
The Tasso in Music Project: A Digital Edition of the Musical Settings of Torquato Tasso's Poetry, ca. 1570–1640

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The Tasso in Music Project, currently funded by an NEH Scholarly Editions Grant (2016-2019), is an open-access and interactive digital platform that allows music historians, performers, and literary scholars to access and analyze late 16th- and early 17th-century settings of poetry by Torquato Tasso, arguably the most prominent literary figure of early modern Italy. The project has been realized by a team of scholars from North America and Europe, with the technical support of Stanford University's Center for Computer Assisted Research in the Humanities (CCARH) and UMass Amherst. Upon its completion, the Tasso in Music Project aims to provide upon critical editions of the about 650 extant musical settings of Tasso's poetry, the vast majority of which have never been edited before. These settings represent the work of over 100 composers from a variety of geographic areas and with different musical styles, and as such provide a snapshot of secular vocal music in an age in which it underwent profound transformations. In addition, these settings shed light on Tasso's extraordinary influence on the music of his time— an aspect of his reception that has received surprisingly little attention to date.

The editions, which constitute one of the largest digital repositories of Italian madrigals and related genres, are encoded with Humdrum software tailored specifically for the project by Stanford's CCARH. The editions are presented on the project's website in a variety of electronic formats, such as MEI, MuseData, MusicXML, MIDI, and PDF, among others. They can also be visualized online using Verovio, a recently developed SVG viewer for music encodings. The editions are accompanied by dynamic, in-score critical notes and by music and textual search tools developed by Stanford's CCARH that facilitate analysis of this repertoire. Some of these search tools— such as single

pitch and melodic or rhythmic pattern— draw on CCARH's work for the Josquin Research Project, a platform for the analysis of Renaissance music that has received wide recognition in the early music community. Other tools are unique to the project, including those that allow users to run combined musical/textual and vertical sonority searches that are crucial for the study of this particular repertoire.

The platform also features a substantial textual component, with TEI transcriptions of the poetic texts as they appear in the musical settings and in contemporaneous literary sources, both manuscript and printed. The textual apparatus allows for a dynamic visualization of literary variants, thus facilitating the collation of different sources. Thanks to this feature, the project will become an indispensable resource for literary scholars interested in the tradition and transmission of Tasso's poetry, as well as for music historians interested in tracking the literary sources from which composers may have drawn the texts they set to music.

The Tasso in Music Project addresses an interdisciplinary audience, bringing together two institutions invested in the development of digital platforms for musical and humanistic research as well as a group of scholars from the North America and Europe who form the project's editorial and advisory boards. As such, the project may serve as a model for institutional cooperation, opening avenues for interdisciplinary approaches to the creation of digital databases of music and poetry from the late Renaissance and early Baroque periods.