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ORATORIO *IL DAVIDE NELLA VALLE DI TEREBINTHO* BY CARL DITTERS VON DITTERSDORF

IZVLEČEK: Članek predstavlja vse ohranjene vire oratorija *Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho* Carla Dittersa von Dittersdorf (Jánský Vrch, 1771). Pozornost je namenjena okoliščinam nastanka dela in sami glasbi, rekonstruirana je tudi repvska zasedba. Drugi del članka je posvečen recepciji dela v času njegovega nastanka. Na koncu je omenjena še sodobna uprizoritev dela, ki je pokazala nesporne glasbene kvalitete tega dela.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, *Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho*, Jánský Vrch, oratorij, kontrafaktura

ABSTRACT: The study presents all the surviving sources of the oratorio *Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho* by Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf (Jánský Vrch, 1771). Attention is paid to the circumstances of the composition of the work and the musical setting itself. The cast of singers is also reconstructed. The second part of the study is devoted to the reception of the work in its day. Finally, the modern staging of the work, which has shown its undeniable musical qualities, is mentioned.

KEYWORDS: Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, *Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho*, Jánský Vrch, oratorio, *contrafactum*

IN his day, Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf was a prominent composer of vocal music. His work was focused particularly on German-language operas; his most famous singspiel performed up to the present time is *Doktor und Apotheker*. He also composed Italian-language operas and congratulatory cantatas.¹ While his oratorios were not as numerous as compositions in the above-listed genres, their merit was equal. Up until the present time five of Ditters' oratorios

This article has been supported financially by the Faculty of Arts, Palacký University, Olomouc, from its Research Support Fund (FPVC2023/12).

¹ Research into the life and works of Carl Ditters was recently begun at the Department of Musicology in Olomouc in 2019. Current information on his Italian-language operas is provided by Krejčová and Spáčilová, "Dittersovy italské opery"; research into the congratulatory music has been carried out by Burdová (see "Gratuláční hudba"). The cited studies provide reference to other literature.

have been documented: one in Latin (*Isaac figura Redemptoris*);² one in German (*Das Opfer des Abrahams*);³ and three in Italian: *Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho*, *La liberatrice del popolo Giudaico nella Persia*, *osia L'Esther* and *Giob*. The latter two, composed for the Tonkünstler-Societät in Vienna, are quite well known and referred to in the relevant literature. In contrast, oratorios from the early stage of the composer's work life are almost unknown, and information related to them in the existing literature is fragmentary or incorrect. This study aims to summarize the current state of knowledge about the topic and present all the relevant sources linked to the oratorio *Il Davide*, which opened Ditters' career in the service of the Bishop of Wrocław, Philipp Gotthard Schaffgotsch, in Jánkský Vrch (Johannesberg) near Javorník (Jauernig) in 1771.

THE TITLE AND DATING OF THE WORK

The creation of the oratorio is documented by Carl Ditters himself in his autobiography, where he uses the shortened name *Davide* and mentions the author of the libretto, Salvatore Ignazio Pintus, and the singer of the title role, Nicolina Trink (Drinka), whom he married several months later.⁴ Another version of the title, *David e Gionathan*, is given in the catalogue of the Leipzig publisher and bookseller Breitkopf, who offered the score in his copying workshop in 1778.⁵ This score has been preserved in Copenhagen (see below). The last version, *Davidde penitente* (!), was offered in 1900 by Carl Krebs in his important publication *Dittersdorfiana* (cat. no. 317). Krebs does not mention the reasons behind his choice of this title, merely referring to Ditters' autobiography, from which he also took an inaccurate year of composition: 1770.⁶ This title and date appear very frequently in later literary sources related to Ditters. The correct title of the oratorio, *Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho*, and its date, 1771, were first given as recently as 1993 in the catalogue *Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf – Sein Wirken in Österreichisch-Schlesien*. The source of this information was the facsimile of the title page of a libretto preserved in Brno (see below).⁷

Regarding the most recent editions of music encyclopedias, the correct information is provided only in the *New Grove*, with reference to the score preserved in Copenhagen (including its alternative name).⁸ Oldřich Pulkert incorrectly states in *MGG* that the date of the premiere

² Libretto in H-Bu, 327.689; Italian version (Vienna, 1776) in A-Wgm, Tb 5693; Cz-Bu, BKB-0002.663. One aria has been identified within research currently being conducted at the Palacký University, Olomouc. Cf. Krejčová, "Kontrafakta operních árií", 94.

³ PL-Wu, Rps 43, microfilm.

⁴ "Padre Pintus war ein guter italienischer Dichter. Er schrieb mir für die Fasten ein schönes Oratorium: Davide; und für den ersten May eine komische Oper: Il viaggiatore americano. Mselle Nicolini [...] spielte die Rolle des David meisterhaft." Dittersdorf, *Lebensbeschreibung*, 199.

⁵ *Supplemento XII. dei Catalogi delle sinfonie, partite, ouverture, soli, duetti, trii, quattri e concerti per il violino, flauto traverso, cembalo ed altri stromenti che si trovano in manoscritto nella oficina musica di Breitkopf in Lipsia, 1778*, accessed 11 August 2023, <https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/details:bsb11034632> (see p. 44: Geistliche Gedichte – Italienische: "Ditters – David e Gionathan, Oratorio").

⁶ "317. Davidde penitente. Oratorium. Text von Padre Salvator Ignaz Pintus. Johannisberg 1770. (Selbstbiographie S. 199)". Krebs, *Dittersdorfiana*, 127.

⁷ Unverricht, Bein and Koukal, *Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf*, 79, cat. no. 78.

⁸ "Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho (? Davide e Gionathan) (Pinto), K317, Johannisberg, 1771, DK-Kk". Grave and Lane, "Dittersdorf".

was 1 April 1768 on the basis of the libretto preserved in Kroměříž.⁹ However, this libretto is related to an entirely different composition by another composer: a German oratorio, *Der vor seinen meinedigen Sohn Absalom zu sterben verlangende David*, by Anton Albrechtsberger. The confusion with Ditters' *Il Davide* probably happened through the similarity of the titles of these two compositions, despite the fact that the characters and plot of the second oratorio are entirely different.¹⁰

Within the existing extensive literature on Ditters, *Il Davide* has been mentioned only by Herbert Seifert, in his study "Dittersdorfs Oratorien" published in the proceedings of a conference held in 1989 in Eichstätt. Because of the long time that elapsed between the conference itself and the publication of its proceedings (1997), the contributions unfortunately did not reflect the information about the librettos from Brno that had in the meantime been published in the above-mentioned exhibition catalogue (1993). For this reason, Seifert, albeit giving the oratorio its correct title of *Il Davide*, bases this not on the libretto for the premiere, but on a print associated with a later performance that took place in Prague in 1782.¹¹ The first attempt at ordering the fragmentary information therefore arrived as recently as 2019 in my study "Carl Ditters' Relationship to Olomouc".¹²

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE COMPOSITION AND THE AUTHOR OF THE LIBRETTO

The sole currently known example of the libretto for the premiere, printed in Nisa, is preserved in the Department of Music History of the Moravian Museum in Brno.¹³ It belongs to a group of librettos of Ditters' operas that come, according to the notes referring to a "Goschütze Bibliothek", from a library in Velké Hoštice (Groß Hoschütz). The owner of the castle originally housing the libretto, Count Ignaz Dominik Chorinsky, was one of Ditters' Silesian patrons, and this libretto is undoubtedly evidence of his presence at the performance of the oratorio at the castle in Javorník. According to Ditters' autobiography, the oratorio *Il Davide* was performed during Lent, a statement consistent with the inscription "nella quaresima dell 1771" on the title page of the libretto. Ash Wednesday in that year fell on 13 February, and Good Friday on 29 March. The premiere therefore took place during the period between these two dates.

The libretto was the work of the Italian priest Salvatore Ignazio Pintus (1714–1786), the confessor of Bishop Schaffgotsch and a member of the Jesuit order until its suppression in 1773.

⁹ "Davide nella Valle di Terebintho [Kr. 317] (P. Salvatore Ignatio Pinto), Or. 2 Tle. (1. April 1768 Troppau), CZ-KRa, DK-Kk; Libr. Troppau 1768". Pulkert and Seifert, "Ditters von Dittersdorf", 1115.

¹⁰ Die menschliche Natur (T), Die Liebe (C), Das Gewissen (A), Der Schmerz (T), Der Neid (B). See Spáčilová, "Quellen zu Wiener Oratorien".

¹¹ Libretto in CZ-Pu, 65 E 3204. Seifert obviously did not consult the original, since he refers only to the catalogue by Claudio Sartori. See Seifert, "Dittersdorfs Oratorien", 108.

¹² Spáčilová, "Vztah Carla Ditterse".

¹³ "IL DAVIDE | Nella Valle di Terebintho | ORATORIO SACRO | per Musica | COMPOSTO E CANTATO | IN JOANNESBERG | NELLA QUARESIMA DELL 1771. | La | Poesia è d'un Teologo, ed Accademico di | Belle Lettere Italiano | La Musica è del Sigr. Carlo Ditters | Cavaliere dello Speron d'oro. | IN NISSA, nella Stamparia." CZ-Bm, B 361.

The title page of the libretto describes him as an “Italian theologian and scholar of belles lettres”, whose identity is revealed by Ditters’ autobiography as well as by a later print of the libretto from 1774. The fact that Pintus valued his first libretto for Ditters very much is evidenced by the fact that in two other texts from 1771 – *Il viaggiatore americano* and *La poesia, e la musica in gara* – he was mentioned as the “Autore dell’Oratorio Sacro intitolato Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho”. Along with these three librettos, he wrote the intermezzo *Pancrazio ed Isabella* (1771), the oratorio *Esther* (1773) and a cantata, *Il picciol tributo musico* (1780), for Ditters. He maintained close contact not only with Bishop Schaffgotsch, but also with other local music patrons: Albert Hoditz and Ignaz Dominik Chorinsky. According to accounts of the time, he was a highly controversial person with a propensity for flattery and a strong dependence on his patrons.¹⁴

This not particularly admirable personal trait is documented in another source for the oratorio *Il Davide*, one unmentioned in the literature until the present time:¹⁵ a libretto printed in 1774 by Joseph Gabriel in Opava (Troppau).¹⁶ This print includes not only the full name of the librettist, but also a remarkable and informative dedication to Bishop Adam Patachich. The dedication states that Pintus had been encouraged to choose this dedicatee by Ditters, who had provided him with Patachich’s Latin translation of the libretto for *Isacco*.¹⁷ According to the librettist’s testimony, correspondence had obviously been going on between him and Patachich (evident from the latter’s letter of 17 June 1774; the dedication is dated 20 September of the same year in Opava). Pintus mentions the Bishop’s membership of the Arcadian Academy under the pastoral name of Sirrasio Acrotorio. With reference to the Patachich’s fondness for belles lettres, he dedicates to the bishop his “first sacred oratorio published originally without my name, as necessitated by the circumstances I was finding myself in”.¹⁸ The libretto definitely cannot be considered proof of the actual performance of the oratorio (there is no reference to Ditters’ music!) – it was merely a tribute in the form of a literary publication that Pintus used in his uncertain position at the time in order to ingratiate himself with Ditters’ former employer. Similar ephemera were the *Esther* published in Opava with a dedication to Maria Lubomirska (before 1780) as

¹⁴ Mañas, “Salvatore Ignazio Pintus”.

¹⁵ I am grateful to Jan Pospíšil for drawing my attention to this libretto. In the *Bibliografie českých cizojazyčných tisků* (Bibliography of Czech Foreign-Language Prints), accessed 10 August 2023, <https://kni-hoveda.lib.cas.cz/Record/BCBT29595>, the libretto is listed as “desideratum”.

¹⁶ “IL DAVIDE | NELLA VALLE DI TEREBINTHO | ORATORIO SACRO | DEDICATO | A SUA ECCELLENZA REVERENDISSIMA | MONSIGNORE | ADAMO | LIBERO BARONE | PATTACHICH | DE | ZAJEZDA | VESCOVO DI GRAN VARADINO, SUPREMO, E PERPETUO | CONTE DELL’INCLITO COMITATO BIHOR CONSIGLIERE INTI-|MO ATTUALE DI S. M. I. R. A. &c. | DALL’ABBATE SALVATORE | IGNAZIO PINTUS | Accademico di Belle Lettere fra gl’Intro-|nati di Siena. [...] Troppavia, nella Stamperia di Giuseppe Gabriel. | 1774.” GB-Lbl, 1578/4905.

¹⁷ Ditters mentions in detail the process of Patachich’s translation of the libretto in his autobiography.

¹⁸ “[...] permettetemi, Eccellenza Reverendissima, che alquanto mi discosti dal divieto fattomi dalla Vostra umiltà nella gentilissima Vostra Lettera dei 17. Giugno passato, di astenermi, cioè da ogni lode nel dar di nuovo alla publica luce questo mio sacro oratorio pregiato del Vostro glorioso Nome [...] Io Vi confesso ingenuamente, Eccellenza Reverendissima, che da quel momento che il Signore Carlo Ditters de Dittersdorff mi comunicò la detta traduzione [= *Isacco*], tanta stima concepì nell’animo mio della Vostra Eccelsa, e sacra Persona, che fin d’allora pensai manifestarla a Voi, et alla Repubblica Letteraria consacrando il mio primo Oratorio Sacro dato alla luce la prima volta senza il mio nome, esigendo così allora le circostanze, nelle quali mi trovava.”

well as Pintus's most famous libretto, *Il Santo Abele di Boemia*, which was dedicated to the memory of the recently deceased Empress Maria Theresa (Brno, 1781).¹⁹

THE PLOT OF THE ORATORIO

The oratorio's plot is based on the 17th chapter of the Book of 1 Samuel, which describes the famous combat of David and Goliath. The librettist has enriched the text with numerous references either directly to the Bible or to various ecclesiastical commentators, as was normal for that time. In the foreword he also provided a rationale for some of the adjustments made to the original; in his view, they enhanced the dramatic effect of the libretto. The main characters are David the Shepherd (soprano), King Saul (tenor), his son Jonathan (soprano), the commander of the army, Abner (bass), and David's elder brother Eliab (alto). The stage setting is the Valley of Terebint, with the tents of the army of the Israelites on one side and those of the Philistines on the other. On the basis of a detailed description of the scenic décor, together with the fact that at that time, according to Ditters' autobiography, there was already a castle theatre at Jánský Vrch, we may assume that the oratorio was intended for staged performance.

The opening scene features a choir of priests, Levites, and soldiers petitioning God for aid, since Goliath has challenged the Israelites to fight head-to-head ("Signor, se irato sei"). In a subsequent monologue David expresses his outrage at the giant's arrogance and feels a God-given scintilla of courage ("Miri il barbaro, e paventi"). His brother Eliab accuses him of arrogance and sends him back to their father ("Va, ritorna al padre amato"), but David refuses. In his dialogue with Abner, the commander of the army, King Saul expresses surprise that, despite the promised reward, nobody has responded to his call to fight Goliath ("Con orrida procella"). Abner suspects the cause may be a crippling fear of the enemy ("Se nasce il timore"). As he is leaving in order to try and find a volunteer for the fight, Jonathan introduces David to the King. The young shepherd asserts his courage ("Vedrai quel ciglio altiero"), but the King remains in doubt. If David loses, they will all lose. Saul's son Jonathan urges his father to have faith in God ("Pensa che il ciel t'invia"), and the King eventually agrees. Jonathan embraces David with expressions of his tender friendship (duet "Eccoti in quest'amplesso"). The first part of the oratorio ends with another prayer from the priests and Levites ("Sia vinto il barbaro").

In the introductory scene of the second part, David refuses the weapons provided to him by Jonathan in accordance with his father's instruction. He also tries to win over the King: as a shepherd, he has had to fight predators threatening his flock with his bare hands many times ("Ei tra le fiere"). Overcome by such great faith in God, Saul accepts ("Combatti inerme, o figlio"). He himself feels weak and doubtful; the burden of rule has become too great for him ("Del regnar le cure sono"). David's elder brother Eliab asks Jonathan to let him see the King. He seeks to prevent David's mission, the reason being his concern about his brother and their old father ("Ahi, misero germano"). Jonathan, however, accuses him of envying David: whether David wins or loses, it will bring him glory ("Muove tal'ora").

¹⁹ For more information on Pintus's situation, see Mañas, "Salvatore Ignazio Pintus".

Saul is restless, waiting for the result of the fight, and together with Jonathan tries to make sense of the voices coming from afar (“Il verde lauro adorna”). Finally, an army led by the victorious David is sighted (“Il popolo divino”). The shepherd falls at the King’s feet and tells his story. Abner, too, adds his account of the confusion in the enemy’s camp after Goliath’s death (“Dalle radici estreme”). The scene climaxes with David’s account of the streams of blood trickling from the giant’s body after he has severed his head (“Di fiume turgido”). Eliab is astounded, and Jonathan hugs David fondly. The general cheering is crowned with a choir of priests prophesying future glory to David’s birthplace (“Non più sarai, o Bethlem”).

PRESERVED MUSICAL MATERIALS

The music of the oratorio survives in two sources: the score preserved in Copenhagen, and the separate musical parts preserved in Kroměříž. The origin of the score can be traced back to 1778, when the copy shop of Johann Gottlob Breitkopf advertised it in its catalogue under the title *David e Gionathan*, a wording matching that on the title page.²⁰ The score was still in the possession of the Breitkopf company in 1836, when it was listed in the firm’s auction catalogue under the title of *Davide e Gionata*.²¹ It is a clean copy, reliable with regard to the music but containing numerous errors in the underlaid Italian text.

The second source comprises parts currently belonging to the musical collection of the Archbishop’s Palace in Kroměříž (under the management of the Olomouc Museum of Art). The file consists of two folders containing bound sheets later complemented with a hard cover inscribed by the Archbishop’s *Kapellmeister* Franz Götz. The first part of the oratorio is inscribed with the complete title including a cast list,²² while the second part has the shortened title of *Il Davide*.²³ The folders contain complete parts for the singers (including the choral numbers) and instruments. The parts for David and Jonathan are complemented by two separate folios headed Canto I and Canto II that contain only the duet “Eccoti in quest’amplesso” with simplified coloratura passages (see Music example 1). The copy was the joint work of two copyists; the distribution of the individual parts between them is provided in Table 1. A remarkable feature is the use of alternative names for the instruments in both parts of the oratorio (Oboe/Oboa, Clarino/Trombe).

²⁰ “Daude e Gionata. | Oratorio | del | Sig. de Dittersdorf.” DK-Kk, mu6402.1531. Note on the title page: “No. 57. 111 Bogen.” Unbound score in two parts, 240 × 325 mm, 126, 96 fols. Watermark: French *fleur de lis* in crowned shield | IESV / LW. Provenance: Niederlungwitz (Sachsen), Johann Vodel, 1742–1763, BWD 12062. Bohemian Watermark Database of the musical sources registered in Union Music Catalogue of the National Library of the Czech Republic, accessed 9 August 2023, http://aleph.nkp.cz/web/watermarks/_12062.htm.

²¹ *Grosse Musikalien-Auction*, 1. Cf. Spáčilová, “Vztah Carla Ditterse”.

²² “Il Davide. | nella valle di Terebinto | Parte I.a | Oratorio Sacro | per Musica | Interlocutori | Davide. Canto I: mo in veste da Pastore, è con Fionda | Saule. Tenore. Rè d’Israele. | Gionata. Canto II: o Figlio di Saule. | Abner. Basso. Prefetto della Milizia. | Eliabbo. Alto. Fratello di Davide. | con. | Violini due. | Oboe due. | Flauto solo. | Corni due. | Trombe due. | Timpani. | Viole due. | e | Fondamento. | Di Carlo de Dittersdorf.” CZ-KRa, A 2335.

²³ “Il Davide. | Oratorio Sacro. | Parte Seconda. | Di Carlo de Dittersdorf”.

Music example 1 | Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, *Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho*, excerpt from the duet “Eccoti in quest’amplesso”

Andante dolce

54
Davide al ma a - mis - tà,
Gionata al - ma a - mis - tà, a

58 parts CZ-KRa

58 parts CZ-KRa

61
si dol - ce a - mis - tà,
61
si fi - da a - mis - tà,

Table 1 | The parts and their copyists

COPYIST A	
Parte prima	Canto 1 Davide, Canto 1 (“Eccoti in quest’amplesso”), Canto 2 Gionata, Canto 2 (“Eccoti in quest’amplesso”), Alto Eliabbo, Tenore Saule, Basso Abner, Violino 1, Violino 2, 2 Viole, Flauto Solo [Aria I.2], 2 Fagotti, Fondamento
Parte seconda	Violino 1, Violino 2, 2 Viole, Fondamento

COPYIST B

Parte prima	Oboe I, Oboe II, Cornu I, Cornu II, Calarino (!) Primo, Clarino Secondo
Parte seconda	Soprano 1 Davide, Soprano 2 Gionata, Alto Eliabbo, Tenore Saule, Basso Abner, Oboa Prima, Oboa Seconda, Fagotto solo [Aria II.7], Corno Primo, Cornu Secondo, Trombe Primo, Trombe Secondo, Timpani

The source is undated, but on the basis of the paper used and the copyists' handwriting there is a good chance that it originated in the Piarist college at Kroměříž at the end of 1770s.²⁴ The source became part of the palace's collection in 1811 at the latest, since it is listed in the inventory of the estate of Archbishop Anton Theodor Colloredo-Waldsee.²⁵ There are indications that the parts were actually used for a staged performance – such as the presence of cadenzas written for the roles of David and Jonathan²⁶ and special signs for instances of synaloepha (the coalescence, in Italian, of adjacent vowels belonging to different words) in the parts of Saul and Abner. This evidence establishes that the material was used as the basis for a staging of the oratorio by the Kroměříž Piarists in 1783 (see below).

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MUSICAL SETTING

Il Davide is an oratorio of the Italian type based on virtuosic solo arias, although the choirs are also important (see Table 2). The orchestra consists of strings (with two viola parts), solo flute, oboes, bassoons, French horns, trumpets, timpani, basso continuo (harpsichord, violoncello and double bass). The solo flute expressing the son's love is used in Eliab's aria "Va, ritorna al padre amato"; "martial" trumpets are used in two arias depicting the combat and in the scene for choir in the second part.

A Sinfonia in C minor reflects the heritage of Viennese Fuxian counterpoint (see Music example 2). The impressive opening chorus is rendered musically as a choral *recitativo accompagnato* in a monodic, quasi-Gregorian fashion (see Music example 3). The arias (mostly of *Dal Segno* type) are particularly interesting for their rhetorical expression and frequent changes in tempo. *Recitativo accompagnato* is employed in David's opening prayer towards the end of the first part, as an expression of the warm friendship between David and Jonathan, and in the second part during the scene depicting his fight with Goliath.

²⁴ Watermark: Maltese cross in crowned cartouche | IEW. Bohemian Watermark Database of the musical sources registered in Union Music Catalogue of the National Library of the Czech Republic, accessed 9 August 2023, http://aleph.nkp.cz/web/watermarks/_8048.htm.

²⁵ "183. Oratorien Authore de Dittersdorf 2. Theile il Davide". "Inventarium".

²⁶ Cadenzas is added for Jonathan's aria "Pensa, che il ciel" and in the duet for David and Jonathan (on separate folios for Canto I and Canto II).

Table 2 | Musical structure of the oratorio

	TEXT	TEMPO	METRUM	KEY	SCORING
Parte I					
Sinfonia		Andante e maestoso	#	c	2 ob, 2 cor, 2 vni, vla, bc
Coro di Sacerdoti, e Leviti	Signor, se irato sei	Adagio	C	c	SATB, 2 ob, 2 cor, 2 vni, vla, bc
Coro di soldati	O Reggitor Supremo	Larghetto	$\frac{3}{4}$	Es	SATB, 2 ob, 2 cor, 2 vni, vla, bc
Rec. accomp. Davide	Il seno a sì grand'opra	Andante maestoso	C	C – a	S, 2 ob, 2 cor, 2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 1. Davide	Miri il barbaro, e paventi	Andante maestoso – Andante	C – $\frac{3}{8}$	F	S, 2 ob, 2 cor, 2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 2. Eliabbo	Va, ritorna al Padre amato	Andantino	$\frac{3}{8}$	C	A, fl solo, 2 cor, 2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 3. Saule	Con orrida procella	Allegro e vivace – Allegretto	C – $\frac{3}{4}$	E	T, 2 ob, 2 cor, 2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 4. Abner	Se nasce il timore	Larghetto e maestoso – Andante	$\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$	G	B, 2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 5. Davide	Vedrai quel ciglio altiero	Larghetto	$\frac{3}{4}$	D	S, 2 cl, 2 cor, 2 ob, 2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 6. Gionata	Pensa che il Ciel t'invia	Allegretto – Larghetto	C – $\frac{3}{4}$	G	S, 2 ob, 2 cor, 2 vni, vla, bc
Rec. accomp. Gionata, Davide	O quale, e quanta splende	Larghetto	C	D	S, S, 2 fg, 2 vni, 2 vle, bc
Duetto 7. Gionata, Davide	Eccoti in quest'amplesso	Andante dolce	$\frac{3}{4}$	F	S, S, 2 ob, 2 cor, fg, 2 vni, vla, bc
Coro di Sacerdoti, e Leviti	Sia vinto il barbaro	Adagio – Vivace	C – $\frac{3}{8}$	d – D	SATB, 2 cl, 2 ob, 2 cor, 2 fg, 2 vni, vla, bc
Parte II					
[Short introduction to the rec. Gionata]	Che mai, Davide, il Genitor dirà?	Andante	C	B	2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 1. Davide	Ei tra le fiere	Allegro moderato	C	G	S, 2 ob, 2 cor, 2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 2. Saule	Combatti inerme, o figlio	Andante maestoso	$\frac{3}{4}$	C	T, 2 cl, 2 ob, 2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 3. Saule	Del regnar le cure sono	Adagio assai – Andante	C – $\frac{3}{8}$	Es	T, 2 cor, 2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 4. Eliabbo	Ahi, misero Germano!	Presto molto – Larghetto	C – $\frac{3}{4}$	e	A, 2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 5. Gionata	Muove tal'ora	Allegretto e vivace – Andantino – Lento	$\frac{3}{4}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$	B	S, 2 vni, vla, bc
Rec. accomp. Saule	Taci. Ascolto voci	Andante maestoso	$\frac{3}{4}$	D	T, 2 vni, vla, bc
Coro di soldati in Lontananza	Il verde lauro adorna	Andante maestoso	$\frac{3}{4}$	D	SATB, 2 cor, 2 ob, fg
Secondo coro più vicino	Ecco quel forte braccio	Andante maestoso	$\frac{3}{4}$	D	SATB, 2 cor, 2 ob, fg

	TEXT	TEMPO	METRUM	KEY	SCORING
Terzo coro più vicino	La confusion si pasce	Andante maestoso	$\frac{3}{4}$	D	SATB, 2 cl, timp, 2 cor, 2 ob, fg, 2 vni, vla, bc
Coro	Il popolo divino – Ecco quel forte braccio	Andante maestoso	$\frac{3}{4}$	A – D	SATB, 2 cl, timp, 2 cor, 2 ob, fg, 2 vni, vla, bc
Rec. accomp. Davide	Allor che m’involai – All’improvviso colpo	Andante – Allegro	C	C	S, 2 vni, vla, bc
Aria 6. Abner	Dalle radici estreme	Vivace – Largo – Presto	C – $\frac{3}{4}$	C	B, 2 cor, 2 ob, 2 vni, vla, bc
Rec. accomp. Saule, Davide	In qual guisa	Andante molto – Presto	C	C	T, S, 2 vni, 2 vle, bc
Aria 7. Davide	Di fiume turgido	Larghetto – Allegro	$\frac{3}{4}$ – C	F	S, 2 cor, 2 ob, 2 fg, 2 vni, vla, bc
Coro l’ultimo	Non più sarai, o Bethlem	Adagio	C	D	SATB, 2 cl, timp, 2 cor, 2 ob, 2 fg, 2 vni, vla, bc

Music example 2 | Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, *Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho*, beginning of the Sinfonia

Andante e maestoso

The musical score is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Andante e maestoso'. The first system includes markings for 'vno 1, 2, vla' and 'bc'. The second system starts at measure 6 and includes a 'vla' marking. The third system starts at measure 12 and ends with a double bar line and repeat signs.

Music example 3 | Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, *Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho*, beginning of the first chorus: “Signor, se irato sei”

Adagio

ob 1, 2

cor in Es 1, 2

vno 1, 2

coro

Si - gnor, Si - gnor, se i - ra - to se - i

vln, bc

6

6

6

6

6

pren - da la ver - ga so - lo la tua pie - to - sa ma - no

The climax of the oratorio is the almost theatrical scene of David’s victorious return in the second part of the oratorio. The initial ceremonial dotted motif, performed by the string orchestra, is interrupted by Saul’s exclamation “Taci, ascolto voci!” and a dialogue with Jonathan. The approaching choir of soldiers is represented acoustically in the instrumentation, where the first and second verse are accompanied solely by “open-air” wind instruments. The entire orchestra, including trumpets marked *pp* (!), joins them for the third verse, “La confusion si pasce”. After a short dialogue for Saul and Jonathan the fourth verse, “Il popolo divino”, is played *mf*. As

soon as David appears before the King the choir repeats *f* “Ecco quel forte braccio”. The following scene is given over to David’s account of his fight with Goliath in the form of a dramatic *recitativo accompagnato* interspersed with arias for Abner and the main protagonist. The oratorio then quickly reaches its end, which takes the form of a monumental prayer.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ROLES AND THEIR PERFORMERS

The libretto unfortunately does not provide the names of the soloists, but the cast may be partly reconstructed on the basis of other operas performed at Schaffgotsch’s court in the same year, 1771. *Il viaggiatore americano* featured Andreas Renner, Vitus Ungricht, Nicolina Trink, Vitus Batka and Wenzel Batka. The serenata *La poesia, e la musica in gara* called for the first four. Neither of the musical compositions for the two operas has been preserved, except for two arias from *Il viaggiatore*.²⁷ However, some of the artists are known from other sources, so we may hypothetically attribute individual roles in *Il Davide* to them.

The tenor Andreas Renner (c. 1730–1794) worked for the Jesuits of Trnava (Tyrnau) and Bratislava (Pressburg) in 1749–1757. From 1764 onwards he was hired by Bishop Patachich to perform in Oradea (Großwardein). After the ensemble in which he worked was disbanded he followed Ditters to Jánký Vrch, where, among other duties, he held the post of *rector scholae*. He was an excellent virtuoso tenor, as evidenced by several preserved compositions he wrote for himself. His vocal competence is repeatedly praised by Ditters in his autobiography.²⁸ In the oratorio *Il Davide*, Renner undoubtedly performed the role of King Saul, which is noteworthy for its exposed coloratura, long held notes and wide melodic leaps, particularly in the aria “Con orrida procella” (see Music example 4).

Music example 4 | Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, *Il Davide nella valle di Terebintho*, excerpts from Saul’s aria “Con orrida procella”

Allegro e vivace

Con or-ri-da pro-cel - - - la, con

or - ri-da pro cel - la a lui ques-ta sol ba - sta, ar-dir ques-ta - gli

da, quest-ta gli

da, gli da.

²⁷ Krejčová, “Kontrafakta operních árií”.

²⁸ Kačic, “Andreas Renner”.

According to Ditters' autobiography, Renner's stepdaughter Nicolina Trink sang the role of David. Baptized on 29 October 1755 in Bratislava (Pressburg) as Nicolina Theresia after the death of her father, the tenor Franz Drinka (c. 1725–1763), she was adopted by Renner, who knew Franz from his studies in Trnava.²⁹ Together with Renner, Trink went to Oradea, where she performed as a soloist in operas from a very early age (*Amore in musica*, 1768). At Jánský Vrch, she belonged to the narrow circle of Bishop's musicians. In one of Pintus's letters, dating from June 1771, she is familiarly called "la Nikerl figlia del Renner". In the following year, specifically on 3 March 1772, she married Ditters.³⁰ The role of David is intended for coloratura soprano, so we may gather from the technical requirements of the role that Nicolina was undoubtedly a very talented singer.

The other soprano part, Jonathan, was probably sung by Ditters' sister Johanna, born in Vienna in 1743.³¹ According to his autobiography, Ditters had employed her as a singer already in Oradea. She came to Jánský Vrch together with other soloists from Vienna. In 1774 she married Paul Friedrich Gams von Gamsberg, a bishop's official. Evidence of her vocal skills is provided particularly by a duet of David and Jonathan at the end of the first part of *Il Davide*, which contains a very impressive coloratura dialogue (see Music example 4).

The baritone role of Abner, the commander of the army, was very likely performed by the second-most experienced singer in Ditters' ensemble, Vitus Ungricht (or Ungericht). This violinist and singer was employed by Ditters in 1765 in Prague to work for him in Oradea. In the summer of 1771 he acted in Prague as an agent hiring singers for Schaffgotsch.³² Following his engagement at Jánský Vrch, Ungricht left in 1776 for the Esterházy court, where he performed as an operatic soloist. A reference to him from 1796 stated that he was a violinist in a Viennese theatre orchestra.³³ In his autobiography Ditters refers to him as a bass singer, which corresponds to his roles in Latin serenatas given in Oradea (*Olympia Jovi sacra*, *Pythia*)³⁴ as well as in a reprise of *L'Arcifanfano* at Eszterháza in 1777. In contrast, in the Javorník operas *Il finto pazzo* and *Il tutore e la pupilla* and in Haydn's reprise of *Lo sposo burlato* he sang tenor parts. In view of these facts, his voice may be characterized as baritone.

The performer of the alto role of David's brother Eliab is unknown, since alto parts are not present in any of Ditters' vocal compositions from the Javorník period, with the exception of this oratorio. He may have used a boy's voice, as suggested by the lesser technical difficulty of the arias concerned.

²⁹ Kačic, "Dittersdorf und Slowakei".

³⁰ The marriage register from Javorník has not been preserved. The date is mentioned in his autobiography by the composer, who states that the marriage took place in the year following the premiere of *Il Davide*. Cf. Fatalski, "Errata". The libretto of *Il finto pazzo* (3 June 1772) already lists her as "Nicolina Ditters".

³¹ Brauneis, "Die Familie Ditters", 40.

³² Volek, "Vysvětlivky", 218.

³³ *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst*, 92.

³⁴ In both libretti he is explicitly identified as a "Basso".

CONTEMPORARY REVIVALS OF THE ORATORIO

Prague, 1782

Il Davide was not so widely known in its time as Ditters' later Viennese oratorios *Esther* and *Giob*, which were directed by the composer himself in various locations across Europe.³⁵ At present, we know only of three other performances: those in the church of St Thomas in Prague in 1782, at the college of the Kroměříž Piarists in 1783/84, and in Wrocław at an undetermined date.

The performance in Prague is documented by a printed libretto preserved in the National Library in Prague (from the Lobkowitz library).³⁶ In the second half of the eighteenth century the St Thomas monastery of the Augustinian Eremites in the Lesser Town was one of the prominent Prague centres of Good Friday oratorios, as evidenced by the preserved librettos. The oldest of them dates back to 1745 (the anonymous *Christlicher Braut*). These oratorios were performed variously in German and Latin.³⁷

At that time music at this Augustinian monastery was performed by members of the order; in 1774–1783 the *regens chori* was P. Pachomius Kreybich (d. 1815). Although his intended successor was P. Theobald Schwartz, the choir was eventually taken over by Johann Joseph Strobach (1731–1794), a lay cantor from St Nicholas.³⁸ This violinist was one of the key music personalities in Prague at that time, and as director of the orchestra of the Italian opera there he became a prominent promoter of Mozart's works.

The librettos known up to the present day show that in the two years preceding the performance of *Il Davide* the church of St Thomas witnessed the performance of Italian oratorios. The first was Ditters' *Esther* in 1780,³⁹ followed by *La conversione di S. Agostino* by Johann Adolph Hasse.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, we know little about the performances of these compositions. However, in view of the subsequent engagement of Strobach as *regens chori*, they may have been performed on his initiative. In this context, it is important to mention that Ditters had met Strobach already during his stay in Prague in 1765, when the violinist had helped him with the hiring of musicians for the Oradea engagement.⁴¹

³⁵ For example in Berlin, Wrocław and Brno (under the personal direction of the composer).

³⁶ "DAVIDE | NELLA VALLE | DI | TEREBINTO. | ORATORIO | DA CANTARSI NELLA CHIESA | DI | S. TOMASO APOSTOLO | DELL' ORDINE DEI ROMITI | DI | S. AGOSTINO. | IL GIORNO | DEL VENERDI SANTO | ALLE ORE CINQUE VERSO LA SERA. | NELL' ANNO MDCCLXXXII. [1782] | PRAGA, | Coi caratteri della Ces. Reg. Scuola Normale, per Matteo | Adamo Schmadl, Fattore." CZ-Pu, 65 E 3204.

³⁷ The librettos are preserved mostly in the National Library in Prague.

³⁸ Trola, "Augustiniáni a hudba", 33–35.

³⁹ Ms. libretto in CZ-Pnm, B 6976.

⁴⁰ Librettos in CZ-Ps, FK IV 39/7 (Italian version); FK IV 44/2 (German version).

⁴¹ "In Prag adressirte ich mich an Herrn Strobach, ersten Violinisten in der italiensichen Oper, um mir mit gutem Rath an die Hand zu gehen". Dittersdorf, *Lebensbeschreibung*, 134.

Kroměříž, 1783/84

Regarding the performance of *Il Davide* in Kroměříž, we have more information, including musical materials preserved in the collection of the Kroměříž castle. Ditters had many personal contacts in the Archbishop's music ensemble: in particular, the violinist Franz Götz (1755–1815), who collaborated with him at Jánský Vrch (Götz's presence is documented there in 1783–1786) and, following a short period as bandmaster of the Brno theatre (November 1786 – April 1788), became the music director of the Olomouc Archbishop, Colloredo-Waldsee.⁴² While holding this position, among other duties, he put in order the musical collection at the Kroměříž castle and added new covers inscribed in his own hand to a significant number of its holdings. This is also the form in which parts for the oratorio *Il Davide* have been preserved.

The chronicle of the Kroměříž Piarists also relates a visit of Carl Ditters, who arrived there on 15 September 1774 in the company of Bishop Schaffgotsch. During this visit the Piarist college organized a concert performance that included students, where “even D. de Ditters, a virtuoso who presented this collegium with entirely unique demonstrations of his artistry, was present”.⁴³

According to the same chronicle, in April 1784 the Piarist college saw a performance of an “Oratorium Germanicum, sub titulo: David in valle Terebinthi”: i. e. apparently in a translation into German.⁴⁴ The chronicle contains a record from the previous year, 1783, concerning a performance of an unnamed Italian oratorio by Ditters; from this record we may infer a premiere in Italian (revivals of the same compositions after a year were not an exceptional occurrence for the Piarist performances).⁴⁵ Further evidence supporting this assumption is offered by the above-mentioned annotations relating to performance in the vocal parts.

Wrocław (undated)

Apart from being performed in Jánský Vrch, Prague and Kroměříž, the oratorio also came to Wrocław. This may be inferred from the bi-lingual, undated, Italian-German libretto printed by Kreuzer in Wrocław, which is preserved in the local university library.⁴⁶ The first scholar to provide information about this source was Maria Zduniak; unfortunately, she did not provide any

⁴² Uhlířová, “Franz Götz”.

⁴³ “Anno 1774. die 15. Sept. celsissimus princeps episcopus Wratislaviensis Philippus Gothardus e comitibus de Schaffgotsch, misso ad P. regentem caerimoniario suo eidem indicavit, invisurum se a prandiis ad seminarium expectiturumque sibi collegium musicum, ab alumnis nostri seminarii producendum. [...] Aderat et virtuosus D. de Ditters, qui in collegio hoc musico singularia prorsus artis suae specimina dedit.” Okresní archiv Kroměříž, *Anmerkungen*, 40.

⁴⁴ “9. Aprilis [1784] productum est Autore Ditters Oratorium Germanicum, sub titulo: David in valle Terebinthi, non sine Auditorium applausu.” Ibid., 49.

⁴⁵ “Anno eodem [1783] die 18. Aprilis in Parasceve productum est in Ecclesia nostra compositum a Dno Ditters Oratorium Italicum, omnium qui fuerant frequentissimi, Auditorum cum applausu.” Ibid.

⁴⁶ Italian title page: “DAVID. | DRAMA PER MVSICA | DAL | SIGNORE DE DITERSDORF. | Personaggi. | Daudi. | Gionata. | Saul. | Eliabbo. | Abner. | Coro si Sacerdoti e Leviti. | Coro si Soldati. | BRESLAU, | nella Stamperia di Kreuzer.”; German title page: “David. | Ein Singstück, | in Musik gesetzt | von | Herrn von Dittersdorf. | Personen. | David. | Jonathan. | Saul. | Eliabbo. | Abner. | Chor der Priester und Leviten. | Chor der Soldaten. | Breslau, gedruckt mit Kreuzerischen Schriften.” PL-WRu, 1070889.

details.⁴⁷ Judging from the author's surname, given in the post-ennoblement form of "Dittersdorf", the libretto must date from the period after 1773; we may also consider the death of Johann Franz Kreuzer in 1796 to be the *terminus ante quem*. The main source for information on concert life in Wrocław, the manuscript of Richard Conrad Kiessling's "Nachrichten über Konzerte in Breslau, 1722–1836",⁴⁸ mentions only the oratorio *David und Jonathan* by Johann Heinrich Rolle (first performed on 3 June 1774, with several reprises).⁴⁹ Confusion with Ditters' *Il Davide* is unlikely, since the composer's name was also mentioned in reports of the contemporary press that were Kiessling's source of information.⁵⁰

INDIVIDUAL PRESERVED ARIAS AND CONTRAFACATA

As with other Ditters' musical-dramatic works, the oratorio *Il Davide* was disseminated also in the form of individually preserved arias and/or their Latin *contrafacta*, though not to the same extent as his Viennese oratorios *Esther* and *Giob*. As of now, the concordances comprise six arias.

The first is the virtuosic tenor aria "Con orrida procella" (Saul, I.4), preserved with its original Italian text in the Silesian Museum in Opava.⁵¹ Its title page has the annotation "del opera il Davido Fatta 1773" and a note of ownership dated 1802, according to which the folio was acquired by Joseph Meixner from Wenzel Martini during his studies.⁵² The second man was a respectable citizen of Javorník with documented contacts in the Bishop's music ensemble (for instance, he became the godfather of Götz's daughter in 1786).⁵³ The date 1773 is two years after the premiere, so the source is perhaps related to a later performance of the oratorio.

The second aria has likewise been preserved only with its original Italian text. It is David's "Di fiume turgido" (II.8), preserved in Beroun in the collection of Tekla Podleská (1764–1852), a prominent Czech soprano.⁵⁴ With this aria, we can trace a direct link back to Jánský Vrch. The singer's husband was Vitus Batka (1754–1839),⁵⁵ a Prague-born musician employed by Bishop Schaffgotsch as an oboist and singer. His brother Wenzel Batka was a bassoon virtuoso in the

⁴⁷ Zduniak, "Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf Beziehungen".

⁴⁸ Accessed 10 August 2023, <https://www.bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/dlibra/publication/95685/edition/92822/content>.

⁴⁹ Fol. 23v (3 June 1774): "Sont. 3. Juli. Ebenda. Eine musikalische Elegie aus dem Trauerspiele Salomo des Herrn Klopstock betitult: David und Jonathan. Musik von Rolle". See note 48. Cf. also fol. 26r (11 June 1775, "David und Jonathan, von Rolle"), fol. 32r (1778), fol. 34r (1779) etc.

⁵⁰ For example *Schlesische privilegierte Zeitung*, 23 May 1778, 565: "Eine Cantate, David und Jonathan, von der Composition des Herrn Musickdirector Rolle in Magdeburg [...]"

⁵¹ "Aria | Tenore solo | 2 Violini | 2 Oboe | 2 Corni | Viola et Basso | Del Sigl. Carlo de Dittersdorff | del opera il Davido Fatta 1773." CZ-OP, A 1290.

⁵² Annotation on the title page: "Wenzeslaus Martini obtulit | Josepho Meixner mp. | mediae Gramaticae | studioso", by the same hand: "Possessor Josephus Meixner mp | die 30. Martii 1802."

⁵³ Zemský archiv v Opavě, Javorník, římskokat. f. ú., JV II 5, 3295, 1778–1795, <https://digi.archives.cz/da/permalink?xid=be89c2a6-f13c-102f-8255-0050568c0263&scan=6ff72c9950724c57a68da61bebo12358>.

⁵⁴ "Aria in F a Soprano Solo, Fagotto obl., Due Violini, Due Oboe, Due Corni in F, Viola et Basso, Del Sig. Carlo de Dittersdorff." CZ-BER, HU 371.

⁵⁵ Klíma, "Česká hudebnice Tekla Podleská".

Bishop's orchestra and at times also performed as a singer. This aria with obbligato bassoons was most likely copied by one of the Batkas at Jánský Vrch.⁵⁶

The third aria, preserved as a Latin *contrafactum*, can likewise be regarded as an item directly linked to Ditters' artistic contacts. This is "Pensa che il ciel t'invia" (Jonathan, I.7), preserved with the Latin text "Omni die dic Mariae" in Opole.⁵⁷ This aria coming from the collection of the monastery of the military order of Křižovníci (Kreuzherren) in Nisa was in the ownership of its *regens chori* Ignaz Pohl, a close collaborator of Ditters.⁵⁸

The second group comprises arias that became part of the music collections in the Benedictine monasteries Broumov and Prague-Břevnov, thanks to the local musician P. Gunther Nommesi, and subsequently found their way into other Czech churches. P. Nommesi (1735–1816) joined the Benedictines in Broumov in 1755. He studied in Břevnov after 1758 and subsequently worked there as a *regens chori* in 1762–1768. An interesting episode in his life was capture by the Prussians in Kłodzko in 1778. After his return to Broumov, Nommesi worked again as a *regens chori* until 1786. He was the creator of an important music collection, acquiring at least 22 compositions from Carl Ditters – among other things, a copy of the oratorio *Esther* – in 1776.⁵⁹

The oldest copy is apparently "Del regnar le cure sono" (Saul, II.3) from Břevnov.⁶⁰ The Italian incipit is recorded only on the title page, and the soprano version of the composition has the Latin text "Oro te, o Jesu chare". Two further versions of this aria were created in Břevnov by P. Wenzel Jansky after 1788: one with the opening line "Oro te, o Jesu chare", the other with the words "Ave maris stella".⁶¹ A musical incipit similar to the one for this composition occurs in Leonora's aria "Wie kann wohl Freude noch in meinem Herzen" in Ditters' opera *Doktor und Apotheker*, which has led some modern researchers into confusion regarding these two compositions.⁶²

Another aria from Nommesi's collection, "Ei tra le fiere" (David, II.1), has been preserved in a single specimen from Broumov. It has the Latin text "Eja amoena cantica" and also a later inscribed text opening "Ave maris stella".⁶³

In contrast, the last aria "Dalle radici estreme" (Abner, II.6) is the most widely circulated musical number from *Il Davide*. Nommesi's copy opening with the words "Voces parate almas"

⁵⁶ Dlabacz, *Allgemeines historisches Künstler-Lexikon*, 96. The brothers' activity as singers was identified on the basis of libretti in Brno. Cf. Krejčová and Spáčilová, "Dittersovy italské opery".

⁵⁷ "Aria in G | a | Soprano Solo | Violino Primo. | Violino Secondo. | Obois 2. | Cornibus 2, Viola. | ex | Fundamento | Auth. D. de Dittersdorff | Ig[naz] Pohl." PL-OPsm, RN 114.

⁵⁸ Drożdżewska, "Kontakty artystyczne".

⁵⁹ Klinkhammer, *Die Kirchenmusikhandschriften*, 2:841–851.

⁶⁰ "Cantate Due | I. Del regnar le cure sono. De Comunione. | II. La cognata esser patria. Ave Maris stella. | Soprano | Due Violini | Due Corni da Caccia | Alto Viola | e | Basso. Del Sig. à Dittersdorf. | P. G[untheri] N[ommesi]. | Per il Coro | di Scta. Margarita." CZ-Pnm, XXXVII B 157.

⁶¹ CZ-Pnm, XXXVII B 158; CZ-Pnm, XXXVII B 97.

⁶² See, for example, Klinkhammer, *Die Kirchenmusikhandschriften*, 2:216, 234.

⁶³ "Cantate per ogni Tempore e | Ave Maris Stella. | Soprano Solo | Violino 1mo et 2do, | Alto Viola, | Oboe due, | Cornu due ex G | e | Basso. | Del Sigre Carolo de Dittersdorf. | Chori Braunensis." Cz-Pnm, XXXVIII A 218.

belongs to the collection of the Broumov Benedictine monastery.⁶⁴ Other copies have been documented in the Broumov church of SS Peter and Paul, twice in Břevnov, and finally in the archive of Josef Krejčí in Sokolov.⁶⁵

The title pages of all the above-listed individual arias or their *contrafacta* use the “Dittersdorf” form of the composer’s surname, which suggests that the copies were made after 1773. A significant feature is the persistence of the Italian version of their texts or their citation on the title page. In most cases, a direct link either to the composer or to the locality of Jánský Vrch has been identified, a feature validating our assumption that *Il Davide* was not as widely circulated as Ditters’ other oratorios or preserved so much in the form of *contrafacta* belonging to the repertoires of Czech (and Central European) churches.

CONCLUSION: HISTORICAL AND MODERN RECEPTION OF THE ORATORIO

The first vocal-instrumental composition chosen by Ditters for his new workplace belonged to the genre of fully staged oratorio, which suggests that he intended to build on the positive reception of *Isacco* in Oradea. This strategy met with less success, however, in the liberalized social circles around the controversial Masonic Bishop Schaffgotsch. For this reason, *Il Davide* is the last oratorio Ditters wrote for Javorník. Later during his stay there, he composed his only opera buffa; these comic operas were composed regularly for the birthdays and name days of his patron. Interest in *Il Davide* may even have been diminished by the success of *Esther*, which was composed two years after *Il Davide*: Ditters triumphed with the oratorio not only in Vienna, but also elsewhere in Europe (the same oratorio, incidentally, opened the door for *Il Davide* in Prague). It is worth recalling that while there was an Italian version of *Isacco* (1776) created for Vienna, there was no reprise of *Il Davide*. The lesser popularity of the second oratorio was reflected even in the rather limited dissemination of individual arias and their *contrafacta*.

In modern times *Il Davide* has only been revived recently because of the limited accessibility of musical materials. The first performance took place in September 2018 in Bílá Voda during the 26th Annual International Musical Festival of Carl Ditters of Dittersdorf.⁶⁶ However, this staged performance directed by the conductor Petr Chromčák included only a selection of musical numbers without recitatives. The modern world premiere of the complete work took place in August 2021 in Olomouc, where the ensemble Volantes Orchestra was led by Veronika Manová and Eva Mikesková.⁶⁷ The most recent performance of the composition took place under Marek Čermák with the same ensemble in August 2023 in Żeliszów and Dresden. This staged

⁶⁴ “Cantata | Basso Solo | Due Violini | Due Oboe | Due Corni in C prof. | Viola di Alto | e | Basso. Del Sig. Dittersdorf.” CZ-Pnm, XXXVIII A 239.

⁶⁵ Concordances cited by Klinkhammer, *Die Kirchenmusikhandschriften*, 1:194 (cat. no. 290). In addition to these, he lists also a “Laudate Dominum” (CZ-Pnm, VIII D 68), but this is a different piece with a similar violin incipit.

⁶⁶ The soloists were Helena Kalambová (David), Anna Začalová (Gionata), Erika Šporerová-Štelbaská (Eliabbo), Dušan Růžička (Saule), Martin Blažević (Abner).

⁶⁷ The soloists were Doubravka Součková (David), Helena Hozová (Gionata), Aneta Petrasová (Eliabbo), Aco Bišćević (Saule), Jiří Miroslav Procházka (Abner). Cf. Jana Burdová, “Dva Davidové na Svatém Kopečku”,

performance confirmed the indisputable artistic qualities of the oratorio in respect of both music and dramaturgy.⁶⁸ One can only hope that we will soon see a recording of the composition and an edition of its score.

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⁶⁸ I am grateful to Karel Valenta for providing me with the score and a live recording of this performance.

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