning.²⁶

The population of Portugal, like that of Europe in general, increased during the eighteenth century.²⁷ By 1732 the country had grown to 2 million people, and by the time of the earthquake the population of Lisbon was around 150,000.²⁸ It is estimated that the destruction brought about by the quake, the fires, and the tsunami that hit the city on 1 November 1755 claimed some 15 thousand lives – about ten percent of the population.²⁹

The royal family, however, was spared, as they were at one of the palaces outside of Lisbon at the time. The destruction was so overwhelming that the king, “bewildered and frightened,” left all matters in the hands of his capable minister, Pombal.³⁰ Among the many buildings lost in the disaster was the newly built opera house, its ruins immortalized in a drawing engraved, printed, and sold in Paris in 1757.³¹ The earthquake prompted philosophical discussions by Portuguese and foreign clergymen and intellectuals, among them Voltaire, Goethe, and Rousseau, who tried to understand the meaning of a disaster of such magnitude.³² A poignant descriptive observation of the natural disaster was published in a twenty-three page pamphlet with the deeply felt eyewitness account of Pedegache:

...How is it possible to paint in writing the horrors which we witnessed, the desolation, the astonishment, the fright, the confusion, the devastation, and the fear? We saw Lisbon turn into a new Athens, where the sciences and the arts flourished, in abundant wealth and quietude, turn, in a few brief moments into a deserted and desolate village... The sea, conspiring against us, threatened to submerge the said remains that had escaped the quickening movements of the earth, and the fires destroying, in brief instants, the little that the other two had spared.³³

In view of such difficulties, it is remarkable that any artistic endeavors would occupy the minds of anyone in government. The rebuilding of the city required not only a complete demolition of all that remained in ruins, but also the disposing of debris, bodies, and rubble for construction to start anew. Once completed several years later, the newly rebuilt center of Lisbon impressed foreign visitors who observed a “most magnificent square surpassing all others in Europe, with a costly and unexampled equestrian statue erected in the square... such a reunion of riches could not but convince them that the

capital and kingdom were in the highest of prosperity and opulence.”³⁴ The square, which still stands today, is regarded as a great example of eighteenth century town planning.³⁵

Dom José’s reign was a period also known as the “age of terror” due to the ruthless government of the Marquis of Pombal, the king’s chief minister. But, even during this period of tribulation, operas and ballets continued to be produced and celebrations still displayed the brilliance of a rich court. In 1760 the wedding of Princess Maria Francisca, future queen of Portugal, was commemorated in spectacular fashion – banquets lasted several days and included multi course meals, and sumptuous dessert tables set in rooms ornamented with silver and porcelain objects for the grand finale of this occasion.³⁶ Music, theatrical entertainment, and fireworks were also part of the events. Toward the end of Dom José I’s reign, the gold that had poured in from the mines in Brazil was beginning to decline and the financial consequences of its scarcity would be felt by the king’s oldest daughter, who inherited a country going into a period of economic and political transition.

1.1.2 The final decades of the eighteenth century

Dona Maria Francisca, Princesa da Beira, became the first reigning queen of Portugal in her own right in 1777 upon king José I’s death. From the onset of her reign, Dona Maria was confronted by the aftermath of her father’s legacy and a number of difficulties, complicated by the fact that she was the first woman to ascend the throne in Portugal. Already married and with several children, Dona Maria I was now forty-three years old. She was fluent in a number of languages, and had been brought up with

painting, music, dancing, and singing lessons. She was also adept at horseback riding, and enjoyed hunting and rides on royal barges on the Tagus.³⁷

A cultured and well-read princess, she had been close to her grandfather, Dom João V, and had grown to appreciate all things artistic. Like her grandfather, Queen Maria I was interested in the sciences and founded the Royal Academy of Sciences of Lisbon, in 1779, one of Europe's first, under the guidance of the diplomat and naturalist abbot Correia da Serra. He would eventually become Portuguese ambassador in the United States and professor of botany in Philadelphia.³⁸ The academy included a science museum and a library. Today it is known as the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, and it still fosters intellectual and research activity, and promotes numerous scholarly publications.³⁹ During Queen Maria I's reign, several educational institutions, libraries, and academies, were founded throughout the country.⁴⁰ Such evidence indicates that the queen's interests extended beyond the church, although she did commission the Basílica da Estrela (Church of Estrela), a building that still stands in the neighborhood of the same name in Lisbon.⁴¹

Although Queen Maria I has been described as a pious queen and her court austere, the many accounts of court festivities surrounding weddings, royal birthdays, name-days, and baptisms indicate that these events were celebrated in typical European-style court life of the period. Theatrical activities including opera and dancing, albeit less opulent than before, continued throughout her reign and into that of her son Dom João VI, in both court and public theaters in Lisbon.

Dona Maria I focused on balancing the court's finances and stabilizing the country. The numerous decrees, court orders and permits from her reign attest to her

concerted efforts to rebuild her country and to restore order, peace, and productivity in this period known as the *Viradeira* – the turn-around in Portuguese history. With the diminishing supply of gold and diamonds, expenditures during her reign had to be reduced. She attended to pragmatic matters such as paying owed salaries, pensions, and other overdue royal debts that had accumulated. The queen resorted to selling property of the royal household in order to achieve a measure of economic balance. In the wake of luxurious expenditures over the course of two previous reigns, Maria I's court would undergo a meager phase. Nonetheless, following her grandfather's example, in 1788 the queen sent her art teacher, painter Domingos Antonio de Sequeira, to study in Rome.⁴²

These economic difficulties were felt in the arts as well. However, correspondence between the impresarios in Italy and the Director of the Portuguese Royal Theaters continued, and the queen still hired musicians and singers.⁴³ Although the total number of operas produced at Maria I's court diminished considerably – less than half the number during her father's reign – ballets and operas continued to be produced, and to supplement the roster of those performers who had remained in Portugal from previous years, at least thirty-three new dancers were hired in fifteen years.⁴⁴ This is not a small number, considering that a list compiled by Sasportes includes the names of 168 dancers in Portugal between the years 1752 and 1807.⁴⁵ Pietro Colonna, the dance master to the court who had arrived in Portugal ten years before, continued in the service of the queen, and later in the prince regent's until the court departed for Brazil in 1807.

Throughout her rule, Dona Maria I was faced with great personal tragedy. Her mental health began to deteriorate, and the European political developments that would have dramatic consequences for Portugal would also contribute to her mental instability.

Many events help explain her mental decline: from the earthquake of 1755, when the queen was only twenty-one years old, and which would have an impact on her religious faith, to the several deaths that would shatter her spirits decades later. Her mother, with whom the queen had a close relationship, died in 1781; her husband, the king consort died in 1786; in 1788 her eldest and most politically promising son, Prince José, succumbed to smallpox; that same year the queen lost her minister, her daughter, son-in-law, and new-born grandson. Finally, the French revolution affected the queen as Europe had begun to see radical changes in its political establishments. Dona Maria I became “subject to fits of melancholy and nightmares and was possessed by the idea that she was damned.”⁴⁶ The queen “could not survive so much misfortune.”⁴⁷ In 1792 she was deemed incapable of ruling and never recovered her mental capacity. In 1807 Dona Maria I departed with the royal court for Rio de Janeiro where she spent the last nine years of her life.

1.1.3 Years of transition – the long reign of the Prince Regent and King João VI

Growing concern for the queen’s mental health and ability to govern brought together a conference of seventeen doctors who produced a signed document stating that immediate measures were required to put in motion practical procedures in the interest of the state.⁴⁸ The queen was not expected to fully recover from her mental illness, or to reestablish her health enough to attend to royal government business; thus, Dom João VI had no choice but to accept the inevitable and assume his responsibilities as heir to the throne of Portugal. These resolutions were made public in the *Gazeta de Lisboa* that

published the decree: “The Prince our Lord declared by a decree dated on the 10th of the current month, that, deferring to him the exercise of the Administration, by the notorious impediment of the Queen His Lady and Mother... [he] has resolved to assist and provide the dispatching and signing for Her while her illness or otherwise the impediment of her Majesty last.”⁴⁹

When Prince João VI assumed the administrative duties of the crown, he was aware of the latest events and of France’s threat to all European nations and sovereigns, Portugal not excepted. Although the prince had much reason for rejoicing since the birth of his daughter Princess Maria Teresa in April 1793, other matters preoccupied the new Portuguese head of state. Soon after João VI became regent, France attacked Portuguese ships in retaliation for the attempted alliance among Portugal, England, and Spain.⁵⁰ Portugal tried to negotiate neutrality, but France intended to dominate Europe as far west as possible. Portugal would soon suffer the ripple effects of Napoleon’s ambitious plan of European dominance.

It was under these dire circumstances that Prince João VI began his thirty-four year rule of Portugal. Dom João VI, although depicted as an indecisive and weak king, recently has been recognized by scholars as one of the most astute rulers of Portugal who faced some of the most difficult and complicated decisions in the course of the nation’s history.⁵¹ The modest and discreet second-born prince,⁵² who had been educated under the old royal customs and monarchical system, would be “one of the first European monarchs to swear a constitution.”⁵³ Dom João VI’s decision to flee to Brazil paved the way for the colony’s move toward independence in 1822 – a decisive turn in the history of both countries.

With the continuing pressures from Napoleon and Portugal's failure at reaching negotiation agreements to keep its neutrality, political instability escalated. Aided by England, Portugal's long-time ally and commercial partner, the plan to take the royal family and government to Brazil came to fruition. As France delivered an ultimatum to Portugal, the Council of State issued a proclamation on the departure of the Portuguese royal court to Brazil.⁵⁴ On November 1, 1807, as French general Junot and his army marched through the outskirts of Lisbon, the royal family and court, escorted by the English navy, boarded the ships on their journey to Rio de Janeiro. The Portuguese army, aided by the English, eventually defeated Napoleon in his campaign of European dominance, a campaign that slowly crumbled until the Emperor was finally vanquished a few years later.

The French occupation of Portugal lasted four years. The first invasion in 1807 brought an initial victory and peace negotiations after the Battle of Vimeiro.⁵⁵ Another French attack ensued in 1809; in 1810, the Portuguese and English troops, under the leadership of General Arthur Wellesley, drove the French across the border and through Spain, and succeeded in defeating Napoleon's armies. The French occupation was finally brought to an end in May 1811.⁵⁶ But, it was not until April 1821 that the Portuguese court returned to Lisbon. Four years of war left the small country of Portugal in chaos – in addition to the loss of many lives, war's aftermath could be felt in losses in agriculture, trade, industry, and overall destruction. Many of the country's treasures had been pillaged by both the French and English, who took with them many Portuguese treasures, including art works, jewelry, furniture, and rare samples of books and manuscripts, some of which have never been recovered.⁵⁷

Dom João VI's reign was marked by radical changes. Upon his return to Portugal, immediate measures to restore the country to political and economic stability took precedence. Independence movements in Brazil continued to foment, and, eighteen months after the court's return Portugal lost its largest and most productive colony. In these turbulent times of war, unrest, and revolutions, art was not a priority or the primary focus of the court as it had been during the prosperous eighteenth century. Given the circumstances, Dom João VI's reign required cutting excessive costs and luxurious expenditures of the crown.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, it was in 1823 that the School of Fine Arts was created, with classes in drawing, painting, sculpture, engraving, and architecture.⁵⁹ And, Dom João VI's court still enjoyed operas and *ballets d'action* as the number of libretti of their productions during this time period proves. During his reign a great number of singers, composers, designers, choreographers, and dancers were brought to Lisbon.

The last few years of Dom João VI's reign were marked by new threats of absolutism. In 1825, his son Miguel, supported by his mother Queen Carlota Joaquina, attempted to overthrow the king in what is known as the *Abrilada*. Prince Miguel's scheme was halted; he was captured by the king's guards and sent into exile.⁶⁰ Dom João VI died in the following year.⁶¹ After his death the political climate in Portugal was far from stable however, and the future of the crown still tottered between the constitutional monarchists and the absolutists. Dom João VI's granddaughter's right to ascend the throne would be questioned and send the country into a new wave of unrest.

1.1.4 Maria II - the child queen

Princess Maria da Glória was born in Rio de Janeiro in April 1819. Only two years old when the royal family and court left on their return journey to Portugal, she was declared queen just a few years later when her grandfather, King João VI, died in 1826.⁶² Years of unrest ensued: the absolutists, with Dom Miguel as their leader, and the liberal factions headed by Princess Maria's father, Dom Pedro, fought over the succession of the Portuguese throne. Dom Pedro renounced the crown in favor of his daughter and set out to defend her rights as legitimate heiress to the crown. After years of the War of Two Brothers, the liberal armies, led by Dom Pedro, won. Meanwhile the young queen left Rio de Janeiro for Europe, spent two years in France between 1831 and 1833, and finally arrived in Portugal to rule a country she had never known. Maria II took the throne in 1834, just days before her father died after his relentless fight for the cause of her succession and the liberal constitution of Portugal.⁶³ Her nineteen-year reign was also fraught with turmoil – economic troubles, political instability, and insurgencies continued to disrupt life at court.

Dona Maria II inherited a country devastated by years of wars. In the wake of the royal family's return after general depletion of funds and stunted growth, the young queen faced opposition and insurgencies from various political groups. Maria II changed prime ministers eleven times during her nineteen-year reign, something that did not contribute to stability in what is considered one of Portugal's most disturbed periods. Her rule was marked by frequent military insurrections and interventions in politics, various revolutions, the siege of Porto, the revolt of the Patuleia, the uprising of farm workers,

the rebellion of Marshalls, new attempts at regaining the throne by Dom Miguel and his followers who contested the legitimacy of her reign, and consequently, economic troubles.⁶⁴ The young queen faced turbulent times from the onset of her rule.

The queen faced personal turmoil as well. In 1834 Maria II married Prince Auguste Charles of Beauharnais, Duke of Leuchtenberg, by proxy.⁶⁵ The prince arrived in 1835, but died two months later of diphtheria.⁶⁶ The following year, after the proper period of mourning, she married Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, with whom she had eleven children.⁶⁷ The king consort focused his attention on the arts, and on re-building a palace in Sintra, on the outskirts of Lisbon, which he bought in 1838 and proceeded to renovate soon thereafter. The construction took several years and the palace was only made habitable in 1851.⁶⁸ Today, the magical Palace of Pena with its surrounding gardens in romantic style is one of Lisbon's many tourist attractions.

Despite all of the political difficulties, the queen found time to dedicate her efforts to the arts. In 1836 Dona Maria II created a Conservatory of Dramatic Arts, where the discipline of dance was incorporated into the curriculum, with lessons in dance and mime taught by Bernardo Vestris and Luigi Montani, respectively, in 1838.⁶⁹ Acting and music were also part of the curriculum of the school. The Theatro Dona Maria II, inaugurated in 1846, after six years of construction, is one of the Queen's artistic legacies. She also had the Estrela Gardens built, a public park near the Basilica of the same name which still exists;⁷⁰ revised the curriculum of the Academy of Fine Arts (which her grandfather had founded); promoted the Literary Society of Lisbon that included courses in astronomy, philosophy, history, fine arts, and literature; created the first free and mandatory public education system in 1844; implemented a public social assistance office for the care of

children, elders, and invalids to end mendicancy; implemented the improvement of the roads with the creation of a committee for the improvement of the interior; and began the construction of the railroad system.

Soirées and public balls in the several Assemblies and Clubs in Lisbon were popular during Maria II's reign, as were the literary and cultural salons which required all in attendance, women in particular, to wear their finest and fashionable best. The queen and her husband frequented the various balls in the palaces of the nobility, which lasted several hours with dancing, theatrical entertainments, and refreshments. The surviving libretti from this period attest to the continued interest in the arts of opera and ballet that were staged in the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in Lisbon, with the royal family, the nobility, and the emerging bourgeoisie in attendance.

1.2 Theaters in Lisbon

Building a theater that could support the productions of grand operas was one of the first enterprises of Dom José I soon after he ascended to the throne in 1750. The Grande Teatro do Paço (Grand Court Theater), as the Ópera do Tejo became known, was designed by Giovanni Carlo Bibiena, of the famous Bibiena family, and one of the Italian architects and scenic designers of the time whom Dom José hired directly from Italy so that his court theater could be built “according to the latest Italian fashion.”⁷¹ The magnificent opera theater was resplendent – its grandiose scale was known throughout Europe and visitors to Portugal wrote of its impressive size, cost, and lavish decorations.⁷² The performance of *Alessandro nell'India* included the participation of a

cavalry regiment, which, according to tradition was comprised of four hundred horses⁷³ – only a colossal size stage could have accommodated such numbers.

The sumptuous building of the Ópera do Tejo impressed foreign visitors in Lisbon. It is described in detail by the French officer Chevalier des Courtils, who witnessed performances in that theater in 1755:

The King maintains an Italian opera house that costs him two million a year. The spectacle he offers to his court twice or three times every week is truly majestic and full of pomp. To this purpose he had a beautiful and magnificent theater built. It is octagonal with four tiers of boxes. That of the King is at the end, and is decorated with imitation marble columns, covered with gilded bronze mouldings. Two other boxes in the same style are placed at the right and left on the sides of the stage. Those on the first and third tiers have gilded balustrades; those on the second and third tiers are fully open in front and magnificently gilded with a shining gold glittering like diamonds. Richness, delicacy, and good taste vie with each other. The theater is superb. It is one hundred and eighty feet long and sixty feet wide. The stalls occupy the whole length of the room. One is comfortably seated; there is no Amphitheatre, as in France... One cannot deny that one is struck when entering this room, by the gold and magnificence which shines and glitters from all sides.⁷⁴

The Chevalier goes on to offer his criticism regarding the size of the stage in proportion to the house, which he finds inappropriate in dimensions, stating that the stage “should have been three times as large as it [was].”⁷⁵ However, when describing one of the performances he attended, he found that “the decorations and the spectacle were superb,” and that “the immense stage, sumptuously decorated, charmed [their] eyes.” In respect to the quality of the performers he was equally complimentary when referring to

the “charming Italian music.”⁷⁶ It seems that the stage was not in fact too small, and that indeed this theater must have been an example of grandeur not easily matched elsewhere. A product of the Brazilian gold mines, the richly decorated opera house attested to the wealth of the Portuguese court.

Dom José’s dream theater did not last long; inaugurated in April of 1755, it would collapse with the earthquake of November of the same year. It is still considered one of the great cultural treasures lost in that catastrophe, along with many paintings, sculptures, and furnishings dating back from the sixteenth century, and the palace library, believed to have been one of the greatest in eighteenth-century Europe, perhaps rivaling even that of the Vatican.⁷⁷ Another immeasurable loss was also felt in the lacunae left by several artists, including several singers and musicians, who fled the country fearing that another disaster was imminent.⁷⁸ This exodus must have affected the dance scene as well – it is probable that dancers too, frightened by the quake, left Portugal to seek employment elsewhere. Lisbon would have to wait thirty-eight years for another sizeable and adequate theater to house court celebrations. Despite all efforts in rebuilding the former cultural life of the court after the earthquake, the lack of an adequate opera house to stage larger productions was on the minds of nobles and managers toward the end of the eighteenth century.

Although not the first theater to be erected in Lisbon, the São Carlos was the first public opera theater in Portugal.⁷⁹ Smaller theaters existed, as well as private royal theaters for celebrations and ceremonies, but a veritable opera house that could accommodate all the necessary requisites for the staging of large-scale opera productions had been needed in the capital of Portugal for a long time. The royal family had enjoyed

music concerts, *serenatas*, and opera in their royal theaters as well as the four small and modest public theaters: Teatro do Bairro Alto, Teatro da Rua dos Condes, Teatro do Salitre, and the Teatro da Graça. After the earthquake of 1755, the Teatro do Bairro Alto only re-opened in 1761 due to the general atmosphere of post-catastrophe and rebuilding of the city.⁸⁰ The Palace of Queluz possessed a small theater, the Teatro Régio de Queluz, built in 1778, which was dismantled only six years later.⁸¹ However, operas were not staged in these theaters often,⁸² and consequently, not many ballets either. The nobility also attended a private theater of the Count de Souré which was famous for its sumptuous, lavish productions with special effects made possible by special stage machinery.⁸³ The public theaters also perished in the 1755 earthquake, but by 1790 some had been rebuilt, and were in operation, albeit in small scale productions rather than in the grand opera style. The Teatro da Rua dos Condes was rebuilt in 1765, and lasted until 1782, after which it was demolished.⁸⁴ The Teatro do Bairro Alto went through some restructuring and additions in 1764; it served as the opera theater until 1789.⁸⁵ The Teatro da Rua dos Condes, also rebuilt in 1765, had four tiers of twenty-six boxes each⁸⁶ and continued to be the opera theater until the Real Theatro de S. Carlos was completed.

Lisbon still had the royal theaters of Ajuda, Queluz, and Salvaterra, but they had been closed due to the Queen's unstable health. In fact, during a performance at the Salvaterra Theater in 1792 Dona Maria I had one of her "stronger fits of madness, and operas in the royal theatres came thus to an end."⁸⁷ Shortly afterward Dom João VI was named Prince Regent, which contributed to changes in the theatrical scene in Portugal as well. Compared to other European capitals, Lisbon was far behind in what it had to offer

in regards to opera and music performances, a fact that was not missed by the nobles as well as the royal administration.

1.3 The Real Theatro de São Carlos

The construction of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos, supported by private enterprise and funding provided by several merchants and wealthy patrons, began in December 1792.⁸⁸ The entire cost for the construction of the S. Carlos Theater amounts to a fraction of the masonry for the Opera do Tejo completed in 1755. It was built at a rather rapid pace – it was inaugurated only five months later. The theater was equipped with restrooms, ample boxes, and good carriage access at the front door. It transformed the life in the center of Lisbon where the new bourgeoisie assembled for the long performances “in their finest dress, ladies in their low-cut gowns in imperial style, their bejeweled necks scintillating.”⁸⁹ Even during the royal family’s exile, the S. Carlos Theater remained open, although there were fewer performances during the French occupation at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The São Carlos Theater was designed by a Portuguese architect, José da Costa e Silva, who had studied in Bologna and worked on a few public buildings in Lisbon upon returning to Portugal. The style of the São Carlos in Lisbon resembles that of the San Carlo in Naples, the theater from which Costa e Silva drew inspiration for his design. The Italian style is so clearly marked in the Lisbon Theater that foreigners, upon seeing the São Carlos, attributed it to an Italian architect.⁹⁰ The San Carlo in Naples burned down in 1816, making the São Carlos in Lisbon a prime example of the Italian architectural style

of this period.⁹¹ Indeed, the reconstructed San Carlo in Naples, Italy, still resembles the São Carlos in Lisbon, although its dimensions, inside and out, are much larger.

The stage of the São Carlos Theater was large – its proscenium was fourteen meters wide, only two meters narrower than the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, but two meters wider than the Teatro Regio in Turin, and three meters wider than the Pergola in Florence. The S. Carlos was exactly as wide as the Teatro La Fenice,⁹² in Venice, and it was thus comparable to the Italian theaters where the Italian dancers and composers who came to Lisbon had worked before. Although it has gone through several reforms, the theater is still very similar to what it was at the time of its inauguration, and on that April evening in 1793 the audience would have walked in and encountered it very much as one finds it today.⁹³ The raked stage allowed the audience to see everything on any part of the stage from any seat in the auditorium.⁹⁴ There were 122 boxes distributed on five levels of tiers. The stalls, with the seating capacity for eight hundred people, had benches with backs; one section of it – the auditorium of the nobles – had upholstered seats.⁹⁵ The horseshoe shape of the tiered boxes, with the royal box decorated with blue velvet curtains and imposing columns in the center of the first level, has been restored.

During the long performances, which lasted several hours, dinner was usually served in the royal box when the prince regent and his consort were present.⁹⁶ Originally, candles made with wax imported from Russia illuminated the house and the stage; however, gas lighting was introduced in 1850.⁹⁷ For a while, the splendid S. Carlos “rivalled the best opera houses anywhere.”⁹⁸

Interestingly, while in Brazil, one of Dom João VI’s artistic endeavors was to build a theater, called Real Teatro de São João, which was inaugurated in 1813.⁹⁹ Its

façade was very similar to the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in Lisbon, indicating that the king wished to reproduce in the New World the social and cultural life of court he was accustomed to in his mother country. With 1,020 seats in the orchestra level, and additional seating in the four tiers above in a total of one hundred and twelve boxes, it was a large theater that would hold many court celebrations during the court's exile in Rio de Janeiro.¹⁰⁰ The large theater was considered to be done in “great taste and built magnificently, emulating the best theaters of Europe in size and beauty of decoration.”¹⁰¹ Eleven years later the S. João was destroyed by fire. The freak accident took place during a performance when an actor ran into the scenery backdrop, making contact with the candles used to light the theater, and setting the entire house in flames.¹⁰² Thus, no records of performances have survived.

The 1793 inauguration of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos celebrated the birthday of Princess Maria Teresa in April of the same year. Other court related events were also commemorated in the theater, as for example the publication of the decree for the Regency of Dom João VI in 1799.¹⁰³ The occasion called for a celebration and the theater served as the perfect venue for this event on the evening of 28 July, when the nobility, the diplomatic corps, and some invited guests attended the special performance at the S. Carlos. Although the *Gazeta de Lisboa* of 2 August gives the title of the ballet performed that evening – *Conquista da Flórida Branca* (*White Florida's Conquest*) – the libretto is not found in the collection of the National Library of Portugal. Two years later, when the peace Treaty of Badajoz was signed by Portugal, France, and Spain in 1801,¹⁰⁴ great celebrations and festivities took place at the *Real Theatro de São Carlos*. A martial band played on the terrace square as the royal family, the nobility, and guests proceeded

to the adorned and illuminated theater. The opera by Cimarosa, *Gli Orazi e Curiazi* included a “well thought-out dance.”¹⁰⁵ The evening festivities included a “sumptuous banquet offered to the royal family and guests, where refreshments, drinks, wine, pastries, ice cream, sweet meats, roasted meats, ham, and other delicacies in abundance were served to all in attendance.”¹⁰⁶ These evenings of celebration and entertainment that included opera and dance would last several hours in order to accommodate not only the performances but also the refreshments.

Even when the Portuguese royal court was in exile across the Atlantic, official celebrations were still observed in Lisbon during the thirteen years it remained in exile. Despite political turmoil, the Real Theatro de S. Carlos did not cease operation, and performances continued through the period of French occupation in Lisbon. As early as January 1808, while the royal family was still aboard the fleet that was to take them to the new world, a new opera was premiered at the São Carlos.¹⁰⁷ That same year a cantata and a ballet were performed at the S. Carlos to celebrate the birthday of the exiled queen Maria I on 17 December 1808, choreographed by Giovanni Battista Giannini. The libretto included text in English in addition to the already standard Italian and Portuguese, no doubt due to the English presence in Portugal during the time of the Napoleonic occupation of Lisbon. The theater remained opened for the duration of the French invasion,¹⁰⁸ and, in addition to celebrations of birthdays and name-days of the royal family, Napoleon’s birthday also had been celebrated with an opera on 15 August. However, few ballet libretti are available from that time period.

The wedding of prince Pedro de Alcântara to archduchess Leopoldina of Austria in 1817 in Rio de Janeiro was duly echoed with gala performances that included opera

and ballets at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos.¹⁰⁹ Royal birthdays and name-days continued to be celebrated in Lisbon according to protocol as it had been, and, “usually with a lavish new production” and an especially composed piece of music, such as a cantata.¹¹⁰ Operas were often produced for these occasions, and, consequently, ballets would be part of the celebrations as well.

In addition to celebrations and masked balls during carnival, the stage and audience of the S. Carlos would also witness public displays of political allegiance, because, “as almost always happened, political developments echoed in applause and shouts of *Vivas* in the theaters.”¹¹¹ To solemnize the constitutional revolution of 1820 a cantata was expressly composed by Coccia by the title of *Il Genio Lusitano Trionfante*. On 27 April 1821, during a performance of the opera *La Cenerentola*, the navy minister, upon receiving some documents just delivered to his box, stood up, clapped his hands and proceeded to address the public:

“I have interrupted this performance because I thought that the news I bear will interest you greatly. At this moment the commander of the frigate Maria da Gloria, just arriving from Rio de Janeiro, brings me the official letter of our sovereign king Dom João VI who declares his acceptance of the constitution, which our national electoral court shall draw (great applause and manifestation of cheers), and has also determined to return to our country and government in Lisbon” ... after more acclamations the minister quieted the public with a hand gesture, and proceeded to read the remainder of the decree.¹¹²

At hearing such commotion in the audience, all the Italian artists walked on the stage from the wings and proceeded to sing as the entire house, on its feet, waved

handkerchiefs in celebration. After that, the remainder of the performance was transformed into an evening of jubilation.¹¹³

However, the theater also witnessed less conciliatory reactions thirteen years later. On the evening of 27 May 1834, the audience began insulting the newly restored king Dom Pedro IV during the performance of the appropriately titled ballet *Clazimiro e Slavizza, or The Usurper Punished*¹¹⁴ by Luigi Montani. Although supported by the middle class and the liberals, Dom Pedro IV nonetheless encountered opponents ready to show their discontent at the results of the latest Convention of Évora which restored the throne to his daughter, Maria da Glória. The various opposing Portuguese factions, at seeing the king in the audience, found the theater a vehicle for voicing their discontent in public, shouting insults such as “traitor” and “despot” at Dom Pedro IV who, unable to contain himself, shouted back “out with the scoundrel,” at which the public reacted with a mixture of “hoorays” and “boos,” while many clamored for the constitutional hymn, which Dom Pedro had composed.¹¹⁵ The tempestuous incident left indelible memories in all who were in attendance at the S. Carlos on that eventful evening; the public insult and display of altered temperaments took a toll on Dom Pedro as well. Already ill and frail, on that same night he showed signs of his further deteriorating health, and died only a few months later at the Palace of Queluz.

After the inauguration of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in 1793, palace court theaters ceased operation, and the royal family attended performances and celebrations at the São Carlos.¹¹⁶ Although the court moved to Rio de Janeiro for thirteen years, the São Carlos continued activities almost uninterrupted, except for brief periods of political unrest. A number of political incidents mentioned herein found their way – sometimes

allegorically – into the ballet libretti of the S. Carlos Theater. As might be expected, the ballets supported the power structure and status quo of the time. For the next several decades into the middle of the nineteenth century Italian choreographers, dancers, and *ballets d'action* predominated on the Portuguese stage. While working in Lisbon future famous Italian choreographers like Antonio Cortesi, Luigi Astolfi, and Giovanni Casati discovered their talent and debuted their first creations.

1.4 The inaugural ballet – *A FELICIDADE LUSITANA*

The latest events at court in 1792 were on everyone's mind: the queen's madness; the passing of government into the Prince Regent's hands; the court's rejoicing over the birth of the first heir to the throne, princess Maria Teresa, just a few months before; and the latest progressions in post-revolutionary France. The decree granting the prince regent the duty and obligation to sign in his mother's name had become public in a special edition of the *Gazeta de Lisboa*. The newspaper also had been publishing weekly news of various displays of honor to the royal couple and gratitude for the royal birth, some of them in detail – celebrations in the form of outdoor festivities, theatrical and musical offerings, and gala performances were taking place in all Portuguese provinces on the continent and overseas colonies. In Lisbon, these had commenced months before with several displays of fireworks throughout town and were to culminate on the night of 30 June 1793 with the inaugural performance of the Real Theatro de São Carlos.

A printed notice announced that there would be three days of inaugural performances: 30 June, 1 and 3 July, at eight-thirty in the evening, warning readers that

all tickets would be priced at double the regular amount “as is customary in Openings of Theaters due to the great expenses incurred in all that is indispensable for such productions.”¹¹⁷ Along with the names of the musical composers and mention of the arrival of the Italian opera artists, recently hired to work in the new theater, Gaetano Gioia is referred to as the “famous *primo ballerino* and dance master in charge of the choreography of the analogous ballet *A Felicidade Lusitana*, to celebrate the auspicious birth of Her Most Serene Princess of Beira.” The performances of the *burleta* (a two act *dramma giocoso*, *opera buffa*, or comic opera)¹¹⁸ and the ballet were to be “duly decorated with scenery and costumes in accordance with such a distinct theater.”¹¹⁹ The same notice informed the public of Lisbon that the libretti for the music and the ballets would be for sale at the Theater on the evenings of the performances. Thus, the audience came into the entry hall of the brand-new theater already apprised of some details of the inauguration of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos.

When the audience walked into the newly erected theater for the inaugural performance, the small printed libretto – approximately three by five inches – for the ballet that soon would be seen to unfold on the stage had been sold in the lobby of the theater. The front page contained the title and subtitle of the ballet, a dedication to Her Royal Highness Dona Carlota Joaquina, Princess of Brazil, the choreographer’s name, and the year of the publication. The theme and story are summarized in Gioia’s address, and then detailed in the body of the libretto, each act explained separately. Curiously, the names of the dancers are not listed, only the characters that are part of the *ballo*. This could be attributed to the fact that Gioia had only two months in which to create both an allegorical theme and the choreography for the inaugural ballet, and had to submit

materials to print before casting the nine main characters in addition to the various minor roles and *corps de ballet*.

Subtitled as a heroic-dramatic ballet, *A Felicidade Lusitana (The Lusitanian Happiness)* was Gioia's first ballet produced in Lisbon and it was a tribute to the Portuguese as they celebrated the inauguration of a theater that could finally allow for the productions of operas on a grand scale. It was also the choreographer's homage to the Prince Regent and the royal house of Portugal. In his "address to the public" Gioia referred to this *ballo* as *eroico-pantomimo* and asked the audience to pardon his "inadequate talent," but assured it of his "diligence in rendering [the ballet] at once intelligible, striking, and pleasing to the eyes."

As was usually done, Gioia addressed the audience of the new Teatro de S. Carlos in a printed letter on the second page of the libretto. "To the respectable and most benign public":

The Lusitanian Happiness is the argument which I proposed to explore for the first time in this new theater. The heroic-pantomimic ballet I composed for the occasion with most diligence, in order to render it intelligible and visually pleasing, would have required a greater talent than mine; however, the nobleness of the subject matter, to which I proposed to create it, will make it worthy of your most benign tolerance. Reflecting on the good taste and fine discernment with which you will judge my *ballo*, I trust that I shall merit the favor which I necessitate so that I may at the same time experience the beneficial effects of the grace to which my most profound veneration aspires, as I am your humbly and most reverent and obliged servant,

Gaetano Gioia

In this characteristically verbose style of the period, Gioia's address demonstrates a concern with the reception of this ballet. Although not an inexperienced choreographer, Gioia was nonetheless creating a work in Lisbon for the first time and thus the reception of his ballet for the occasion of the theater's inauguration was important. The ballet is subtitled a *ballo eroico-dramatico*, but Gioia refers to it as a heroic-pantomimic ballet – something that points to the interchangeability of these subtitles throughout the period. Gioia makes use of mythological characters in creating this ballet that takes place partly in Lusitania¹²⁰ and partly in Heaven. The summary he included just before the detailed scenes of each act gives us a sense of how the choreographer conceived his work for this eventful performance in June 1793. The audience read the description in the libretto prior to witnessing the ballet on stage:

The Lusitanian happiness, occasioned by the auspicious birth of Her Most Serene Princess of Beira is the argument of this ballet: to this event concurred, in excessive joy, the Gods when they saw the Royal Progeny, to whom they promised protection of their Kingdom, especially by Neptune and Mars, and, finally, the celebration of this above mentioned birth which takes place in the Royal Kingdom in the chambers of Jupiter.

As the royal family was celebrating the birth of the princess Maria Teresa, the first offspring of Dom João VI and Dona Carlota Joaquina, Gioia's ballet celebrated this blessed occasion on the stage in an allegory of Gods bestowing their protection on the kingdom and the royal family. The list of characters includes Jupiter, Neptune, Mars, Mercury, Juno, Venus, Minerva, the River Tagus, Lusitania, and various Genii and Pleasures. The new theater must have been equipped with special machinery that allowed

Gioia to design an especially effective opening scene for the first act with the gods descending from the clouds:

At the opening of the curtains, one could see the backdrop depicting the margins of the river Tagus with the city of Lisbon seen at a distance, while the Gods descended from the heavens. To one side of the stage are the River Tagus and the sea, both looking sad. At a sign from Jupiter Tagus awakens, and, surprised by seeing the Celestial Divinities, obsequiously reverences all of them, who tell him that it is no longer a time for sadness. Tagus inquires the reason for happiness, at which Venus and the other Goddesses show him the newborn progeny, at which sight Tagus exults. Filled with pleasure all the Divinities, the Genii and the Pleasures begin to dance. Once the dance is finished, Tagus announces the arrival of Lusitania, who enters accompanied by the Genii and the Pleasures bringing the portraits of the sovereign Prince Regent and Princess, as an offering to Jupiter and the other deities who courteously and joyfully accept them.

The description of the scenes in the first act clearly indicates a blend of mime and dance intertwined in the story of the first *ballet d'action* staged at the Real Teatro de S. Carlos. The blending of mime and dance continues in the other two acts of this ballet. In the last scene Gioia presents an apotheosis finale with all characters arranged in groups and dancing, all bowing at once to a grand tableau, after which a grand *ballabile* begins. Although this is Gioia's only ballet still available in the collection of the libretti at the National Library of Lisbon, its content is important in establishing the style of ballets produced in Portugal at this time, and offers insight into the *ballets d'action* genres that predominated on the stage of the Real Teatro de S. Carlos throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

Notes to Chapter 1

¹ Douglas Wheeler and Walter Opello Jr, *Historical Dictionary of Portugal*, 1; Opello *Portugal: From Monarchy to Pluralist Democracy*, 1.

² A. H. de Oliveira Marques, *History of Portugal*, Vol.1, 45-46.

³ A. R. Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire. From Beginnings to 1807. Vol. 1: Portugal*, 95-96.

⁴ Wheeler and Opello, 4.

⁵ Kenneth Maxwell calls this period the “long eighteenth century in Portugal.” “Eighteenth-Century Portugal: Faith and Reason, Tradition and Innovation during a Golden Age.” *The Age of Baroque in Portugal*, 104.

⁶ A. J. R. Russell-Wood, “Portugal and the World in the Age of Dom João V,” *The Age of Baroque in Portugal*, 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Disney, 269. Dom João V’s wedding to Maria Ana of Austria in 1708 was a particularly ostentatious event for which the king had sent an embassy to Vienna for the marriage’s negotiations earlier in that same year.

⁹ Luísa Viana de Paiva Boléo, *D. Maria I, A Rainha Louca*, 54.

¹⁰ Disney, 272.

¹¹ Russell-Wood, 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, 16-17.

¹³ Disney, 275.

¹⁴ Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 52.

¹⁵ Jennifer Montagu, “João V and Italian Sculpture,” *The Age of Baroque in Portugal*, 81-83.

¹⁶ Wheeler and Opello, 165.

¹⁷ Examples of carriages are now on display in the Lisbon’s National Coach Museum. In *The Age of Baroque in Portugal*, Marco Fabio Apolloni devotes an entire essay to the coaches of Dom João V’s embassy to Rome. The same volume includes an article by Leonor d’Ory on the jewelry of the time period, now in the collections of palaces and museums. D’Ory points out that although faux jewelry had been the vogue throughout Europe since the mid-seventeenth century, the availability of gold and precious stones from Brazil kept this fashion from disseminating in Portugal, 163-166.

¹⁸ Disney, 272.

¹⁹ Manuel Carlos de Brito, *Opera in Portugal in the Eighteenth Century*, 24-26.

²⁰ Marian Hannah Winter, *The Pre-Romantic Ballet*, 145. *Tedescho* in Italian means German; hence his nickname *Il Tedeschino*, the German, referred to his German connection.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

²² Brito, 31-32. The candle wick used in Portugal at the time was made from cotton that came from Brazil, and there had been complaints about the quality of the wick and the great amount of smoke in the theaters, which prompted the king to import 300 kilograms (660 pounds) of cotton to be used in the manufacture of candles for his opera theater productions (*ibid.*, 33).

²³ Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Arquivo Histórico do Ministério das Finanças (Royal House Archives), Box 3505.

²⁴ ANTT, AHMF Box 3506, 31 January 1767.

²⁵ ANTT, AHMF Box 3505, 1769. The director included his personal order for a number of items from France, such as hats, dresses, silk stockings, wigs, scented wig powder, pomade from Provence, scented soaps, four pairs of cufflinks, a gala dress, and even toothbrushes, as evidenced in a letter stating that these were items “[he] ordered directly from M. Jean Dupont” and clearly were not for the theater, as there is a separate roster of items he ordered “for his majesty’s theater.” AHMF Box 3505, 7 July 1767.

²⁶ Maxwell, “Faith and Reason,” 103.

²⁷ Oliveira Marques, 378-79.

²⁸ Kenneth Maxwell, *Pombal, Paradox of the Enlightenment*, 38.

- ²⁹ Maxwell, “Faith and Reason,” 115; *Pombal*, 38; Livermore, 220-21; Oliveira Marques, 379-80.
- ³⁰ Maxwell, “Faith and Reason,” 115.
- ³¹ J. F. Blondel, J. P. Le Bas Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, D.S. XVIII, 298.
- ³² Publications on the phenomenon in several languages dwelled on “divine intervention” and the reason behind the punishment of many who were praying at mass on All Saint’s day while many in prison were saved. Indeed, it seemed as though the hand of Providence had intervened. Even in such matters Pombal interceded in order to keep the population from going into a general panic, requesting that priests refrain from addressing such topics in their sermons. H. V. Livermore. *A New History of Portugal* 222-223.
- ³³ Pedegache 23.
- ³⁴ Livermore 237-38.
- ³⁵ Maxwell “Faith and Reason” 116.
- ³⁶ Simonetta Luz Afonso, “Court Festivities at Queluz,” *The Age of Baroque in Portugal*, 175-177; Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 144-145. At the Lisbon court it was customary to change rooms before the dessert course, an innovation introduced in 1755 that continued for several decades. Halls or rooms were specially decorated with objects in porcelain and silver for that purpose. Afonso, “Court Festivities,” 177.
- ³⁷ Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 70-75.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 215.
- ³⁹ Disney, 318.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 317.
- ⁴¹ Maria I’s remains were transported to the Basílica of Estrela upon the court’s return from Rio de Janeiro in 1821.
- ⁴² Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 177. Domingos Antonio de Sequeira would become the court’s portrait painter during Dom João VI’s reign.
- ⁴³ Brito, 57-58.
- ⁴⁴ José Sasportes, “Feasts and Foliás: The Dance in Portugal,” 48-49.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.
- ⁴⁶ Livermore, 244.
- ⁴⁷ Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 258.
- ⁴⁸ Jorge Pedreira and Fernando Dores Costa, *D. João VI, Um Príncipe entre Dois Continentes*, 60.
- ⁴⁹ *Gazeta de Lisboa* 14 Feb 1792.
- ⁵⁰ Oliveira Marques, 424.
- ⁵¹ Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 283.
- ⁵² Dom João VI’s oldest brother, prince José, had been prepared to succeed Dona Maria I, but died in 1788, at the age of twenty seven, due to small pox.
- ⁵³ Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 283.
- ⁵⁴ Livermore, 250; Disney, 332-33.
- ⁵⁵ This battle inspired a ballet by the title *A Restauração do Porto ou um dos Triumphos do Heroe Wellesley* (*The Restoration of Porto or one of the Triumphs of the Hero Wellesley*), which featured English troops on stage. Francisco da Fonseca Benevides, *O Real Theatro de S. Carlos de Lisboa*, 103. Unfortunately, no extant libretto has been discovered for this performance.
- ⁵⁶ Livermore, 251-54; Oliveira Marques, 428-29. Sir Arthur Wellesley was awarded the title of Duke of Wellington for his successful campaign against the French.
- ⁵⁷ Oliveira Marques, 429.
- ⁵⁸ Pedreira and Costa, 48-49.
- ⁵⁹ Luísa V. de Paiva Boléo, *D. Maria II, A Rainha Insubmissa*, 261.
- ⁶⁰ Livermore, 266-67.
- ⁶¹ Pedreira and Costa, 422-24. Dom João VI became ill and died after seven days. The homicide hypothesis has been confirmed by posthumous analyses of the king’s remains, which showed highly elevated levels of arsenic in the visceral tissues.
- ⁶² At the age of twelve the young Maria II was received by King George V of England; at the time, several caricatures of the young queen circulated in the English press. Boléo, *Rainha Insubmissa*, Illustration after page 192.
- ⁶³ The constitution charter that Dom Pedro proposed was the basis for all of the constitutions of Portugal, with some modifications, until the fall of the monarchy in 1911. Livermore, 269; Laurentino Gomes, *1822*,

320. Dom Pedro ensured that Maria II was declared of age, and enthroned her the following day on September 20, 1834. He died only four days later at the palace of Queluz where he had spent his youth before the court departed for Brazil. The first official decree issued by the queen was a royal letter conferring the order of the “Gran-Cross of the Order of the Tower and Sword of Valor” on her father. Boléo, *Rainha Insubmissa*, 174-176.

⁶⁴ Wheeler and Opello, 185; Livermore, 281-85; Boléo, *Rainha Insubmissa*, 274.

⁶⁵ He was a cousin of Dom Pedro’s second wife and the marriage had been negotiated prior to his death. Boléo, *Rainha Insubmissa*, 189.

⁶⁶ Maria II had been married to her uncle Dom Miguel, but the marriage was never consummated and it was annulled by the church. Boléo, *Ibid.*, n. 354.

⁶⁷ He was the cousin of Prince Albert of England, who married queen Victoria and thus Maria II became cousin of the English queen by marriage. Three of the quadruple alliance countries were governed by queens at the time. Livermore, 281.

⁶⁸ Boléo, *Rainha Insubmissa*, 266-68; [parquesdesintra.pt/14 October 2014](http://parquesdesintra.pt/14-October-2014).

⁶⁹ Olga Roriz “Conservatorio,” *Citi*, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 17 January 2015. The conservatory went through periods of decline and did not have continuous instruction or attendance after 1842. Several proposals to revise the dance school, were not successful. By 1868 there only three dance students enrolled and it was finally dissolved one year later. *Ibid.*, “História,” 16 Feb 2015.

⁷⁰ The project was unusual as it took advantage of the terrain’s natural landscape in an innovative fashion, where the trees, flower beds, and walkways created a harmonious natural environment. Boléo, *Rainha Insubmissa*, 298-300.

⁷¹ Mário Vieira de Carvalho, *Pensar É Morrer*, 41.

⁷² Augusto M. Seabra, *Ir a S. Carlos*, 35.

⁷³ Carvalho, 42.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Brito, 27.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Disney, 284.

⁷⁸ Brito, 30.

⁷⁹ Seabra, 15-16.

⁸⁰ Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 238.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁸² Brito, 83.

⁸³ Caetano Beirão, *Dona Maria I; Subsídios para a Revisão da História de Seu Reinado*, 269.

⁸⁴ Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 239.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*; Brito, 83-84. There seems to be some confusion regarding the name of the Bairro Alto Theater as two other theaters were also referred to as Bairro Alto probably because of their location.

⁸⁶ Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 239; Brito, 90. The size of the house differs according to each author. In Brito’s estimation the theater was much larger, with 104 boxes, whereas Boléo gives the number of 23 boxes, which seems rather small.

⁸⁷ Brito, 77.

⁸⁸ These were Tabaco production and importation businessmen who lent the money for the building of the theater. The debt was finally paid more than fifty years later in 1854. Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 241-42.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁹⁰ Seabra, 57.

⁹¹ Benevides, 20; Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 242.

⁹² Benevides provides an appendix with the measurements of the main European theaters as a comparison with the S. Carlos in Lisbon, 434-442.

⁹³ The noble hall was finished four years later, something that has led to some confusion as to the date of the inauguration for once this hall was finished, it too was inaugurated in 1797. Boléo, 241; Benevides ; David J. Cranmer, *Opera in Portugal 1793-1828*, 23. This ample room on the second floor is directly above the main entrance below, with large glass doors that open to a terrace overlooking a square.

⁹⁴ Cranmer, 17.

⁹⁵ Cranmer, 17. Women were not allowed in the stalls, only in the boxes.

- ⁹⁶ Ibid.
- ⁹⁷ Benevides, 28.
- ⁹⁸ Cranmer, 11.
- ⁹⁹ Luis Norton, *A Corte de Dom João VI no Brasil*, 101.
- ¹⁰⁰ Jean-Baptiste Debret *Viagem Pitoresca e Histórica ao Brasil* Vol 1, 5; ctac.gov.br/centrohistorico/teatro, 14 Oct 2014. The seating capacity of the S. João was about the same as that of the Theatro S. Carlos in Lisbon.
- ¹⁰¹ Debret, Vol 1, 414.
- ¹⁰² Lafayette Silva, *História do Teatro Brasileiro*, 27.
- ¹⁰³ He was officially declared Prince Regent in 1799, but had been signing in the queen's name since she had been declared incapable in 1792, as previously mentioned.
- ¹⁰⁴ Disney, 325.
- ¹⁰⁵ Benevides, 68.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 68-69.
- ¹⁰⁷ Cranmer, 49.
- ¹⁰⁸ Boléo, *Rainha Louca*, 243.
- ¹⁰⁹ Benevides, 113.
- ¹¹⁰ Cranmer, 22.
- ¹¹¹ Benevides, 121.
- ¹¹² Ibid., 123.
- ¹¹³ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁴ This libretto is not available in the collection of the National Library of Portugal. From its title we can deduce that it alluded to the tyrannical rule of the absolutist Dom Miguel, the usurper of the Portuguese throne who was defeated by his liberal brother Dom Pedro IV.
- ¹¹⁵ Benevides, 158-59.
- ¹¹⁶ Brito, 77.
- ¹¹⁷ Seabra, 59.
- ¹¹⁸ Cranmer, 17.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid., 59.
- ¹²⁰ Portugal was known by its founding Romans as Lusitania. Lusitanian and the prefix *lus* still refer to things Portuguese.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHOREOGRAPHERS

Many of the choreographers who worked in Lisbon from 1793 until the middle of the nineteenth century attempted their first choreographies during their tenure at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos. Antonio Cortesi, hired as a *primo ballerino*,¹ suffered an injury while dancing, and, as a result, became a choreographer and finished his contract by creating ballets instead of performing. Luigi Astolfi, for example, created his first ballet while fulfilling his appointment at the Lisbon Theater, and went on to become one of Italy's most prolific choreographers of the nineteenth century. A few choreographers came to Portugal with some experience, and upon returning to Italy continued their careers as creators of ballets at La Scala in Milan and La Fenice in Venice, for instance.

While some of the choreographers who worked in Lisbon in the sixty-year period I am investigating started their careers in Portugal and choreographed for the first time while employed at the Real Theatro de São Carlos, many of them brought to Portugal their previous experiences as ballet masters and composers from their tenure in theaters such as the La Scala in Milan, La Fenice in Venice, San Carlo in Naples, Teatro Regio in Turin, and the Pergola in Florence. Four of the choreographers who worked in Portugal were to become some of Italy's foremost choreographers of the early to mid-nineteenth century: Gaetano Gioia, Luigi Astolfi, Giovanni Casati, and Antonio Cortesi. The latter,

in particular, was considered a successor of Salvatore Viganò, the creator of the Italian style *ballet d'action*, the *Coreodrama*. Luigi Astolfi, who created his first ballet while he was a performer in Portugal, also became a renowned composer of ballets in the first half of the nineteenth century upon his return to Italy. Gaetano Gioia, the creator of the ballet for the inauguration of the São Carlos Theater in 1793, continued his career as choreographer and became successful upon his return to Italy at the end of that same year, working at the Teatro La Scala, among other theaters, for many years. Gioia's ballets were frequently restaged by his brother Ferdinando, as was the case of his *Gabriella de Vergy*, which in turn would be the inspiration for Donizetti's opera by the same title.² Antonio Cortesi, a pupil and protégé of Gioia also restaged his *Gabriella de Vergy* for the S. Carlos Theater under the title of *Fayel*.³ Gaetano Gioia's inaugural ballet libretto demonstrates some of his tendencies and stylistic choices for this choreographic work in Lisbon.

Many of the choreographers who started their careers as composers of ballets in Lisbon had extensive training and had worked with well-established names in the ballet-pantomime style, such as Salvatore Viganò, Salvatore Taglioni, Antonio Monticini, and Giovanni Coralli, to name a few. Dancers and choreographers were familiar with each other's styles and had performed in many of the ballets by these masters and ballet composers. It is also common to see names of dancers who appear in Portuguese libretti also listed in Italian libretti from previous years. It seems logical that they would have brought to the Lisbon stage the training and dancing styles, as well as the choreographic choices, of their masters and mentors.

My selection of choreographers is not necessarily based on the number of works they created for the Real Theatro de S. Carlos. I chose them because their presence in Lisbon was significant due to their importance in Italy. The selection also allows me to make a comparison of their works found in the National Library of Portugal with those at the Houghton Library at Harvard University. Comparison of the libretti in these two different collections makes possible the analysis of their narratives to establish the similarities and differences in ballets produced in Portugal and Italy from the end of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century, and to identify changes in the approach to the stories they contain.

2.1. Gaetano Gioia

Gaetano Gioja was a contemporary of Salvatore Viganò, and was as prolific and as well-known in Italy as that ballet master, although he did not have as much international exposure. But, unlike Viganò, Gioia “found general acceptance all over Italy.”⁴ Although he started as a *grottesco*, by the time he arrived in Portugal as a dancer he had advanced to the two stages of *serio*, first as a *primo ballerino serio*, and soon after that to the rank of *primo ballerino serio assoluto*, a ranking he would retain for the remainder of his performing career.⁵ In 1793, probably after his return from Lisbon, Gioia was hired at the La Scala Theater where he created several ballets and also arranged the music for some of them. As a young performer he already showed an interest in creating his own roles, for he received additional compensation for having contributed the choreography for his own pantomime in a ballet when he was only

fourteen.⁶ Gioia was a principal dancer for at least ten years working in many other theaters throughout Italy, including the Regio in Turin and La Scala, in Milan, both as a dancer and as a choreographer.⁷ Having had his choreographic début in 1789 in Turin,⁸ Gioia had been working as a composer of ballets for four years before being invited to stage the ballets for the opening performance of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in 1793. Thus we can infer that during his short appointment in Portugal Gioia contributed considerably to the quality of both performance and choreography on the Lisbon stage. Dancers have always emulated fellow dancers with whom they share regular lessons, rehearsals, and performances by observing, practicing new skills, and attempting innovative technique they have encountered through contact with one another. Gioia was a teacher of pantomime in the school at La Scala in 1824;⁹ his style of mime was passed on to students who went to Lisbon as performers and choreographers.

Because Gioia was better known in Italy than abroad, information about him is scarce. His name is rarely mentioned in major dance history works, and even then, mostly in passing. Gioia dedicated himself exclusively to choreography from 1803 until his death in 1826. During his longest and most creative period at the San Carlo in Naples, from 1802 to 1807, he created ballets in the Italian pantomime style, or what Hansell calls “grand pantomime dramas.”¹⁰ Gioia’s prolific output numbers more than ninety ballets.¹¹ His long thirty-seven-year career as a choreographer was influential not only in dance, but in opera as well. Two of Gioia’s ballets – *Gabriella di Vergy* (1819) and *Cesare in Egitto* (1807) – served as inspiration for Italian operas; both enjoyed great popularity in Italy throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.¹² Although Viganò is the best known Italian choreographer of this time period, Gioia created five times the

number of works of his contemporary, and “his long lasting presence on the Italian stage for more than a half century is irrefutable.”¹³ Many of his *balli grandi* were restaged for twenty years after his death. Clearly, Gioia’s importance cannot be underestimated and his contribution to the *ballet d’action* in Italy must not be overlooked.

Many of Gioia’s ballets were later revived or re-staged by his brother Ferdinando, and by at least one of his students, Antonio Cortesi, who was also choreographer in Lisbon. If his style and preference for using “large number of dancers and spectacular scenic effects... for visual extravagance”¹⁴ could already be seen in his early works, we can imagine the impact of the laudatory tribute to the royal family and their new-born princess in his choreography for the inaugural ballet staged in Lisbon in 1793.

2.2 Augusto Hus

Marian Hannah Winter delineates the history of the Hus family, indicating that the clan was quite large and spread out over Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is thus difficult to place Augusto within the “Hus dynasty, which was so numerous, so active, so successful, and so well-travelled, that only a fragmentary chronology is possible.”¹⁵ We do know that Augusto was working in Italy in the late 1820s, and that he also appears as the choreographer of ballets at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in Lisbon in the seasons of 1834-36. Ivor Guest tells us that Augusto Hus was the grandson of French-born August I, born Jean-Baptiste, who was a student of Dupré and was a successful choreographer of provincial theaters in France in the late 1780s.¹⁶ Jean-Baptiste had already experimented with the *ballet d’action* in its infancy, presenting an

innovative ballet in this style in 1759.¹⁷ Augusto's father, Pietro Hus, was choreographer and teacher in Naples, and trained many "brilliant Milanese and Neapolitan Romantic dancers,"¹⁸ including three of the best choreographers of the period: Salvatore Taglioni, Antonio Guerra, and Louis Henry.¹⁹ Augusto's dates are not certain – he is not a renowned choreographer outside of Italy, and his tenure at the São Carlos in Lisbon is virtually unknown. However, Augusto Hus seems to have contributed to Italian ballet as a choreographer of a certain degree of inventiveness and a ballet master of some importance.

Little is available regarding Augusto's career prior to his appointment in Lisbon. He studied in Padua, graduating in 1827 as a *ballerino*, having later on become a famous choreographer, the "last of an illustrious family of dancers and choreographers."²⁰ After his Portuguese tenure, Hus returned to Italy, working with dancers such as Marie Taglioni and Fanny Cerrito who alternated in the title role of his *Luisa Strozzi*, which he composed for the opening performance of the 1842-43 season at La Scala, and which was repeated fifty times.²¹ In 1845 Adele Dumilatre would play the role of the young fairy Zeila in the ballet by the same title also at La Scala. Hus' *Odoardo III (Edward III)*, an historical mimed action which he staged for the Teatro Carignano in Turin in 1837, would be performed as *L'assedio de Calais (The Siege of Calais)* at La Scala ten years later, with Augusta Maywood as a leading dancer. This was a re-staging of the work by Louis Henry, whom Hus, in a program of 1847, acknowledged was the ballet's original author.²² As a choreographer Hus worked with many renowned dancers of the time, and, when still young, he also appeared in his own ballets in both danced and mimed roles.

In Lisbon Hus was responsible for choreographing a ballet for the debut of the French ballerina Mlle Noblet,²³ *O Triunfo de Amor (The Triumph of Love)*. In this work Hus interweaved mimed action with various dances, including variations and a *pas de deux* for Noblet in the role of Diana. Although it is difficult to ascertain exactly how long his stay in Portugal might have been, we know that he had already created at least two ballets for the S. Carlos Theater by the time Noblet appeared on the Lisbon stage in 1835.²⁴ In the preface to the program Hus states that he had “attempted to challenge himself and create something very distinct from all of his previous compositions, having chosen a mythological theme, which he deemed more appropriate to showcase the talents of Noblet.” Perhaps Hus’ early attempts at choreography were encouraging, as he went on to become one of Italy’s several prolific choreographers of the nineteenth century. After a successful stay in Vienna he returned to Italy. Augusto Hus, like his predecessor Carlo Blasis, graduated to the post of *maestro di perfezionamento* and director of the academy of dance at La Scala in 1851.²⁵ He remained in that capacity until 1868, when he was succeeded by Giovanni Casati, another choreographer whose early career can be traced to an engagement at the S. Carlos Theatre in Lisbon.

Augusto Hus also worked at the San Carlo in Naples, and, according to Hansell “staged virtuoso ballets, like those of his contemporaries Armand and Bernard Vestris, Louis Henry, and Salvatore Taglioni, [frequently] based on fantastic themes, which ultimately drew for inspiration on the magical atmosphere of the Viennese fairy-tale ballets.”²⁶ The libretti from his works at the S. Carlos in Lisbon that have survived, however, are examples of historical or mythological themes. *Jocko, O macaco agradecido (Jocko, The Thankful Monkey)* a pantomime ballet in which a sweet-tempered

monkey saves a child and thus is pardoned by an irate hunter²⁷ being an exception.

Although not well-known, Augusto contributed considerably to the fame of the active, well-traveled, and successful Hus dynasty.

2.3 Luigi Montani

Luigi Montani is an enigmatic figure in the roster of choreographers who staged ballets for the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in Lisbon. He was a frequent choreographer – he appears in that capacity for several seasons – and many of the libretti for his ballets have survived. The range of titles and themes varies greatly, pointing to his versatility, if not to his originality, for many of Montani's ballets seem to have been re-stagings of his own previous works or of those by other choreographers.

Biographical data on Luigi Montani is sketchy at best. Little is available about him other than dates on the libretti. The first libretto of works he created in Lisbon that still survives dates from 1818: *Cesar no Egypto* (*Cesar in Egypt*), which follows the same plot as the ballet by the same title created by Gaetano Gioia in 1807. The only ballet by Montani found among the libretti of the Harvard Theatre Collection is *Il Sotterraneo* (*The Subterranean*), from 1812, which he then re-worked for the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in 1821, changing the title to *Catharina de Guizé ou O Subterraneo* (*Catharina of Guizé or The Subterranean*). This ballet, in which rival characters vie for the love of the same woman, exemplifies many similar serious and dramatic themed libretti.

It is difficult to ascertain the length of Montani's career as he is not mentioned by any author in Italian dance history sources. However, dates of libretti where he appears as

either dancer or choreographer, or both, span several decades – from 1795 to 1850. Portuguese libretti which are attributed to him date from 1818 (*Cesar in Egypt*) until 1841 (*John the Cruel*). Before his first appointment in Lisbon Montani had experience both as a *ballerino* and as a choreographer.

Montani traveled the various Italian states from Napoli to Palermo working first as a *ballerino*, then, from 1810 on, also as a choreographer. While in Napoli he danced in Gaetano Gioia's ballets from 1795-1796; a 1798 libretto lists him as a dancer in Genoa; in 1801 he performed in Bergamo, and in 1804-1805 he split his time between Rome and Firenze. In 1807 Montani appeared as a dancer in the heroic-comic ballet *Gli Assassini (The Assassins)*, and in *Caterina di Coluga* by Lorenzo Panzieri in Rome.²⁸ The first record of his choreography dates from 1810 when he created the comic ballet *Il Maestro di Campagna (The Country Teacher)* for the Teatro D'Angennes in Turin, possibly his first work. From then until 1817, before his appointment in Lisbon, he worked in three Milanese theaters – Teatro Re, Canobbiana, and La Scala. In 1812 he created *Il Sotterraneo (The Subterranean)* at the Teatro alla Scala featuring one of the most famous Italian mimes in the cast, Nicola Molinari, in the role of Count Axel's servant. Giovanni Coralli, also known as Jean Coralli, the co-choreographer of *Giselle*, appears in the cast list in the role of Count Axel. This ballet was again performed in Bergamo at the Teatro Ricardi in 1823 with the extended title *Il Sotterraneo o sia Caterina di Coluga*, in which Montani played the role of Rasmatoff. The cast list also features a Rosa and Lodovico Montani, who were perhaps his wife and brother.

From 1818 to 1822 Luigi Montani was fulfilling his first engagement at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in Lisbon. Ten libretti from this time period have survived and are

part of the collection of National Library of Portugal. It was during his first appointment that he choreographed *Caterina di Coluga, or The Subterranean, The Usurper Punished, Cesar in Egypt, and The Vestal*. All of these were re-stagings of stories by other choreographers, including ballets by two famous Italian names of the period, Gaetano Gioia and Salvatore Viganò.²⁹ In the last year of his first period in Portugal he returned to Italy.

In the autumn of 1822 we find Luigi Montani as choreographer for the *balli* in *Evelina, a melodrama eroico* performed in the city of Alessandria. He also appears as one of the *primi ballerini*, along with Lodovico and Rosa Montani, in the same program. From 1823 to 1826 he worked in theaters in Bergamo, Palermo, Firenze, and Turin at the Teatro Carignano. In 1826 Montani is again billed as the choreographer for the *balli* in a production of the *dramma per musica Piglia il Mondo come Viene (Take the World as it Comes)* at the Teatro Via della Pergola in Firenze. Montani returned once again to Lisbon for additional appointments at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos – there are libretti of his works that date from 1827 to 1834. Once again, a return trip to Italy can be traced to records of ballets he created for theaters in Bergamo and Milan in 1835 and 1836. A third, and possibly last, appointment in Lisbon brought Montani back to the S. Carlos for the 1840-1841 season. Two of his ballets were staged in Rio de Janeiro in 1850 and 1852 respectively: *O Naufragio Feliz (The Fortunate Shipwreck)* and *João, O Cruel; baile eroico (John the Cruel; heroic ballet)*. It is possible that Luigi Montani traveled all the way to Brazil for the 1850 libretto states that the ballet was “composed and directed” by Luigi Montani, an indication that he was present for that production. The later libretto only states that the heroic ballet is by Luigi Montani.³⁰ His career truly illustrates the

itinerant life of ballet masters and choreographers of the time – from the days of performing as a *ballerino* in Napoli in 1795 to the last work he choreographed in 1850, Luigi Montani was active either performing or staging *ballets d'action* for several theaters in Italy, Portugal, and Brazil.

Many of the titles of Montani's ballets share titles with ballets by other choreographers. While this alone does not prove that his ballets were copies of another authors' works, it might indicate his "borrowing" of ideas, as it was common for choreographers to borrow from one another and often re-work themes and stories. Many of these instances are mentioned throughout Winter's seminal work *The Pre-Romantic Ballet* – even famous and successful choreographers, Filippo Taglioni among them, plagiarized large segments of popular ballets.³¹ In some cases composers did acknowledge previous works and the original creator of a ballet, but often times they did not. This can be particularly true of the libretti of the *ballet d'action* period, when the stories were printed and distributed at performances, thus becoming available, not only to the audience, but to other choreographers as well.

Luigi Montani's name appears in the list of *grotteschi*, compiled by Kathleen Hansell, who were active in Italy from 1750 to 1800, many of whom, like Montani, were choreographers as well as performers.³² This supports the notion that Montani was already active as both a performer and a choreographer for twenty years prior to his initial season in Lisbon in 1819. Although this list of performers working in Italy from 1750-1800 does not specify the number of performances or works created by these *grotteschi*, it does provide additional information pertaining to his career in Italy.

Montani's ballets varied greatly in subject matter judging from their subtitles: 'tragic', 'heroic', 'serious', 'mythological', 'sentimental', 'heroic-historical', 'mimic-allegorical', 'heroic-comical', 'ideal-heroic-comical', 'mimed action', 'half-character action', and even a 'sacred-mimed action' from the bible entitled *A Creação do Mundo* (*The Creation of the World*). In this 1834 Lisbon ballet Montani played the role of Cain, son of Adam and Eve.

The earliest libretto I have found of Luigi Montani's ballets in Portugal is *Cesar in Egypt* from 1818; however, the notes at the end of the story state that he would be "much obliged to receive the customary support from the benevolent public of this city," which could also indicate that he had already created works in Lisbon earlier in that season, but that perhaps no other libretti have survived. In the 1819 performance to celebrate Dom João's birthday at the Real Theatro de São Carlos in Lisbon, Luigi Montani is billed as the Roman choreographer of the *baile serio A Vingança de Ulysses* (*Ulysses Vengeance, serious ballet*), possibly a reference to his city of birth. It is probable that in this ballet Montani made use of stage machinery, as it can be inferred by the description in the libretto of the scene where "the clouds open and Minerva appears on her coach, the sky full of Nymphs and Genii, followers of the Goddess of Knowledge, who bestows her blessings on the union of Ulysses and Penelope." The action ends with a final tableau. This ballet would have required special effects by use of stage machines in order to depict a scene where the clouds open to reveal a tableau.

The only ballet of Montani that is available in both Portuguese and Italian that can be compared for the content of the story, characters, and overall sense of action and dancing, is *Il Sotterraneo*. Although some details differ, in essence, as we will see in the

next chapter, the story is almost identical in the two versions. Most of Montani's works were re-stagings of works by other choreographers as, for example, *The Usurper Punished*, which had been previously done by Gaetano Gioia for the San Carlo in Napoli in 1795, when Montani was a *ballerino* in this production. His *Misanthrope*, choreographed in 1812 for the Teatro alla Canobbiana in Milan, was restaged in Lisbon in 1828. The comic ballet *la Finta Pazza per Amore (The One who Feigned her Own Madness Because of Love)*, which Montani choreographed in 1817 for the Teatro Re in Milan, and which was later restaged by Antonio Monticini in 1833, and Alessandro Borsi in 1835 (in Lisbon) is an exception as it seems to be the only ballet that had not been previously staged by anyone else.³³ Montani restaged, revived, or re-created many *ballets d'action* in his long and prolific forty-year choreographic career.

2.4 Luigi Astolfi

Luigi Astolfi, who was in Portugal through two different time periods, created a number of original works there, which were then re-staged in other theaters later on. Astolfi was choreographer in Lisbon for the seasons of 1824-26 and then for the 1839-40 season at the Real Teatro de S. Carlos. Of all of his ballets twelve libretti remain in the collection of the National Library of Portugal. In addition, I have located a number of libretti of his Italian ballets in the Harvard Theatre Collection. Two of Astolfi's works still available in these narratives are credited with being popular works that he re-staged successfully in several other theaters in Italy and Vienna.³⁴ One of these, *I Minatori di Salerno (The Miners of Salerno)*, was revived several times. Interestingly, Luigi Montani

staged a few ballets with the same titles as some of the ballets by Astolfi and, although he does not credit him for the scenario, the stories and characters closely resemble those of the latter.

Dates on Luigi Astolfi are not exact, and no extensive information is available regarding his training and career. Born at the end of the eighteenth century, he debuted as a dancer in Venice in 1817, and then started his career as choreographer outside of Italy – Portugal, Vienna, and also Russia.³⁵ Astolfi found his calling as a choreographer while in Portugal and enjoyed a long career abroad staging his works not only in several Italian cities such as Turin, Verona, and Genoa, but also in Vienna and Russia.³⁶ While in Portugal Astolfi was engaged as a dancer as well as a choreographer.³⁷ His choreographic appointments in Portugal span two different periods: the first for two seasons, from 1824-1826, and the second between 1839 and 1840. Although his ballets seem to have been focused on serious and dramatic themes while in Portugal, upon returning to Italy, Astolfi created ballets that, if not exactly romantic in essence, contained romantic-like characters and elements. *Alma*, a ballet performed in Turin in 1845 featured nymphs and spirits. In the last act the spirit of Alma comes back to life. In *L'encantadora de Madrid (The Enchantress from Madrid)*, also staged in Turin in the same year, there is a dream scene which reveals the right course of action to the main character, causing her to make the right decision regarding her father and fiancé. Both of these ballets featured Fanny Cerrito and Arthur Saint Léon as the dancing couple. A lighter theme is explored in a shorter ballet subtitled *balletto magico-fantastico, Le Pillole del Diavolo (magical-fantastic ballet, The Devil's Pills)*, in which creatures such as monsters, witches, spirits and nymphs cohabitate in the world of the fairy Logistilla, who protects two lovers in

their fight to overcome the father's wishes to marry his daughter to a rich gentleman. As might be expected, all ends well in this light-hearted ballet. In *Zampa*, an earlier creation, Astolfi already explores romantic ideas that resemble moments of the ballet *Giselle*. In the third act, the shadow of a deceased distraught young woman appears to avenge her fate, frightening everyone and, grabbing the ill-intentioned corsair Zampa by the hand, throws him into a precipice. This scene resembles that of the *wilis* driving Hilarion to his death in act two. This ballet pre-dates *Giselle* by a decade or so; like the more well-known later work, it includes a dead woman's return to earth as a spirit to free her sister from the hands of a mean-spirited pirate.

According to author Fernanda Borroni, Astolfi tried to cater to the audience's taste to a great extent, a tendency which hindered his creativity and disturbed the balance of the action on stage. "His constant and excessive preoccupation with variety and embellishment in an attempt to improve his ballets resulted in the opposite effect – what he thought would please did not – these adjustments did not seem to be effective, or seemed incongruent and unnatural,"³⁸ and they ended up not meeting the audience's expectations. Astolfi clearly dealt with various subject matters and his extensive oeuvre – more than fifty ballets – attests to his capacity as a choreographer. Some of the best dancers of the time were interpreters of his works; Nicola Molinari, Emanuele Viotti, Fanny Cerrito, and Arthur Saint-Léon created some of the main roles in Astolfi's celebrated ballets. The famous mime Nicola Molinari, for example, played the important role of the villain in the *Minatori di Salerno* (1837); and Fanny Cerrito was the protagonist in *La Encantadora de Madrid* (1845). Astolfi was still active in 1853, and ten

years later *Il Ritorno di Boemondo in Salerno*³⁹ was revived in Milan at the Regio Teatro alla Canobbiana, which attests to its long-lasting audience appeal.

Two of Astolfi's ballets are available in libretti of the National Library of Portugal and the Harvard Theatre Collection in the Houghton Library: *I Minatori di Salerno*, and *Le Sette Reclute*.⁴⁰ Both stories are exactly the same in the productions in Portugal and Italy; these two ballets were produced in Lisbon in their original versions, even though the casts were different. Further discussion of these two ballets is included in chapter four.

2.5 The Vestris brothers

Both Armand and Bernardo Vestris were choreographers engaged at the Real Teatro de S. Carlos in Lisbon. The libretti found in the National Library of Portugal indicate that their Portuguese appointments took place thirty years apart, a fact that either indicates an age difference between them, or suggests that their appearance in Portugal occurred at very different points in their lives – at a young age for Armand, and at a much later age for Bernardo. Only two libretti of Armand Vestris' ballets are available. The two brothers are related to the famous Vestris family that was originally from Italy and that later migrated to France where they achieved fame and notoriety.⁴¹ The younger brothers were better known outside of the French theaters, and Bernardo Vestris in particular, worked primarily in Italy with the exception of the time spent during his appointment in Portugal.

Armand had been trained by his father and grandfather, the legends of French ballet Auguste and Gaétan Vestris. By the time he made his debut in Paris at the age of thirteen, Armand was well-trained and ready to appear on stage next to his two male family member predecessors. Apparently good looking, the “tall and handsome” Armand would earn great reviews when he first appeared on the Parisian stage next to his grandfather in March, 1800.⁴² Seven years later Armand appears as choreographer at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in Lisbon. The Portuguese audiences most likely witnessed him in his youthful glory – a print of Armand Vestris in the ballet *Macbeth* in 1815 at the San Carlo, Naples, depicts him as a muscular and expressive dancer, with clearly defined calves and arm muscles, balancing his weight on a sword held in his right hand, with his upper body thrown back, his left hand clenching his chest in an expressive and dramatic gesture.⁴³ When Arthur Saint-Léon wrote *l’Etat Actuel de la Danse* in 1856 complaining about the state of male dancing, Armand Vestris is mentioned as one of the few great dancers of French style of the previous decades.⁴⁴ Vestris’ tall, lean, and muscular body appears supple and graceful in the character-like dance *I Contadini Tirolesi* in a *pas de trois* and in a *pas-de-deux* in another print.⁴⁵ If we were to judge from these drawings Armand’s physique was ideal and in accordance with the best descriptions found in the dance manuals of ballet masters such as Carlo Blasis. And since prints were typically made as tributes to the dancers depicted, and distributed in the theaters during performance for customers to purchase as a souvenir of that night’s program, it can be surmised that Armand Vestris was considered popular enough to warrant the printing of such theatrical memories for purchase.⁴⁶ Binney explains that Italian theaters “published souvenir prints to memorialize the visits of famous dancers to their cities and theaters”

and that these prints had a dual function of paying “tribute to the performer who is recognized by it, and being a memento of the performance.”⁴⁷ A print of Armand Vestris indicates that he deserved both.

Although exact dates on Armand’s birth are not found, many sources state that he was born in 1797. Ivor Guest, however, indicates that he must have been born a decade earlier.⁴⁸ I concur, as he must have been older than ten by the time he was performing and choreographing in Lisbon in 1807. Armand’s presence in Lisbon was short-lived. After one year he went on to London, thus depriving the Portuguese audience of experiencing his performances and choreographic inventiveness.

Armand Vestris appears as a performer in Italian libretti. He was also considered a good teacher, having trained the young Amalia Brugnoli,⁴⁹ and taken her along with him to Vienna, where he was engaged as a choreographer during the same time Filippo Taglioni worked there at the Hofoper.⁵⁰ During this period Armand Vestris worked not only with Filippo Taglioni, but also with Louis Henry, who had been his colleague in Italy and was now also working in Vienna.⁵¹ It was in Vienna that Armand Vestris explored the possibilities of a ballerina’s use of *pointe* as shown in the print of Amalia Brugnoli in the first ballet he created for her in 1823.⁵² Such choreographic explorations by Armand Vestris were unfortunately interrupted by his untimely death in 1825 at age thirty-eight while in Vienna – had he lived longer, perhaps his contribution to dance both as a performer and choreographer might have been more innovative and longer lasting. As it was, he did not get to see the technical improvements of *pointe* technique in full force just a few years later. It is important to note that by the time Armand Vestris reached Portugal he had already been a dancer at the Paris Opera and also at the La Scala

Theater in Milan. According to Guest, Vestris' arrival and debut in London took place in 1809 via Portugal.⁵³ Since his benefit performance in Lisbon took place in September 1807, it is probable that he had been there for at least one year prior to that.

Biographical information on the other Vestris brother who also held an appointment at the S. Carlos in Lisbon is even more scarce than that of Armand, who was better known. Bernardo Vestris did not achieve his brother's fame and did not further the family name as a notable dancer or choreographer; however, some of the libretti of his ballets are still available. He worked mostly in Italy, dying at the age of forty-nine in 1845.⁵⁴ Although considered a "minor choreographer,"⁵⁵ Bernardo, like his brother, appeared on the Lisbon stage and some libretti of his creations dating from 1835 to 1838 have survived. One of the ballets he choreographed while working at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos, *Portugal Restaurado (Portugal Restored)* celebrates the restoration of the throne to the Bragança Dynasty.⁵⁶ Clearly alluding to the political scene in Lisbon during the unrest and fight between the two brothers over the Portuguese Crown, and openly supporting the winning side in his preface to this ballet, Bernardo Vestris celebrated the victory of the Braganças with the display of a Portuguese flag at the end of this ballet.

In 1843 Vestris choreographed the *ballo fantastico Elda, o sia Il Patto degli Spiriti (Elda, or the Pact of the Spirits)*, at the Teatro La Scala in Milan. The ballet was based on a legend in which the "fantastic and the marvelous were believed to be historically accurate." It took place in Germany and it included characters such as the spirit of the Earth and other magical characters. Lucille Grahn played the role of Elda in this ballet that included special effects such as the "vanishing of one of the spirits, Leila, who sinks into the heart of the earth in a swirl of fire."⁵⁷ Vestris also choreographed *Don*

Chisciotte in 1844 at the La Scala in Milan, anticipating Marius Petipa's creation by more than thirty years. Featured as a *ballo comico* and performed as the second ballet in the same program as Jules Perrot's *La Esmeralda*, which featured Fanny Elssler as the protagonist, this two-act *azione* (action) seems to have been a pantomime ballet.

Bernardo Vestris might have been a "minor" choreographer in other European cities such as Paris and London, but he appears to have been prolific and creative in Venice and Milan where he worked after his engagement in Lisbon. As early as 1839 Bernardo's name is listed as the choreographer of the ballets at the Teatro La Scala in Milan, when Carlo Blasis is listed as *maestro di perfezionamento* and Fanny Cerrito is featured as *prima ballerina*. Vestris' staging of *La Rivolta delle donne del Serraglio* (*The Revolt of the Women of Seraglio*), *ballo fantastico*, was a theme already explored by Louis Henry in 1823 in *Les Amazones*, which in turn was later reworked by Filippo Taglioni under the title *Révolte au Sérail* (*Revolt in Serail*). Bernardo Vestris' version must have won the favor of Italian audiences – it was staged in Torino in 1863 by a different choreographer who gives full credit to Bernardo Vestris. He created a similar ballet under the title of *As Odaliscas* (*The Odaliscues*), in Lisbon in 1838 which featured a Moorish ballet, a national ballet of ancient Egyptians, and a Pyrrhic dance.

2.6 Antonio Cortesi

Perhaps one of the most important choreographers to have worked in Lisbon is Antonio Cortesi. Born into a family of dancers and trained by his father, Cortesi not only was exposed to dance early on in his life through his artist parents, but he was also

fortunate to have performed in works by the famous choreographers Onorato and Salvatore Viganò, and Gaetano Gioja. A decided turn in his career when he injured an Achilles tendon while he was engaged at the São Carlos Theater in Lisbon resulted in a long, productive, and successful career as a choreographer.

Cortesi met with difficulties from the beginning of his appointment in Portugal. As the ship that was to bring several artists to Lisbon was ready to leave Genoa in 1822, some of the artists, Cortesi among them, had to pawn their own luggage as payment for their fares to Portugal as these had not been secured by the management.⁵⁸ Cortesi's first appointment in Portugal did not last long, probably because of his injury. His first choreographic work was a restaging of Gaetano Gioia's *Gabriella di Vergy* in May 1823 as part of the celebration of King Dom João VI's birthday. Considered a dancer of some repute, Cortesi had already performed in several theaters throughout Italy by the time he accepted an engagement at the S. Carlos in Lisbon. A performer since the young age of twelve, by 1822, the year of his first appointment in Portugal, Cortesi had acquired considerable performance experience, enjoying the tutelage and respect of Gaetano Gioia, who took an interest in his career and assisted him in securing contracts in theaters where his own ballets were being commissioned, where Cortesi could be of assistance with the *ballabili* (grand ballet) for his ballets during a busy schedule as main choreographer.⁵⁹ Thus, under the guidance of one of Italy's greatest choreographers of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Cortesi acquired experience by not only performing, but observing the craft and being able to create his first ballets.

After his version of *Gabriella*, Cortesi created his first complete ballet, *Inês de Castro*, which would become his most restaged and successful work.⁶⁰ The tragedy of

Inês de Castro, based on a Portuguese historical theme by Luis de Camões, was not an original idea by Cortesi – it had already been explored by other choreographers, including Giuseppe Canziani in 1775, Luigi Dupin in 1786, Gaspare Ronzi also in 1786, Domenico Rossi in 1791, and Antonio Ginafanelli in 1796,⁶¹ all of them too early for Cortesi to have seen and reproduced. The successful production of this first original creation in Portugal encouraged Cortesi to return to Italy and dedicate himself exclusively to choreography. Unfortunately, the libretto for this first production in Lisbon is not available in the National Library of Portugal. When restaged in London in 1833, it met with great disapproval by the critics and audience alike. Although the role of Inês was played by the famous mime Antonia Pallerini, one of Viganò's most frequent and favorite interpreters, the ballet was deemed a "strange entertainment, a silent tragedy, and a very powerful effect of dumb show."⁶² *Inês de Castro* was added to the repertoire of the La Scala Theater in 1831 after having been performed throughout many Italian theaters with great success.⁶³ Although not as successful in London, *Inês de Castro* remained popular in other European cities; in Italy in particular, it remained a favorite for many years.

In Italy Cortesi was a respected choreographer, and considered a successor of Viganò. Soon after his return from Portugal, Cortesi was engaged in Turin as maestro of the school of dance and composer of ballets and is thus described in the alphabetic catalog of the artists engaged in the theaters of the city of Turin in 1824-25: "good figure and good pantomime; composed two ballets demonstrating reasonable skill and great knowledge of group formation in the ballets; shows great promise as a choreographer, possessing great talent and musical knowledge as well."⁶⁴ At the time Cortesi was just beginning his long choreographic career in Italy.

Cortesi created more than one hundred ballets, although some were re-workings of earlier pieces which he would re-name, all of which met with the approval of the audience in Italy. Cortesi had the opportunity to prove himself once again in Portugal during a second appointment, also traveling to London and creating ballets for Italian theatres in Venice, Milan, Napoli, and Rome at that time. He worked with many famous dancers of his time including Marie Taglioni, Fanny Cerrito, Fanny Elssler, Carolina Rosati, and the notable Italian mimes Nicola Molinari and Antonia Pallerini. His *Fausto* from 1849, which had music specially commissioned by him, was also restaged many times. Besides his own ballets, Cortesi also reworked some of the famous romantic ballets like *La Sylphide* in 1841, and *Giselle*, which he re-choreographed entirely in 1843, using new music by an Italian composer instead of that by Adolph Adam.⁶⁵ Many years later Cortesi would also restage *Ondine*, in 1852, for the Real Teatro in Turin.⁶⁶ One of Cortesi's last ballets, *La Liberazione di Lisbona (The Liberation of Lisbon)*, in 1859, like his first and most successful creation *Inês de Castro*, was also inspired by a Portuguese theme.

2.7 Emanuele Viotti

Biographical data on Emanuele Viotti is virtually non-existent. We know that he was already performing by 1824 as he appears in a libretto in the role of Ataliba in Giovanni Galzerani's *L'eroe Peruviano: Ballo eroico-tragico, (The Peruvian Hero: Heroic-tragic ballet)* at the La Fenice Theater in Venice – the earliest record I have been able to locate. We also know that he was performing in Luigi Astolfi's ballets in the

1830s, and was considered to have been among the best dancers of the time.⁶⁷ By 1837 Viotti was choreographing – the scenario for the ballet *Fedora, o, Scio riacquistata* (*Fedora, or The Reconquering of Chios*), at the Nuovo Teatro in Padua, is credited to him. Again in 1838, *La Fontana d'amore* (*The Fountain of Love*), a *ballo comico* at the same theater was of Viotti's authorship, and in the autumn of 1841 some of his ballets were produced at the Teatro Comunale in Modena.⁶⁸ In the following years prior to his appointment in Portugal Viotti was creating ballets for several Italian theaters: La Fenice in Venice, Pergola in Florence, Teatro Comunale in Modena, Teatro Comunitativo in Bologna, and Teatro Carignano in Turin. For the Teatro La Fenice he created sixteen ballets from 1838 to 1858. He was a gifted choreographer who could “compose large group dances with imagination, and beginning with *Lucrezia deli Obizzi* in 1842, he began to craft wonderful and majestic grand processions.”⁶⁹ Favorable reviews of his 1843 ballet *Dorliska* in Rome mentioned his ability to connect scenes with great clarity.⁷⁰ Thus, by the time Viotti arrived in Lisbon he had several years of experience and successes in Italy. Upon his return to Italy, Viotti went back to Turin, where he created *Crimilde* in 1849 for Amalia Ferraris, the Italian romantic ballerina.

Two of the ballets Viotti created while in Portugal were then re-worked and restaged in Italy in subsequent seasons. Although the titles were changed, *A Walkiris*, first performed in Lisbon in 1848, was then restaged with the title of *Crimilde*, the ballet for Ferraris, possibly with the addition of dancing scenes which were not included in the Portuguese version. The same title change happened with the *balletto comico* of 1849 *A Conversação às Escuras* (*The Conversation in the Dark*), which was changed to *Zanze* for the Italian production, and performed in the same evening as *Crimilde*. Although the

specific dates are not stated, Viotti's appointment in Portugal ended with the 1849 season, and soon thereafter he returned to Turin as a choreographer.

Viotti was also inspired by the writing of Luis de Camões and choreographed a ballet based on one of the poems of the epic *Os Lusíadas*. Although Camões' work celebrates the history of the Portuguese, Viotti staged it as a *bailete comico*, a small comic ballet, *A Ilha dos Amores (The Island of Loves)*. The opening of this ballet includes dancing blended with mime with "graces and nymphs on stage, at times forming various groups, and at times dancing."

Viotti's works are important in a study of ballet history in Portugal through the middle of the nineteenth century. While the romantic ballet in Europe, and in England in particular, was already experiencing a decline, the Italian taste and style of *ballets d'action* were still prevalent on the stage of the S. Carlos in Lisbon. The great names of the stars of the romantic ballets made their last appearances in London by the end of the 1840s decade—Carlotta Grisi's being the very last in 1851.⁷¹ Amalia Ferraris' talents, unfortunately, would not be fully exploited – she arrived at the European scene in the last few years of the romantic ballet glory. Her strength and speed, gained through her Italian training, were featured in Paul Taglioni's *Les Grâces* of 1850, in which she was able to demonstrate her prowess in the "remarkable *equilibre* in... sudden pauses on the point."⁷² Ferraris' career would last for a long while afterward, however, for she went back to Italy where the *ballet d'action* lingered for a while.

Emanuele Viotti was still active in 1860 when his ballet *Ileria* was revived at the Teatro Carignano in Turin. Subtitled a *ballo romantico*, this is the last record of his works as a choreographer I have been able to locate; it had been done for the Teatro La Fenice

in Venice two years before. Viotti included copyright notices in his libretti, and often claimed the rights to the music as well, perhaps prompted by the popularity of his works. Although not well-known, Viotti was a prolific and accomplished choreographer whose career lasted several decades.

2.8 Urbano Garzia

When Urbano Garzia arrived in Portugal he was already a very experienced performer, choreographer, and teacher. Having worked at the Teatro alla Scala for thirty four years as a choreographer, and then as a mime teacher since the foundation of the Accademia di Ballo Alla Scala in 1812,⁷³ Garzia brought to the Portuguese stage an array of skills that were to be shared on the stage of the S. Carlos in Lisbon for two separate seasons. Garzia was considered a very active artisan of the dance, and even designed the costumes for some of his own ballets.⁷⁴ Of his first season in Portugal we only have one record – a libretto from 1806; from his second appointment we have only two, one of which was also produced in Italy and for which a libretto is also available. *Le avventure di Aroldo il Prode ovvero Il Cavalieri del tempio* (*The Adventures of Aroldo, the Brave, or the Riders of the Temple*) was first produced for the Teatro La Scala in 1815, and restaged by Garzia in Lisbon in 1822. Although subtitled a *ballo epico*, this ballet featured spirits and ghosts and the shadow of a deceased beloved who appears by her tomb toward the end of the ballet – such characters seemed to appear in many of the ballets produced in Italy and in Portugal, even though they were not referred to as romantic in the libretti.

Urbano Garzia was known for his ability to please the audience and to adapt to popular taste working almost on the spur of the moment. An example of this way of working is offered by Luigi Rossi in his history of ballet at the theater La Scala:

[Urbano Garzia] had staged *Il Peregrino negromante* which was received with some degree of condescendence, particularly over their witty reflections... had the audience laughing hilariously. It was so well-received that everyone wished to see the mirror scene once again, and Garzia pleased all right away [by using it] in the *Tromba Magica* (*The Magic Trumpet*) – an example of his immediate response to the will and caprice of the public.⁷⁵

He seems to have been able to do this frequently and successfully.

When the school of the Theater La Scala was founded, the predominant teachers came from the French school – to “correct the prevalence of the French school and render the style more Italian, Urbano Garzia, with his vast experience as a performer and choreographer, was hired as the mime teacher, a fundamental part of the training of dancers at the time.”⁷⁶ His role in the academy was important, for in Italy mimed ballets were predominant through the first half of the nineteenth century and beyond.

Although I have not been able to locate biographical dates on Urbano Garzia we can assume that he could not have been much younger than twenty years old when he started at the Teatro La Scala in 1787, which would place his birth at around 1767. When he arrived in Portugal for the first time in 1806 he might have been a mature and experienced dancer, mime, and choreographer of thirty-nine. By the time of his second appearance in Portugal sixteen years later, Garzia had been choreographing and had also

started his tenure as teacher of the Accademia attached to the La Scala Theater since its foundation.⁷⁷ The death of an Italian named Urbano Garzia was recorded at the Loretto Church in Lisbon in 1829.⁷⁸ It is difficult to ascertain if it was the same person, however, without any additional information. The last record of Garzia working in Italy dates from 1824 in libretti of the theaters in Turin and La Scala in Milan. Thus, it is possible that he died in Lisbon during a return appointment.

2.9 Giovanni Casati

The Milanese Giovanni Casati had been a dancer and choreographer in Italy and France before his appointment at the S. Carlos in Lisbon. At first trained by his father, an amateur dancer and great mime, Casati was encouraged by Giovanni Coralli to enroll at the Academy of the La Scala Theater where he was a *primo ballerino*.⁷⁹ The young Giovanni, “soon reported to be one of the best students to have studied at the still new academy,”⁸⁰ started his training at the age of eleven and upon his graduation was offered a contract as a *primo ballerino di mezzo carattere*. From 1821 to 1833 he performed as a *primo ballerino* in Milan, Florence, Venice, Turin, Genoa, Bologna, Naples, and Mantua.⁸¹ At La Scala he performed in ballets by Louis Henry, Salvatore Taglioni, and Antonio Cortesi.⁸² Casati interrupted his performing career and moved to Paris to study with Auguste Vestris who prepared him for his 1830 debut.⁸³ His successful stay in Paris resulted in an offer to remain there, but he turned it down to return to La Scala. His career was well-established by the time he was hired as a principal dancer for the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in 1840.

Casati's first choreography, *La Donna Bianca (The White Woman)*, with music by Pugnani, was well-received. The use of two-colored costumes for the *corps de ballet* gave the ensemble a pictorial effect.⁸⁴ In 1832 he created two ballets for the Teatro della Pergola in Florence.⁸⁵ Encouraged by these first attempts, he decided to dedicate himself exclusively to choreography while in Lisbon, where he created at least five works, most of them of the mythological genre. His stay in Lisbon was short – he returned to Italy in 1841 and resumed his career as choreographer in Mantua at first. In 1843 he began his long association with the La Scala Theater choreographing several ballets during his twenty-five year tenure. In 1868 he replaced Augusto Hus as director of the Academy of the La Scala Theater, a position he retained until 1883. Casati was the first student from the academy to have attained that prestigious appointment.⁸⁶

Gioavanni Casati is considered to be one of Italy's foremost choreographers of the mid-nineteenth century. His ballets had long-lasting appeal. During his long career as choreographer from 1843-1868 he produced many works that were restaged as late as 1875, even though the well-known Italian choreographer Luigi Manzotti had already emerged as a late-century phenomenon.⁸⁷ Casati was endowed with great fantasy and imagination, which explains the endurance and high recognition of his works.⁸⁸

Many of the stories of his ballets served as vehicles for dancing, which he indicates in libretti in Portuguese and Italian: "the composer created this short fable not to highlight the importance of the mimed action, but as a pretext to introduce [in it] many dances,"⁸⁹ with the "harmonious development of the solos and group parts in the choreographic puzzle."⁹⁰ In this he stands apart from the majority of the Italian choreographers of that period who focused on the stories and pantomimes of ballets.

Casati's 1846 *Iselda di Normandia*, a *ballo fantastico*, is based on a story similar to that of *The Sleeping Beauty* in which a fairy godmother, in revenge for not receiving an invitation to her godchild's wedding, curses her to sleep for one hundred years until a prince who is not yet married kisses her. His *Shakespeare ovvero Il Sogno d'una notte di estate* (*Shakespeare or A Dream of a Summer's Night*⁹¹), was not based on the writer's story by a similar title, but on an *opera comique* by Rosier and Leuven instead. *Lo Spirito Danzante* (*The Dancing Spirit*),⁹² a *ballo fantastico di mezzo-carattere*, is loosely based on *Giselle*. The spirit of Gilda appears among the other *wilis* and tries to save the Duke, who had betrayed her, but in vain – he dies on her tomb at the end of act three.

Although Casati's presence in Lisbon was brief, during the one season he spent there he created five ballets, three of which were on mythological themes. A *divertissement ou Bailete* (*Divertissement or small ballet*) he created for the Real Theatro de S. Carlos, which is discussed in chapter four, was a romantic-themed ballet with sylphs, a benevolent genie, and a magical torchlight. Casati's contribution to Italian ballet is irrefutable – his long association with the La Scala Theater and academy were long lasting legacies of his talents as director and choreographer.

The Italian choreographers discussed here represent the various approaches and styles brought to Portugal during the first half of the nineteenth century. These choreographers came often with a certain degree of experience, if not as choreographers, then as performers and disciples of influential ballet figures of the Italian school. These artists came from some of the best Italian theaters where they received their training and performed in works by famous choreographers such as Gioia and Viganò. Some of them

began choreographing in Portugal and dedicated their careers exclusively to choreography from then on, contributing to the development of ballet in Italy and other European countries. Many of them taught and created works for familiar figures of nineteenth-century ballet. Portugal fostered the choreographic careers of Italian dancers who both brought their works to the Lisbon stage and created new ones that they restaged or revived when they returned to their home country.

Notes to chapter 2

¹ In the preface to the libretto Cortesi explains: “Not being able to, much to my chagrin, be back on the stage as a *primo ballerino* given the misfortune of a leg injury I suffered while I was dancing, I try by other means to bring to this respectable public a fancy I hold of earning your patronage staging a new ballet which I have the honor of presenting in this program and thank you in advance for your kindness and forgiveness.” Cortesi had not finished his first year as a dancer when the accident happened. His *Fayel* is a re-staging of Gioia’s *Gabriella de Vergy*.

² Although the opera *Gabriella* was not staged, at least two other ballets by Gioia anticipated the operas by the same titles as well: *Elisabetta, o il castello di Kenilworth* by G. Donizetti, and *Cesare in Egitto* by Ercole Paganini. For additional details on ballets that anticipated operas, see Kathleen Kuznick Hansell *Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera* 276-278; and Rita Zambon “Quando il Ballo Anticipa L’Opera: ‘Il Corsaro’ di Giovanni Galzerani” in *Creature di Prometeo; Il Ballo Teatrale dal Divertimento al Drama*. Ed. G. Morelli.

³ *Fayel, ou Gabriella de Vergy* was the first ballet Cortesi staged for the S. Carlos, performed on May 13, 1823 to celebrate King João VI’s birthday.

⁴ Hansell, “Theatrical Ballet,” 264.

⁵ Hansell explains that Gioia was a successful pantomime performer, which granted him the *grottesco* status, true of many outstanding Italian dancers. By the time he was twenty five he continued to perform in this genre, then moving onto the serious style in 1789; 264. In 1793, probably after his return from Lisbon, Gioia was hired as a *primo ballerino* at the La Scala Theater where he created several ballets and also arranged the music for some of them, for he was also a fairly good composer and violinist. Luigi Rossi, *Il Ballo alla Scala, (1778-1970)*, 38-39.

⁶ Hansell, “Theatrical Ballet,” 265.

⁷ Hansell, “Gaetano Gioia,” *Grove Dictionary of Music online*.

⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹ Hansell, “Theatrical Ballet,” 264.

¹⁰ Hansell, “Theatrical Ballet,” 271.

¹¹ Hansell lists the cities in which Gioia worked from 1802 until 1824: Naples, Rome, Florence, Milan, Turin, Piacenza, Parma, Reggio, Bologna, Rovigo, Padua, Venice, Pesaro, Sinigaglia, and Livorno – an impressive number indeed. “Theatrical Ballet,” 265.

¹² Hansell, “Theatrical Ballet,” 277-78; “Il Ballo Teatrale e l’Opera del Primo Ottocento,” 196-97.

¹³ Hansell, “Il Ballo Teatrale,” 196.

¹⁴ Hansell, “Gaetano Gioia,” *Grove Dictionary of Music online*.

¹⁵ Marian Hannah Winter, *The Pre-Romantic Ballet*, 33.

¹⁶ Ivor Guest, *The Ballet of the Enlightenment*, 283.

¹⁷ Edward Nye, *Mime Music and Drama on the Eighteenth-Century Stage*, 209.

¹⁸ Winter, 33.

¹⁹ Barbara Naomi Cohen-Stratyner, *Biographical Dictionary of Dance*, 446-47.

²⁰ Alberto Basso, *Il Teatro della Città*, 260.

²¹ Luigi Rossi, *Il Ballo alla Scala*, 76.

²² When Hus staged the ballet in Lisbon, however, he did not credit Louis Henry as the author.

²³ The ballerina’s first name was not included in that or any other libretto where she is listed as a performer. It is unlikely that this was Lise Noblet, who had made her debut in London in 1821. Ivor guest, *The Romantic Ballet in England*, 33. A ballerina by the name of Auber Noblet appears in Italian libretti of the 1820s, possibly the dancer who appears in Lisbon in 1835.

²⁴ Two libretti of ballets by Hus for the S. Carlos Theater date from 1834; perhaps he created others before 1835 as well, but no other libretti have survived.

²⁵ Rossi 76.

²⁶ Hansell, “Theatrical ballet,” 271.

²⁷ It is not possible to ascertain if Hus’ ballet is a restaging of Filippo Taglioni’s ballet. He created *Joko, the Brazilian Ape*, while in Stuttgart in 1826. Winter, 151. Guest, *Romantic Ballet in Paris*, 294 n.

²⁸ Lorenzo Panzieri was also the choreographer for an earlier *Caterina di Coluga* in which Montani performed in 1804, also in Rome. Most likely he drew inspiration, or borrowed from this work later on for his ballet by the same title.

²⁹ A discussion of *La Vestale* by Viganò and a comparison between that and Montani's libretto is included in chapter 4.

³⁰ We do not know Montani's birth and death dates, but we can infer that he was at least 14 or 15 by the time he was performing in Gioia's ballet in Napoli in 1795, unless he was a child performer, which we have no way of confirming. If he did go to Brazil in 1850 – or earlier – he staged his last ballet at the age of 80. The 1852 libretto only states that the ballet is by Luigi Montani. No other name appears for the director or stager of the ballet.

³¹ Winter, 252. Filippo Taglioni used large portions of Louis Henry's 1823 *Les Amazones* for his *Révolte au Sérail*, which Bernardo Vestris also re-worked later.

³² Kathleen Kuzmick Hansell "Grotteschi in Italy, 1750-1800" *The Grotesque Dancer on the Eighteenth-Century Stage; Gennaro Magri and His World*. Ed. Rebecca Harris-Warrick and Bruce Alan Brown, 284.

³³ An earlier version was choreographed by Sébastien Gallet in the 1750s (place not identified), but Montani could not have seen that production. I have not been able to access this libretto to compare it. An opera from 1735 produced in Lisbon is entitled *La Finta Pazza*. Brito, 9. Montani's ballet is most likely based on the libretto for the opera *La Finta Pazza* first performed in 1641 in Venice. *Yale University Baroque Opera Project*. Online.

³⁴ Fernanda Mariani Borroni "Luigi Astolfi" *Treccani Enciclopedia, Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Online.

³⁵ Borroni.

³⁶ *Ibid.*; Barbara Naomi Cohen-Stratynner, *Biographical Dictionary of Dance*, 43.

³⁷ He also worked for the theater S. João in Porto.

³⁸ Quoted in Borroni, "Astolfi."

³⁹ This ballet is the same as *I Minatori di Salerno*, and it is also known as *Boemondo*. It was revived by the dancer and choreographer Gaspare Pratesi.

⁴⁰ In Portugal it was called *As Nove Recrutadas (The Nine Recruits)*; however, the content of the story is the same.

⁴¹ Jeannine Dorvane, "Vestris Family" *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, Vol. 6: 330.

⁴² Ivor Guest, *Ballet Under Napoleon*, 74-75.

⁴³ Edwin Binney, *Sixty Years of Italian Dance Prints; 1815-1875*, 14-15.

⁴⁴ Winter, 262.

⁴⁵ Winter, Frontispiece, 230.

⁴⁶ Binney, 8-9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Guest, *Ballet Under Napoleon*, 74.

⁴⁹ Amalia Brugnoli along with partner and then husband Paolo Samengo, were inspirational to many young aspiring dancers. She created many roles in his ballets, which were later danced by Fanny Elssler and Marie Taglioni. Lithographs of Brugnoli and Samengo show her supported by her partner, feet fully pointed, easily poised in the air, the quintessential figure of the romantic ballerina (see Winter's discussion of Brugnoli and Samengo's partnership, 252-52). Amalia Brugnoli's prints show her on the tips of her toes, hovering over her partner who supports her by the waist in a lunge. Winter, 273.

⁵⁰ Winter, n., Illustrations between 250-251.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 251-52.

⁵² *Ibid.* Two Prints in *The Pre-Romantic Ballet* show Amalia Brugnoli on the tips of her toes in 1823-1824 in ballets by Armand Vestris, 272-73. Brugnoli had already performed *en pointe* eight years before Marie Taglioni did in *La Sylphide*. Binney, 25.

⁵³ Guest, *The Romantic Ballet in England*, 122.

⁵⁴ Guest, *Ballet Under Napoleon*, 17.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

- ⁵⁶ The ballet refers to the 1640 restoration of the Portuguese throne after the Spanish rule. However, the libretto in fact deals with the war of two brothers which ended in 1834. Further discussion of this ballet is included in chapter four.
- ⁵⁷ Lucile Grahn had made her Paris debut by then and had already finished her first three-year engagement by this time. In 1843 she was already a celebrated dancer in Paris. This might have happened on her way back from a trip to Russia in 1841. Guest, *Romantic Ballet in Paris*, 180-183.
- ⁵⁸ Francisco Benedito Benevides, *O Real Theatro de S. Carlos de Lisboa*, 129.
- ⁵⁹ Francesco Regli, *Dizionario Biografico*, 143. Alessandra Ascarelli, "Antonio Cortesi" *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Online 24 Feb 2014.
- ⁶⁰ Ascarelli, "Cortesi."
- ⁶¹ Manoel P. Carvalhaes, *Inês de Castro na Ópera e na Choreographia Italianas*, 96-108.
- ⁶² Quoted in Guest *Romantic Ballet in England*, 53-55.
- ⁶³ Rossi, *Il Ballo alla Scala*, 46.
- ⁶⁴ Alberto Basso, *Il Teatro della Città*, 179. Interestingly, Cortesi's contemporary colleague Carlo Blasis, in an almost prophetic evaluation, is described as a good dancer, however too fat and stout, but who would make a good maestro for a school of ballet.
- ⁶⁵ Rossi, 46, 63.
- ⁶⁶ Regli, 46.
- ⁶⁷ Borroni, "Luigi Astolfi," 10 Feb. 2014.
- ⁶⁸ There are no titles for the ballets – Viotti is listed as the composer of the *balli*.
- ⁶⁹ Claudia Celi, "Percorsi Romantici nell'Ottocento Italiano," in *Musica in Scena; Storia dello Spettacolo Musicale*. Ed. Alberto Basso, 122.
- ⁷⁰ "La Rivista," 20 Novembre 1843. Quoted in Celi, 123.
- ⁷¹ Guest, *Romantic Ballet in London*, 140.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, 139-140.
- ⁷³ Carlo Gatti, *Il Teatro alla Scala nella Storia e nell'Arte (1778-1963)*, 58. The academy was founded in 1813 and was attached to the theater. *Ibid.*, 68.
- ⁷⁴ Rossi, 41; Winter, 261.
- ⁷⁵ Rossi, 41. Garzia also used a mirror scene in his ballet *La Donna del Bosco (The Woman from the Woods)*, which he choreographed in 1808 for the Scala in Milan, and restaged in Lisbon in 1823.
- ⁷⁶ Rossi, 70.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.
- ⁷⁸ The registry of deaths at the Loretto Church in Lisbon states that Urbano Garzia was seventy-six at the time of his death, which would indicate that he was thirty-four when he was choreographer at la Scala in 1787, the earliest libretto I have been able to locate.
- ⁷⁹ Alessandra Ascarelli, "Giovanni Casati," 10 February 2014. Regli, 115. Two other sources give his birth date as 1811.
- ⁸⁰ Rossi, 76.
- ⁸¹ Ascarelli, "Casati," 10 Feb 2014. Regli, 116.
- ⁸² Celi, 123.
- ⁸³ Guest, *Romantic Ballet in Paris*, 95. His debut did not receive favorable reviews, although Guest attributes it as an attack on Vestris and the old school, and not necessarily on Casati's abilities.
- ⁸⁴ Regli, 116.
- ⁸⁵ Ascarelli, "Casati".
- ⁸⁶ Celi, 124; Ascarelli, "Casati".
- ⁸⁷ Rossi, 77.
- ⁸⁸ Regli, 116.
- ⁸⁹ Giovanni Casati, Libretto "O Alfinete," 1840.
- ⁹⁰ Celi, 124.
- ⁹¹ This is the literal translation, which differs slightly from the English title *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- ⁹² The libretto is of a revival staged by Davide Mocchi for the Teatro Carignano in Milan in 1851. No other libretto of this ballet is available and the date of the original performance is not mentioned in any of the sources.

CHAPTER 3

THE LIBRETTI AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LISBON

Dance is an art form of the present moment – it vanishes once the curtain comes down, except in the memories of those who were part of it. Unlike music, theater, painting, and sculpture, dance, until more recent times, has left virtually no traces of its existence.¹ Without the tangible evidence of scores or scripts, for example, dances from the past evanesce. The surviving libretti of *ballets d'action* from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, are written, documented evidence that supply us with abundant information on dances of this time period.

Libretti were small booklets designed to accompany theatrical performances that, like programs today, contained the pertinent information about the presentation. Scholars today can derive important insights from the libretti beyond details such as the cast and location of performances. The Portuguese ballet libretti from the first half of the nineteenth century that have survived, and are now in the collection of the National Library of Portugal, were often contained within the opera libretti for the productions in the same evening. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the libretti for the ballets began to be printed separately.² These small books varied in size: they could be as little as three by five inches, to as large as five by seven inches, and be as short as five to

six pages, or as long as thirty, forty, or more. They usually provided the basic information, such as the name of the choreographer, the city, theater, and date of the performance – but not the time – the list of the main dancers and the characters they portrayed, and infrequently, the names of the composer, set and scenic designers, and costumers.³ Some had fancy decorations on the covers, while others that have survived don't have covers at all. The quality of paper on which they were printed varied greatly as well, from heavy-weight cloth paper to much thinner, at times almost transparent paper.⁴ Information in the libretti also changed over time. After the 1830s they began to list the dances that would be performed, and often listed the names of the dancers who would be doing them.

The information included in the libretti varied, but they almost always included the names of choreographers and dancers, although their spelling varied, and often only the last names of performers were listed, making them difficult to identify. Names of the music composers, as well as those of scenery and costume designers for the ballets were rarely given, but on some rare instances the machinists were mentioned. This is not peculiar to Portugal – often French libretti did not include information on music, costume, and scenic designers either.⁵ The most significant aspect of these libretti for a study of the ballets of this time period, however, is the information they provided regarding the stories that were being staged.

The choreographic content and the summary of the actions in these booklets can serve as the basic structure through which we can interpret the ballets of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As Edward Nye explains, “‘Choreographie’ refers to a kind of detailed plot synopsis, something akin to the programmes for *ballets*

d'action, the printed scenarios published and sold to spectators before a performance. . . . It is a synopsis of events, relations between protagonists, ambitions, obstacles, duties and desires, all the essential ingredients which make the subsequent action possible.”⁶ The value of the libretti rests in their narrative content, since narrative, as suggested above, is choreography and in these libretti the narrative is documented evidence of a performance beyond the title of ballets and the names of the performers.

These libretti are invaluable precisely because they are sources of information of ballet scenarios produced in Lisbon during the first half of the nineteenth century. Studying them sheds light on aspects of the *ballet d'action* that are otherwise impossible to decipher. Their stories are rich with innuendo of character and plot development, pictorial evidence of stage scenery and lighting, and details on movement and pantomime. These details comprise the most significant elements in interpreting their stories – they are pictorial, helping the reader visualize the action of these ballets. They are, I believe, both an example of dance notation, and evidence of dramatic action on the stage.

3.1 The *ballet d'action* libretti as systems of dance notation

Because libretti contain information on the pantomime, they are, as mentioned above, choreographic – they recorded actions and directions of dances. In that capacity, they are also a system of notating dance, a concept that had initially been explored by Pierre Beauchamps and published by Raoul Auger Feuillet at the turn of the eighteenth century as a “system of recording movements by use of symbols and figures,” which was

to become widely known and translated in several languages, including Portuguese in 1761. The Beauchamps-Feuillet's system was still in use even as late as 1780, in spite of its inability to notate the advancements of dance technique in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and despite its being unsuitable to describe the steps and gestures of ballets of that time. Jean Georges Noverre discusses *Chorégraphie*, the Feuillet system of notation, in his *Lettres sur La Danse* (1760) both to illustrate that it was outdated by then, and to demonstrate that he was familiar with it.⁷ In his view, a notation system that was not capable of showing the “contours that the arms must have, the design the arms must make, the attitudes of the body, the *effacés*, the oppositions of the head,”⁸ was of no use at all to the choreographer of ballets. Noverre was referring to the importance of gestures and expression in the art of dancing at this time, something, he argued, the Feuillet system was not designed to capture. However, there are examples of the notation of arm and hand movements in *Chorégraphie* including sixteen measures of arm and hand movements and castanet playing to illustrate the use of the system in recording arm movements through symbols.⁹ Malpied's treatise also discusses the use of hand gestures and their notation in his 1780 publication *Traité sur l'Art de la Danse*, in which he describes the notation of hand and arm movements as in the presentation of the hands in dancing the minuet, and also to show clapping in rhythm. If movements of the arms and hands could be recorded in the eighteenth-century notation system as described in *Chorégraphie*, the question is not its ability to do so, but *why* these movements were not recorded in the dance scores that have survived from the period. One possible answer is that arm and hand gestures were to be adapted to each dancer, who was expected to find

his own way of performing with grace and to adapt movements to his own body type and level of technique.¹⁰

Dancers were given a great degree of latitude in their improvisation of dances and interpretation of roles. This is clear in the writings of Gennaro Magri in 1779,¹¹ Blasis in 1820,¹² and also in Noverre's discussion of expressiveness. Such freedom of improvisation was true for theatrical as well as ballroom dancing of the period. In the ballroom, arm gestures were kept to a minimum, and their use was in accordance with the rules of propriety and decorum, thus their performance was assumed and their notation not necessary. Also, the notation of hand movements in addition to the steps would make the notation process even more time-consuming, slowing down the publication and the dissemination of dances. Furthermore, the additional symbols for hand and arm gestures would clutter the page and make the reading of scores more difficult. The focus of the notation centered on the intricate footwork – steps and leg gestures, and their detailed variations of execution, could be notated. Although the eighteenth century notation system was in some ways limited, it did satisfy the needs of the time, and its dissemination world-wide has been unsurpassed even today.¹³ Feuillet's publication reached all parts of Europe throughout the century, and its usefulness, despite its limitations, is confirmed by the century's many dance masters, who carried with them the notated scores for use wherever they traveled.

Feuillet's system emphasized the path and steps of the dances, and the notation is almost pictorial – a representation of the steps and gestures on the page as traced by the limbs in performing them. These elements were also the focus of the technique: the path of the dancer, the steps along the path, and the notated circular gestures of the feet and

legs, all of which were central elements of the dance style of the time. Such emphasis also derives from the fact that feet and lower legs were the most visible parts of the bodies of both male and female dancers, particularly in the ballroom. The pathways were also visible as the stage was raked, making it easier to visualize choreographic effects in the spatial patterns. The carriage of the arms followed the rules of appropriate behavior, deportment, and elegance characteristic of the century, but was rarely notated.¹⁴ Pierre Rameau dedicates the second part of his manual *Le Maître a Danser* (1725) to the proper movements of the arms and hands, including those that should accompany various dance steps. In addition, he discusses the movements of the shoulders and the wrists, and the necessity of the opposition of the arms in relationship to the feet,¹⁵ something that was essential throughout the eighteenth century and was still relevant in the early nineteenth century. Carlo Blasis referred to the beauty and natural movement of opposing the feet with the arms almost one hundred years later in his *Elementary Treatise* (1820).¹⁶ The use of the arms was to be studied carefully by the dancers, who needed to find the most appropriate positions and movements according to their height and body type. The individual style and appropriateness of gestures was suggested and advised by dance masters throughout the eighteenth century. The implied freedom of performance is apparent in various manuals and treatises from Rameau's *Le Maître a Danser* to Blasis' *Elementary Treatise*.¹⁷

The eighteenth-century notation, a “track” system¹⁸ of notation, uses a line that depicts the dancer's path with steps notated on either side of it. Visually, it is a very efficient system as it does not require the dancer to flip sides – the right side of the track corresponds to movements done with the right foot, or right side of the body, and

symbols written on the left correspond to the left side of the body. Arm and hand movements were understood to follow the rules of opposition as suggested by Rameau and other dance masters of the time, as it is natural for the body to balance in that way. Dancers were expected to adapt their gestures to their own bodies and perfect them to their taste. By the middle of the eighteenth century when the *ballet d'action* was being developed, however, gestures acquired meaning beyond the appropriate manner of carrying the body and moving the arms and hands. Now each gesture, as proposed by Noverre, carried meaning, and passions could be expressed by actions of the entire body; according to the eighteenth-century theorist, gestures were more effective than words themselves in their expressive capability.

...in regard to the passions there is a degree of expression to which words cannot attain, or rather there are passions for which no words exist. Then dancing, allied with action, triumphs. A step, a gesture, a movement, and an attitude express what no words can say; the more violent the sentiments it is required to depict, the less able is one to find words to express them. Exclamations, which are the apex to which the language of passions can reach, become insufficient, and have to be replaced by gesture.¹⁹

The dancing masters of the mid to late eighteenth century did not develop a notation system that could record the expressive movements of the body and the gestures, elements which became characteristic of the *ballet d'action*. The emphasis on individual expressiveness of the entire body and the use of pantomime made the notation of the steps irrelevant, contributing to the gradual fading of the notation system. The written words of the libretti, with their descriptive words, replaced the notation of the movements of legs and feet.

Along with Edward Nye, I argue that in the absence of more tangible evidence such as a notation score, the narrative of ballet libretti *is* a form of dance notation. It allows the reader to interpret the ballets – we visualize movement in the words we read. Although they do not record the steps of dances as the previous Feuillet notation system had done, libretti do give us the basis upon which to re-build a ballet scenario. Word description as a way to record movement can lead to a multitude of problems, however, not least of which is the range of interpretation when trying to turn words into movement.²⁰ However, description has been used by dance masters and choreographers throughout time and in some cases it provides vital clues about the dances they recorded. Auguste Ferrère left a manuscript with his annotations on two ballets: it includes four different ways of recording movement—Feuillet notation, floor patterns, sketches and word descriptions, and word descriptions alone to describe pantomime action.²¹ Although he had a notation system at his disposal, Ferrère also resorted to word description to notate dances at the end of the eighteenth century. Although not ideal as a system of notation, words “are a vital means of communication in learning to understand and master movement;”²² therefore, word description such as we encounter in libretti does constitute significant historical information on the *ballets d’action*. Libretti, along with the interpretation of dance manuals of the same time period, are the only tools we have to help in re-constructing the ballets of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Descriptions of action or pantomime gestures were included in the libretti in the National Library of Portugal – their narrative texts contained language that can be read as action because they *imply* movement in order to make the plot of these ballets understood. The essence of the *ballet d’action*, as proposed by the choreographers of the

time, was action through the entire body. The technical dance movement of these ballets was not as important as the expressive components of the ballets – their narratives were the main focus. The language from these narratives describing the gesture and pantomime help us visualize the action and the movements to emerge from the text, thus truly re-creating the *ballet d'action* in its essential characteristics, with the narrative as its central focus. The narratives in the libretti are systems of notation – they are blueprints from which we can understand the movement content in the stories. And because, as Laurenti notes, “notation only gives an outline, which we must interpret by filling in the gaps,”²³ the word descriptions in the libretti provide us precisely with that: a blueprint. The expressive gestures, intrinsic and fundamental to the *ballet d'action*, emerge from the text, re-creating the ballets in our mind’s eyes as we read them. The narratives of the libretti are a system of notation—the words describe the action just as symbols described the leg and feet movements in the notation system of the previous century. These descriptions record what was essential for the style of that particular time period – expressiveness in the entire body.

3.2 Moving words – speaking dance: where *is* the action in the *ballet d'action*?

To understand the relevance of the words in the libretti and to be able to use them as notation, it is necessary to emphasize the essential characteristics of the *ballet d'action*. It had been evolving for over sixty years before it reached the stage of the Real Teatro de S. Carlos. Its roots go back to the middle of the eighteenth century when Noverre, along with other *ballet d'action* proponents such as Franz Hilverding and

Gasparo Angiolini, wished to revive the art of dancing, to make it more expressive, freeing it of affectation and technical tricks it had previously featured. Technique, they believed, should be the mechanism by which to attain expressivity, not an end in itself. The dancing masters and theorists of the mid to late eighteenth century spoke of feats of virtuosity that were devoid of meaning, mere attempts at impressing the audience and designed to gain their applause. To attain the beauty of dancing in its highest and most beautiful form, dancers should aim at “freeing their bodies of the vices of the *caprioles* and *entrechats*, dedicating themselves to the noble art of pantomime, and never forgetting that it is the soul of [their] art,” wrote Noverre.²⁴

Because the *ballet d’action* was a story told through movement or pantomime, its dramatic content was an essential aspect of the genre. The dramatic narrative of the libretti constitutes an important element in the study of the libretti as sources of movement documentation. The question for the dance historian then becomes one of interpretation. How do we “read” these stories in order to gather their meaning, and, more importantly, how can we derive movement from their words? Edward Nye suggests that the “ballet programme[s] constitute a choreography because [they have] performative value” and that they contain enough information for the restaging of a *ballet d’action*.²⁵ Thus, if they contained the necessary ingredients, we need to interpret them as texts that convey movement and meaning. And, that is possible by identifying the passages in the libretti that indicate movement, gesture or pantomime, stage directions, and types of passions suggested by the narrative to unravel principles and characteristics of the *ballet d’action* in these ballet libretti.

As Edward Nye clearly demonstrates in his article on *ballet d'action*, libretti are useful tools when one knows what they offer, how to interpret them, and to what extent they can be useful:

[Libretti] are choreodramatic in a number of ways: they identify the characters' passions, their movements on stage, their overtly pantomimic moments, as well as general principles of staging. In essence they tell us a great deal about *what* happens, even if they tell us little about *how*; although the choreodramatic plan is elaborate, it is not technically explicit. In itself, it is not a 'choregraphie' in the sense Feuillet meant the term, and generally speaking cannot be used to reconstruct the ballet. But we ought not to assume *a priori* that Feuillet-type notated movement would necessarily have been more useful to a choreographer of a *ballet d'action* than a detailed synopsis of the action.²⁶

Indeed, if we consider their content, the libretti narrative are useful not simply as a source of the story, but as a source of movement as well, provided we can understand *how* the action developed in addition to *what* the action was. Those elements are not always clearly evident at first. It is necessary to read the stories closely to find indication of their potential as "choreography;" they are an invaluable source of information regarding productions staged in Portugal and essential resources in understanding Portuguese dance in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They are paramount in tracing the historical development of dance in Portugal during that time period.

The scenarios of the *ballets d'action* do not necessarily indicate the ratio of movement to dancing that takes place. In order to "see" them we need to identify indication of movement in their words. At the turn of the nineteenth century, when the *ballet d'action* was familiar to the audiences, there was no doubt that these were ballets

and not plays, although the dancers were required to be actors as well.²⁷ However, to a reader today, that may not necessarily be so obvious. The narratives of the libretti, then, can be the “choreographies” of the *ballets d’action*, the missing link in further understanding the history of ballet in the decades that bridge the end of the eighteenth with the first decades of the nineteenth century. We need to read these libretti to make a distinction between dance and spoken word, or rather, understand their content as speaking dance—the essence of the action in the *ballets d’action*.

If we examine the language of the libretti and identify the passages that indicate movement described in them, the flow of the action becomes clearer. In the descriptions of the plot development, action and dancing implicitly embedded in the libretto, come to the surface. The following scenarios will further illustrate the intrinsic pantomime in the stories. Words or phrases that indicate movement are italicized for emphasis on elements of action: pantomime, gestures, movement, and stage direction.

The first ballet staged at the Real Teatro de S. Carlos in 1793, *A Felicidade Lusitana*, was a mythological, allegorical ballet in pantomime. This ballet was important in the celebration of both a royal event and the inauguration of the theater. The first act takes place at the margins of the Tagus River with a view of Lisbon in the background.

At the opening of the scene we see the Gods *descending*²⁸ from the Heavens. At one side of the stage Tagus and the sea are *looking sad* and do not notice the arrival of the Gods. *With a gesture Jupiter awakens Tagus* who is *surprised* to see the celestial deities. Once all the *obsequious reverences are made* to Jupiter and all of the company, Tagus *is told* that this is no time for sadness. He, in turn, *asks the reason for which he ought to be happy*; and Venus and the goddesses *show him the newborn princess*, at which sight Tagus *exults*. *Filled with joy* all the Divinities, the

Genii, and the Pleasures *begin to dance*; at the end of this dance Tagus *announces* the arrival of Lusitania, who *enters followed* by the Genii and the Pleasures *bringing* the portraits of the royal sovereigns, *presenting* them to Jupiter and all of the Divinities who *joyfully* and *courteously* accept them. Juno, *after looking to one side then the other*, *orders Mercury to go to Neptune and bring him the good news* so that he, with his maritime powers, can cast his protection on the Kingdom, uniting himself to the prosperity of the sovereign royal couple. *Mars offers to accompany Mercury* on this occasion, and once *Jupiter has given his consent*, they *exit* to where they had come. Mercury and Mars remain on stage and the first act ends.

The verbs and adjectives indicating action and mimed gestures of the passions guide the reader through this ballet in pantomime. Some passages are descriptive as well as prescriptive. In the passage “*after looking to one side then the other, orders Mercury to go to Neptune and bring him the good news*” the movement of looking to one side then the other implies looking for something or someone, in this case, searching for Mercury; *ordering* is indicative of an arm and hand gesture, while the rest of the sentence implies a dialogue through movement—here Mercury is told to move toward Neptune and narrate the event – the birth of the royal princess. While it is not possible to know exactly how the “bringing of the good news” was done, a series of pantomime gestures to symbolize the meaning of the words had to happen.

The second act opens with Neptune’s courtiers dancing, followed by a dance by Neptune himself, who then sits on his throne and orders more dancing to take place. After Neptune *accepts* Mars’ invitation to protect the kingdom together, he is given a flag of the kingdom which he accepts *heroically*, indicating his approval and protection as he

unrolls it. The third act again brings more celebration and joy shown through pantomime, culminating in a tableau of all of the characters, followed by dancing by the various groups bowing to the gods in their formations, which begins the grand ballet (*ballabile*)²⁹ ending with a great tableau formed by all.

This first ballet exemplifies the style of ballets that choreographers would continue to create, restage, or revive on the S. Carlos stage for several decades. The ingredients already present in this 1793 libretto appear in subsequent libretti throughout the next six decades in Portugal.

Pietro Angiolini³⁰ composed and directed his third ballet for the Lisbon stage in 1794: *Giro in Timbraja, a ballo eroico (Revolution in Timbraia, heroic ballet)*. It was clearly a *ballet d'action* as can be deduced from the descriptions of the scenes in the libretto. Angiolini played the role of *Ciro* in this ballet in four acts. This heroic ballet also contains a scene of troops and infantry performing what seem to be military “evolutions” in the first act. “The prince enters mounting a superb horse, accompanied by his captains and numerous battalions of cavalry and infantry. They line up in an orderly manner in front of the city.” Although the libretto gives no indication of a “dance” performed by these characters, “lining up in an orderly manner” implies a choreographed evolution in a series of military-like formations on stage as part of this action which happens at the beginning of act one.³¹ In the next scene, *Ariene*’s consent to marry *Ciro* brings pleasure to all, and a few characteristic dance numbers take place to express everyone’s approval; they are interrupted by the entrance of the royal guards announcing the arrival of two ambassadors, when act one ends.

In act two the libretto paints a scenario that indicates a blending of pantomime and dances – the dances serving the clear purpose of distracting Ariene from her troubles.³² The scene is played by four characters: two sisters and their confidantes. The sisters Ariene and Artenice are the daughters of the main character Ciassare, who has been hurt in battle and, at this point in the story, is lying lifeless on the battlefield. Ariene’s husband was also wounded, and she is preoccupied with both her father and her husband. At this point the two sisters are consoled by their ladies in waiting:

Ariene and Artenice come in, *afflicted* by the realization that their father’s life is in danger and that Ariene’s husband is hurt; their confidantes *try to enliven* and *distract* them with a few dances in an attempt to help them forget their *afflicting* thoughts. Ariene is *appeased* by the two ladies, but *preoccupied* by the sudden *fear* brought on by the thought of her dead father and wounded husband, is given to such new, *ever-growing and strong afflictions* that overtake her spirits and impel her to *run furiously* to the battlefield in order to save them, albeit the *supplicating cries* of her sister Artenice and the two confidantes, who *follow suit* in an attempt to stop her.

Words such as *affliction* and *supplicating* indicate action, or pantomimed action in gestures, poses, and display of emotions or passions to convey the meaning of the story. In order to portray *ever-growing and strong afflictions*, a change in mood, countenance, and body posture needs to take place and be noticeable to convey torment. The words *run furiously* indicate both the movement of running and the passion with which the movement is to be approached; *running* denotes not only the fact that she moves quickly, but that she moves with *furios* urgency as well. The dances in this act serve as a “distraction,” as indicated in the text, and are part of the story but they are not the most

important moment in the plot. The pantomime comprises the central and most important aspect of this ballet. The telling of the story through movement – gesture and pantomime – is clearly the strongest feature of these ballets as evidenced by the story outlined in their texts.

When Armand Vestris choreographed a ballet for his 1807 benefit performance, he based it on the love story of Sappho and Phaon, in which he played the role of Phaon in the four-act ballet by the same title. In the prologue Armand states that in this work “he attempted to put in practice the ideas of the great masters at the academy such as Noverre and Gardel.”³³ In this spectacle that instills melancholy, he continues, Vestris “tried to blend dancing into the action.” That is evidenced in the libretto.

According to the description of the scene that opens act one, Sappho is in her apartments with her companions and disciples who attend to the study of various arts such as painting, music, and poetry. The room is adorned with the statues of their respective muses. At the rising of the curtain the young women are occupied: Sappho *reads*, Dorilla *plays the lyre*, Cleonice *dances*, while Melissa *draws* her poses. A slave *comes in to announce* the arrival of a young man, a protégé of Venus; Sappho *listens with indifference*, but the others instead *show great interest* in seeing the young foreigner and *begin to quarrel* about their conquest. This being the day dedicated to the festival to honor Minerva, they all leave to partake in the games. In act two Phaon is the center of attention, surrounded by the people.

Sappho and her companions *enter dancing*, each with her different characteristic accessories for the games; Phaon joins them. Sappho *looks at him* closely and is *immediately enamored, feeling the flames of love*; Phaon however is already *enamored* of Cleonice. He dances a quintet with

the four young women, in which *he lets his attraction for Cleonice be noticed*. The four ladies begin shooting arrows and Cleonice displays the greatest dexterity; she wins the prize and receives her crown. Phaon *expresses the force of his passion*. Sappho, *enraptured by love*, cannot stop admiring Phaon; she takes a pencil, writes him a poem, and places it in a bouquet. Meanwhile Cleonice dances a solo. But what a *shock Sappho feels* when she understands that Phaon and Cleonice are getting along! Dorilla *tries to console her*. Phaon, at the head of the warriors, dances a solo. The spectators carry him in triumph. Sappho, still *inebriated with love*, joins the crowd and *getting close to Phaon hands him* the bouquet and the poem. *He rejects both with indifference* and she *runs away perplexed*. Phaon and Cleonice *leave, going toward* the temple of Venus. The gladiators *perform a dance*, finishing the festival to the sound of martial instruments.

From the words of this libretto we can see how Armand Vestris blended the danced and mimed parts in this story. As the highlighted words above demonstrate, pantomime was essential in conveying these feelings of passion and love throughout act two. In the following scene Amor comes into action and plans his mischief. Here once more Vestris wove dancing to convey meaning to his *ballet d'action*:

As Amor dances he sees Sappho and goes into the temple of Venus. Sappho *comes running and bewildered*; Dorilla *follows her*. Sappho *expresses her despair* and Dorilla *mocks her madness*. Sappho, *resentfully* asks if she knows Amor. Dorilla answers that yes, she does, and that she will *show her how inconstant* this god's arrows are: *dancing, she proceeds to pick up roses, plays with them, then discards them, picking up some more, to the sound of different arias always depicting the inconstancy of Amor*. Sappho *hugs Dorilla, expressing* how fortunate she is to think that way.

The dialogue between Sappho and Phaon in their next encounter is the center of the action at this point in the story. As they explain to each other their affection pantomime is clearly the only means by which they could have made the scene understood. A little further ahead in the story,

Sappho arrives, *restless, perturbed, and greatly agitated*. She looks at the great rock at the top of the hill by the sea, *takes a few steps*, and *halts in horror*. Dorilla *painfully announces* that the ship on the beach is there to take Phaon and Cleonice. Sappho, *furiously*, plans her vengeance and *asks* Dorilla for help: she will detain them with the pretext of a feast. Sappho asks her sisters to bring torches that night and to set the ship on fire before the two lovers can embark. When Phaon and Cleonice arrive they are *stupefied* at seeing Sappho, who *feigns tranquility* and *tells* them she has prepared a great feast in their honor.

Reading the libretti emphasizing the words that indicate pantomime movements helps us to distinguish between the danced parts and the action parts, and to identify the written language in the stories in the genre of the *ballet d'action*, thus leaving no doubt that the “dialogue” included in these narratives is in fact enacted through body and facial expressions.³⁴ When Dorilla *announces* that the ship will leave taking Sappho’s love, *herself feeling* the pain, she indicated that by gestures. This entire dialogue was enacted by using hand and body gestures and facial expressions to indicate a conversation between the two women. As this ballet by Vestris illustrates, pantomime was essential in conveying these characters’ thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the spectators.

Tragic ballets tended to end with pantomime and tableaux³⁵ rather than the large group dancing scenes that characterized more joyful ballets. These tableaux demonstrate the range of characters’ passions in the closing acts. This can be clearly seen in the final

scene of *Dionisio, o Tyranno (Dionisio, the Tyrant)*, an 1840 ballet by Luigi Montani. In a love story that parallels the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, the main character Areta, believing her husband to be dead, is unable to bear her fate and takes her own life; at this point begins act five:

At this moment Areta enters, pale and disheveled, showing the empty poison bottle which she had taken in order to join her beloved husband. The dire news *spreads desolation* among those present. Areta, in *astonishment*, sees that the prince, her husband, is alive; *she runs to his arms*, regretting her irreparable step. She *breathes her last sigh* and dies in his arms, leaving all in *great consternation*. A horrible earthquake destroys part of the temple and the mount erupts; a general tableau *depicting this horrendous catastrophe* ends the action.

This final scene necessitated the display of feelings through the use of action, which could not be achieved without facial expressions, as well as dramatic arm and hand gestures. Words such as “desolation,” “astonishment,” and “consternation,” for example, required the dancers’ ability to instill these same feelings in the audience in order to make the spectators feel their tragedy. Instilling these passions in the spectators required pantomime and gestures that were expressive relying on the entire body, and called for enhanced facial expressions in order to reach the audience. In the *ballets d’action*, as Noverre had stated, words cannot be as expressive as the body – steps, gestures, movement, and attitudes replace the written language.³⁶

The extent of pantomime in the libretti varied, depending on the subject-matter of the ballets, and was more common and lengthier in the dramatic, historic, or heroic ones where the stories tended to be more dependent on word description, and their plots more dependent on relationships of characters and their complicated web of events. The comic

ballets on the other hand often had shorter libretti, and sometimes included only short descriptions of the storyline without further details. The absence of details indicates that body movement and facial expressions were executed in a manner that was clearer to the viewer, since these comic ballets were also in a lighter style. Their characters usually were peasants, innkeepers, maids, servants, and at times their masters; thus, more overt gestures could be used to convey meaning.

In the ballets mentioned here the role of pantomime emerges from the text—these ballets could not have been performed without the use of gestures, poses, and pantomime – elements of late eighteenth-century technique and aesthetics we encounter in dance manuals of the period. It is also safe to assume that such language of pantomime was understood by the Portuguese audience. Unlike the glossaries that appeared in Weaver’s early work, there were not any notes to explain what each gesture meant in these nineteenth-century libretti; rather, the story was written in narrative. Presumably, the audience would have been able to follow the events by reading these *argomenti*, or plot synopses, included in the program. Explanations of the mimed actions were not given, thus implying that they were not necessary because such mimed gestures were familiar to the audience by then. Although in the beginning of the pantomime ballet era it had been customary for choreographers to rely on detailed explanation of gestures in order to make sure that their works were understood, this was no longer the case decades later.³⁷

The choreographers working in Portugal at the end of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century did not see a need to include explanation of mimed movements in their libretti. They must have been confident that their ballets would be understood, since no description of actions and their meanings were printed in the libretti.

There are no recorded manuals of mime used by the dancers of the time because mime was devised individually, according to each dancer's own interpretations and abilities. Their pantomime was drawn from a blend of stylized movements and everyday gestures.³⁸ The libretti, therefore, gave them sufficient information with which to devise meaningful gestures; thus, dancers and choreographers were successful in their pursuit of telling a story purely through the movements of the body in expressive ways.

Notes to chapter 3

¹ The 1700 Feuillet notation is an exception, as is Labanotation, from 1928. Although it has been available since the early twentieth century, however, Labanotation has not been widely used by either choreographers or dancers. Film and video recordings register that particular performance, but not necessarily what the choreographer had devised. In addition, films and videos of dance frequently alter the environment by positioning the camera at different angles, and thus cutting parts of the stage and, often, of the dancers' bodies as well.

² That was also the case in Italian ballet libretti. In Italy they continued to be printed within the opera libretti.

³ I have encountered only one libretto that mentions the costume designer. The names of the set and scenic designers became more frequent after the 1830s. Usually the composer was mentioned only when the score had been done specifically for that particular ballet.

⁴ Edward Nye suggests that programs, or libretti, were cheaply produced because they were not intended to last. *Mime, Music and Drama on the 18th-Century Stage; The Ballet d'Action*, 214.

⁵ Maureen N. Costonis, "Dauberval's *Le Siège de Cythère*, 1791," 176; Judith Chazin-Bennahum, *Dance in the Shadow of the Guillotine*, 4.

⁶ Edward Nye. "'Choreography' Is Narrative: The Programmes of the Eighteenth-Century *Ballet d'Action*," 48-49.

⁷ Jean-Georges Noverre, *Lettres sur la Danse et Sur les Ballets*, 362-395.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 365.

⁹ Raoul-Auger Feuillet, *Chorégraphie ou L'Art de Décrire la Danse*, 99-102.

¹⁰ Catherine Turocy, director of the New York Baroque Dance Company and world-renowned baroque re-constructor, teaches by this principle and coaches dancers to find their own body proportions within the baroque style aesthetics.

¹¹ Gennaro Magri, *Theoretical and Practical Principle Treatise on Dancing*, trans. Mary Skeaping, 143.

¹² Carlo Blasis, *An Elementary Treatise Upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing*, 39.

¹³ Ann Hutchinson Guest, *Choreo-graphics; A Comparison of Dance Notation Systems from the Fifteenth Century to the Present*, 21.

¹⁴ One exception is the score for the *Chacon for a Harlequin* as it includes notation for the motions of arms and hands in handling the taking off and putting on a hat. Feuillet did include the notation of hands and notated the beating of the castanets to illustrate the use of notation for that purpose. Feuillet, 97-102.

¹⁵ Pierre Rameau, *Le Maître à Danser*, 100.

¹⁶ Blasis, *Elementary Treatise*, 27.

¹⁷ Rameau, 197-199; Blasis, 38-39.

¹⁸ Ann Hutchinson Guest, *Dance Notation: The Process of Recording Movement on Paper*, 64

¹⁹ Cyril Beaumont, *Letters on Dancing and Ballets*, 4

²⁰ Guest, *Dance Notation*, 12.

²¹ Carol Marsh and Rebecca Harris-Warrick. "Putting Together a Pantomime Ballet" in *The Grotesque Dancer on the Eighteenth Century Stage*, ed. Rebecca Harris-Warrick and Bruce Alan Brown, 238-239.

²² Guest, *Dance notation*, 14

²³ Laurenti, *Traces of Dance: Drawings and Notations of Choreographers*, 107.

²⁴ Noverre, *Lettres*, 55

²⁵ Nye presents the idea that a programme of the action, a musical score, and the dancers' experience combined would be enough to stage, or restage a *ballet d'action*. *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 50

²⁷ Nye, *Mime, Music and Drama*, 164. They were sometimes called plays as well.

²⁸ The movement here is dependent on stage machinery, which adds to the effect of the ballet.

²⁹ The *ballabile*, ensemble dances, were one of the characteristics of Viganò's ballets. Winter, 190. They were already explored by Gioia in this work, as it is clear by this passage that he wove various tableaux with the dancing in the finale. In this creation Gioia anticipates Viganò, or perhaps parallels him in his working of group formations interchanged with dancing. Dauberval also made use of such groupings and dancing intertwined in his ballet *Le Siège de Cythère*. Maureen N. Costonis, 190.

³⁰ Angiolini mentions in the preface of the libretto that this is his third composition for the S. Carlos. His tenure there was interrupted for one year, and then resumed in 1795 after a “disastrous voyage.”

³¹ What an impressive scene that must have created with a horse on stage and a large number of soldiers marching in various formation. Horses were popular in ballets in Portugal and were used in ballets throughout Europe as well. For example, in the first act of *Giselle* in 1841... “the Prince and Bathilde, his daughter, appear on horseback, accompanied by a numerous suite of lords, ladies, and falconers”... Marion Smith, *Ballet and Opera in the Age of Giselle*, 231. Ballets with military exercises seem to have been frequent and popular in Portugal as we encounter descriptions of scenes such as this in other libretti of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

³² Dances were usually part of festivals, celebration, or distraction in the Portuguese libretti. In fact, several of the libretti mention dances within the stories in instances such as those of celebration, to distract someone from worries, or in merry rejoicing at the conclusion of a happy-ending ballet. Situations where dancing would normally take place is characteristic of these Portuguese libretti, and seems to have been common, as suggested by Susan Leigh Foster, in *Choreography and Narrative: Ballet's Staging of Story and Desire*, 170.

³³ Vestris identifies himself as a student of the Imperial Academy of Paris, and his mention of his tutors no doubt serve to testify to that and to validate his work.

³⁴ The emphasis on dialogue was stronger in libretti of dramatic ballets than in the others.

³⁵ Several libretti of ballets in Portugal end with a tableau.

³⁶ Beaumont, *Letters on Dancing and Ballets*, 4.

³⁷ Noverre used words to explain the actions and their meanings in detail in his programs, a fact that prompted Gasparo Angiolini to question the clarity of his pantomime if they needed that much explanation. Giannandrea Poesio, *The Language of Gesture in Italian Dance from Commedia dell'Arte to Blasis*. PhD Thesis, 32-33.

³⁸ Nye, *Mime, Music and Drama*, 231-232.

CHAPTER 4
THE *BALLET D'ACTION* SCENARIOS ON THE STAGE OF
THE REAL THEATRO DE S. CARLOS

Scenarios of ballets staged in Lisbon in the early nineteenth century varied in subject matter as well as genre. The over one hundred and fifty libretti in the collection of the National Library of Portugal provide information that elucidates the styles of ballets produced at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos. The specimens in the library are not exhaustive, however – I have found some libretti of the S. Carlos in the Harvard Theatre Collection that are not part of the Portuguese collection in the Lisbon Library, for example.¹ It is also possible that there were ballets for which no libretti were printed, or libretti whose ballets ended up not being staged for various reasons, such as illnesses of performers, for instance. The content of these libretti, however, does provide insight into the style of *ballets d'action* choreographed for the stage of the S. Carlos Theater and sheds light on the history of dance in Portugal during that time period.

The productions from 1792 to 1850 carried various subtitles further designating their genres, such as 'sentimental', 'magical', 'fantastic', 'mythological', 'heroic', and even 'sacred'. The compound designations also abound: 'historical-heroic', 'serious-tragic', 'heroic-comic', 'semi-serious', 'tragic-historical', 'demi-character', 'mimed

action’, heroic-pantomimic’, and so forth. The term ‘romantic’ appears as part of subtitles of only three ballets and it does not signify romantic in the sense of the *ballet blancs* such as *La Sylphide* and *Giselle*, as we now identify them; instead, these ballets are of the *ballo grande* style – ballets in four or more acts that emphasized mime – and all three of them fall into the ‘historic’ category. While it is true that this “limitless gamut” of subtitles found in the libretti illustrates what Nye calls the “need for the *ballet d’action* to define itself,”² by the middle of the nineteenth century it might be expected that this range of styles that had proliferated across Europe had crystalized. However, in Italy these terms continued to be used for several decades and in France they were still included in ballets of the first two decades of the nineteenth century.³ In Portugal the use of a wide variety of ballet subtitles persisted throughout the mid-nineteenth century and beyond.

These subtitles can be misconstrued when one is trying to decipher ballets of that period. *Giselle*, probably the best-known and longest lasting romantic ballet was called a ‘Ballet Fantastique’ at its premiere in 1841.⁴ Indeed, *ballet fantastique* or a *ballo fantastico* was a fantasy ballet, which implied a scenario of dream with imaginary, fantastic characters. A ballet of 1817 in Portugal, classified as “magical,” falls into the tragic style, even though a magician figures in the list of characters. Salvatore Viganò’s 1812 *Noce di Benevento (The Walnut Tree of Benevento)*, restaged in Lisbon in 1826, is simply listed as a *dance in four acts*, but it contained elements of the romantic ballet, including such characters as witches and apparitions of monsters and demons.⁵ Ballets in the romantic style were not designated as romantic, but rather as “fantastic,” “grand

ballet,” “divertimento,” or simply “ballet.” Even though mythological ballets, however, almost always included that word in their subtitles, in general the subtitles in themselves tell us little about the nature of these stories.

These various classifications of *ballets d’action* styles demonstrate that the permutations in these subtitles are not as meaningful as they first appear to be. Upon close examination of the ballet scenarios we are able to recognize that they share several characteristics more often than these subtitles indicate, and, that the significance of these subtitles, even to the choreographers, was less exclusive than we might imagine. In the sections that follow I categorize the works staged in Lisbon that I have chosen to discuss based on their libretti narratives, and organized them into the following genres: political, mythological, historical, serious and tragic, comic or demi-character, and romantic.

4.1 Patriotism triumphs! – Ballets of political message

The first ballet by Gioia in 1793, celebrating both the inauguration of the theater and the birth of the princess Maria Teresa, was political and allegorical in nature. Throughout the sixty-year period covered here, other political developments in Portugal were brought to the stage of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos. At times the themes of the ballets appear as historical events, but on closer inspection their direct reference to recent occurrences becomes evident. In some cases the choreographers make direct references to these events, as is the case in Luigi Montani’s preface to the ballet *O conselho de Jove* in 1822, while in others the correlation is less obvious. *Clazimiro e Slavvizza, ou o*

usurpador punido (Clazimiro and Slavvizza, or the usurper punished), a ballet of 1834⁶ also by Montani, for example, indirectly dealt with the war of two brothers that had ended just months before. In *Lysia Libertada, ou os satellites do despotismo no Averno, dança mimico-allegorica* (*The Liberation of Lysia, or the Satellites of Despotism in Averno, mimed-allegorical dance*), Montani makes use of mythology to stage a ballet of political message that celebrates the anniversary of the constitutional monarchy in 1834. In some cases the political messages were woven into a mythological argument, and metaphorically referred to both current and historical political events.

In 1822, Luigi Montani “deemed the analogous argument of his ballet appropriate for their happy circumstances” as Portugal celebrated the first anniversary of the signing of the constitutional monarchy. In his address to the public Montani alludes to the lack of time to prepare this ballet, and “hopes it is well received by the public of that illustrious nation, which would be his only wish in compensation for his weary endeavors.” *O Conselho de Jove (Jupiter’s Counsel)* subtitled *representação mimico-allegorica (mimed allegorical representation)*, depicts the desolate country in the character of Lysia (danced by Teresa Coralli), the Lusitanian genius, and the river Tagus seeking advice from the wise and infallible Jupiter in Olympus. Jupiter produces a resplendent cloud that opens revealing the words “*elect congressmen the nation must, and form a liberal constitution.*” The Lusitanian heroes, overcome with joy, not only promise, but also vow to obey and preserve this constitution eternally. Aided by the strength of Mars and the virtues of Minerva, the characters of sciences and of the other gods also promise to support the heroes who, filled with happiness, return home. After relaying what happened in

Olympus to the people, “Tagus detects inexplicable transport of happiness in everyone’s countenances and orders a monument to be erected,” which immediately takes place. The appearance of the statue of the constitution descending from the clouds attests to divine approval. The action ends with a most happy constitutional dance to express universal and excessive rejoicing by all.

Although not designated as a mythological ballet by Montani, the allegorical mythology throughout the plot illustrates how the celebration of the anniversary of this political development served as the inspiration for the work. This ballet illustrates the representation of current events on stage, a reference which certainly was not missed by the royal family who most likely were in attendance (they had returned to Portugal in 1821). Since approval for the libretti had to be secured before printing, it was also a message of support for the constitutional monarchy from the management of the theater.

Four years later, in the prologue of another ballet, *Lysia Libertada*, Luigi Montani writes:

The composer, who has always shown a particular sympathy for, and his most fervent sentiments toward the constitutional cause, has had the satisfaction of presenting to this respectable public a few productions alluding to this subject matter several times, which have been well-received. Having been asked to produce an allegorical representation for the celebration of this jubilatory day, not only for the Portuguese but also for all of those who detest despotism, I have used this theme and hope in advance that this dance will merit the same reception that my other works on identical subjects have in the past.

Montani depicts the constitutional and liberal movement of 1826 in Portugal, represented in the characters of the generals, one of them designated as the despot with his satellites and soldiers, a Lusitanian hero, peasants, and extras. Jupiter, Lysia, Pluto, Mercury, Discord and other Olympian deities resolve the conflict and a dance by Olympian nymphs to the queen's anthem ends the ballet.

Directly related to the War of Two Brothers, which ended in 1834, is the ballet Ferdinando Rugali choreographed in that same year: *O Soldado Honrado ou A Tomada de um Forte (The Honored Soldier or the Attack of a Fort)*. Rugali portrays the character of Dom Pedro, who puts his personal interest and private life aside for a nobler cause: saving his nation's future. Allied with the captain, Pedro and the Portuguese army defeat the enemy and triumph after bringing down their flag, dancing and rejoicing to celebrate their victory. Interestingly, Rugali chose to set the story in a village near the castle of Stauback; however, the political message could not have been clearer. In the last scene, the Portuguese Liberal flag is hoisted, and, while the dancing takes place, a sign displays the worth of the Portuguese army: *Viva the Liberating Army; Viva our Valiant Leader*.

Another instance of a ballet that alluded to political events in Portuguese history is the *baile historico em tres actos, Portugal Restaurado (Portugal Restored, historical ballet in three acts)*, choreographed by Bernardo Vestris in 1835. Although he called it a historical ballet, its theme paralleled contemporary political developments in Portugal – the conflict over the succession of the throne that had ended in the year before. It could be appropriately subtitled a political-patriotic ballet, given its subject matter. In his address to the public Vestris justifies some of his choices:

Without going away from the threads of history, I judged it necessary to alter a fact in order to not present on the stage a character that should appear in the development of the action, the Duchess of Mantua, whom I chose to omit from the plot to avoid hatred toward the actress who should portray her; by doing so I make all of the focus of indignation fall on a degenerate Portuguese, Miguel de Vasconcellos, who, although not a regent by right, posed as such. To embellish the subject of this ballet I found it appropriately correct to add an amorous episode by which to render the tyrant of Portugal even more odious, remaining in all other matters close to the thread of history.

Although the libretto states that the ballet takes place in Lisbon in 1640, the tyrant of Portugal, as Dom Miguel was known, in fact had usurped the throne and been defeated by his brother Pedro in 1835, the year before the ballet was created.

At the beginning of act one a “dialogue” takes place:

Leonor is talking to her friend and confidant Margarida narrating her love for D. Fernando and her hatred of the Regent, especially now that he had disclosed to her his marriage intentions. The tyrant Vasconcellos arrives and orders Margarida to leave. Leonor wants to stop him, but is obliged to cede to the orders of her guardian, who tells her once again of his passion, to which Leonor responds with indifference, telling him that she will never be his spouse.

The pantomime in the first scene clearly establishes the relationships between the characters and the love triangle that is central to the plot. Use of gestures and facial expressions to tell Margarida of her woes introduces the dramatic content of the ballet to the audience.

The following scene presents more pantomime to clarify the characters' feelings and further develop the story.

Several noblemen have entered the room where a reception to honor Count Garcia, the Spanish ambassador, will take place. Garcia has arrived to deliver the certificate of Regency to Dom Miguel. Among the guests is Dom Fernando, whose presence surprises everyone in the room. At seeing this general reaction, he explains that he was invited by Vasconcellos, which Dom Fernando's friends confirm. The Count inquires about Leonor, and Dom Miguel Vasconcellos makes a gesture to Menigo to go call her. Leonor enters, followed by her ladies-in-waiting. Count Garcia presents her with a bracelet, a gift from his Spanish sovereign. Dom Fernando and Leonor manifest their mutual affection and love for each other; however, Fernando cannot suppress a movement of rage when he sees his beloved take a seat next to Miguel. Dom Fernando detains Margarida to whom he speaks of Leonor and his jealousy of the regent Miguel; D. Fernando asks her to relay to Leonor that soon she will be freed from the oppressor. Margarida takes her leave, but before departing recommends him to be mindful of his beloved, advising caution.

As the passage above illustrates, the plots of these ballets were filled with intricate mimed segments that necessitated the detailed explanations that the libretti provided.

Act two brings forth the subject of Freedom and Independence, and all of the noblemen, with Dom Fernando as their leader, who swear allegiance to the Duke of Bragança (Dom Pedro IV) as their only sovereign, pledging to fight for him and die for the restoration of the nation. The noblemen renew their vows in the name of heaven and go to the palace to seek the regent, having been asked by Dom Fernando to return by eight o'clock the next morning.

The third act takes place in the palace of Miguel Vasconcellos, who tries by all means to exercise his authority over Leonor and to bend her to his will, telling her he will give orders for the wedding preparations. Having no other recourse, Leonor tells him that their union is not possible – she is in love with Fernando and will be united only to him. This fills Vasconcellos with anger and he swears revenge; calling for his guards, he orders Leonor to be locked up. Drawing their swords and daggers, Dom Fernando and Vasconcellos engage in a mortal combat. Helped by Leonor, who kills one of Vasconcellos' friends with a dagger, Dom Fernando finally is able to kill the tyrant. Dom Fernando orders that the body of the despot be thrown out the window by the allies who had just come in; a national flag unfolds with a sign that reads:

Hurray to Freedom!

Hurray to the Duke of Bragança and his dynasty.

This patriotic ballet depicting the victory of Dom Pedro over his brother Miguel, under the guise of the restoration of Portugal centuries earlier, alludes to contemporary political developments. The event on which the theme of the ballet centers, the figure of the oppressive regent Miguel, would have been still fresh in the minds of those attending the performance of Bernardo Vestri's *Portugal Restaurado* in 1835.

The memory of a throne usurped by a rival brother was still vivid in the minds of choreographers by 1838, when Bernardo Vestris choreographed *As Odaliscas* (*The Odalisques*). Its sub-plot involved a love triangle between two brothers complicating the popular revolt led by one of the brothers who aimed to overthrow the king and take the throne. Although not a direct reference to political events – the action takes place in

Egypt – the underlying theme of this ballet also hints at the war over the succession of the throne of Portugal in the preceding years. In the final act a warrior-like pyrrhic dance performed by all of the female dancers in the character of odalisques, distracts the army of one of the brothers. A final combat between the rivals and their troops results in the defeat and death of Armais, the brother who had overtaken the crown as a tyrannical ruler.

Ferdinando Rugali choreographed *A Verdadeira Felicidade de Lysia* (*Lysia's True Happiness*) in 1829. Although he used a mythological plot for this ballet in three acts, the political message of the ballet is clear at the end. In act three, which takes place in the reign of Jupiter, he and other deities display signs that read: *Viva Dom Miguel, King of Portugal – Viva the Empress our Lady and queen – Viva the House of Bragança* – and all dance to the sound of the royal anthem to end the ballet. Here the political message is blended with the allegory of mythology – a device that was used by choreographers who staged other political allegories as well, as had been the case with the inaugural ballet of the Teatro de S. Carlos.

4.2 Nymphs, naiads, temples, and grottos – ballets of ancient myths and legends

The ancient myths of Roman and Greek mythology with their myriad of short stories and tales populated by powerful gods and goddesses, nymphs, naiads, titans, beasts, and monsters had been inspiring choreographers for some time before these ballets entered the scene at the Real Teatro de S. Carlos. Noverre staged his famous

Jason et Medée toward the end of the eighteenth century as a pantomime ballet. Cupids, Venuses, and other mythological characters had made their appearance on other European stages before Lisbon, where they enjoyed several decades of a revived interest in Roman and Greek mythology.

The theme of Apollo and Daphne inspired choreographers of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos to stage ballets based on their well-known love story. One example is the 1827 *baile mythologico em dois actos* by Luigi Montani befittingly titled *Apollo e Daphne*. Act one begins with a dance of the shepherds and shepherdesses in a valley of temples; Apollo enters in his chariot and all wish to pay him homage, but he signals for them to continue their festive dancing. Daphne appears, followed by her nymphs, and they join in the dances. Amor, surrounded by cupids, arrives in his carriage of fire to watch the celebration. Daphne wants to avoid him. Apollo comes out of his temple and observes, then shows the python he has killed which is on top of a tree. Indignant, Amor threatens Apollo with his arrows, and departs.

Apollo tries to relate his fear of Amor to Daphne, and, attracted by her beauty, dances with her. Amor, out of sight, observes their dancing and takes advantage of the moment to shoot his arrows – one with the golden tip, the other with the lead – and, satisfied with his first vengeance, leaves. Apollo declares his love to Daphne; she tries to flee but is detained by the shepherds and shepherdesses and the sound of Apollo's lyre. She is able to escape when, in order to get closer, he ceases to play. Apollo follows her; Amor, proud of his mischievous work, runs after them.

The next scene opens in a dense forest where a branch of the river Peneus can be seen to one side. Daphne arrives, fatigued from her flight and pleads with Peneus, her father, for help. He transforms the lower half of her body into the trunk of a tree. Apollo enters hurriedly, and astonished at Daphne's metamorphosis, hangs his lyre on a branch with the words: "Apollo, betrayed by his treasured beloved, here consecrates his golden plectrum." Amor enters followed by his suite of genii, ridiculing the deluded Apollo, reminding him of the serpent he had killed. He implores Amor for forgiveness and piety; Peneus supplicates in Apollo's favor. Amor, unable to resist all of their pleas, transforms the forest into the reign of Venus, where Daphne can be seen surrounded by the graces and the genii who adorn her with crowns of roses. Venus brings Apollo before beautiful Daphne, asking Cytherea to intercede with her son in her favor. Amor, powerless at his mother's request, does not deny her this courtesy: he shoots his arrow at Daphne's heart, uniting her with her Apollo. This joyous moment is celebrated with merry dancing that demonstrates general happiness.

Variations of this plot appear in later libretti by Augusto Hus and Theodoro Martin. Augusto Hus staged *Apollo e Daphne, divertimento anacreontico (Apollo and Daphne, Anacreontic divertissement)*, in 1834. The one-act ballet tells the story of Apollo (played by Hus), and his love for Daphne, who treats him with indifference and disdain. She evokes the protection of her father Peneus, whose powers transform her into a laurel bush. Apollo, in desperation, implores Cupid to take pity on him. Cupid, wishing to repair his error – having shot an arrow at Apollo but not one at Daphne – descends on a cluster of celestial clouds, and answering to Apollo's pleas, restores life to Daphne and

leads her into his arms. The festivities to celebrate the happy ending take place. Peneus, surrounded by naiads, tritons, and nymphs blesses their union and everyone pays tribute to the happy couple. A general tableau ends the ballet.

Another 1835 libretto, *O triunfo de Amor (The Triumph of Love)*, also by Hus, dealt with mythological characters once again. Hus considered the theme of this *baillete anacreontico (short Anacreontic ballet)* the most adequate for the debut of the French prima ballerina Mme Noblet.⁷

In a dense forest Endymion admires the statue of Diana and some nymphs and shepherds dance to the sound of his flute. The nymphs, vying for his attention, offer him a crown of roses which he refuses at first, but then accepts and takes part in their dancing, forming various delightful groupings. A hunting horn is heard: Endymion is delighted. The nymphs want to take him away from the scene, but he refuses vehemently and indignantly; they vow their implacable hatred. Several shepherds want to persuade him to leave, but he refuses to follow and, showing them Diana's temple says he is love-stricken. His friends fear for his safety and finally succeed in his acquiescing to leave.

The next scene centers around Diana and Endymion and their encounters. When he is desperate, Cupid appears. Endymion, pleadingly, throws himself at Cupid's feet. The god promises to protect him. At Cupid's sign several lovers appear bringing him a crown of white roses and a veil. Cupid, disguised as a nymph, goes into Diana's grotto.

In the opening of act two Diana appears in her bathing attire. She sits down, her nymphs adorn her, and they all dance. Diana is told that a nymph wants to speak to her and Cupid enters. This new nymph surprises everyone. Diana inquires the reason for her presence at her quarters and

Cupid answers that he wants to be part of her retinue. Diana tells him he must serve her and be faithful, and then requests that he takes a bow and arrow. When one of the nymphs brings Cupid the bow and arrow, he pretends to shoot, but using one of his own arrows instead, aims at Diana's heart, and wounds her. Diana reacts with anger and orders her followers to seize the reckless nymph. Cupid appears as his own self and all of the nymphs run away. Diana pursues him.

The scene is transformed into a beautiful vale; Endymion comes searching for Cupid who comes running from Diana's rage. Endymion and Diana exchange glances with uncertainty. Cupid takes pleasure in their awkwardness. Diana, under Cupid's spell, lets the bow fall from her trembling hand. Endymion takes her hand and she falls into his arms. Cupid enjoys his triumph; rendering homage to him, all perform a few dances featuring Diana and Endymion. Cupid ushers the union of the two lovers and a general tableau ends the action.

Bernardo Vestris also chose a mythological divertissement in one act, *Venus and Adonis*, for the debut of the French ballerina Mademoiselle Clara on the Lisbon stage in 1835.⁸ The libretto lists the danced parts of this ballet: *a pas de sept*, two *pas de trois* – one by three female dancers and one by Hus, Clara, and the dancer in the role of Cupid – and a finale, which we can surmise was done by the entire cast. The scene takes place in a delightful prairie. It opens with

Venus, sad and pensive, surrounded by the nymphs who try to entertain her; the graces at the feet of Cupid, implore him to have compassion on his mother, who is afflicted by deep torment. Cupid wants to hear directly from her the reason for her troubles and inquires, but Venus refuses to answer. One of the graces tells him in secrecy that Venus

adores Adonis extremely, but that this mortal loves nothing but hunting, being insensitive to love. Suddenly the sounds of the hunters' trumpets can be heard. Venus feels her heart palpitating; Cupid promises to bring Adonis to her feet immediately and asks her to go hide behind some rose bushes to wait for her beloved, and to be ready at his first signal.

This first scene is rich with dialogue movement – it is not difficult to imagine all of the details of the description above being done in body movements and gestures – in essence, a speaking dance. This would have given Mlle Clara many opportunities to demonstrate her abilities in pantomime. The following scene is equally filled with action. This segment is particularly richly descriptive:

Adonis arrives with the hunters, oppressed by exhaustion; the fragrance of the flowers and the freshness of the fields invite him to rest. He puts down his spear and trumpet, and reclines on the grass at the foot of the rose bushes. Soon after, Cupid emerges. Adonis is under his spell and Cupid shoots his arrow and hides again. Adonis, agitated, his heart palpitating, awakens suddenly and wants to flee when Venus arrives. A nymph detains him but he persists; he then realizes he can no longer resist as he has become a slave of love. Cupid brings them together to pronounce their vows of mutual love. The nymphs celebrate this pleasant day while Adonis and Venus engage in unrestrained delight and contentment.

Mars appears in the next scene. Seeing Adonis and Venus together, he wishes to avenge himself of her betrayal by sending an enormous boar to the prairie. Adonis is fatally wounded while battling the beast; Venus becomes lost in despair, and Cupid summons Jupiter and implores him to bring Adonis back to life, to which he assents and all rejoice in celebration.

Mythology continued to be presented by choreographers in Lisbon throughout the period under study. *A Vingança D'Amor, divertissement anacreontico em um acto* (*Love's Vengeance, Anacreontic divertissement in one act*), by Théodore Martin, brings Apollo, Daphne, Peneus, Amor, nymphs, shepherdesses, tritons, hunters, and mermaids to the stage of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos once again in 1847. Martin's libretto is similar to that of Augusto Hus from 1834, but, in Martin's words, his new approach to the dances, the staging, new scenery, and new music, would make it more appealing. The choreographer gives a brief summary of his ballet, since "Apollo and Daphne's love fables are generally well-known."

The ballet begins when Apollo, proud of his triumphal killing of Typhon, scoffs at Amor, who in vengeance tries to shoot his arrow at Apollo, but ashamed and embarrassed at his failure, shoots his golden-tip arrow at Apollo, and the lead-tip one at Daphne, rendering her insensitive to love. In the opening scene Apollo, seated by Daphne's grotto, sings to his beloved accompanying himself on his lyre. He decides to take part in the celebrations to honor Diana, and appears before Daphne in his shepherd costume. Apollo receives the prizes of a golden bow and a crown of roses, which he presents to Daphne, but she refuses them. He declares his love – she pushes him away. Her nymphs invite her to a hunt. Apollo changes into his own costume and declares his love once again. Daphne recognizes the god and runs, but he catches her.

From this point on, the ballet follows the same sequence as that of the previous choreographers: Daphne is transformed into a laurel, Cupid answers Apollo's appeal, forgives him, and unites the two lovers. The ballet ends with a dance of celebration by all of the characters.

In addition to the ballets that were purely mythological as described above, choreographers also continued to blend their plots of political message with myths. Another example of this is Giuseppe Villa's *Phedra, baile tragico em cinco actos* (*Phaedra, tragic ballet in five acts*), in 1838 for another celebration of the anniversary of the constitutional monarchy. This was Villa's first attempt at staging a ballet on this theme. The story is based on the myth of Phaedra, Hippolytus, Venus and other characters, by Fontanelle,⁹ with the introduction of "a few indispensable additions of his own invention." This longer ballet has a more complicated plot, larger cast, and changes of scenery in a story of love, jealousy, death, and remorse that culminates in a happy ending with an analogous tableau to end the mimed action.¹⁰

Several other mythological ballets were staged in Lisbon during this time period. Pietro Angiolini choreographed *Orfeo e le Baccanti* in 1795, and *La Morte d'Ercole* (*Hercules' Death*) in 1793, a story of Hercules and Deianira that also features Venus, Jupiter, jealousy, fear, and hope. Hercules is the subject of another ballet in 1808, *Hercules Triunfante em Troia* (*Hercules Triumphant in Troy*) by Giovanni Battista Giannini, where Hercules encounters the marine monster Neptune. As described previously in chapter three, Armand Vestris also used a mythological theme for this benefit performance in 1807. Although subtitled a serious ballet in three acts, Montani's *A Vingança de Ulysses* (*Ulysses' Vengeance*), essentially was a mythological ballet staged to celebrate the birthday of the Prince Regent on May 13, 1819. Aided by Minerva, Ulysses is able to win Penelope's heart when he battles the other suitors for her hand in this Olympian grand ballet; their union finalizes the action with the opening of

clouds where nymphs, genii, and Minerva form a tableau to express their happiness and solemnize the occasion.

Giovanni Battista Cozzer's *A Conquista do Vellocoino de Ouro; baile mythologico em cinco actos*, (*The Quest for the Golden Fleece; mythological ballet in five acts*), on the story of Jason and the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece, in 1820, featured Medea, Jason, Apollo and Venus, graces, Cupid, and furies. In 1821 Giovanni Coralli also staged a heroic-mythological ballet while in Portugal: *Telemaco na corte de Idomeneo* (*Telemachus at the Court of Idomeneus*), with Minerva and Ulysses as the main characters in this ballet that takes place in Ithaca. As mentioned above, Ferdinando Rugali used mythology for his patriotic ballet *A Verdadeira Felicidade de Lysia*, in 1829, and also in *A Protecção de Venus, ou os Amantes Felizes* (*Venus' Protection, or the Happy Lovers*), which he choreographed in 1834. Two ballets by Giovanni Casati in 1840, *Orpheo*, and *Psyche*, are also mythological ballets.

Seven of the eleven available libretti by Francisco Jorck staged at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos¹¹ between 1839 and 1843 belong in this category, adding to the roster of ballets on the themes of ancient Greece and Rome: *Echo e Narciso* (*Echo and Narcissus*), 1839; *Apollo Pastor* (*The Shepherd Apollo*), 1839; *Narciso e a bella naiade que se adoram* (*Narcissus and the Beautiful Naiad who Adore Each Other*), 1841; *A Força do Destino* (*The Power of Destiny*), 1841; *Telemaco na Ilha de Calypso* (*Telemachus on the Island of Calypso*), 1841; *O Triunfo d'Amor* (*The Triumph of Love*), 1840; *O Triunpho de Euthymo* (*The Triumph of Euthymius*), 1843. Although some of the

above ballets at times present variations on the same story, choreographers added episodes to adapt them to a particular occasion, or to add variation to their narratives.

The familiar stories of these well-known Roman and Greek mythological legends would have been easy to follow. As the examples above demonstrate, choreographers revisited these legends and fables from time to time and felt at liberty to introduce additional episodes and to alter their stories which allowed them to weave more dancing into the ballets. These myths also gave them the opportunity to reaffirm the underlying moral lessons in tales that, in their majority, ended in happiness. The large number of Portuguese libretti dealing with these themes testifies to their favorable reception.

4.3 Ships, sailors, and seascapes – ballets on Portuguese history

Ballets on historical themes were one of the preferred genres of the Lisbon audience, as Augusto Hus observed in the preface to *Eduardo III* in 1835, when he decided to explore an authentic historical subject for his choreography. Serious ballets predominated on the stage of the S. Carlos throughout this period, and a few choreographers found inspiration in Portuguese history, introducing topics such as the early Portuguese conquests overseas, for example. Antonio Cortesi's first original work drew on the tragic episode of Inês de Castro, taken from the poem by Luis de Camões, for his ballet of the same title. Outside of Portugal Salvatori Taglioni staged *I Portoghesi nell'Indie, ossia la conquista di Malacca: ballo eroico pantomimico in cinque atti* (*The Portuguese in India, or the conquest of Malacca: heroic-pantomimic ballet in five acts*)

in 1819, for the San Carlo in Naples. The same theme served as the source of inspiration for Giuseppe Villa's 1837 version of the same ballet entitled *A Conquista de Malaca pelos Portugueses (The Conquest of Malacca by the Portuguese)* for the S. Carlos in Lisbon.

The 1838 ballet in three acts *A Adoração do Sol (The Adoration of the Sun)* by Bernardo Vestris treats the subject of native Indians and chiefs of a tribe that practice the ritual of the adoration of the sun. Characters include an indigenous American orphan girl, a chief, a ship's captain, an admiral, sailors and mariners, and indigenous men and women. The action takes place in the isles near Florida.¹² Included in the scenes listed in the libretto is a dance of bamboos, something that might have been innovative, especially due to the original score composed by a Portuguese musician who was also conductor for the orchestra of the Real Teatro de S. Carlos at the time.¹³ The conflict between the indigenous peoples and the Europeans ends with the captain distributing gifts to the chief and his people in a peace offering. But, before the European fleet departs, the chief requests that they observe their ritual of the adoration of the sun. At the first sign of light on the horizon all of the indigenous people bow down crouching, and their ritual ends the ballet.

One year later Vestris choreographed another ballet on the theme of Portuguese maritime sailing: *A Discipula da Natureza, baille em trez actos (Nature's Disciple, ballet in three acts)*. In this ballet an admiral had lost his wife and daughter while on an expedition when their ship sank. The wife died, but the daughter survived and lived on an island to which, many years later, another expedition takes a friend of the admiral. Upon

arrival the sailors find the young and wild orphan and her companion, a goat. After her initial reaction of fear, she tries to run away; finally the sailors are able to communicate with her and offer her something to drink; unaccustomed to wine, she falls asleep and is taken to the captain's cabin. In act two she awakens and marvels at everything in sight. The first thing she notices is a mirror, and scared by her own reflection runs away. She then finds a lady's hat and necklace, and a bell, which she proceeds to sound. The ballet ends when her father, the admiral, arrives on the island and meets his daughter, whom he believed had perished in the shipwreck that claimed his wife so many years before. On the deck of the ship a celebration for their re-union ends the ballet.

A Conquista de Malaca pelos Portugueses, acção mimica em cinco actos (The Conquest of Malacca by the Portuguese, mimed action in five acts), was based on an historical account by the French *abbé* Raynal, to which Giuseppe Villa added a love episode (undoubtedly to render the story more interesting). Indian characters such as a Brahman, devadasis and bayaderes, soldiers, and grand officials are featured in this ballet. The attraction of the Indian sovereign to the daughter of the Portuguese officer underlines the development of the action. Ships, forests, storms, and soldiers marching into the city figure in this interwoven story of dissent, imprisonment, and tumult. In act five, which takes place during the night, the Portuguese troops arrive and set the city on fire. The Indian king, hoping to be saved by the Portuguese officer's daughter whom he loves (but whom he has abducted and locked in a dungeon of his castle), comes running away from the attackers. He sees the Portuguese on board their ships and their cannons that start firing. He tries to get into the fort, but it comes crumbling down and he is

trapped in the ruins. The Portuguese officer, after saving his daughter with the help of his assistant, holds her in his arms. As daylight breaks, the Portuguese flag glows in the sunlight, finishing the tragic action.

Antonio Cortesi' staging of *A Estrella Propicia, ou a Escrava Portuguesa* (*The Auspicious Star, or the Portuguese Slave*), originally choreographed by Cesar Terini de Lucca, made reference to historical events of Portuguese explorations by Vasco da Gama. This undated grand ballet retells some episodes of the 1500s, the age of Portuguese discoveries, and includes Venus in the form of a star among the characters; slaves, soldiers, servants, moors, allegorical figures, banyans, bayaderes, and Portuguese heroes and heroines complete the roster of figures who appear in several scenes alluding to episodes of history. The central theme focuses on a Portuguese slave, wife of a nobleman, whom the Indian emperor wants to marry. A military ballet to the sound of Indian drums, with "all of the dancers in rows marching in good cadence" takes place toward the end of scene one. At the end of scene two, the slave is reunited with her husband, the "barbarous emperor" is defeated, and the couple gets transported to a great noble room adorned with columns and a crystal chandelier. The names of famous figures from Portuguese history appear on pedestals with their respective statues. The final tableau displays the victorious Portuguese in the center, while the defeated angry emperor and the entire court surround them in astonishment.

Luigi Astolfi treated the Portuguese presence in North Africa in his heroic-historical ballet *Os Portugueses in Tanger* (*The Portuguese in Tangier*). This 1839 ballet in five acts and six scenes illustrates the style of *ballo grande* – large, spectacular

productions in various acts, mainly mimed, and interspersed with dances.¹⁴ The large cast with numerous characters of both Portugal and Tangier, including a duke, an emperor, a sultan, viziers, soldiers, sailors, officials, eunuchs, moors, odalisques, guards, and slaves illustrates the style. Dances are inserted as entertainment for the sultan and diversion for the slaves during their meal. The glorious victory of the Portuguese displaying their flag after having brought down the Moorish walls is represented in an analogous tableau to end the ballet. Astolfi staged a ballet on an episode of more ancient history of Portugal the following year in *As Heroínas Lusitanas (The Lusitanian Heroines)*, a ballet that refers to the Roman occupation in the north of the country in the remote second century.

Naturally, in these heroic *ballets d'action* the Portuguese are depicted as magnanimous heroes, generous benefactors, and courteous dukes and princes, who triumph in adversity and war. Choreographers paid their homage to the people of the nation that employed them, and were more than happy to please the management and the directors of the theater, as well as those in attendance, with ballets that expounded on their victorious history. Extolling the brave character of Portuguese soldiers was particularly pertinent during the years following the French occupation and Portugal's subsequent defeat of the French army with the aid of the English general and troops.

4.4 Duels, dungeons, and daggers – the serious, dramatic, and tragic ballets

The majority of the ballets for which libretti were printed and remain in the collection of the National Library of Lisbon were of the serious, heroic, dramatic, and

tragic genres. Variations on familiar stories were frequent, and some of the most common subject-matters were brotherly rivalries, disputes over a woman's heart, love triangles, vengeance, jealousy, suicide, and the like. Often the injured, unreasonable, and vindictive characters resort to violence, and send their victims to isolation in dungeons or remote apartments in distant castles to persuade them to change their minds, or to die of starvation. Inevitably, a confrontation ensues, either in the form of a duel or fight in which one or more character is severely injured or fatally wounded. In some ballets, a desperate attempt to win results in a character committing suicide to avoid capture and imprisonment. Unrequited love is often at the heart of these convoluted plots involving noble men and women and their entourages, confidantes among them. Peasants, soldiers, and armies often are included as well. Names of characters are often similar, contributing to the bewildering development of the plots, and reinforcing the usefulness of the libretti to clarify the ballets' stories.

Also common is the theme of forbidden love where one of the characters is already betrothed, or unattainable due to other circumstances, as in the case of Luigi Montani's *A Vestal*, in which the main character, Emilia, is a vestal virgin at the service of the goddess Vesta, whose duty is to keep the temple fire burning. *La Vestale* had been written by Salvatore Viganò three years earlier, and an even earlier version was done by Gardel at the Paris Opera in 1807, based on the opera by Spontini.¹⁵ Luigi Montani's libretto follows that of Viganò's in both word description and elements that appear in the plot.

In the first scene, Emilia, one of the vestal virgins,¹⁶ is distributing the palms and crowns to the winners of the games in celebration of the Feast of Ceres. Decio, one of the winners, notices her; she lets her kindness toward him transpire: a sign of love blossoming. The act ends with a general march.

In act two Decio has returned to his father's house confused and pensive, and not able to forget Emilia, and coming to the realization that their love is hopeless, he gives into his profound pain. When his father arrives and notices his sadness, Decio tries to hide his despair, claiming that he is tired from the games. His father orders a great banquet with music and dancing to celebrate his son's victory, at the end of which Decio confides his secret love for Emilia to his friend Claudio, who tells him he knows an underground secret passage that leads into the vestal temple and promises to take him there the following night.

At the opening of act three Emilia watches and tends the sacred fire. She knows her duty as a vestal prohibits her from loving a mortal. Desperate, she asks the goddess for protection. Almost delirious, she speaks to Decio as if he were present, explaining her predicament. At this moment Decio and Claudio enter the temple. Decio tells her of his love and proposes they escape; she wants to run away from him, but he detains her; she begs him to leave, as they will both perish if they are caught in the temple. Decio takes that as a sign of her rejection of him and despairs. Meanwhile, the fire is extinguished and Emilia, desperate, faints at the feet of the goddess. Claudio comes in to warn Decio of the other vestals' approaching. They enter the temple and are surprised to see that the fire is no longer burning, that Emilia is on the ground, and that two men are inside the temple.

Decio asks them not to reveal what they have just seen. Priests arrive and one of the vestals relates what has just happened. Horrified, they take Emilia from her companions and lead her away, warning her of the death sentence she now faces.

Emilia's trials take place in the following act; she is found guilty, and sentenced to death. Decio appeals to his father who is one of the counsels, confessing his crime and involvement in her fate. His father, unmoved, reads the fatal sentence, takes off Emilia's vestal robes, and covers her with a black veil. In the final act Emilia is taken down to her eternal prison, which is closed with a large and heavy stone. Decio arrives to try to save her, and tries to plead with the High Priest, but in vain. Decio tries to kill him, but does not succeed and is killed instead by the guards. His father arrives intent on dissuading him, but it is too late. Realizing what has just happened, he stops, horrified. Decio drags himself onto Emilia's tomb and, repeating her name, expires.

Luigi Montani's libretto of this ballet for the Real Teatro de S. Carlos in 1821 is the earliest record of a restaging I have found that postdate Viganò's original production in 1818. *La Vestale* was revived many times in Italy, from 1818 until 1840. Giuseppe Villa, who played the role of Claudio in Viganò's original ballet for the Teatro La Scala in Milan and for his 1820 production in Bologna, re-staged it at least six times in seven years for theaters in Palermo, Bergamo, Naples, Cremona, Padova, and Torino. Viganò's brother Giulio re-worked it at least twice: in 1828 for the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, and in 1832 for the Canobbiana in Milan.¹⁷ These various reproductions attest to the ballet's success in Italy for at least two decades. Given the dramatic content of the story, it was

probably well-received in Portugal and it is possible that the ballet was also reproduced there at a later date but that no other libretti have survived.

In 1836 Alessandro Borsi choreographed *O Proscritto, baile em quatro actos* (*The Exiled, ballet in four acts*). The second night of the performance was his “benefit” as Borsi explains in the preface where he asks for the public’s indulgence for “he had very little time to bring it to the stage.” He plays the role of Albros Golsalvo, the villain and murderer in this *ballet d’action* filled with drama as described in the *argomento*:

Eurideos, master of the castle of the Western Tower, upon becoming a widower took Adalia, a Spanish princess of a fierce and ambitious character, as his second wife. She, having passed a few years, fell in love with count Blango, a most bitter enemy of Eurideos, and together they plotted the murder of her unfortunate husband who, unjustly accused of betraying his country, was exiled. Adalia found a way to send her allies along with Eurideos in order to kill him. The leader of these allies, Gonsalvo, under the name of Albros was also an exile as a consequence of murdering his wife, and had found refuge next to Adalia. Albros took pity on Eurideos, and instead of killing him, convinced him to leave the country forever, spreading the news of his death. Eurideos however, overwhelmed by a desire to see his son Arios once again, and to avenge his destiny, returns to his home country in disguise. Accompanied by a faithful servant who had remained at the service of Adalia, Eurideos is able to go into the castle and hide. Aided by the servant, Eurideos revives his presence in the memory of his subjects and tries to find the opportune occasion to take revenge. His son Arios, however, had fallen in love with Irene, an orphan and honest maiden whom he wishes to marry. His godmother Adalia does not consent to the marriage, sends him into exile and plots Irene’s abduction and murder.

At this point the mimed action begins: the abduction of the lover, the meeting of Arios with his servant Aio Gilprez, Eurideos' return, and the punishment of Adalia and her accomplices, are the main themes that comprise the story of this ballet based on the drama *Albros Hand of Blood*. Borsi states that he added some episodes in order to clarify this mimed action.

Augusto Hus' *Gabriella de Vergy*, staged at the Real Teatro de S. Carlos in 1835, had been choreographed by Gaetano Gioja in 1819, and enjoyed great popularity in Italy where it was revived or restaged at least another dozen times.¹⁸ The Portuguese libretto used here is that by Hus. *Gabriella* is a story of forlorn love, betrayal, jealousy, revenge, and repentance, all culminating in a tragic ending.

The ballet is inspired by an episode of French history by De Belloy,¹⁹ an account of a barbaric and historical twelfth-century tragedy. Here too, a few modifications were introduced in order to make it more suitable for a ballet, and more easily understood, as stated by the choreographer, to "render the action more interesting by adding danced parts." The presence of Gabriella's lover Rodolfo, for instance, provided an opportunity for the two lovers' scene and for the husband to notice a change in her mood, as well as providing an opportunity for a duel between the Count and Rodolfo to take place, which results in the latter's death and the ballet's tragic ending.

The *argomento* from which the story was drawn describes the main points:

Gabriella, although in love with Rodolfo, to whom she had been promised from an early age, given some circumstances marries Count Fayel, a feudal lord. As a result Rodolfo joins an army, is gravely injured, but before dying writes a last letter to his beloved Gabriella. Fayel,

overtaken by jealousy, intercepts the squire, murders him, and takes the letter. His cruel, vindictive, and barbaric actions bring such desperation to Gabriella that she refuses to eat, dying of sadness and consumption. The jealous husband, supposing his wife's betrayal, acts hastily. Upon discovering her innocence and virtuous conduct too late, he takes a dagger and plunges it into his own chest.

Hus' enlarged and adapted version for the ballet includes such changes as the interaction between Rodolfo and Gabriella, a love triangle between the two lovers and Fayel's sister who has fallen in love with Rodolfo, as well as the introduction of a king who is passing through the country and is received by Fayel; these additional plot elements thus provided an opportunity to insert entertainment dances in act three. These alterations are clearly mentioned by both Ferdinando Gioia and Augusto Hus, who excuse themselves for having to resort to these tactics in order to help them adapt a historical tragedy for a ballet.

Luigi Montani's 1821 ballet *Catharina de Coluga ou o Subterraneo* (*Catharina of Coluga or the Subterranean*) is another tragic ballet of confrontation, jealousy, and death. Teresa Coralli played the role of Princess Catharina while Montani himself played the role of the villain, count Rasmatoff. The ballet begins with the festivities to celebrate the wedding of Catharina to Procotieff, count of Coluga. Rasmatoff, count of Ugliz, to whom Catharina had refused her hand, arrives at the palace and is invited to take part in the celebrations, which he accepts and, with feigned happiness, congratulates the couple. At the end of the banquet and dances, Rasmatoff pretends to take leave, and Procotieff offers him a room in the castle to spend the night, since it is already dark.

In act two Rasmatoff succeeds in entering the bridal apartments, tying Procotieff's hands and covering his mouth with a handkerchief, then abducting Catharina. Procotieff is able to make enough noise to attract servants and friends, who come to his aid. They all leave in search of Rasmatoff. In the following act, Catharina and Rasmatoff fall into the river while he is dragging her along trying to escape, and they are rescued by passing peasants. Procotieff recognizes his wife's clothing on a peasant, who traded clothes with Catharina, which renews his hope of finding her.

A room in the castle of Rasmatoff is the scene for act four, where Rasmatoff arrives in his castle, dragging Catharina. After ascertaining that there is no stranger in the room, he threatens to have by force that which he could not have by love. Her pleas for mercy are to no avail; he opens a door that leads to a dungeon and locks her inside. Rasmatoff's servant, after hesitation, lets Procotieff and his retinue of friends and servants into the castle; however, afraid his lord will find out, he tells them to hide in the stairs below. They hear a distant voice which Procotieff believes to be his wife's. Accompanied by his valet, he leaves to search for Catharina. They are surprised by Rasmatoff and recognize him as Catharina's abductor. Procotieff and his servant are able to grab Rasmatoff by the hair and threaten to kill him unless he sets Catharina free. Rasmatoff's servant comes in and they let the villain go. In the fifth and final act Rasmatoff enters the dungeon to again express his love for Catharina, but noticing she still disdains and despises him, resorts to violent action; he is about to drag the desolate countess away when the sound of banging on the walls is heard, which scares Rasmatoff and fills Catharina with hope. He trembles at the sight of Procotieff, military men, and

armed peasants. Grabbing Catharina by the hair and holding a knife to her neck, Rasmatoff threatens to kill her if anyone moves close. Peasants and others shake in fear, but Procotieff's faithful servant and a peasant jump on Rasmatoff's back, disarm him, and throw him to the guards. Catharina runs to her beloved husband's arms. Rasmatoff, taking advantage of this tender scene, grabs a pistol from one of the guards to kill Procotieff. He is detained, but furious and enraged by jealousy, seizes a dagger, drives it into his own chest, and expires amidst the general abhorrence which ends this tragic action.

Catharina de Coluga is one example of the tragedies that filled the stage of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in Lisbon. Often these tragic ballets ended with punishment of the odious characters, restitution of order and peace, pardoning of wrong doings, and in some cases, reconciliation. Throughout the development of the action the plot may take many turns until the resolution in the final act can be reached. As we have seen in *Gabriella de Vergy*, multiple deaths sometimes also occur in the end.

4.5 Humble peasants, simple stories – lighter fare in comic ballets

In contrast with the complicated plots and noble men and women of the tragic and serious ballets, the comic *mezzo-carattere* was the domain of the commoners and their perceived simpler way of life. Their shorter stories and easily identifiable characters offered diversion in plots where servants were rewarded for their loyalty, young ladies were united with their corresponding lovers, good deeds were rewarded, and joyous

dancing celebrated everyone's general happiness. Often, these comic ballets do not have a detailed description of acts, but include only a synopsis of the plot development.

*A fingida louca por amor; ou o casamento depois da morte, (The One who Feigned her Madness Because of Love, or The Wedding after Death)*²⁰, baile comico em 3 actos by Antonio Monticini, reproduced at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos by Alessandro Borsi in 1835, is an example of these lighthearted scenarios. This short ballet is easily understood – fewer characters in an uncomplicated plot can be followed without much trouble in this merry comic dance. Lucinda, who is in love with Leandro, is being forced to marry a rich and famous, but shrewd and ridiculous feudal lord. In order to escape her fate she plots a scheme, supported by a loyal servant – she pretends to have gone mad and to have taken poison. Her aunt, believing Lucinda to be dead, has her body transported to a remote apartment in the castle, along with her wedding gown and the jewels she was wearing prior to feigning her own death. Some servants plan to steal the jewels from their supposedly deceased lady, but Lucinda flees with her lover Leandro through a window, leaving a faithful servant in her place. From this point on some charming misunderstandings ensue (the libretto does not describe them), until finally the truth is revealed, the aunt consents to the marriage of the two lovers, and their wedding finalizes the action. Summarized stories were common in the shorter, lighter ballets and these “misunderstandings” were clearly portrayed on stage without the need for detailed descriptions in the libretti.

Theodoro Martin staged at least five ballets for the Theatro S. Carlos, three of which were in the comic genre: *As Ilusões de um Pintor (The Painter's Illusions)*²¹ in

1845, *As Modistas (The Dressmakers)* in 1846, and *Os Estudantes em Férias (The Students on Vacation)* in 1847. All three are charming ballets with gracious and generous characters and happy endings. Leonello, the young artist character in *As Ilusões de Um Pintor* has been working on the portrait of the widow Amandine, countess of Saint Olivar. Upon finding out that he had done so in order to always be able to look at her, the countess decides to be the judge of the quality of her likeness and goes to his studio. His students tell Amandine of their master's fondness for her. Ascertaining that the portrait is of exquisite quality, she becomes compassionate of his feelings and decides to pretend to return his attention in order to cure him of his infatuation. His increased attentions and expressions of love result in her truly falling in love with him, until she has no other choice but to offer him her patronage and hand in marriage. A celebration of their wedding takes place in the countess' palace with a lavish party and dancing by all.

A second work by Martin, the *demi-caractère* ballet in two acts *As Modistas (The Dressmakers)*, features a dress shopkeeper and her four dressmakers who, as their mistress leaves, seize the opportunity to invite their boyfriends into the shop for a dance. The shop assistant, whose boyfriend is also in the shop, hides him when the owner returns. She is unaware of the other four young men who were also hiding, and, thinking they are robbers, faints upon finding them in the closet. The dressmakers confess that the four men are their lovers, the assistant reprimands them, and they tell her they know her boyfriend has been there as well. They agree to keep this a secret from their boss and leave to take part in a masked ball. The shopkeeper and her husband, undisclosed to each other, go to the ball as well. At finding his wife in a masked ball costume, the husband

suspects infidelity. She implores for forgiveness as she was there just to have some fun with her assistants, who remove their masks. The husband forgives her and they all continue with the masked diversion.

Urbano Garzia attempted the romantic notion of nature unspoiled by civilization in his 1823 character dance in five acts *A mulher do Bosque* (*The Woman from the Forest*), which he had also staged at the Teatro La Scala in Italy in 1808. The ballet begins in the woods near a village in Poland. Upon finding the woman from the woods, or a “savage,” several comical episodes take place. Claudio, a rich Polish man wants to civilize the woman and invites her to take part in a dance with his friends. She observes them in admiration, then wishing to imitate what she has just witnessed, tries to dance and gets dizzy, falling in the arms of Claudio and one of his friends. They give her some spirits to revive her, which she drinks and then begins to show signs of drunkenness, and finally gets down to the ground and falls asleep. Claudio has the hunters take her to his house and everyone leaves. The woman is asleep in a room in Claudio’s house, where several of his friends observe her in curiosity; she moves a few times until she falls on the floor, surprised and scared at once. As she walks through the room she notices some cords and starts to play with them. They unveil a large mirror. At seeing her own reflection she stops; believing it to be another person, she follows her own image, laughing and playing whimsically. At seeing this, Claudio and one of his servants, unseen by the woman, add to the scene. They draw the curtains again closing the mirrors. Claudio’s friends, “with good manners,” invite the woman to exchange her clothing, to

which she consents and leaves with all of the ladies. Claudio orders a feast to take place in his gardens where a general dancing finalizes the ballet.

In 1826 Giuseppe Sorentino choreographed a work that anticipates Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* by several decades: the ballet in three acts *O Limpa-Chaminés Feito Principe (The Chimney Sweeper Turned into a Prince)*.²² The prince, bored with the high society entertainments of music, games, and dancing, devises a way to divert himself and proposes to trade places with the chimney sweeper. The two characters swap their clothing and their identities, which initiates a number of misunderstandings until at last everything is clarified and restored to harmony. Everyone finds these jocose events amusing and charming, and dance celebrates the occasion in the gardens of the palace.

A lighthearted ballet about pretend military recruits was the theme of Luigi Astolfi's 1840 mimed action *As Nove Recrutadas ou a Festa de Baile com Mascaras (The Nine Recruits or the Masked Ball)*. This comic ballet takes place in an old fort near Barcelona. Isabel, the daughter of Dom Rodrigo, a Spanish colonel in charge of a small army of recruits, devises a plan to get close to Fernando, whom she fancies. Aided by her loyal friend Adelaide, they explain the scheme to their friends: to go into the fort, which is guarded by old army veterans, disguised as recruits and have some fun at their expense. Adelaide asks Dom Rodrigo for a fake document stating that they are the fort's new recruits. He consents to play along if they do not bother the officer Fernando who has been detained there. Isabel enjoys the effect of her plan, the ladies promise the colonel to do as they were told, and ask him for their uniforms in order to put their plan into action. Isabel asks her father for permission to help her friends get ready; he grants it provided

she returns to her room shortly. In the next act Dom Fernando is walking in the courtyard of the fortress while two old veterans drink and smoke; the wife of one of the servicemen serves them a snack and performs an old national dance, then a duet with her husband. Sounds of tambours are heard and the recruits come marching in military order and salute the veterans. The old sergeant receives the note telling him to train these new recruits. He orders them to go and put away their bags. Fernando, who heard all of this, comes in to meet the new recruits.

They all come out of their room, including Isabel. Fernando is overjoyed when he recognizes her and the two lovers embrace tenderly. They are interrupted by the sergeant who orders them to get the weapons for their first drill. Fernando observes them, proud of Isabel performing her military evolutions so well. A notice arrives from colonel Dom Rodrigo telling the veterans to get everyone ready to defend the fortress from the Turks who will be arriving soon. The recruits panic, then devise a way to get out of this predicament: they will go into their rooms and change back into their clothes to disarm the enemy. The Turks disembark, and the desperate sergeant calls for the recruits. The Turks begin to fight and the veterans, unable to hold their own, are ready to surrender when the recruits-turned-ladies arrive and implore them to spare their lives. But, how surprised they are to find out that the Turks are instead their lovers in disguise! At this moment Dom Rodrigo arrives, laughing at his joke, but is caught by surprise when he spots his daughter among the ladies. Isabel throws herself at his feet; Fernando, and everyone else, pleads with the colonel. Unable to resist the touching scene, he hugs his daughter, pardons Dom Fernando, and tells them they are allowed to be married. One of

the veterans asks the colonel to let him show the recruits' military evolutions; the ladies change back into their uniforms and perform their exercises, to everyone's praise. A big party takes place and the comic action ends with great applause.

As these light-themed ballets illustrate, the short comic ballets could be followed easily, and the mimed action could be understood without great difficulty, even if their stories were unfamiliar. In fact, "the pastoral, light-hearted, and comic ballets seem to have been the few original productions"²³ staged at the time of the *ballet d'action*. Their simplicity and charm offered some respite from the more serious operas and ballets usually performed in the same evening.

4.6 Shawls, veils, and scarfs – sylphs in disguise

Although not a favorite genre on the stage of the Real Theatro de São Carlos, romantically themed ballets nonetheless did appear in Lisbon as early as 1841. Their titles and subtitles often do not reveal any romantic elements, with the exception of *The Enchanted Veil* in 1851. Upon closer examination, however, their hidden romantic components surface in characters such as sylphs and fairies, and veils, shawls, and other objects with magical powers. Some of these ballets do not end tragically, but rather resolve in "happy endings," albeit at times only after death. Besides the restaging of Filippo Taglione's *La Sylphide*²⁴ in 1838 and *Giselle*²⁵ in 1843, the only two recognizable romantic ballets seen in Lisbon, other scenarios illustrate the genre as their stories demonstrate.

In his 1841 *Divertissement* Giovanni Casati included a sylph and a genie in a ballet that presents elements of the story of *La Sylphide* transported to Asia, with the addition of a benevolent genie who helps the bride Zulema recover her groom.²⁶ As in the original story, a wedding is about to take place between Zulema and Omar when a sylph kidnaps the groom with whom she had fallen in love. The swift disappearance of the groom is not noticed until the wedding ceremony is finished; the guests try to divert the inconsolable bride while her father suggests she marry someone else since all of the attempts to find the missing prince have failed. She protests against this suggestion. Ilda, the good genie, appears and transforms Zulema into a sylph, then gives her a torch-light and instructs her to go in search of her beloved. The genie disappears; Zulema waves her beacon, and the scene transforms into the sylphs' forest.

Sylphs slowly begin to appear until one of them enters with Omar wrapped in a shawl; several other sylphs follow. Zulema mingles with them awaiting the right moment to take her groom from the arms of her perfidious and odious rival. Omar is perplexed by the similarity between the two sylphs and a duet between them ensues, at the end of which the real sylph tries to entice him once again.irate, Zulema remembers her torchlight and waves it around making all of the sylphs vanish. The forest turns dark and Zulema and Omar are left alone; the scene turns into the bright court of the benevolent genie. In the presence of all his court and Zulema's parents, the genie unites the couple in perennial happiness. All of the genii get into different formations and the curtain drops.

In this story Casati brings some of the romantic elements featured in *La Sylphide*: supernatural beings, a shawl, and the unrequited love of a mortal for a sylph. He also

adds characters such as the genie, changes the names to sound Asian, and lends the fiancée a proactive, heroic temperament: unwilling to relinquish her groom, Zulema embarks on a journey to the sylph's realm to bring back her lover. In this ballet Omar's destiny is in the hands of two women, the sylph and Zulema, who fight for his love. Rather than lose his sylph forever, and his fiancée to a rival, in this *Divertissement* Omar and his wife, aided by the genie Ilda, are happily reunited.

One year later Francisco Jorck staged *O Lago das Fadas (The Lake of the Fairies)*, a ballet in four acts.²⁷ The story takes place in a village in Switzerland.

A group of students walking through the mountains asks a shepherd the way back to their village. After showing them the way, he warns them of the dangers of the lake of the fairies, which might bring them misfortune. The fellows get on their way, except Augusto who is now curious, and wishing to see the fairies, hides behind a tree. Soon he hears celestial voices singing and the fairies appear, covered in their veils from head to toes. They all dance forming various figures where Flora's beauty and graceful movements stand out. Augusto is mesmerized. Once they finish dancing the fairies walk toward the lake. As Flora passes by, Augusto removes her veil and hides it. The other fairies fly through the air in fear.²⁸ Flora summons her fairy sisters for help. Augusto tells her of his feelings and says that he was unaware that without her veil she would be transformed into a mortal. At this moment his companions appear looking for him. A great storm moves in and they all run, leaving Flora alone on top of the mountain.

Act two opens with the villagers gathered for a party. Julieta, Augusto's betrothed, wants to introduce him to her friends. Perturbed by what happened near the

lake, he takes the veil from his pocket and kisses it. Julieta, noticing his distance, asks him what has happened. He dissembles. Flora comes into the lodge asking for shelter. She and Augusto recognize each other, she notices the veil and wishing to recover it, tells him she is fond of him. Julieta witnesses their encounter, sends Flora away and reprimands Augusto for his falsity. He confesses his love for Flora telling Julieta he never loved her. She implores him not to leave her and to follow through with his promise of marriage. A Count, coming through the village after hunting, sees Flora and is immediately enamored of her beauty. He proposes marriage, but she replies that she is in love with Augusto. The Count, noticing the party decorations throughout the village inquires about their meaning. Julieta tells him of her wedding to Augusto, who has now abandoned her. Once again, she implores him to marry her. He rejects her still. Augusto looks for the veil, but Julieta has taken it from his pocket. In order to free Flora from the Count's proposal Augusto tells Julieta he will marry her if she restitutes him the veil. She agrees and they run off looking for Flora.

At the opening of act three the count declares his love: if Flora does not accept his proposal he threatens to kill Augusto, who pretends to accept the wedding of Flora, but secretly lets her know he has the veil to set her free. Flora is about to give her hand to the count when Augusto gives her the veil and she disappears. The count shows desperation, while Julieta remains astonished. Augusto seizes this opportunity to flee. In act four Augusto looks for Flora near the lake where they first met, becoming forlorn and desperate at not finding her. Flora finally appears, and he exults with joy. Flora

announces to her fairy companions she wishes to renounce immortality in order to marry Augusto. They all approve and the occasion is celebrated with dancing.

In this ballet the veil is an object of transformation and symbol of magical power – without it Flora cannot fly. It is also a token of love and the focus of the jealousy of Augusto's betrothed, and, in the end, it reunites the two lovers transporting them to the world of the fairies.

Emeth, the 1846 grand fantastic-Egyptian ballet by Théodore Martin also explores a romantic theme. This story, in which the magical powers of a rose enable a mortal to be united to his beloved goddess, develops in six acts and six scenes. In the libretto's preface Martin offers this last choreographic invention as his farewell gift to the Lisbon Theater and expresses his appreciation for the public's acceptance of his "arduous and thorny labors as a composer." Among the characters are a sovereign and his daughter Nefte, who is engaged to Athor, who in turn falls in love with the Egyptian deity and protagonist Emeth, played by Martin's wife. The music for the ballet was composed by the Portuguese Francisco Norberto dos Santos Pinto, whom José Sasportes identifies as a "frequent collaborator of choreographers" during this time.²⁹ In act five three soloists and sixteen *corps de ballets* dancers perform a *ballabile* that blends dance and pantomime. In this ballet, a veil serves to disguise the elegantly dressed Emeth, who shows up at the celebration of Athor and Nefte's wedding.

Emeth enters the palace as a storm rages, and noticing that no one is present, begins to dance as Athor arrives and becomes enthralled with her gracefulness. Their first encounter demonstrates conflict; she recognizes his noble stance and he, the

consequences of falling in love with a deity. She reminds him that his vows of never ending love must be kept and promises to return to earth. Emeth gives Athor a rose with magical powers – by looking at it he can summon Emeth on earth. Reassured by his reaffirmed faithfulness, Emeth disappears. Nefte and Athor engage in conversation and he lies to her about the rose, saying it is a talisman. Emeth appears and, sensing that Nefte will take the rose from Athor, makes it disappear. At a ball in the royal palace Athor seems to recognize a veiled, mysterious, and beautiful woman. As he approaches her, she takes off the veil and starts to dance with one of the guests. Nefte inquires as to the identity of the stranger and her father, noticing Athor's interest in Emeth, tries to rush the wedding ceremony. When Athor declines to marry princess Nefte despite knowing his refusal will seal his death sentence, he implores Emeth to let him look at the rose one more time. She agrees on one condition: that he renounces his mortal body in order to join her in the celestial realms and be rewarded with their heavenly blissful union. To transpose himself to Emeth's otherworld Athor thrusts a dagger into his own chest and dies in her arms. The final act opens in the foggy forest where Emeth and her deity sisters celebrate her indissoluble union with Athor. The fog clears and the two lovers are taken to heaven – a final tableau finishes the mimed action.

Emanuelle Viotti's ballet *A Walkiris*,³⁰ is another example of a story that centers on the love of a mortal for a sylph-like character. Crimilde, the supernatural being and one of the celestial *Walkiris*, renounces her special powers to be united with her corresponding lover Silfrido, already betrothed to a noble woman, princess Miranda. This 1848 *grande baile phantastico em cinco actos* (*grand fantastic ballet in five acts*) also

takes place in Scotland, and includes several walkiris, genii, hunters, pages, peasants, and the entourages of both Miranda and Silfrido.

At the beginning of act one the love between Crimilde and Silfrido has already blossomed. She dances “fluttering around him like a butterfly” and, embracing her, Silfrido promises Crimilde to marry her as soon as she becomes a mortal. Crimilde is protected by Ariete, king of the aerial gods, who knowing of her feelings for Silfrido becomes their guardian. At Crimilde’s insistence, Ariete agrees to transform her, warning her that once a mortal, she will not be able to return to her former state. Ariete places a crown of oak leaves on her head, and her veil and wings fall. He then tells her that her sister walkiris will always protect her and that if the oak leaves, symbols of fidelity, begin to wilt she will be abandoned by her lover and her protectors. Silfrido refuses to marry Miranda, enraging his aunt and prompting her to avenge this embarrassment by sending him into incarceration. Before he is taken away, Silfrido gives Crimilde his scarf as proof of his love. When Silfrido encounters Crimilde, poisoned by Silfrido’s aunt in revenge for having lured him away, he falls into despair and stabs himself with a dagger. Ariete, taking pity on the lovers’ suffering, sends Crimilde to the aerial world. She throws the scarf down transporting Silfrido’s spirit to the heavens where they are united as immortal lovers for eternity. The end of this ballet is a redeeming consolation for the two lovers through spiritual love as the closing words in the libretto illustrate – “Crimilde, an immortal spirit, ascends to heaven, and while not having been able to attain her desired ideal love on earth, reaches immortality beside her beloved in heaven.” Even though the

lovers die, the ballet ends with delectable dances to celebrate the union of Crimilde with Silfredo in this almost religious undertone finale.

Viotti's ballet does not exactly parallel *La Sylphide*, but the two ballets share some elements – the supernatural character's loss of veil and wings; the sylph-like character who whisks the groom away on his wedding day; the magical scarf given as a gift that destroys the supernatural creature in *La Sylphide*, but that reunites Silfrido with Crimilde at the end of *A Walkiris*. In Viotti's ballet the figure of the witch Madge is replaced by the aunt who seeks revenge and poisons Crimilde. Instead of losing both his sylph and his fiancée, in Viotti's story Silfrido finds happiness in death and the consolation of afterlife blissfulness through his spiritual union with Crimilde.

Lastly, *O Véo Encantado: baile fantastico em trez actos* (*The Enchanted Veil: fantastic ballet in three acts*), explores a theme of supernatural beings from a work by the “famous Carlo Gozzi, a writer whose fame places him among the most conspicuous of our time,” as Libonati explains in the preface of this 1851 libretto. To him, Gozzi's works “provided choreographers with fantastic arguments appropriate to dance.” Cupid and fairies are among the characters in this story of transformation by the magic of a veil.

The action takes place in 1500 Germany, near a lake. Like the plot of *The Lake of the Fairies*, act one of *O Véo Encantado* begins in the forest, where Thebaldo and his friends are warned by a mountaineer about the danger of the fairies, malefic spirits, who linger there and prey on their unaware victims. Thebaldo's friends hurriedly leave the forest, but he stays behind. Enveloped in a floating veil, Zelia soon descends, a “beautiful form that combines the graces of the body with the speed of a Sylph.” She notices

Thebaldo and his amorous and ardent expressions of love entices her to flirt with him; she calls her companions while he hides and observes their dances; seeing that they are carefully holding their veils he infers that without them they would not be able to fly, and he seizes Zelia's. As a storm moves in all of the fairies disappear except Zelia, who cannot find her veil. Desperate and disturbed she searches for it everywhere. Thebaldo appears and declares himself again; she responds that he must restore her veil immediately or she will be forever ruined. The storm rages stronger; Thebaldo's friends are on their way home, but finding him there and seeing Zelia at his feet, fear he has fallen under the spell of a bad spirit. They drag him away as she implores in vain that Thebaldo restores her talisman. Lightning strikes, and Zelia falls to the ground. Her dress mysteriously changes, and on the trunk of a tree the following text appears: *Zelia, you are no longer a fairy, but a mortal!*

The mountaineer, guiding a group of people, finds Zelia. They all help her. When she sees her new garments she understands her ill fate, telling all that she has been abandoned. Catharina, moved by her story, offers her a post as a servant at her inn. Zelia, in hopes of still finding her veil, accepts the offer and accompanies the entourage.

In the opening of act two we find Thebaldo in his room, sad and pensive. Out of sight, Catharina observes the preoccupied countenance of her betrothed. Remembering his encounter with Zelia, he takes the veil from his pocket and kisses it tenderly. Catharina, unable to suppress her reactions, burns with jealousy, attracting his attention. Thebaldo swiftly hides the veil and tries to hide his feelings. At this moment his friends enter to invite him to go hunting, and Catharina leaves without being noticed. Thebaldo,

refusing the invitation, is alone. Catharina comes in, accompanied by her new servant Zelia, to bring Thebaldo's dinner. He recognizes her, and Zelia, taken by surprise, drops the tray. Catharina takes advantage of this disturbance to seize the veil. Satisfied, she signals for Zelia to follow her, but Thebaldo detains her. Zelia pleads for her veil. Thebaldo throws himself at her feet imploring for her love. Zelia tries to run away but he threatens suicide. She is about to declare her love to recover her precious and magical object when they hear footsteps, and she flees.

In the next scene, several weddings of the villagers are about to take place. The couples begin to arrive and salute the Baron and his entourage. He graciously accepts the flowers they offer. Thebaldo, Catharina and Zelia enter. Thebaldo notices Zelia and the Baron in conversation with a heavy heart, and is ready to intercede when all are invited to watch the dances. To keep Zelia from talking to the baron, Thebaldo invites her to partake in a *pas de trois* with him and his fiancée, after which the notary presents the marriage contract to Thebaldo. Instead of signing it, he takes the wedding veil from Catharina's head and places it on Zelia's. Catharina covers her own head with Zelia's magic veil; upon recognizing her prized object Zelia snatches it, which astonishes everyone. Suddenly, a dense fog permeates the grounds and the scene transforms into Cupid's mansion. Zelia, back in the company of her fellow fairies, tells Thebaldo to love Catharina for it would be foolish to pursue his love for her. Thebaldo realizes his mistake, asks Catharina for forgiveness, and their union is celebrated to finalize the action.

In this ballet, the ending resembles that of the original *Giselle*, when at the end of act two, the heroine encourages Albrecht to go back to his fiancée Bathilde.³¹ Unlike

Albrecht, who “protests the suggestion,” Thebaldo heeds Zelia’s and the ballet ends with the happy union of the engaged couple. The theme of a veil, scarf, or shawl as a memento of the mortal’s encounter with a supernatural being runs through all of these ballets as illustrated above. As Debra Sowell has argued, the shawl was a fashion statement in the nineteenth century and the tradition of incorporating fabric into choreography had been established before; as these ballets illustrate, they continued to be used as “props that elucidated relationships or signaled plot developments.”³² Visually effective, as they could be easily identified by the audience, their symbolic connection to the characters and the advancement of the story could be understood. Fabric was just one of the many objects used in *ballets d’action* that helped choreographers tell their stories. Props served a dramatic purpose as a way to place characters within the stories.³³ The use of props is evident not only in these romantic-themed ballets, but also in other scenarios described here. Letters, signs, personal objects, flags, clothing, veils, shawls, and scarves were articles that carried dramatic tension and significance within the *ballets d’action* stories. As these scenarios also demonstrate, the usefulness of such elements is unquestionable. Complicated dramatic stories were greatly enhanced, and their meaning clarified, by the use of objects that connected the various characters and episodes and helped the viewer follow the action on stage – they were essential elements in the narratives of the *ballets d’action*.

4.7 When ballets repeat – plagiarism, paraphrase, or reinvention?

Most of the ballets produced for the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in the first half of the nineteenth century were re-stagings of the choreographers' own previous works, or in some cases, of another's, as sometimes the libretti stated. This was not unique to Portugal, for Italian choreographers had reused or reworked libretti by their colleagues before. Examples of this can be found in ballets elsewhere, and libretti made this both easier and more prevalent since the focus of the ballets was the action, which would allow stories to be retold numerous times without the need to replicate the dance steps. Often the pressure to create works within only a few months or weeks resulted in the repetition of ballets, or portions of ballets, from previous seasons. Ornella di Tondo mentions that with "ever-tighter theater schedules choreographers were obliged to re-use segments of pre-existing works for new productions."³⁴ Since copyright protection was not yet enforced, the borrowing of other choreographers' themes or stories was also common.³⁵ Di Tondo elaborates upon this in her analysis of the ballet *La Sylphide* in Italy, which went through many different versions and revivals during the nineteenth century. Variations in their plots abound, as she demonstrates.³⁶ By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, choreographers in Italy began to include copyright notices in the libretti of their ballets, and at times, the notices of copyright to their music as well.³⁷ Comparisons between Italian and Portuguese libretti illustrate the ease with which ballets could be restaged throughout Europe during that time.

Several ballets by the same choreographers were staged both in Lisbon and in Italy. Comparing their libretti demonstrates that the content of these ballets were essentially the same. Often, names of characters were translated to their Portuguese equivalents, while at times they were renamed completely. However, the scenarios remained, almost always, virtually unaltered.

Gabriella de Vergy, a libretto discussed earlier, was originally choreographed by Gaetano Gioia in 1819. It was first staged at the Real Theatro de S. Carlos in 1823 by Antonio Cortesi; in 1825 it received a new staging by Luigi Astolfi, and in 1835, another one by Augusto Hus. A comparison between Hus' *Gabriella* in 1835 with that of Gaetano Gioia, reproduced by his brother Ferdinando in Italy on several occasions, provides clear evidence that these versions of the ballet were essentially the same.³⁸ Antonio Cortesi's version is also identical in its description and list of characters. The Italian and Portuguese versions have the same story, scene descriptions, and development of actions. One of the Italian versions, staged by Gioia's brother Ferdinando for the Teatro Comunale di Bologna in 1828, varies slightly in the ending: although the Hus version ends with Fayel stabbing himself with a dagger, in Ferdinando Gioia's production, Fayel tries to kill himself, but, prevented from doing so by his valet, removes the bandages off his wounds and falls dead at Gabriella's feet.

Alessandro Borsi's *O proscritto, baile em quatro actos* (*The Exile; ballet in four acts*), from 1836, was restaged in Italy in 1840. The two texts in Portuguese and Italian are exactly the same, including the description of the scenery and the stage directions. The names of the characters were translated, and the story follows the Portuguese

libretto. If this ballet was created by Borsi for the first time in Lisbon, it is one of the few examples of ballets that were first produced there before they were restaged in Italy.³⁹

Another ballet by Borsi for which I have been able to compare two versions of the same story is *A fngida louca por amor* (1835), which was a restaging of Antonio Monticini's ballet *La Finta Pazza per Amore* (*The One who Feigned her Madness Because of Love*) of 1833. Luigi Montani, however, had also choreographed a comic ballet by the same title for the Teatro Re in Milan in 1817.⁴⁰ In the preface to his 1835 libretto Borsi credits Antonio Monticini with the authorship of the ballet.

Luigi Montani's 1821 *Catharina de Coluga ou o Subterraneo* (*Catharina of Coluga or the Subterranean*) is a restaging of his ballet *Il Sotterraneo* (*The Subterranean*) for the Teatro La Scala in Milan in 1812, which was also restaged in Bergamo in 1823. For the Lisbon production Montani changed the names of the characters but retained the plot. The couple Giovanni and Teresa Coralli played the main roles for the Milanese production in 1812 at the La Scala Theater. Teresa also played the title role in the Lisbon staging, while Montani himself played the role of the villain.

Two ballets that Emanuele Viotti composed in Portugal he later reproduced in Italy: *A Walkiris*, in 1848, and *A Conversação as Escuras* (*The Conversation in the Dark*) in 1849.⁴¹ They were both performed on the same evening for the Teatro Regio in Turin in 1849 under the titles *Crimilde* and *La Zanze*, respectively. Although Viotti re-named these ballets, the Italian text of *Crimilde* is an exact translation of his earlier Portuguese ballet. *La Zanze*, a shorter ballet in the comic style is closely similar to *A Conversação as Escuras*, the three-act ballet in the Portuguese libretto. While the Portuguese version is

complete, the Italian program included only the short *argomento*. However, the synopsis and the list of characters demonstrate their similitude.

Other ballet scenarios add to this list of works that traveled to and from Italy, and all of them confirm the identical narratives in their reproductions: Salvatore Viganó's *La Vestale* (*The Vestal*) and *Il Noce di Benevento* (*The Walnut Tree of Benevento*), Louis Henry's historical ballet *Edward III* (La Scala 1827, Lisbon by Augusto Hus 1835), Urbano Garzia's *La Donna del Bosco* (*The Woman from the Forest*) (La Scala 1808, Lisbon 1823), Antonio Cortesi's *I Pazzi per Progetto* (*Mad about Plans*) (La Scala 1831, Lisbon 1842), Luigi Astolfi's *Le Sette Reclute* (*The Seven Recruits*) (Teatro Nuovo, Padova 1839, Lisbon 1840)⁴² and *I Minatori di Salerno* (*The Miners from Salerno*) (Carignano, 1833, Turin Teatro Regio 1846, Genova 1836, Canobbiana 1837, Padova 1839, Lisbon 1840),⁴³ and Jules Perrot's *La Esmeralda* (London, Her Majesty's Theater 1844, La Scala Carnival 1845, Lisbon 1850),⁴⁴ to name a few. It is true that variations in the plots of the same ballets staged at different times by either the same, or a different choreographer, were also common, including revisions such as changes or additions in the names and number of characters, addition of acts, and altered endings. In Italy ballet libretti were often modified.⁴⁵ The libretti listed above, however, are virtually identical in their various versions.

As these examples illustrate, choreographers working in Lisbon adapted, restaged, or revived libretti of stories that had been done before. Since this was also the custom in Italy, not surprisingly, Italian choreographers would follow that custom while in Portugal as well. The dissemination of the *ballet d'action* throughout Europe is evident. As

Edward Nye points out, libretti “cross[ed] the borders, with or without their choreographers, and spread a [new language] of dance from St. Petersburg to Madrid, London to Milan, Vienna to Paris”⁴⁶... and from Milan to Lisbon. In addition, several of the choreographers who went to Lisbon had performed in ballets of well-known Italian choreographers, which made them more likely to participate in the transporting of libretti of the original works. Engagement in previous productions of these ballets gave dancers access not only to their stories, but also to details pertaining to the development of the action, pantomime, and stage directions, for instance, thus allowing them to contribute to the spread of the *ballet d’action*.

The libretti in their various productions attest to their almost identical content; but, were they staged in the exact same way? Why would choreographers wish to restage, rework, or revive previously performed ballets? The libretti themselves hold the answers to these questions.

One of the characteristics of ballets of the eighteenth century was the use of well-known stories or themes on which to build a ballet scenario.⁴⁷ That was especially true of the serious, heroic, tragic, mythological, or historical genres – the preferred genres both in Portugal and in Italy – which were invariably built on existing texts or classical myths, as the examples of the scenarios above illustrate well. As Hansell observes, enough time elapsed between revivals to make them seem to appear new.⁴⁸ Thus, repeating and restaging previous works was not unique to Portugal, but something that was common practice in Europe throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There were advantages to repeating ballets. First, well-known stories would be easier to follow

and therefore more enjoyable to watch without having to refer to details of plot development in the libretti, or trying to keep track of characters and their various encounters. Second, the limited span of time in which to create a new ballet would restrict choreographers' ability to devise an entirely new story.⁴⁹ In fact, in their libretti prologues, choreographers often mention the short amount of time in which they were expected to create a new work. Third, I believe, choreographers followed a libretto, but altered other aspects of their narratives. They frequently added amorous episodes in order to make them more palatable and more danceable, added or subtracted characters or parts of the plots, and inserted situations that would allow for dances to develop.⁵⁰ Several choreographers alluded to resorting to these tactics, as previously mentioned.

Theodoro Martin's preface to the ballet *A Vingança d'Amôr* (*Love's Vengeance*) illustrates this point:

The Anacreontic *divertissement* I have the chance to submit to this illustrious Portuguese public's judgment is drawn from a subject already explored by other colleagues. But, I thought I would be able to present it in different ways, and proceeded to work on this as if painting an entire new picture over an existing one, and in so doing have hoped that the ballets, the *mise en scène*, the new music by the famous Lindpaintner, and the new scenery by the well-known brushes of Rambois and Cinatti, together will contribute to the good reception of my work.

In his frankness, Martin reveals what most likely was the driving force behind the frequent repetition of ballets. Although their plots drew from the same sources – historical themes, famous mythological legends, heroic dramas – the ballets were not necessarily identical reproductions every time. The libretti refer to these as “new ballets.”

The choreographers experimented with new approaches to the familiar narratives in new ways; and new productions would include new sets, new costumes, and possibly new dance choreography as well. Thus, they did not just appear to be new, but were often new in virtually all of their aspects, as Martin suggests. And, considering the degree of flexibility in the interpretation of mimed action, this becomes even more plausible as different casts would certainly deliver the pantomime in different ways.

Considering that dancers were given a great degree of latitude in their interpretation of roles, the inherent open-ended framework of the *ballet d'action* libretti meant that their performance and interpretation depended on the dancers themselves, and how they were able to infuse their pantomime with expressiveness in order to carry out the meaning of the stories. From the mid-eighteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century, ballet masters highlighted the importance of personal investment in finding the adequate nuance of performance, not only of technique, but also of ways to make their dancing more elegant, engaging, graceful, but above all, expressive. Noverre, Magri, and Blasis all included discussion on the importance of dancing with the entire body and finding the most appropriate, pertinent, and proportionate poses of the arms and legs, the right inclination of the head, the most harmonious attitudes.⁵¹ Because libretti were guiding aids, or blueprints, to the *ballets d'action*, variations in their interpretation and performance constituted an inherent aspect of the works of the time.

Notes to chapter 4

¹ There are over a dozen libretti in the Harvard Theatre Collection in the Houghton Library that are not part of the Lisbon Library collection. There could be additional samples in other libraries or private collections as well.

² Edward Nye, “‘Choreography’ is Narrative: The Programmes of the Eighteenth-Century *ballet d’action*,” 44.

³ Libretti of the late 1860s still had subtitles like these, and pantomime ballets continued to be performed. Ivor Guest’s compilation of ballets created at the Paris Opera from 1793-1819 demonstrates that in France these designations were still used as well. *Ballet Under Napoleon*, 485-490.

⁴ Marian Smith, *Ballet and Opera in the Age of “Giselle,”* 213.

⁵ Giannandrea Poesio, *The Language of Gesture in Italian Dance from Commedia dell’Arte to Blasis*, 44.

⁶ Although the title of this ballet is mentioned in Francisco Benevides’s book *O Real Theatro de S. Carlos de Lisboa*, I have not been able to locate a libretto for this ballet at the National Library of Portugal.

⁷ Her first name is not listed. It is improbable that she would be Lise Noblet, who, in 1835 would have been thirty-four years old. Guest, *The Romantic Ballet in England*, 71. A ballerina by the name of Auber Noblet is listed in libretti of the 1830s in Italy. She could have gone to Lisbon from Italy as many of the other dancers and choreographers did. The presence of French dancers and choreographers in Italy during that time is also evident.

A Mr. Cousthou is listed in the libretto in the role of Endymion. Guest states that Coustou, like Charles Mabile, Guerra and Bretin, “were talented dancers, but received scant attention as they devoted themselves to displaying the graces and talents of the ballerinas they partnered.” *The Romantic Ballet In England*, 46. Whether or not this is the same Cousthou that appeared in Lisbon I was not able to ascertain.

⁸ The absence of a last name makes it difficult to identify these dancers. In *The Romantic Ballet in England* Ivor Guest mentions a Mlle Claire who was engaged at the Paris Opera in 1803, but it is unlikely that it would be the same dancer, 138. Three other libretti at the BNP list a Clara Lagoutine, but I have not found any more information on a dancer by that name.

⁹ Perhaps Villa refers to the French writer Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle.

¹⁰ Villa restaged this ballet in 1842 for the Teatro Regio in Turin.

¹¹ Nine of them are available at the National Library of Portugal; two of them are in The Harvard Theatre Collection.

¹² An interesting choice, considering the Portuguese did not explore or settle in Florida.

¹³ The composer was Francisco Norberto dos Santos Pinto.

¹⁴ The *ballo grande*, according to Giannandrea Poesio was “a vast, spectacular production, generally in four, five or even six acts, in which the action was mainly mimed, interspersed with incidental dances. They were efforts to perpetuate Viganò’s *coreodrama*, 91. Ornella di Tondo defines it similarly: “grand spectacle emphasizing mimed action and *ballabile*, lavish scenery and costumes, and deploying a large *corpo di ballo* in great mass scenes.” “The Italian *Silfide* and the Contentious Reception of Ultramontane Ballet,” in Marian Smith, ed. *La Sylphide: Paris 1832 and Beyond*, 188. They differ in the time period, however. Poesio states that it replaced the *coreodrama*, which after Viganò’s death in 1821, went into a decline, while Di Tondo proposes that it was popular in the late 1850s and early 1860s.

¹⁵ Winter 193; Guest, *Napoleon* 492; Beaumont, *The Complete Book of Ballets*, 38.

¹⁶ Played by Giovanni Coralli’s wife Teresa in the Lisbon restaging by Luigi Montani. In Giuseppe Villa’s staging for the Regio Teatro in Turin in 1831, Antonia Pallerini played the role of Emilia. In the 1819 ballet by Viganò, Emilia was also played by Pallerini, while Giuseppe Villa played the role of Claudio, as listed in Cyril Beaumont’s *Complete Book of Ballets*, 35. Villa re-staged this ballet in Italy in 1842.

¹⁷ The role of Decio was played by Nicola Molinari in 1818; Antonia Pallerini played the role of Emilia in the original production and also in several re-stagings of the ballet, including Giuseppe Villa’s in 1831.

¹⁸ Ballets by the same title had also been staged by Francesco Clerico in Venice in 1780 – the earliest record of this ballet I have been able to locate – and by Sebastiano Gallet in Naples in 1790, *Catalogo del Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale*. In the appendix to her article “Gioia, Il Ballo Teatrale e l’opera del Primo

Ottocento,” Kathleen Kuzmick Hansell lists twelve total productions by Gioia and others, 229. In addition to those, I have found another five productions by the same choreographers.

¹⁹ Identified as Pierre-Laurent Buyrette de Belloy in the Harvard Library database.

²⁰ The title is somewhat misleading. The madness of the character only becomes clear through the story.

²¹ Jules Perrot’s ballet by the same title, *Le Délire d’un peintre*, a divertissement, had been performed in London in 1843 with Fanny Elssler and Perrot in the main roles. Guest, *Jules Perrot, Master of the Romantic Ballet*, 353. The story bears no resemblance to Auguste Ferrère’s ballet *Le Peintre amoureux de son modèle* described by Rebecca Harris-Warrick and Carol G. Marsh in “The French Connection,” *The Grottesque Dancer on the Eighteenth Century Stage; Gennaro Magri and His World*, ed. Rebecca Harris Warrick and Bruce Alan Brown, 191-92.

²² There is a record of an undated opera by the same title in Italian, and one record of a comic ballet by the same title choreographed by Domenico Lefevre in 1793, *Catalogo del Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale online*. Sorrentino probably found inspiration either in this ballet or in the comic opera in one act by the same title, interestingly with music by Marcos Portugal, performed at the King’s Theater in the Hay-Marked in 1800, *Harvard University Library Catalog online*.

²³ Edward Nye, *Mime, Music and Drama*, 219.

²⁴ The name of the choreographer who restaged it is not included in the libretto.

²⁵ Restaged by Gustave Carey.

²⁶ Ornella di Tondo mentions a Chinese Sylphide staged in Palermo, Italy, in 1856, “The Italian Silfide,” 187-188; 202; 207.

²⁷ Antonio Guerra choreographed a ballet by the same title, *Le Lac des Fées*, in 1841, which starred Fanny Cerrito. Guest, *The Romantic Ballet in England*, 53, 77; Cyril Beaumont, *The Complete Book of Ballets*, 374. Jorck’s ballet might have been a re-production of Antonio Guerra’s; without the libretto by Guerra it is difficult to ascertain any similarities.

²⁸ The flight of the fairies in this ballet suggests the use of machinery for the stage effect.

²⁹ José Sasportes, *Trajectoria da Dança Teatral em Portugal*, 58.

³⁰ A ballet by the title *La Walchiri: gran ballo fantastico* was produced in Cremona, Italy, also by E. Viotti. *Catalogo del Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale online*.

³¹ The scene, which included a “fair amount of talking,” has been cut from the original story. Marian Smith, *Ballet and Opera in the Age of “Giselle,”* 199.

³² Debra H. Sowell, “Contextualizing Madge’s Scarf: The *Pas de Schall* as Romantic Convention,” in *‘La Sylphide’: Paris 1832 and Beyond*, 27

³³ Nye, *Mime, Music, and Drama*. 165; “‘Choreography’ is Narrative,” 54.

³⁴ Di Tondo, 173.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Di Tondo, 208.

³⁷ In the preface to his 1852 ballet *Fausto*, for example, Antonio Cortesi stated: “The current program together with the music that accompanies the choreographic action, and the ballets, are the exclusive property of Antonio Cortesi, who intends to exercise all of the rights accorded to him by law against any reproductions not authorized by him, and for this reason places the whole under the protection of the law on literary property.” Emanuele Viotti also included a notice of copyright in his libretto for the ballets *Crimilde*, and *La Zanze* for the Teatro Regio in Turin in 1849: “This program and the music of the ballet and the *balletto* are the property of Mr. Emanuele Viotti.”

³⁸ A music score available at the Harvard Theatre Collection provides details of staging such as duration of the scenes, for example.

³⁹ I have not been able to find any earlier productions, but it is possible that it had been staged prior to the Portuguese one.

⁴⁰ I have not been able to compare the libretto by Montani, as it is only available in Italian libraries. A record of the ballet is available on the online database of the Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale in Italy.

⁴¹ I have located a record of a ballet by the title of *La Walchiri* choreographed by Viotti in 1847 for the Teatro della Concordia in Cremona, on the online *Catalogo del Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale*. This

leads me to believe that his Portuguese ballet was a revival of this earlier one. I have not been able to read this libretto in order to ascertain its similarities with the other two.

⁴² In Lisbon it was titled *The Nine Recruits*.

⁴³ Luigi Astolfi reworked this ballet many other times: Genova 1836, Canobbiana in Milan 1837, Padova 1839, among others.

⁴⁴ For this ballet I was able to compare three different libretti: The transcription in Beaumont's *Complete Book of Ballets* (241-247), the Italian Libretto for which Perrot himself was the choreographer, and the Lisbon libretto, staged by Nicola Libonatti, also with music by Pagni. All three stories are the same, with slight variations in wording. While the 1844 libretto is done in three acts (five scenes), the Italian one is distributed in five parts, while the Portuguese version is a "dance in five acts."

⁴⁵ Di Tondo elaborates on this in her article *The Italian Silfide*, 173, 190.

⁴⁶ Nye, "'Choreography' is Narrative," 45.

⁴⁷ Nye, *Mime, Music and Drama*, 219.

⁴⁸ Hansell, *Theatrical Ballet*, 275.

⁴⁹ Choreographers frequently mentioned the short amount of time they were allotted to create new ballets.

⁵⁰ Di Tondo, *Italian Silfide*, 173. Choreographers in Italy frequently re-used segments of pre-existing works for new productions. They also borrowed works and programmes making modifications as they pleased. Susan Foster mentions that plots took place around festivals, soirées, or events where dancing would normally occur, *Choreography and Narrative*, 170. Additions of scenes in which dancing would naturally occur were common and appear in the Portuguese libretti of the serious, heroic, and dramatic ballets as diversions to entertain counts, dukes, sultans, etc.

⁵¹ Attitudes were not just positions as we now understand them, but an overall countenance in accordance to the way a dancer should find expression within the dancing. Attitudes were in fact moments of posing, almost still, but that were intended to bring a degree of transcendence to the audience.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the sixty years from the inauguration of the Real Theatro de S. Carlos until the middle of the nineteenth century, the Lisbon stage was filled with *ballets d'action* of various genres. These pantomime ballets at times reflected the political atmosphere in the country through allegorical themes, as was the case of some of the mythological, serious, and historical ballets that drew on current events. Laudatory ballets that extolled the virtuous, generous, and noble characters of kings and rulers also figured on stage, particularly on occasions to celebrate royal birthdays, name-days, and coronations. The several genres analyzed in this study illustrate the styles that predominated on the stage in Lisbon: patriotic ballets such as *O Conselho de Jove* (*Jupiter's Counsel*) that alluded to the anniversary of the constitutional monarchy, and *Portugal Restaurado* (*Portugal Restored*) which had as its central theme the usurpation of the throne by a tyrant; mythological ballets that often metaphorically alluded to historical events in Portugal as exemplified in the 1793 inaugural ballet *A Felicidade Lusitana* (*The Lusitanian Happiness*) were also favored on the Lisbon stage; historical ballets such as *Inês de Castro* and *The Conquest of Malacca by the Portuguese*; serious and dramatic ballets, the most numerous, of which *Gabriella de Vergy* and *Catharina de Coluga ou o Subterraneo* are good examples; comic ballets with lighter themes that often

included summarized plots such as *As Modistas (The Dressmakers)* and *A Mulher do Bosque (The Woman from the Forest)*; and proto-romantic ballets with characters such as fairies and sylphs as presented in the ballets *O Véio Encantado (The Enchanted Veil)*, *Emeth*, and *A Walkiris*. As the libretti in this study have illustrated, the Portuguese taste for ballets was closely connected to that country's century-old association with the Italian ballet style. The Italian taste for ballet started to be cultivated in Portugal in the early eighteenth century, when the first ballet masters and *ballerini* arrived in Lisbon; by the turn of the nineteenth century it was firmly planted. The Italian style predominated in the ballets produced at the S. Carlos Theater throughout the period in this investigation, and the Italian presence on the Portuguese stage is so strong that a study of the history of Portuguese ballet could be, by extension, a study of the history of Italian ballet.

The narratives of the libretti discussed herein add to an understanding of the significance and degree of pantomime that was still embedded in ballets of the first half of the nineteenth century and beyond. The *ballets d'action*, ballets in pantomime, persisted not only in Portugal and Italy, but elsewhere, for dance slowly incorporated modifications to style and technique through time, not in segmented, delimited periods. The frequently used terms to designate different periods in ballet history are in fact not as clearly defined as they may appear to be. The labels “‘Baroque,’ ‘Romantic,’ and ‘Neo-Classical’ did not suddenly begin or abruptly end. Rather, the stylistic and technical “‘periods’” are always in a state of transition, moving gradually from one emphasis to another.”¹ There was not a definite departure from the *ballets d'action* to a clear, precise beginning of the romantic ballets – the romantic ballets were still fantastic pantomime

ballets, or *ballets d'action*. As Marion Smith has discussed in her analysis of *Giselle*, the 1841 production of the ballet had an equal amount of dancing and pantomime.² Since then the ballet has slowly morphed into an almost purely danced form, with additions of danced parts and omission of the mimed ones throughout. *La Sylphide*, the other popular contemporary representative of the romantic style, in the version by Auguste Bournonville of 1836, also included a fair amount of pantomime. Although it has been preserved by Danish dancers and kept in their repertoire, it too was modified throughout time; however, mimed passages were crucial to the development of the plot and to the understanding of this ballet.³

Also important is the fact that fantastic ballets, what we call romantic ballets, were not the most prevalent on the stages of the Paris Opera. Because *La Sylphide* (1832) and *Giselle* (1841), the two most popular ballets to have survived from the mid-nineteenth century are of the fantastic genre, there is a tendency to believe that all ballets from that time period were in that style.⁴ However, as Smith asserts, more non-magical ballets were produced at the Opéra than supernatural, fantastic ones.⁵ Thus, ballets in the fantastic style did not predominate on the European stage in the early to mid-nineteenth century. The relatively small proportion of fantastic, or romantic ballets produced in Portugal is also true in Italy as well, where the dramatic and historic genres were favored and more popular throughout this period.⁶ It is also important to consider that romantic elements differed from country to country, and that the emphasis on dramatic elements does not exclude romanticism from these plots as illustrated by ballets such as *A Walkiris*, *The Enchanted Veil*, and *Emeth*, for example. However, narratives that

emphasized plot development and clarity through the extensive use of pantomime were preferred in Italy, and, consequently in Portugal, as exemplified in the serious and dramatic ballets *Gabriella de Vergy* and *The Subterranean*. As Debra H. Sowell points out, a well-established ballet tradition that relied on strong elements of pantomime and facial expressions to convey meaning and help the understanding of the narrative of the stories would not suddenly abandon it.⁷ Thus, the Italian ballet choreographers working in Lisbon did not eliminate the pantomime that had been crucial to the preceding era, but rather relied on it and continued to incorporate it in the narratives of ballets through the middle of the nineteenth century.

The importance of pantomime is still apparent in ballets in the second half of the nineteenth century as well. Arthur Saint Léon, who also worked in Lisbon and Italy, choreographed ballets that were essentially ballets in pantomime in the late 1850s and later. His ballets exemplify a blend of dancing and mime typical of the nineteenth century *ballets d'action*, something that the French critics found to be a defect of his works.⁸ The role of pantomime diminished gradually, and toward the end of the nineteenth century ballets throughout Europe emphasized dancing over pantomime. The ballets of Luigi Manzotti in Italy, for example, became less reliant on pantomime and included large casts of dancers and focused more on movements. The ballets of Marius Petipa in Russia also began to focus more on dancing.⁹ As this investigation demonstrates, the relevance of mime is exemplified throughout the narratives of the Portuguese libretti, and the significance of the *ballet d'action* as an instrumental aspect of

our understanding of the development of ballet in the nineteenth century becomes evident.

The other facet of ballet history to be considered here is the element of technical evolution. Examples of the slow progression in terms of ballet's developments in technique are explored in the writings of Sandra Noll Hammond. These are essential to our understanding of these ballets, for the choreographers and dancers did not abandon the progress of technique achieved in previous times, but instead improved upon them, incorporating new ideas and concepts over time. A pictorial overview of these *ballets d'action* can be gathered by looking into the technical manuals of this period and writings about them. Carlo Blasis' 1820 *Elementary Treatise* include illustrations of dancers in costumes in various poses and groupings; Theleur's 1831 *Letters on Dancing* also includes several plates of dancers in costumes holding different props such as garlands and fabric to form varied shapes, giving an iconographic rendering of ballets of this period.

By the mid-eighteenth century dancers were jumping higher, turning multiple times, and displaying feats of physical virtuosity that demonstrated the development of technique. Against a sheer exhibitionism in pursuit of audience applause spoke Jean-Georges Noverre who openly opposed such distortions, which he considered to be detrimental to the art form. In *Lettres sur la danse e sur les Ballets* (1760) Noverre clarifies the degree of technical training at the time of his writing. Throughout his *Lettres* he continuously alludes to the expressiveness and powerful meaning of gestures which the young dancers of the time had abandoned to replace with flamboyant *caprioles*,

destitute of any feeling or artistic content—“mechanical and un-definable movement, without meaning, without character, and without life.”¹⁰ He was, of course, exaggerating, as there were dancers who were capable of attaining both in their performances, and by the end of the century August Vestris had amalgamated the two with brilliance and refinement.¹¹ Yet, there must have been a measure of truth to Noverre’s comments.

The preference for the expressive style of dancing and the development of the *ballet d’action*, influenced by the works of Noverre and Angiolini, was far reaching and long-lasting, and spurred the birth of expressive dancing that focused on gestures and pantomime – the *danza parlante*, or speaking dance, as Angiolini described it – dancing that was always expressive and always beautifully natural.¹² Noverre also wanted to infuse arm movements with meaning, as the hands and arms were able to express infinite and varied forms of sentiments, the passions of the soul, and through these gestures the dancer could reach the souls of the spectators as well. “The *port de bras* should be as varied as the different passions that dance could express” and these were, according to him, limitless in their varied qualities.¹³ Dancing toward the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century aspired to reach a different purpose – not to amaze and amuse for the sake of applause but to transcend and infuse the spectator with awe. The necessity for the expressive dancing and use of pantomime is clear in the narratives of the Portuguese libretti discussed here.

Giovanni-Andrea Gallini, who in 1762 also wrote about pantomime, its history, and aspects of the *ballet d’action*, compares dancing to painting and affirms that “every truly theatrical situation is nothing but a living picture.”¹⁴ The libretti of Italian

choreographers working in Portugal seem to achieve this effect for as the stories develop, a pictorial element comes to the surface; images of the action on stage seem to unfold before our eyes; we can “see” the actions of the ballets as their stories progress. The narratives resemble what Gallini called “poetic dances” in pantomimes that balanced various elements to form a whole with mimed action at its center.¹⁵ This balance, which was achieved in different degrees by both Viganò and Gioia in Italy through the early nineteenth century,¹⁶ also emerges in the stories contained in the Portuguese libretti in a weaving of dancing with pantomime, as Gallini proposed.

An aspect of technique from the past that is fundamental in the study of the *ballet d'action* is the individuality in performing the steps in both the classroom and on the stage during that time. Individuality, which had been highly praised in the eighteenth century, continued to be so in the nineteenth century as the writings of ballet masters referred to it. In 1820 Blasis, for example, stated that the dancer could do pirouettes “in any kind of attitude or arabesque, provided that the design of the body, arms and legs be graceful, and every movement natural, and free from affectation.”¹⁷ When speaking of general harmonious poses, attitudes, and arabesques, he commented:

The number of poses, attitudes and arabesques is innumerable, as a slight *épaulement* of the body, an opposition of the arms or a mere movement of the legs, in happy relation to the ensemble, produces unlimited variety. Their graceful execution depends entirely upon the dancer’s taste and it is his responsibility to adapt them to the style and character of his dance.¹⁸

Individuality in performing steps and gestures was essential in the *ballets d'action* analyzed in this study. The more uniform *corps de ballet* appearance came to be the norm later on in the nineteenth century.¹⁹

Individuality is evident in the *ballets d'action*. Dancers and mimes were expected to bring their own interpretation to their roles. Because mime was so independently devised, although choreographers must have given directions to the interpreters of their ballets, this aspect of the ballets remains elusive to us today.

As the writings of several dance theorists of the early nineteenth century illustrate, pantomime in the expressive use of the entire body was fundamental to ballet as it became an independent art form. Ballet choreographers did not simply discard the use of pantomime by the time the romantic ballets were choreographed, for pantomime was still a strong component of the stories they conveyed on stage. It was after the middle of the nineteenth century that the trend of trimming mime scenes from ballets began in the Paris Opera.²⁰ But, as Smith points out, deleting entire pantomime scenes from *Giselle* not only detracted from its plot development and understanding, but also stripped away the poetic nature of its narrative.²¹ Many other examples of the importance of mime can be found in the narratives of nineteenth century *ballets d'action* in the Portuguese libretti. Pantomime was truly instrumental in telling these stories and conveying the dramatic development of their narratives and characters. As their contents illustrate, the ballets produced in Lisbon in the first half of the nineteenth century demonstrate the vital importance of pantomime in the development of these stories and their instrumental role in conveying the drama of the plots and their characters.

The libretti at the National Library of Portugal exemplify the importance of mime in the *ballets d'action* as central elements in this often neglected segment of dance history – the period after the baroque and before the romantic. This study unveils the importance of this epoch of dance history through several pantomime ballets in the numerous libretti in this Portuguese collection. The choreographers who worked in Portugal, most of them unknown until now, contributed to an important aspect of the development of ballet and left us a rich legacy; their works, preserved in the narratives of these libretti, are choreographic in a form of dance notation with which we can better understand the history of ballet of this time period. This study reveals the importance of the ballets in pantomime in their varied themes to our deeper understanding of dance history in the fifty years encompassed here – their written stories are tangible evidence of *ballets d'action* staged in Lisbon during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Notes to conclusion

¹ Hammond, "Clues to Ballet's Technical History from the Early Nineteenth Century Ballet Lesson," 63.

² Marian Smith, *Ballet and Opera in the Age of Giselle*, 175. Smith discusses the omission or shortening of several mime scenes throughout the ballet in current re-stagings of *Giselle*.

³ Alexander Bennett offers a complete discussion of the script and a comparison of the Taglioni and Bournonville ballets in "Simplified Choreographic Script of *La Sylphide*". '*La Sylphide*': *Paris 1832 and Beyond* 247-256.

⁴ It is also interesting to note that these two ballets were also the exception in their unhappy endings, for the ballets in pantomime of this era almost always ended happily. Smith, *Ballet and Opera*, 59, n. 260.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁶ Ornella Di Tondo, "The Italian Sylfide," in '*La Sylphide*': *Paris 1832 and Beyond*, ed. Marian Smith, 209. Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet," 279.

⁷ Debra H. Sowell, "A Plurality of Romanticisms," 50. In this article she proposes that different definitions of romanticism need to be introduced in the writing of dance history for, comparing all other aesthetics to the French romantic ballet is not appropriate since different countries had their own definition and interpretation of various romantic elements.

⁸ Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet," 281.

⁹ *The Sleeping Beauty*, however, still contained long pantomime passages, which received negative press at the time. Tim Scholl, "*Sleeping Beauty*," *A Legend in Progress*, ix.

¹⁰ Jean-Georges Noverre, *Lettres sur La Danse et sur Les Ballets*, 259-60.

¹¹ August Vestris enjoyed a long career and performed until past the age of fifty. He was born in 1760, the same year Noverre's *Lettres* were published, and taught many of the following generations of dancers and choreographers of the beginning of the nineteenth century. John Chapman's article on Vestris' contribution to ballet and his blending of styles, as well as Edmund Fairfax's *The Styles of Eighteenth Century Ballet* offer insightful information on the dancer and dancing of that time. Chapman "August Vestris and the Expansion of Technique;" Fairfax, 276-86.

¹² Giannandrea Poesio, "The Language of Gesture in Italian Dance," 33.

¹³ Noverre, *Lettres sur la Danse*, 264-65.

¹⁴ Giovanni-Andrea Gallini, *A Treatise on the Art of Dancing*, 251.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 268-69. Gallini calls for the perfect harmony and balance of poetry, music, painting, decoration, and machinery. The music element in the Portuguese productions is difficult to ascertain for there are no scores with choreographic annotations on them.

¹⁶ Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet," 267-270.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁸ Blasis, *An Elementary Treatise Upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing*, 39.

¹⁹ Marion Smith also discusses the individual characters for the parts of the Wilis in *Giselle*, which included different nationalities in its original production in 1841, 191-195.

²⁰ Smith, 116-123. Smith attributes this trend to the difficulty of comprehending the pantomimes in the ballets.

²¹ Smith, 191, 199. She states that the story is much narrower in scope and that the importance of certain characters, such as that of Hilarion, is greatly diminished by the omission of mimed passages.

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APPENDIX A

Libretti of ballets staged in Portugal

- Angiolini, Pietro. *Giro in Timbraja, Ballo Eroico in Quattro Atti*. Lisbona: Stamperia de Signore Taddeo Ferreira, 1794.
- . *La Morte D'Ercole, Ballo Serio-Tragico*. Lisbona: Simmone Taddeo Fer., 1793.
- . *Orfeo e Le Baccanti; Ballo Eroico in Tre Atti*. Lisbona: Stamperia de Simone Taddeo Ferreira, 1795.
- . *Pico, e Canente Rè Latini Perseguitati Dalla Maga Circe; Ballo Eroico in Cinque Atti*. Lisbona: Stamperia di Simone Taddeo Ferreira, 1795.
- . *Raollo Signore di Crequi; Tragicommedia in Prosa di Tre Atti Mista*. Lisbona: Stamperia di Simone Taddeo Ferreira, 1795.
- . *Lo Sciocco Poeta de Campagna; Farsa Prima per Musica*. Lisbona: Simone Taddeo Ferreira, 1794.
- . *La Sposa Volubile Ossia L'Amante Imprudente; Dramma Giocoso per Musica*. Lisbona: Stamperia di Simone Taddeo Ferreira, 1795.
- . *Lo Strambo in Berlina; Dramma Giocoso Per Musica*. Lisboa: Simone Taddeo Ferreira, 1795.
- . *La Virtuosa in Mergellina; Dramma Giocoso Per Musica*. [Ballo Primo: *Gli Finti Filosofi*; Ballo Secondo: *L'Amor Secreto*]. Lisbona: Stamperia di Simone Taddeo Ferreira, 1793.
- . *Zeboschi, ed Esing, Ossia Il Vero Amico, Ballo Di Carattere Pollaco in Tre Atti*. Lisbon: Stamperia de Simone Thaddeo Ferreira, 1795.

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- . *Branca de Rossi, ou O Exemplo do Amor Conjugal; Baile Serio Extrahido da História de Italia.* Porto: Imprensa de Gandra, 1826.
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- . *Fayel: Baile Heroico em Cinco Actos.* Porto: Imprensa do Gandra, 1825.
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- . *O Triunfo de Berenice; Dança Trágica Dividida em Cinco Actos.* Porto: Imprensa do Gandra, 1825.
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- . *Catharina de Cóluga ou O Subterraneo; Dança Trágica em Quatro Actos.* Porto: Imprensa do Gandra, 1822.
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- . *La Finta Militare per Gelosia; ballo comico*. Milano: Antonio Fontana, 1827.
- . *Gl'Inglesi in America, ballo di carattere*. Napoli: Vincenzo Flauto, 1791.
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- . *La Rivalità Funesta; ballo tragico em tre atti*. Milano: Stamperia di Carlo Dova, 1827.
- . *I Solitarj, ossia I Nemici delle Donne; ballo in quattro atti*. Firenze: Stamperia Fantosini, 1823.
- . *I Viaggiatori al Mondo della Luna; ballo di mezzo carattere*. Milano: Giacomo Pirola, 1833.
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APPENDIX B

Brief Chronology

- 1750 Death of Dom João V, king of Portugal (1706-1750)
Dom José I ascends the throne. Pombal becomes chief Minister of King José.
- 1755 April – inauguration of Casa da Ópera.
November 1 – Lisbon earthquake.
- 1758 Assassination attempt against Dom José I
- 1759 Jesuit expulsion from Portugal and colonies.
- 1777 Death of Dom José I – King of Portugal (1750-1777)
Maria I ascends the throne. Pombal dismissed as chief Minister.
- 1785 Dom João VI marries Carlota Joaquina
- 1788 Death of Prince José
- 1791 Portugal and United States establish full diplomatic relations.
- 1792 Queen Maria I declared incapable of ruling.
Dom João VI named Prince Regent to sign in his mother's name
- 1793 Birth of Princess Maria Teresa
Real Theatro de S. Carlos inaugurated.

- 1798 Birth of Prince Pedro, future Pedro I Emperor of Brazil, and Pedro IV King of Portugal
- 1799 Dom João VI officially declared Prince Regent
- 1807 November 27 – royal family departs for Brazil.
First Napoleonic invasion.
- 1808 March – royal family arrives in Brazil
- 1809 Second Napoleonic invasion.
- 1811 Third French invasion. British under general Wellington force French to evacuate Portugal.
- 1815 Brazil elevated to the status of Kingdom
- 1816 Death of Maria I, queen of Portugal (1777-1816)
Dom João VI ascends the throne
- 1817 Dom Pedro de Alcântara marries Duchess Leopoldina of Austria
Liberal Revolt for independence in the north of Brazil
- 1818 Dom João VI crowned King of Brazil, Portugal and Algarves in Rio de Janeiro
- 1819 Rio de Janeiro – April 4 – birth of Maria da Glória, future Maria II, queen of Portugal.
- 1820 Liberal revolutionary movement in Porto
- 1821 Revolution in Rio de Janeiro. King Dom João swears the provisory constitution of Portugal.
April 26 – Dom João and the royal family embark for their return to Portugal.
Dom Pedro remains in Brazil as regent.

July 3 – Dom João VI and the court arrive in Lisbon. Period of constitutional monarchy begins.

1822 First Portuguese constitution.

September 7 – Dom Pedro acclaimed as protector of Brazil, proclaims Brazil's independence.

Dom João VI swears the first Portuguese constitution.

1823 Dom João VI revokes the 1822 constitution. End of the first liberal movement.

Dom Miguel named commander of the Portuguese army.

1824 “Abrilada” - Anti-liberal movement headed by Dom Miguel.

Dom Miguel exonerated and exiled.

1825 Dom João VI recognizes the independence of Brazil.

1826 Regency Council with Dona Isabel Maria, daughter of Dom João VI as regent due to the king's illness.

March 10 – death of Dom João VI Prince Regent (1792-1816), King (1816-1826)

Death of Empress Leopoldina in Rio de Janeiro.

Dom Pedro abdicates the Portuguese crown in favor of his daughter Maria da

Glória, who is too young to assume the crown. By agreement, her uncle Dom

Miguel, is to accept the constitution and rule in her name until she comes of age.

Sanctioning of the Constitutional Letter.

1828 Dom Miguel returns to Portugal.

Dom Miguel revokes and suspends the Constitutional Letter, declaring himself absolute king.

Anti-Miguelite movement begins.

- 1829 Liberals and absolutists revolt in the Azores.
- 1830 Death of Queen Carlota Joaquina.
- 1831 Dom Pedro I abdicates the crown of Emperor in name of his son Dom Pedro II in order to restore his daughter Maria to the throne of Portugal.
Dom Pedro goes to France to seek support for his daughter's cause.
Dona Maria da Glória remains in France for two years.
- 1832 Dom Pedro becomes regent in name of his daughter Maria da Glória who is still a minor.
Porto revolution begins with Dom Pedro as their leader. Civil war between the two brothers.
- 1833 Lisbon liberated from the absolutists army of Dom Miguel.
Dona Maria II arrives in Lisbon.
- 1834 Battles of Almostrim and Asseiceira – Liberal armed forces under the leadership of Dom Pedro win.
Évora-Monte convention, Dom Miguel expelled as king and from government, and forced into exile.
Dona Maria II declared of age on September 19 – beginning of her reign.
Constitutional monarchy consolidated under the rule of Queen Maria II until her death.
October – death of Pedro de Bragança; Dom Pedro I Emperor of Brazil (1822-1831), Dom Pedro IV of Portugal (1826), Regent (1828-1834).
Freedom of the Press Law.
- 1835 Dona Maria II marries Augusto of Leuchtenberg, who dies two months later.

- Creation of the Council for the Public Education.
- 1836 Dona Maria II marries Dom Fernando de Saxe-Coburg-Gota.
- Setembrismo, the leftist liberal movement in the September revolution.
- Founding of the Royal Academies of Fine Arts in Lisbon and Porto.
- Founding of the Surgical-Medical Schools of Lisbon and Porto.
- Mandatory public education instituted.
- Founding of the Lisbon Polytechnical School.
- 1837 Revolt of the Marshalls.
- College of the Nobles dissolved.
- 1838 New Constitution.
- Founding of the National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts in Lisbon by decree of Dona Maria II.
- 1839 Conservatory of Dance, Mime, and Gymnastics created as part of the Conservatory of Dramatic Arts of Lisbon.
- 1840 Conservatory of Dramatic Arts elevated to the status of Royal Conservatory of Lisbon.
- 1846 Teatro Dona Maria II inaugurated – designated for theater performances
- Civil War of Patuleia that lasted eight months.
- Maria II dissolved the government.
- 1851 Period of economic development and regeneration of Portugal and political stability.
- 1853 Death of Queen Maria II (1826-1853).

APPENDIX C

Ballets in the Harvard Theatre Collection that are not part of the National Library of Portugal Collection.

| Choreographer | Title | Subtitle/genre | date |
|----------------------|--|---------------------------|------|
| Cappon, Valentin | <i>A Filha das Flores (The Daughter of the Flowers)</i> | Fantastic ballet | 1851 |
| Jorch, Francisco | <i>Apollo Pastor (Apollo the Shepherd)</i> | Short Mythological Ballet | 1839 |
| | <i>Echo and Narcissus</i> | Short Mythological Ballet | 1839 |
| Marsigliani, Cyriaco | <i>O Chapim d'el Rey ou Parras Verdes (The Chapim of the King, or The Green Vine Leaves)</i> | Divertissement | 1847 |
| | <i>O Proscripto Escocês (The Scottish Exile)</i> | Semi-Serious Mimed Action | 1847 |
| Montani, Luigi | <i>A Vingança de Ulysses (Ulysses' Vengeance)</i> | Serious Ballet | 1819 |
| Vestris, Bernardo | <i>A Adoração do Sol (The Adoration of the Sun)</i> | Ballet | 1838 |
| | <i>Portugal Restaurado (Portugal Restored)</i> | Historical Ballet | 1835 |
| | <i>As Forjas de Vulcano ou o Poder do Amor (The Forges of Volcano, Or the Power of Love)</i> | Mythological Ballet | 1837 |

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------------|------|
| Vestris, Bernardo | <i>Venus e Adonis</i> | Mythological Divertissement | 1835 |
| Vienna, Lorenzo | <i>O Amante Sagaz (The Astute Lover)</i> | Comic Ballet | 1848 |
| Villa, Giuseppe | <i>Dgenguiz-Kan ou A Conquista da China (Dgenguiz-Kan or the Conquest of China)</i> | Ballet | 1838 |
| | <i>O Peregrino, ou o Talento Suppre a Idade (The Peregrinator or Talent Overcomes Age)</i> | Demi-character Ballet | 1834 |
| Viotti, Emanuele | <i>A Ilha dos Amores (The Island of Loves)</i> | Small/short mimed ballet | 1849 |
| | <i>Os Três Corcundas de Damasco (The Three Hunchbacks of Damask)</i> | Small/short comic ballet | 1849 |

APPENDIX D
ILLUSTRATIONS



Illustration 1: Partial view of the Convent of Mafra, a symbol of Dom João V's reign.
(Author's private collection.)



Illustration 2: The ruins of the Casa da Ópera, the Teatro do Tejo, after the 1755 earthquake. Lithograph by M. Paris and M. Pedegache. National Library of Portugal. Electronic file. Ea-352-a



Illustration 3: The Commerce Square in Lisbon. Lithograph by João Pedro Monteiro, 1849. National Library of Lisbon. Electronic file. E.A. 94-6-A



Illustration 4: Dona Maria I, Queen of Portugal (1775-1816). Engraving by Francisco Manuel Pires.

National Library of Portugal. Electronic file. E-47-V



Illustration 5: Dom João VI, King of Portugal, Brazil and Algarves.
1825 engraving, Paris: Chez Fantin.
National Library of Portugal. Electronic file E-4973-P

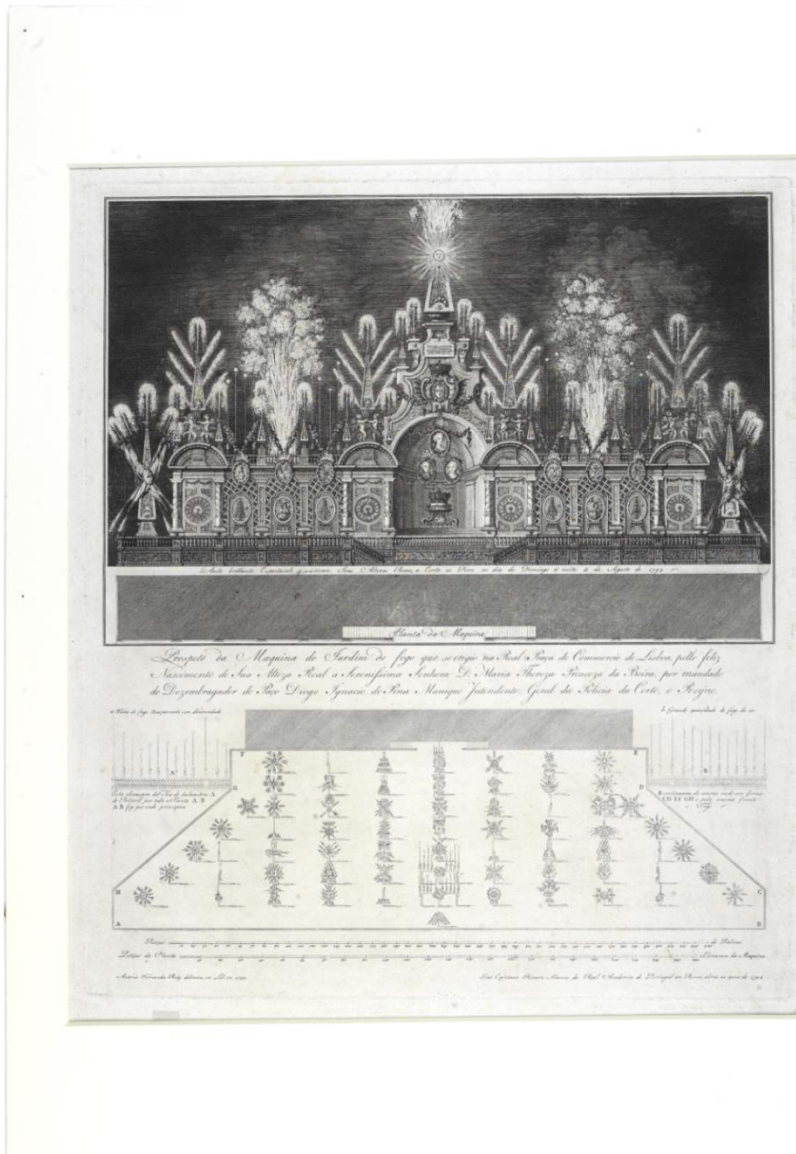


Illustration 7: Plans for the display of fireworks at the Commerce Square in Downtown Lisbon to celebrate the birth of the Princess Maria Thereza in 1793.
 Plan drawing by Antonio Fernandes Reiz
 National Library of Portugal. Digitized lithograph. E-63-r



Illustration 8: The royal family embarkation on the Wharf of Belem, 27 November 1807.
By Constantino de Fontes.
National library of Portugal. Electronic file. E-3550-p



Illustration 9: Dona Maria II depicted as a child queen by Ducarme, after her father abdicated in her favor upon Dom João VI's death in 1826, when Maria da Glória was seven years of age.

National Library of Portugal. Electronic file. E-78-p



Illustration 10: Dom Pedro I, Emperor of Brazil (Dom Pedro IV, King of Portugal) with his daughter Maria da Glória, queen of Portugal in 1834. National Library of Portugal. Electronic file. E-45-p



Illustration 11: The Real Theatro de S. Carlos, ca. 1850. Engraving by C. Legrand. National Library of Portugal. Electronic file. E-3413-p.

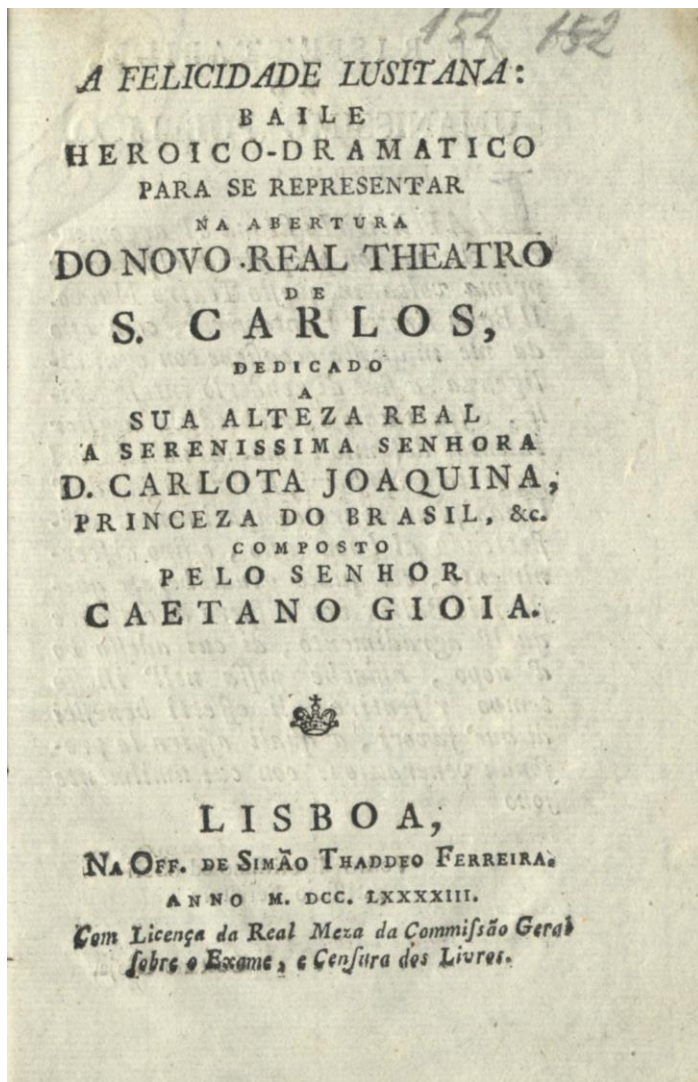


Illustration 12: The title page of the libretto for the inaugural ballet, 1793. National Library of Portugal – digitized image from the libretto. M. 1067 P.

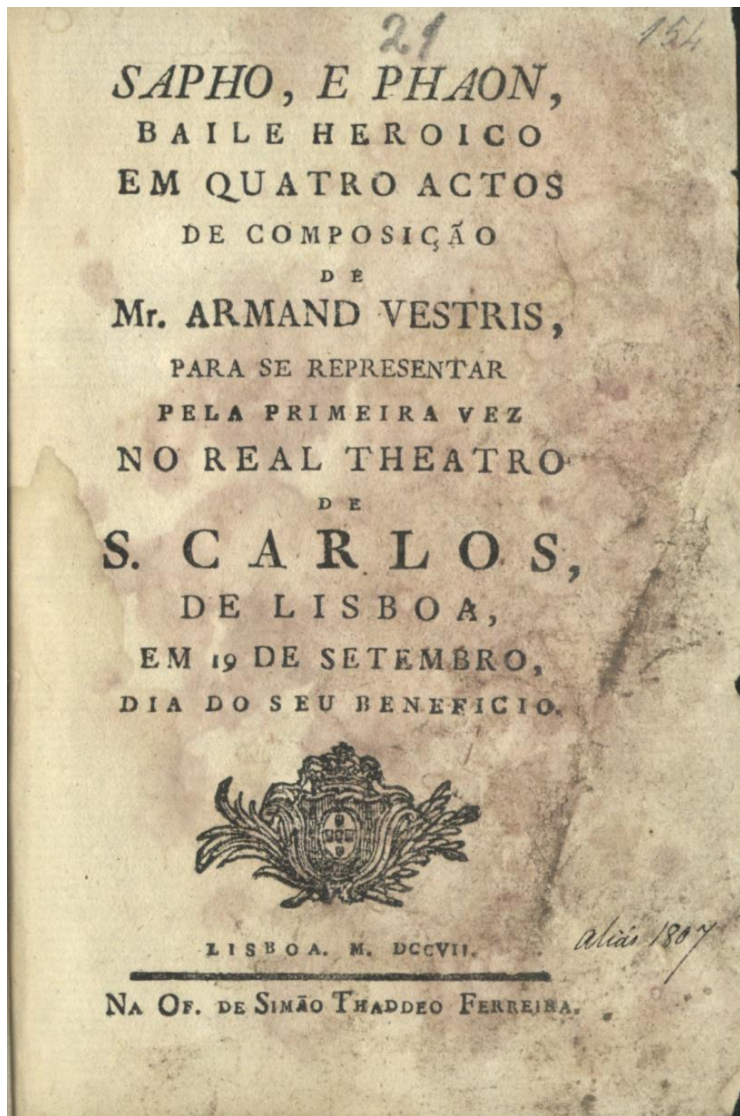


Illustration 13: Title page of Armand Vestris' libretto of his benefit performance in 1807. National Library of Portugal. Electronic file – digitized from the libretto. M. 1339 P.



Illustration 14: Cover for the reduced piano score music of the ballet *Esmeralda*, 1844. National Library of Portugal. Digitized copy of the music score. M. P. 532//11A.



Illustration 15: Costume Design for the dancing part in the ballet *La Esmeralda*.
Unidentified author.
Harvard Theatre Collection. TS 239. 318. 41



Illustration 16: Costume design for the first mime in the same series.
Harvard Theatre Collection. TS 239. 318.41



Illustration 17: Costume design for a danced part in the ballet *Chiara di Rosenberg*.
Choreography by Antonio Cortesi (1832 [?]).
The shorter costume would allow for freedom in dancing. Unidentified author.
Harvard Theatre Collection. TS 239. 318. 14



Illustration 18: Costume design for the mimed role of Chiara di Rosenberg in the ballet by the same title. Choreography by Antonio Cortesi. 1832 (?)

The long costumes for mimed roles would have been cumbersome for the danced parts, which tended to have lighter and shorter costumes.

Harvard Theater Collection – unidentified author. TS 239. 318. 14



Illustration 19: Costume design that includes a shawl in a series of designs for 19th century Italian ballets.
Harvard Theatre Collection. TS 239.318.41



Illustration 20: Costume design for the prima ballerina who wears a veil. Unidentified ballet in the series of costume and properties designs for 19th century Italian ballets. Harvard Theatre Collection. TS 239.318.41



Illustration 21: Luisa Zimmann-Martin, wife of Théodore Martin, who was featured in many of his ballets. Portrait offered at her benefit performance in 1846. Lithograph by Pedro Augusto Guglielmi.
National Library of Portugal. Electronic file. E.2288 V.



Illustration 22: Maria Luigia Bussola depicted *en pointe* in the lithograph by Pedro Augusto Guglielmi, offered at her benefit performance in 1849. National Library of Portugal – Digitized image from an uncatalogued print.