

**Images of Royalty
in the Nineteenth
and Twentieth
Centuries.**

**Tradition
and Modernity
in Italy, Portugal
and Spain**

**Pierangelo Gentile
Leonardo Mineo
Miguel Metelo de Seixas
Isabel Corrêa da Silva
(eds.)**



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New Perspectives on the Political Role of Maria Pia of Savoy, Queen of Portugal (1862-1910)

Maria Antónia Lopes

1. Recent perspectives of Maria Pia

Until the publication of my biography of Maria Pia of Savoy in 2011, public opinion in Portugal was largely unaware of the existence of this woman, who was the penultimate queen of Portugal, where she lived from 1862 to 1910. Yet the people loved her until the end of the monarchy and even her harshest critics recognized, in 1910, with the implantation of the Republic, that she was the only member of the royal family to be missed.

From 2013, with the change in the Board of Directors of the Ajuda National Palace, Maria Pia began to attract the attention of Art History researchers. Her activity as water-colourist and photographer and her known involvement in the refurbishment of the interior of the Palace², as well

1. The present text is based on M.A. Lopes, *Rainhas que o povo amou: Estefânia de Hohenzollern e Maria Pia de Saboia*, Círculo de Leitores, Lisbon 2011 (paperback: Temas e Debates, Lisbon 2013). The information and perspectives presented in this essay as well as other aspects of Maria Pia's life and personality are further explored in this biography.

2. M.J. Botelho Muniz Burnay (ed.), *Ricordo di Venezia – Vidros de Murano da Casa Real Portuguesa*, Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda-Palácio Nacional da Ajuda, Lisbon 2015; J.A. Ribeiro (ed.), *Um olhar real: obra artística da rainha D. Maria Pia: desenho, aguarela e fotografia*, Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda-Palácio Nacional da Ajuda, Lisbon 2016.

as in the improvement of its furnishings, received greater attention. Among young Art History researchers there is a growing interest in Maria Pia, one example being a recent MA dissertation which analyses portraits, caricatures and other forms of visual representations of the queen³.

In the specific field of history, until 21st century all studies of Maria Pia's husband, son and daughter-in-law – kings Luís and Carlos, and Queen Amelia – characterized the queen as frivolous, poorly educated, spendthrift, vain, temperamental or even emotionally unstable. She was depicted as a woman who had a difficult relationship with her husband and was jealous of her daughter-in-law, Amelia of Orleans. French biographers – not historians – made Maria Pia into a sexually insatiable, adulterous woman, without presenting a single piece of evidence.

The portrayal of Maria Pia by twentieth-century historians is in fact almost the opposite of the public image enjoyed by the queen in her own time. Then she was regarded by most Portuguese people as a charitable, generous, kind person, and an exemplary mother and educator of her children, Carlos and Afonso. She was admired for her elegance and poise, for her courage in crucial moments, her sense of majesty, her unfailing support of her husband, the dynasty and the country, and for her friendliness and kindness to all the people, whatever their status. But a large part of the aristocracy never really welcomed her. The more conservative Catholics saw in her a reflection of her father, Vittorio Emanuele II of Italy, and frowned upon her lack of interest in public religious ceremonies. Her political adversaries criticized her spending and claimed she was overbearing or even hysterical. Rumours that she had lost her mind after the 1908 assassination of her son and grandson were then uncritically repeated by historians.

In fact, Maria Pia was an intelligent woman; generous and with a keen political sense, she was by far the best queen consort of the Portuguese constitutional monarchy. In the 19th century, queen consorts had a specific role: they should provide an heir, help win the support of the people and enthusiasm for the monarchy, ensure the glamour and re-

3. D.R. Gomes, *O retrato de uma Rainha. A construção da imagem de D. Maria Pia de Sabóia (1847-1911)*, master's dissertation, Universidade de Coimbra, Faculdade de Letras 2020.

spect for royalty, and support the king's decisions and thus contribute to his wider popularity. This was, in short, their political role: to help consolidate the monarchy and the dynasty. Queen Maria Pia fulfilled this role to perfection, accomplishing all of the above aims. As Queen-mother, she was expected to retire into the background and assist her son, should he require it. This she did more than once, and if she ever disagreed with King Carlos's decisions during his reign (1889-1908), she never made it public. Opposition politicians could not find any other fault with which to impute her but her expenses. The common people never cared much about this, loving her till the fall of the monarchy.

She was also instrumental in establishing good relations between Portugal and Italy in the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s, and in finding diplomatic solutions for serious questions during her son's reign. Because she always acted with great discretion – when her role was not deliberately obscured –, her true political relevance had passed unnoticed by Portuguese historiography.

2. Political reasons for the marriage

Born in Turin on 16th October 1847, Maria Pia was a member of the House of Savoy. She was the grand-daughter of Carlo Alberto of Savoy, king of Sardinia, and the daughter of the crown prince, Vittorio Emanuele, and of his wife, Adelaide of Habsburg. She had four elder siblings, Clotilde, Umberto, Amedeo and Oddone.

Maria Pia was 17 months old when her parents ascended the throne, after the abdication of Carlo Alberto of Savoy in 1849. She was seven years old when her mother died. Vittorio Emanuele's children received a very strict education upbringing (except Oddone, who suffered from a physical disability), the girls in Turin royal palace and the boys in Moncalieri castle.

In 1861 Vittorio Emanuele called the first parliament of the Kingdom of Italy and became its first monarch. The new kingdom was recognized by Napoleon III of France, followed by Portugal. Other nations followed suit, but Vittorio Emanuele was regarded with suspicion by the royal families of Europe, not only because of his conflict with the papacy and with the emperor of Austria, but also due to his

role in dethroning the king of Naples. The king of Italy had thus a keen interest in establishing a close bond between his House and another Catholic reigning family of a constitutional monarchy. The Portuguese royal family of Braganza was seen as an excellent choice, not least because Vittorio Emanuele believed that the Iberian Peninsula was on the way to achieving a political union, with Portugal playing the role that Piedmont had played in Italy's unification. And the king of Iberia would be his son-in-law.

In 1861, the Portuguese royal family consisted of the twenty-four-year king, Pedro V, whose wife, Stephanie of Hohenzollern⁴, had died childless, his four brothers and his father, the widowed King Consort Ferdinand de Saxe-Coburg-Gotha⁵. Thus the dynasty seemed secure. Then, in November, in the space of a few days both the king and Prince Fernando died. Augusto, the youngest brother, fell seriously ill while the two other brothers, Luís and João, were abroad. When they returned, Luís was proclaimed king, while João also became ill and eventually died. Augusto survived, but never fully recovered intellectually. The dynasty was in danger. The king had two sisters, but these princesses could never ascend the throne, not because they were women – Portuguese law did not exclude women from the throne – but rather because their husbands were not Portuguese. As the single and last resort, it was urgent for Luís to get married and beget an heir. Vittorio Emanuele was well aware of the situation. Soon after the death of Pedro V, the Italian king and government had considered the marriage of Princess Maria Pia with Luís⁶, who ascended to the throne on 22th December 1861. On that very same day the war minister, Marquis of Sá da Bandeira, defended the idea of this marriage in a text in which he invoked dynastic and national reasons, adding that «some of the Catholic royal houses» could not be considered an option owing to their loyalty to absolutist principles. In his view, there were no political advantages in a marriage into

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4. On Stephanie of Hohenzollern, see M.A. Lopes, *Rainhas que o povo amou* cit.
5. Cf. M.A. Lopes, *D. Fernando II: um rei avesso à política*, Círculo de Leitores, Lisbon 2013 (paperback: Temas e Debates, Lisbon 2016).
6. E. Brazão, *A unificação de Itália vista pelos diplomatas portugueses (1861-1870)*, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra 1966, p. 57.

the Saxe-Coburg and the Hohenzollern Houses. An alliance with the Orleans could upset relations with France, given the enmity of this House towards the French emperor. The Savoy princess seemed the best option. «This would be a very popular match in Portugal, as can be deduced from the reaction of the liberal press when it was rumoured that D. Pedro was considering this princess. And this is because, since 1848, the House of Savoy has clearly shown its allegiance to constitutionalism»⁷.

He added that there might be advantages in establishing a close familiar connection with Italy because, as there were delicate questions in Africa between Portugal and England and France, and given that Italy was not a colonial power, this nation might be useful as a friendly mediator or referee, and well accepted by the other two powers.

The King of Portugal asked for Maria Pia's hand in June 1862, which her father accepted. In his answer, Vittorio Emanuele writes that the match «will be received with enthusiasm in Italy», and he rather imprudently adds:

On this auspicious occasion I would like to express my best wishes for the fulfilment of the glorious destinies that await Your Majesty and Your Majesty's nation. That the star that has so far shined so brightly on Italy will in the same manner protect the peoples entrusted to your Majesty's rule and wisdom⁸.

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Vittorio Emanuele clearly saw Portugal as a new Piedmont, meant to unify the Iberian Peninsula. And he wished to have his family linked to that purpose. It goes without saying that such a notion could not be made public, given the political uproar, both internally and externally, that it would cause. The Spanish government would voice its indignation and even in Portugal such a project would cause upheaval among discontented politicians. France and England would equally react and it is even possible that the king would have been compelled to withdraw his marriage proposal and/or that the Italian king would equally be compelled to

7. Quoted in J. Vilhena, *D. Pedro V e o seu reinado. Novos documentos. Suplemento*, Imprensa da Universidade, Coimbra 1922, pp. 174-175.

8. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Arquivo da Casa Real (ACR), cx. 7336.

back down. But none of this happened, because Vittorio Emanuele's words were not made public.

On September 27th, 1862, Princess Maria Pia got married by proxy at Turin Cathedral. She left the church, this teenager (she was 14 years and 11 months old) as the Queen of Portugal. She embarked on the 29th and the Luso-Italian flotilla arrived in Lisbon on October 5th, where the young couple met for the first time.

3. A common political ideal

There was great enthusiasm in Italy when the engagement was announced. The fact that the princess was marrying a king and not a throneless Bonaparte – like her sister Clotilde, who had been sacrificed to ensure France's support for Italian unification – was well received by Italians. There was a widespread belief among politicians that Portugal, a nation where constitutional liberties were respected, would become the Piedmont of the Iberian Peninsula. The news was received with a round of applause in the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The commission sent to present their compliments to Vittorio Emanuele alluded to the «glorious destinies» awaiting the two peoples. The Senate also applauded the news, and its representatives mentioned the sacred cult of liberty common to both Italians and Portuguese, as well as the political convenience of this dynastic union, in a reference to the long association between the two houses since the days of Mathilde of Savoy, wife of Afonso Henriques, the first King of Portugal⁹.

This choice was also welcomed by Portugal's progressive wing. «The marriage of the granddaughter of Carlo Alberto, the founder of Italy's liberty, with the grandson of Pedro IV, the liberator of Portugal, would always deserve the approval of the Portuguese people and consensus among the free nations»¹⁰. The conservative reaction was as expected. The newspaper *A Nação* (The Nation) wrote that «the chosen princess is the daughter of an excommunicated man»¹¹. Maria Pia was ideologically branded. She would always be

9. *O Conimbricense*, 26.7.1862, pp. 2-4.

10. *Archivo Pittoresco*, 1862, p. 305

11. Quoted in L.E. Espinha da Silveira, P.J. Fernandes, *D. Luís*, Círculo de Leitores, Lisbon 2006, p. 53.

remembered as the granddaughter of Carlo Alberto and Vittorio Emanuele's daughter, and she would herself become an icon of constitutional liberties in Portugal.

Physically, Maria Pia was not stunning. She was still a teenager who did not conform to classical standards of beauty. Her most striking feature was her mass of reddish hair. «D. Maria Pia of Savoy was very young when she married the king of Portugal; her figure had not yet blossomed into what it would later become»¹². From the time she turned 18 and until she became a widow, at 42, Maria Pia was admired for her majestic, elegant and graceful posture. The people were drawn by her beauty, her smile and her charitable work. The upper class were captivated. When the Portuguese royal couple made their first foreign trip, in 1865, Maria Pia was completely transformed, and made an impression in such demanding and cosmopolitan centres as Biarritz, where the French imperial court resided. The Queen thus became a political asset, both at home and abroad.

4. The role of the queen in the relations between Portugal and Italy

Maria Pia's close ties with her family led her to play a vital role in the relations between the two countries. The papal efforts to disrupt these relations failed during Luís' reign because of the close ties between the two reigning families and because of Maria Pia's personality. However, it should be acknowledged that the King always supported his wife and that he held her family in great esteem, as I will show below.

Etiquette prescribed that a second son should have his maternal grandfather as godfather. When Prince Afonso was born, in 1865, the king and the queen were asked not to follow this custom because of Vittorio Emanuele's excommunication, and for fear of the Pope's reaction. The king resisted the pressure and invited his father-in-law to be godfather, but the Italian king reacted with similar courtesy and declined the invitation to avoid embarrassment to

12. F.F. Benevides, *Rainhas de Portugal. Estudo histórico*, Livros Horizonte, Lisbon 2007 (1879), p. 625.

Portugal. Two months later the royal couple went on a visit to Italy and took with them little Carlos, the crown prince.

In her birthplace, Maria Pia was reunited with her family after a three-year absence. Florence had replaced Turin as capital, while there was hope that Rome would someday take its place. The couple headed for Florence, where they were received by Vittorio Emanuele with royal splendour. They were accompanied by a procession of coaches.

The youthful looks and open smile of Vittorio Emanuele's daughter took the Florentines' hearts by storm. For the first time the people of the new capital caught sight of the splendours of Savoy and were impressed: they gathered on the streets under heavy and persistent rain and cheered the Portuguese royal couple and the other princes¹³.

The first court ball organized in the new capital was held in her honour. Luís and Maria Pia stayed in Italy for a month and a half, visiting Turin, Florence, Genoa and Milan. The friendship between the two countries and the two reigning families was thus widely proclaimed through Europe.

The queen attended the weddings of Amedeo and Umberto, in 1867 and 1868, both as sister and as Queen of Portugal. At the wedding of the future King of Italy, Umberto, she took her father's arm. The two crowns displayed their union. From 1870, when Rome was made capital and the pope retired behind the Vatican walls, the city had two governments, one in Quirinal and the other in the Vatican. Pius IX refused to receive any head of State who had visited the King of Italy at his palace in Quirinal, threatening with a breakup of diplomatic relations.

On the death of Vittorio Emanuele II, in 1878, Portugal paid homage to the late king. Both chambers delivered eulogies and passed messages of condolences, suspending its sittings for three days. The queen, who had not left the country for 9 years, travelled to Italy accompanied by the heir to the throne, representing the king. On January 15th, when the queen was a few hours away from Rome, Pius IX demanded that the Italian and Portuguese families break off their relations, warning the Portuguese king and gov-

13. U. Pesci, *Firenze capitale (1865-1870). Dagli appunti di un ex cronista*, Bemporad, Florence 1904, p. 80.

ernment that the Holy See would break off relations with Portugal if the country did not comply¹⁴. Such insensitivity, on the very day of Vittorio Emanuele's vigil, revealed the «heart of stone» that many attributed to the pope, but he had always been motivated by reasons of State.

Maria Pia stayed at the Quirinal Palace¹⁵ with the prince, and the Portuguese king did not give in to the pressure of the pope. She stayed for her father's funeral, on January 17, and two days later for the coronation ceremony of the new King of Italy. The presence of the Queen of Portugal at the coronation of Umberto I was not by chance; it was an open challenge to the pope.

5. Maria Pia, a pillar of the Portuguese monarchy

Maria Pia ruled in conjunction with her husband. Their correspondence reveals their deep understanding, as well as the king's reliance on his wife's views on political questions. In periods of crisis, and especially during the attempted coup of 1870, public opinion recognized the resolution and courage of the queen, which helped preserve the image of the royal couple. The same occurred again in 1880, when Republican ideals inflamed the streets of Lisbon. Two years later, during the centenary commemorations of the death of the Marquis of Pombal, Republican propaganda was outperformed by the popular enthusiasm for the queen, who had never been close to the clergy and was the daughter of the man whom they saw as the victor of the pope.

Maria Pia saw herself and was seen as a protector of the poor, but she was the only queen of the Portuguese constitutional monarchy whose work for the poor was in tune with what the new liberal order defended. She became the public face of a social assistance supported by civic bodies that were outside the sphere of influence of the church. Her initiatives – and her prompt assistance in times of crisis, as well as her kindness, gained her the support of the people, and in this way she became a powerful means of ideological, dynastic and governmental propaganda.

In 1889, when she was widowed, Maria Pia, aged 42, left

14. ANTT, ACR, cx. 7337.

15. *Ibid.*

the stage. Reviewing Luís' reign, many considered that the queen had been its mainstay. The writer Fialho de Almeida even claims that it was she who guided her husband as he learned to be king, and that during his 28-year reign only two people deserved to be remembered by posterity: the Prime Minister Fontes and Maria Pia. He writes that «few European monarchs will have had a more intelligent companion, a more discerning associate or a more refined and accomplished player in the dynastic *mise-en-scène*». And he added: «On an imperial throne, she would certainly be a model empress, with her indisputable spiritual strength, her proud understanding of royal prestige, her regal splendour, and above all her instinctive capacity to adjust to the needs of modern majesty, which is as full of artifice as a modern theatre play»¹⁶.

6. Her son's reign

Rui Ramos argues that Carlos placed her mother in a «sub-political world», and that the widowed queen «grabbed hold of anything that could strengthen her position» but no one paid her any attention¹⁷. I have a different perspective. The king kept his mother informed about important decisions and political problems and used her diplomatic influence in the Italian Court on some occasions. In fact, several contemporary and early twentieth-century authors realized that Maria Pia never was minor that figure, ignored by all. The fact was that Carlos was very conscious of his role and image and would not allow her to take the initiative. She remained in the background, as she always had, regarding political matters; furthermore the king also had to deal with his wife's jealousy.

Carlos relied on his mother to captivate the people, ever more attracted by Republican ideals; but in the 1890s he also used her diplomatic skills, because the king had very little influence in foreign courts – something that his biographers always fail to mention. It was, in fact, only after the death of Queen Victoria, in 1901, that Carlos's friendship with Edward VII gave him a measure of influence. As a

16. F. de Almeida, *Os Gatos I*, Livraria Clássica, Lisbon 1919, pp. 149-151.

17. R. Ramos, *D. Carlos*, Círculo de Leitores, Lisbon 2006, p. 221.

member of the House of Orleans, a family that had been banished from France, Queen Amelia had no say in international affairs, while Maria Pia was the sister of the King of Italy, whose political weight far surpassed his being a European king: as a member of the Triple Alliance, with Germany and Austro-Hungary, Italy had greatly increased its influence. Carlos never dealt directly with his Uncle Umberto or with his cousin, Vittorio Emanuele III; his mother played that role. These are some examples of what she was able to achieve.

In April 1893, Maria Pia left for Italy, on her first trip abroad after becoming a widow. It was widely reported at the time, and frequently repeated since, that she was going for her brother's silver wedding anniversary, but in reality she was on a diplomatic mission to meet the Italian king and the German emperor in Rome. She achieved the support of the two rulers on an agreement with the foreign creditors of the Portuguese public debt, to save the country from bankruptcy¹⁸. The agreement was signed on 20th May 1893, but the queen's involvement was concealed.

In the following two years, Maria Pia continued to work in the background, this time for Portugal's interests in Brazil and in Africa, using her privileged relations with the Italian royal family and with the German emperor¹⁹.

In 1896, she managed to restore diplomatic relations between Portugal and Italy, which had been broken off in the previous year. In 1895, the Portuguese king had made a tour of Europe. The visits to France, Germany and England went well, but there was a serious diplomatic incident with Italy, concerning the Vatican. The Portuguese government had suggested that the two kings should meet in Monza, but the Italian government insisted that the meeting should take place in the capital, as was to be expected. However, to avoid upsetting the pope, Carlos decided to cancel his visit to Italy. Trying to please both the pope and Umberto, Carlos «had the door slammed in his face by both», as a newspaper wrote. To solve the rift, in a concerted action with the king and the government, Maria Pia used

18. Archivio di Stato di Torino, Legato Umberto II, 1^o v., c. 16.

19. Arquivo Regional de Ponta Delgada, Arq. Ernesto Rodolfo Hintze Ribeiro, 3.10.69.R and 3.11.30.R.

the pretext of attending her nephew's wedding to go to Rome and try to patch up the relations between the two countries – and she succeeded. She announced the good results in two telegrams, one addressed to the king and the other to the foreign minister²⁰. According to local testimony, the solemn arrival of a smiling Maria Pia in Rome on 22th October 1896, accompanied by Umberto, was loudly cheered by the people in the streets. Because they had felt that their city had earlier been ostracized, the Roman population now felt warmly towards the Portuguese queen. She became and continued to be very popular in Rome²¹. This time, her diplomatic endeavours did not go unacknowledged by the public. On January 22th 1897, the Portuguese House of Peers paid «their respectful homage to Her Majesty D. Maria Pia for her good offices with her brother, the king of Italy».

In 1901, the Portuguese government was trying to reach an agreement with its external creditors which was absolutely crucial for the country, and King Carlos was aware of the Kaiser's opposition to it. As in 1893, Maria Pia was called in, and the exact same strategy was used. She left for Rome, under a shower of criticism from the opposition, who accused her of extravagant spending. She was allegedly going to the christening of Princess Iolanda, Vittorio Emanuele III's daughter, where she knew she would meet the German emperor. The problem was solved²², and a few months later the agreement was signed.

7. The Portuguese regicide

On February 1st 1908, the King and the Crown Prince, Luís Filipe, were assassinated. It took a long time for Maria Pia to recover from her overwhelming grief, and there were relapses. Her retinue was reduced to two gentlemen and two ladies, and her financial situation went from bad to worse. The palace where she lived was deserted and sombre, scarcely staffed and there were instructions to save every

20. ANTT, ACR, cx. 7426.

21. *A rainha Maria Pia*, «Almanach Bertrand», 1913, pp. 23-26. The article is presented as a text written by an Italian correspondent who is not identified.

22. J. M. Espírito Santo de Almeida Correia de Sá (ed.), *Memórias do sexto marquês de Lavradio*, Nova Ática, Lisbon 2004, pp. 37-38.

penny. The final affront to her dignity was the rumour that the «old queen» had gone mad to such an extent that she watered the flowers of the carpets and talked with the dead, and that she had gone into exile without recovering from her mental breakdown. This version of events, repeated *ad nauseam* until 2011 without presenting one single witness, is contradicted by all the available documented evidence.

In 1908, when her grandson was proclaimed King Manuel II, the municipal council of a Portuguese small town sent a message to each of the two queens. To Amelia, now the Queen Mother, it said: «May Your Majesty's overwhelming grief be a little appeased with the certainty that the heart of the Portuguese people is with your beloved son, on whom rest our hopes for the resurgence of Portugal». To Maria Pia: «With the day's greetings, this chamber [...] salutes Your Majesty as an unflinching defender of constitutional liberties»²³. Maria Pia was, thus, still seen as the symbol of progressive monarchists, in clear contrast with the Queen Dowager, whose conservative clericalism had made her unpopular.

In the two last years of the monarchy, Maria Pia suffered from poor health, straightened finances and little recognition from the Court. Although she clearly had no political role, she had become a symbol. When the rumours of her madness spread, some saw in it a metaphor for the national collapse. António Patrício's 1909 drama *O Fim* (The End) is a case in point. The action takes place in that same year. The protagonist, unnamed but immediately recognizable as Maria Pia, is a mad, old, destitute woman, her palace in ruins, with a mad duke, a lucid handmaiden and a few servants. She had been abandoned and betrayed by the king, her grandson, and by her daughter-in-law. Then Lisbon is bombed by foreign powers, the king dies and the city is conquered. But Portugal is more than just Lisbon, and hope survives. An unknown man shows up at the palace; he wants to unite the country behind the old queen, only to discover, to his horror, that she is just a demented old woman. It is the end. Of the country and of the people. The

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23. *Diário de Notícias*, 10^m may 1908.

author had thus identified the destiny of Maria Pia with the destiny of Portugal.

Even the most ardent republicans, such as João Chagas, admired her for herself and for the image she had created of herself. In his *Cartas Políticas* (Political Letters), published from December 1908 onwards, Chagas writes:

Queen Maria Pia undoubtedly used her charitable work as a means to enhance her personal prestige, like all queens do – their main virtue consists in giving what is not theirs to the poor – , but she did not use it to fight off the liberal spirit of the nation. She did not use it to corrupt, to entice, to buy votes for a political party, and so she did not divide the nation. During her reign, the Portuguese people were liberals, even the Church was liberal. She raised her two sons in that spirit. [...] Now, with her gone from the political scene, and even to a certain extent, from the social scene [...] it is time to say a few words to do her justice. And this is all the more necessary because after her there were other queens in Portugal who do not deserve such words, for their lack of respect for public conscience, for the influence of their education on the character of the young princes, even for their lack of splendour as royalty – for indeed, after her, there were no other queens in Portugal²⁴.

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8. The Republic: Maria Pia returns to Italy

The Republic was proclaimed on 5th October 1910. On that very day, and against her will, Maria Pia left her adopted country, where she had lived for 48 years, for ever. The royal family, consisting of the young King Manuel II, his uncle, Afonso, and the dowager queens, embarked on their exile journeys – Maria Pia, to Italy, and the rest of the family, to England.

Maria Pia was received in her homeland by her nephew, Vittorio Emanuele III. She was no longer a queen in Portugal, since a Republican decree had proscribed the House of Braganza and its descendants, but as a member of the Italian royal family, in Italy she continued to be treated as a queen.

In the same month of October, the Portuguese govern-

24. Quoted in F.R. Martins, *D. Manuel II, historia do seu reinado e da implantação da República*, Ed. A., s.n. 1931, p. 401.

ment realized that it was impossible to ignore the fact that Maria Pia's marriage treaty had settled on her a state pension. The contract had been signed by the Portuguese and the Italian parliaments; it was an international treaty, independent of regime and one the Republic should honour. Queen Amelia's situation was different, because her marriage with the former king had been privately arranged. In these circumstances, the Republican government decided to pay Maria Pia's allowance in full. It was also prepared to allow her to return, singling her out from the exile to which the rest of the family had been condemned. In other words, the Portuguese government granted the older queen what it categorically refused other members of the royal family – which once again shows Maria Pia's central position in the relations between Portugal and Italy, which depended on the way the former queen was treated by the Republic.

Maria Pia did not return to Portugal. On 5th July 1911, 9 months after arriving in Italy, she died in her native Piedmont.

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