



New Images of Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart in Rome*

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ABSTRACT: This study presents a group of previously unpublished representations of the Polish noblewoman and Queen of Great Britain, Maria Clementina Sobieska. Together with her consort, James III Stuart, she spent her brief life in Rome, where significant material testifying to her presence is still preserved. Among these are her funerary monument in St Peter's Basilica, depictions of her elaborate funeral ceremonies, as well as official prints and paintings portraying her in her royal capacity. In the 2025 exhibition held at the Capitoline Museums, dedicated to the presence of the Sobieski family in the Eternal City, the section on Maria Clementina featured two paintings depicting her in devout guise, together with her remarkable plaster bust painted to resemble bronze—thus far a unique example. Considered collectively, these three works enrich and nuance the image of a young woman who, despite the adversities she faced and the public role she was compelled to assume, consistently remained true to herself.

KEYWORDS: Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart, Rome, portrait, sculpture, Ursuline Sisters.

STRESZCZENIE: Niniejsze opracowanie przedstawia zbiór niepublikowanych dotąd wizerunków polskiej szlachcianki i królowej Wielkiej Brytanii, Marii Klementyny Sobieskiej. Wraz ze swoim małżonkiem, Jakubem III Stuartem, spędziła swoje krótkie życie w Rzymie, gdzie do dziś zachowały się liczne świadectwa jej obecności. Należą do nich jej pomnik nagrobny w Bazylice św. Piotra, przedstawienia uroczystych ceremonii pogrzebowych, a także oficjalne ryciny i obrazy ukazujące ją w roli królowej. W ramach wystawy zorganizowanej w 2025 roku w Muzeach Kapitołińskich, poświęconej obecności rodziny Sobieskich w Wiecznym Mieście, w sekcji poświęconej Marii Klementynie zaprezentowano dwa obrazy przedstawiające ją w stroju modlitewnym, a także niezwykle gipsowe popiersie pomalowane tak, by przypominało brąz — jak dotąd jedyne tego rodzaju. Rozpatrywane łącznie, te trzy dzieła wzbogacają i nianusują wizerunek młodej kobiety, która pomimo przeciwności losu i publicznej roli, jaką była zmuszona pełnić, konsekwentnie pozostawała wierna sobie.

SŁOWA KLUCZE: Maria Klementyna z Sobieskich Stuart, Rzym, portret, rzeźba, siostry urszulanek.



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In the exhibition held at the Capitoline Museums in 2025 and dedicated to the presence of the royal Sobieski family in Rome,¹ one section was devoted to Princess Maria Clementina Sobieska (Oława, 17 July 1701—Rome, 18 January 1735),² who lived a large part of her short life in the Eternal City as Queen Consort of England *de iure*.³

The young, beautiful, wealthy, romantic, and pious Clementina, granddaughter of Jan III and Maria Casimira, daughter of their eldest son Jakub and of Jadwiga Elisabeth von Pfalz-Neuburg, married at just eighteen years of age on 1 September 1719 in Montefiascone (Italy, province of Viterbo) the Catholic James III Stuart (London, 11 June 1688⁴—Rome, 1 January 1766), officially recognized by the Papal State as sovereign of Great Britain, albeit in exile.⁵

The couple lived in Rome in the Palazzo del Re in Piazza dei Santi Apostoli, arranged for them by Clement XI.⁶ Although gladdened by the birth of two sons, her married life was not happy but rather a source of suffering

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¹ *Una Regina polacca in Campidoglio. Maria Casimira e la famiglia reale Sobieski a Roma* (Roma, Musei Capitolini 11.06–21.09.2025), exhibition catalogue, ed. F. Ceci, J. Miziołek, F. De Caprio, Roma 2025. For about 15 years, Rome hosted the court of Queen Dowager Maria Casimira Sobieska, who officially arrived to celebrate the Jubilee of 1700, but was in diplomatic exile following the death of King Jan III and the subsequent election of Augustus II of Saxony to the Polish throne. The exhibition presents the events and testimonies of the Sobieski family, from Maria Casimira to Maria Clementina, and their relationship with the city.

² A. Skrzypietz, S. Jujeczka, *Maria Klementyna Sobieska, królowa i słuźebnica Boża*, Katowice 2022.

³ Skrzypietz, Jujeczka, cited in note 2; A. Markuszewska, *W cieniu korony. Muzyka w polityce Jakuba III Stuarta i jego żony Marii Klementyny Sobieskiej w Rzymie (1719–1735)*, Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Warszawie, 2024.

⁴ In the old Julian calendar, adopted in England until 1752 (old style calendar), the date of Stuart's birth was 11 June, but according to the Gregorian calendar (new style calendar), adopted in the Papal States and other European states, it corresponded to 21/22 June.

⁵ Maria Clementina was selected as the most suitable consort for James III Stuart, the Jacobite claimant to the English throne. Despite the obstacles imposed by George I of Hanover, the *de facto* king of Great Britain, and by Emperor Charles VI of Austria, his political ally, Maria Clementina succeeded in reaching the Papal States, surmounting numerous difficulties along the way. After James III's efforts to reclaim the British throne proved unsuccessful, the couple settled in Rome, where they lived under the protection of Pope Clement XI—Maria Clementina's godfather—and of his successors. See *1° settembre 1719. A 300 anni delle nozze regali di Montefiascone. Atti del Convegno, Montefiascone 30 novembre 2019*, ed. G. Breccola, F. Ceci, Viterbo 2020.

⁶ E. Corp, "Il Palazzo del Re a piazza dei Santi Apostoli, residenza di Giacomo III Stuart e Maria Clementina Sobieska," in: Ceci, Miziołek, De Caprio, cited in note 1, pp. 231–38. In the palace there is currently a plaque commemorating the last of the Stuarts, Cardinal Henry, Duke of York (here referred to as Henry IX), the son of the royal couple, who resided in the building for an extended period.

for the young queen. Because of a series of family disagreements over the education of the children, who were soon taken away from their mother and entrusted to tutors she did not approve of, and due to the complex internal dynamics of the small Stuart court in Rome that isolated Maria Clementina, relations with her husband progressively deteriorated. This situation caused her profound psychological distress, which led her to seek comfort in prayer, religious practices, and in her affectionate relationship with the Ursuline sisters⁷ and Benedictine nuns,⁸ to whom she was always very attached from the time of her arrival in Rome.

No longer able to tolerate the growing arrogance of those who gravitated around her husband and influenced his attitude toward her, Clementina leaves the Palazzo del Re, taking refuge on 15 November 1725 in the Benedictine monastery of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, where she remained for about two years, until 7 July 1727, while maintaining contact with her family.⁹

Finally, urged by the advice of the Pope and sincerely devoted friends, but above all following the long-awaited removal of James III's favorites, Maria Clementina left the monastery and departed for Bologna, where she was finally able to embrace her children, who were there with their father.

The queen, deeply affected by her previous sorrows, increasingly intensified her charitable and ascetic religious practices, undermining her body and spirit. The royal family returned to Rome in 1729, but Maria Clementina's health gradually worsened.¹⁰

Having received the sacraments, Maria Clementina died in her Roman residence on 18 January 1735, at just over 33 years of age, exhausted by an illness that had worsened in the last year.¹¹ Clement XII showed particular

⁷ M.T. Lambiasi Bellizia, "Il soggiorno di Maria Clementina Sobieska dalle monache benedettine di Santa Cecilia," in: Ceci, Miziołek, De Caprio, cited in note 1, pp. 239-45.

⁸ E. Lauro, "Il soggiorno di Maria Clementina Sobieska presso il monastero delle Orsoline di via Vittoria a Roma," in: Ceci, Miziołek, De Caprio, cited in note 1, pp. 247-54.

⁹ M.T. Lambiasi Bellizia, "Nel nome di Clementina. Analisi delle motivazioni che spinsero la Sobieska a lasciare Palazzo del Re nel novembre 1725," [in press].

¹⁰ A. Skrzypietz, "Marital Crisis between Maria Clementina née Sobieska and James Stuart in the Light of her Correspondence with her Father," in: *I Sobieski a Roma: la famiglia reale polacca nella Città Eterna*, ed. J.A. Chrościcki, Z. Flisowska, P. Migasiewicz, Warszawa 2018, pp. 362-77; Eadem, "Maria Clementina Sobieska in the Web of Court Intrigues," in: *Queens within Networks of Family and Court Connections*, ed. A. Skrzypietz, Vienna 2022, pp. 99-112; A. Markuszewska, "And All This Because of the Weakness of Your Sex': The Marital Vicissitudes of Maria Klementyna Sobieska Stuart, Wife of the Old Pretender to the English Throne," in: *Frictions and Failures: Cultural Encounters in Crisis*, ed. A. Bues, Wiesbaden 2017, pp. 163-78.

¹¹ *Parentalia Mariae Clementinae Magnae Britanniae, Franciae et Hiberniae Reginae issu Clementis XI Pontifex Maximus*, Roma 1736; *De costumi e della morte di Maria Clementina, Regina d'Inghilterra, di Francia e d'Irlanda*, nella stamperia di Lelio Dalla Volpe, Bologna 1737.

respect toward the unfortunate queen: during the days of her agony, he suspended all Carnival theatrical performances and arranged for her a grand state funeral in the Basilica of the Santi XII Apostoli in the square, where the Palazzo del Re was also located. Prints and a large painting realised by the Valeriani brothers¹² (fig. 1) remain from the ceremony. In 1738 an elegant marble monument was erected in the basilica, preserving Maria Clementina's heart, the work of the sculptor Filippo Della Valle.¹³



Fig. 1 Giuseppe Valeriani and Domenico Valeriani, *Funerali di Maria Clementina Sobieski Stuart nella Basilica dei Santi Apostoli*, oil on canvas, cm 135,5×98, c. 173. Roma, Museo di Roma (photo Alfredo Valeriani). All images have been published in the exhibition catalogue *Una Regina polacca in Campidoglio*, Roma 2025.

¹² The painting belongs to the collections of the Museum of Rome of the Capitoline Superintendency (MR 39358). F. De Martino, "Giuseppe Valeriani e Domenico Valeriani. Funérailles de Marie-Clémentine Sobieski dans la basilique des Saint-Apôtres," in: *La Grande Bellezza. L'art à Rome au XVIIIe siècle. 1700-1758* (exhibition catalogue), Cinisello Balsamo 2020, pp. 175-6.

¹³ On 9 February 1737, the Council of the Conventual Franciscan Friars resolved that a plaque should be placed inside the church to make public the fact that the friars preserved the queen's viscera - referred to in the text as *interiora*. Archivio dell'Ordine dei FMConv., *Libro dei Consigli dall'anno 1727 fino all'anno 1754*, p. 57. In the following months, the monument was commissioned, in addition to the plaque. J. Montagu, "The Sobieskis in Marble," in: *I Sobieski a Roma: la famiglia reale polacca nella Città Eterna*. Atti del convegno, Roma, Bibliotheca Hertziana, 8-9 giugno 2016, ed. A. Chroicki, Z. Flisowska, P. Migasiewicz, Warszawa 2018, pp. 312-40.

From the basilica an enormous funeral procession then set out and reached St Peter's Basilica, where she was buried in the crypt. In 1745 Clementina's body was transferred from the Vatican Grottoes and placed along the spiral staircase leading to the dome, behind the cenotaph that had already been erected in her memory in the Vatican Basilica two years earlier. Indeed, Benedict XIV had commissioned a splendid monument dedicated to her, created by Filippo Barigioni and Pietro Bracci (1739–42)¹⁴. The portrait on the tomb, supported by a sculpted personification of Faith and by a winged putto, was executed by the Roman mosaicist Pietro Paolo Cristofari.

The *fama sanctitatis* of the queen, her sincere faith and charity, were recognized throughout Rome. In 1736, at the will of James III, a cause for beatification was initiated, which, however, was interrupted for a decade and subsequently never brought to completion.¹⁵

Clementina's Fair and Gentle Visage

During her Roman life, Maria Clementina was always considered in every respect, both by the papacy and by the Catholic states of Europe, as Queen Consort of Great Britain, and treated with the honours due to a crowned head.

Moreover, her passion for music and musical dramas, which she shared with her husband, made her a patron of these arts; James III wrote to the Duke of Mar shortly after the marriage: "The queen is very fond of music, besides which she is not interested in other entertainments"¹⁶. A large number of librettos were dedicated to the couple, and their names appear in the title page, always designating them as royals of Great Britain.¹⁷

The several official portraits of Maria Clementina and James III, painted by important painters of the period and active at the Roman Stuart court, are well known. These representations aimed to 'construct' and disseminate

¹⁴ J. Montagu, cited in note 13.

¹⁵ M.A. Quesada, "Il processo di beatificazione di Maria Clementina Sobieska. La voce dei testimoni," in: *I Sobieski a Roma*, cited in note 13, pp. 378-89; S. Jujeczka, "The Beatification Process of Maria Clementina Sobieska. Legal and Political Context," in: *I Sobieski a Roma*, cited in note 13, pp. 390-99.

¹⁶ N.E. Field, *Outlandish Authors: Innocenzo Fede and Musical Patronage at the Stuart Court in London and in Exile*, unpublished PhD, University of Michigan 2013 (<https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/items/38482b6b-0bb7-48ae-80e6-d2cff9ba714b>, access 08.04.2026).

¹⁷ A. Markuszewska, *W cieniu korony. Muzyka w polityce Jakuba III Stuarta i jego żony Marii Klementyny Sobieskiej w Rzymie (1719–1735)*, Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Warszawie, Warszawa 2024.

the official image of the royals, repeated in replicas and copies distributed as gifts to Catholic courts, supporters of the Jacobite cause, and also given to private individuals and relatives (often in elegant miniatures), contributing to legitimizing the Stuarts' claim to the throne of England.¹⁸

In Rome there are several representations of both the couple and of Clementina alone.¹⁹ At the Galleria di Palazzo Pallavicini, paintings of Maria Clementina and James III are on display, presenting them as sovereigns dressed in the official attire of the English court.²⁰ Another likeness of Maria Clementina, as already mentioned, is preserved in St Peter's Basilica.²¹ The mosaic image, executed by the Roman master Pietro Paolo Cristofari,²² derives from a painted model by Lodovico Stern (1709–77),²³ an Austrian-born artist active in Rome from around 1724. Stern himself drew inspiration from an image painted circa 1725 by Martin van Meytens, who was responsible for the official representations of the Stuart family in exile.²⁴

¹⁸ E. Corp, *The King Over the Water: Portraits of the Stuarts in Exile after 1689*, Scottish National Portrait Gallery 2001; E. Corp, *The Stuarts in Italy, 1719–1766: A Royal Court in Permanent Exile*, Cambridge University Press 2014. See National Portrait Gallery, London: <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/personExtended/mp02953/maria-clementina-sobieska?tab=iconography> (last access 08.04.2026) and, finally, the exhibition at the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, *The Sobieskis and Stuarts* (24.10.2025–31-05.2026), curated by Edward Corp and Piotr Pininski (<https://wilanow-palac.pl/wystawa/sobiescy-i-stuartowie-blask-i-widmo-korony>, last access 08.04.2026).

¹⁹ E. Corp, *The Stuarts in Italy*, cited in note 18, pp. 96–120 and pp. 277–306; G. Vullings, "Fit for a Queen: The Material and Visual Culture of Maria Clementina Sobieska, Jacobite Queen in Exile," *Court Historian*, 26, no. 2, 2021, pp. 123–43.

²⁰ D.H. Bodart, "Le sourire de Marie-Clémentine Sobieska," in: *Artyści włoscy w Polsce XV–XVIII wieku*, ed. J.A. Chroscicki, J. Pomorska, Warsaw 2004, p. 310.

²¹ See <https://dpiocrd.wilanow-palac.pl/en/knowledge/the-sobieskis-and-stuarts-monument-to-clementina-sobieska-in-st-peters-basilica-rome-bronislav-puc-1883> (last access 08.04.2026).

²² M.G. Branchetti Buonocore M.G., "Cristofari, Pietro Paolo," in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 31, 1985 (https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-paolo-cristofari_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/—last-access-08.04.2026). P. Di Buono, V.M. Seifert, *L'invenzione del mosaico in filato. Aspetti storici e tecnici*, Foligno 2021, pp. 99–103.

²³ F. Petrucci, D.K. Marignoli, *Ludovico Stern (1709–1777). Pittura Rococò a Roma*, Roma 2012.

²⁴ E. Corp, *The King over the Water*, cited in note 18, pp. 63–5, 108 and E. Corp, *The Stuarts in Italy, 1719–1766*, cited in note 18, passim. For the Stuart paintings of Martyn van Meytens see also: <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/artists/martin-van-meytens-younger> (last access 08.04.2026).

A New Image: Maria Clementina as Devout Queen and Young Woman

In the exhibition dedicated to the Sobieskis at the Capitoline Museums, three representations of the queen preserved in Rome were exhibited for the first time: two oil paintings and a plaster sculpture painted bronze in colour.

As already mentioned, in November 1725 Maria Clementina literally fled from the Royal Palace and took refuge in the Benedictine monastery of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere. The event, considered at the time a scandal, had wide resonance throughout Europe, and one can well imagine that Clementina must have experienced profound inner reflection because of it.

During this period, in fact, she wished also to rework the iconographic model that portrayed her. In the official portrait paintings executed up to that time, the queen appeared in all her splendour, with powdered wig, jewels, garments, and insignia of her rank. Her face, as always, was illuminated by a slight smile and a lively gaze directed toward the observer.

During her stay at Santa Cecilia, Clementina probably felt the need to represent herself according to a new image, in which her religious spirit and her being the wife of a king and mother of princes, potentially destined for succession, were to stand out.

To achieve this, Clementina entrusted herself to the Stuart family painter, the Venetian Antonio David. The artist had in fact been in contact with the exiled Stuarts since 1717, painting portraits of the entire royal family in Italy.²⁵

Around 1727 it must have been Maria Clementina herself who requested the artist to portray her not only as queen, but above all as devout. The original portrait was commissioned by Clementina from David in March 1727, to be given as a gift to the Duchess of Melfort in France, and it was the king who paid the painter.²⁶ A few months after leaving Santa Cecilia, the queen commissioned many replicas of the painting, partly realised also by David's pupils or by other copyists. All the works share the same composition, whose quality depends on the ability of the artist.

Maria Clementina is depicted half-length, facing the viewer with her face turned three-quarters to the left, illuminated by a lively gaze and the usual slight gentle smile. Her head and hair are covered by a white fabric veil

²⁵ M. Pedrolì Bertoni, "David, Antonio," in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 33, 1987 ([https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-david_res-e1a2f675-87eb-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-david_res-e1a2f675-87eb-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_(Dizionario-Biografico)/), last access 08.04.2026).

²⁶ E. Corp, *The Stuart in Italy*, cited in note 18, pp. 117-9 and 375.

with a pleated border, falling over her shoulders and bust. The veil is held on the head by a red ribbon and is covered by another veil, this time black and transparent, whose edges are tied on the chest.

The dress is simple, burgundy or brown, with wide sleeves from which ample white cuffs of light pleated fabric emerge. Representing the royalty of the portrait is the ermine stole that falls crossed over her chest from her shoulders.

Her right hand rests on the surface of a small table and holds a small black devotional book, in which her finger is inserted, as if to mark the page she was reading before turning her gaze toward the observer and closing the book. Her left hand is not visible, hidden behind the royal crown, of gold with a red velvet interior.

Several copies of this painting survive: one at the Musée du Château de Versailles, one in the collection of the Duke of Hamilton at Lennoxlove, one at the Palacio de Liria in Madrid, one in a private collection in Ohio (USA), one in the Francesco Scaglione House Museum in Sciacca, Sicily, one recently acquired by the Museum of the Palace of Jan III Sobieski at Wilanów in Warsaw. Others are on the art market.

In Rome there are at least two paintings of this type, one preserved in the church of the Irish Dominican Fathers at San Clemente²⁷ (fig. 2) and the other in the church of the Santissimo Nome di Maria at Trajan's Forum, where the Archconfraternity of the same name is based (fig. 3). Both are almost identical, although one can note the hand of two different painters.

The portrait of the Archconfraternity, however, is enriched by a Latin inscription painted at the base of the canvas, identifying Maria Clementina as queen and fellow member.²⁸ The Archconfraternity was founded in 1685 to commemorate the Battle of Vienna of 12 September 1683, when the Christian League desired by the pope and placed under the command of Jan III Sobieski defeated the Ottoman army that had besieged the capital of the Empire. In 1688 Innocent XI officially approved the archconfraternity and became its first member, shortly followed by the Emperor of Austria Leopold I.²⁹ In 1731 Maria Clementina entered the

²⁷ The Irish Dominicans were closely connected to the Stuarts and to their court in Rome. The Dominican Father John Brown, confessor to James III, took part as a witness at the king's marriage to Clementina in Montefiascone; see Noel S. McFerran in <http://www.jacobite.ca/gazetteer/Rome/SClemente.htm> (last access 08.04.2026) and M. Marzetti, "Testimonianze delle nozze Stuart-Sobieski in Scozia e Irlanda," in: *Il matrimonio di Giacomo III Stuart e Maria Clementina Sobieska*, cited in note 5, pp. 103 and 112.

²⁸ "MARIA CLEMENTINA MAGNAE BRITANNIAE REGINA INTER SOSORES HUJ. ARCHICONE. ADSRIPTA."

²⁹ Originally, the Archconfraternity was based in the church of Santo Stefano del Cacco. It



Fig. 2 Anonimo, *Ritratto di Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart in veste di devota*, oil on canvas, cm 65×49,5, attributed to the workshop of Antonio David, c. 1727. Roma, Collegio di San Clemente (foto F. Ceci).



Fig. 3 Anonimo, *Ritratto di Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart in veste di devota*, oil on canvas, cm 63,5×48,5, attributed to the workshop of Antonio David, c. 1727. Roma, Arciconfraternita del SS. Nome di Maria al Foro Traiano (photo Lucrezia Giachini).

Confraternity: granddaughter of the great hero of Vienna Jan III, wife of the man considered the legitimate Catholic claimant to the British throne, and known throughout Rome for her heartfelt devotion, her presence conferred further prestige upon the archconfraternity.

On that occasion she was given a precious small volume bound in green velvet with gold and coloured thread embroidery.³⁰ Inside is a Latin praise of the queen, where her virtues are extolled and where the date of her admission, 23 December 1731, is recorded. This is followed, in Italian, by the list of rules that every member of the Archconfraternity had to observe. On the cover is embroidered in gold and silver thread a monogram with an M, perhaps a C (Maria Clementina?), and the royal crown.

On the back is the queen's heraldic emblem, consisting of an oval within which appears the Stuart coat of arms on one side and on the other the Janina coat of arms of the Sobieski family. Completing the emblem is the royal crown surmounted by the lion and below the motto of the Sovereign of Great Britain, in French *Dieu et mon Droit* (God and my Right).

The Plaster Bust of Maria Clementina

In the exhibition at the Capitoline Museums an exceptional plaster bust painted bronze in colour of Maria Clementina was exhibited for the first time, probably donated by the queen herself to the Ursuline nuns of Via Vittoria. It is the only known sculptural bust representing her to date.³¹ (Figs. 4-5)

The queen, deeply attached to the Ursulines who hosted her from her arrival in Rome in 1719, frequently visited the convent, leaving gifts on her visits³². Among these are this bust and one of Clement XII.³³

later moved to the church of San Bernardo at the Forum of Trajan, now lost; finally, it established itself in the church of the Most Holy Name of Mary at the Forum of Trajan, consecrated in 1741. The Archconfraternity remains active to this day: A. Capogni, *Arciconfraternita e Chiesa del SS. Nome di Maria al Foro Traiano - Roma*, Roma 2007; see pp. 24-9.

³⁰ *Obblighi che devono osservare li Fratelli e Sorelle dell' Archiconfraternita del Santissimo Nome di Maria*, National Library of Scotland (Reference: Acc. 11210, <https://manuscripts.nls.uk/repositories/2/resources/1902>).

³¹ Painted plaster imitating bronze, 100 × 74.5 cm (wooden base, 20 cm).

³² The convent was originally located in Via Vittoria, and the two busts must have been transferred to the Ursuline convent on Via Nomentana 34 between 1896 and 1900. Together with the busts, a marble inscription in Latin was also relocated, translated as follows: "In the year of Our Lord 1734, Mother Superior Maria Giuseppa of Middelborg and the sisters set this here as a testimony of gratitude in honour of Clementina Sobieski, Queen of England, because through her long sojourn and her glorious examples of virtue she enriched the monastery with gifts worthy of her royal generosity, making it more illustrious".

³³ The 'Unione Romana delle Orsoline' intend to donate the bust to the Capitoline



4-5. *Busto di Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart*, plaster painted in faux bronze, cm 100×74,5), attributed to Filippo Della Valle, c. 1730. Roma, Unione Romana Orsoline (foto Alfredo Valeriani).

The plaster sculpture of Maria Clementina returns her image idealized and at the same time with naturalistic impact, with long loose hair. An iconographic precedent is the profile of the queen fixed in the medal executed in 1719 by Ottone Hamerani, where the harmonious beauty of the queen is exalted, here, however, dressed regally, with evident neckline and pearl parure.³⁴

The bust, of exceptional artistic quality, represents Clementina naturally, without the customary wig that appears in official portraits. Two locks of her long hair fall over her bust and shoulders; the others are gathered in a chignon at the nape and held on the forehead by a band. Her face is serene, with a sweet, distant, and melancholic gaze.

Superintendency of Cultural Heritage in Rome. F. Petrucci, "45. Busto di Maria Clementina Sobieski Stuart, 46. Busto di Clemente XII," in: Ceci, Miziołek, De Caprio 2025, cited in note 1, pp. 387-390; M. Migliorini, "Il restauro dei busti di Clemente XII e Maria Clementina Sobieska delle Orsoline," in: Ceci, Miziołek, De Caprio 2025, cited in note 1, pp. 391-2.

³⁴ F. Ceci, J. Pietrzak, "The life of Maria Klementyna Sobieska-Stuart written in medals commemorating the most important Moments in her life," in: *Proceedings of the XVI International Numismatic Congress, 11–16.09.2022, Warsaw*, Vol. IV, Brepols 2025, pp. 199-212.

The bust seems to show an elegant Polish-style dress: a lace blouse emerges from the closed bodice, upon which a brooch is pinned. On her shoulders she has a precious mantle adorned with fringes that seem to move in the wind. Intended exclusively for the Ursulines, whom she considered dear friends, here we can see the image that Clementina wished to give of herself: a Polish princess in Rome, without any reference to her role as queen, devoid of jewels except for the brooch on her blouse.

The work, for its soft and painterly modeling, could be by Filippo Della Valle, also proposed as the executor of the pendant bust of Clement XII, both executed around 1730, when the queen was about twenty-eight years old, a dating compatible with the age shown in the portrait.

The Florentine sculptor also carved in 1737–38 the Monument to the Queen's heart in the Church of the Santi XII Apostoli.

These portraits exhibited in the Capitoline show sought to highlight the private face of Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart, a woman who knew how to fight as long as she had strength and who never renounced herself, until death.

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