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Nicolas Dufetel

Liszt and Wagner

Foreword to *The Collected Writings of Franz Liszt: Dramaturgical Leaves, II (Richard Wagner)*, éd. Janita R. Hall-Swadley, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, xv-xxxviii.

“Wagner belongs now to the Olympians, like Goethe and Victor Hugo”ⁱⁱ

In the little brown leather wallet that Liszt used in 1883, one can still find a handful of long white hair and seven small pieces of paper: visiting cards on which he wrote down some religious thoughts in Latin, French and German, and a tiny folded sheet where he wrote these words: “Vergangener sei nicht mehr berührt. In der Hülle seiner Unsterblichkeit verbleibt Ric[h]ard Wagner.”ⁱⁱⁱ Maybe this thought was written when he learnt about Wagner’s death, on February 13th, 1883. Liszt’s admiration for Wagner is well known and this sentence provides a new evidence of it, maybe intended to remain private. As a private ex-voto, it also states that his genius and his oeuvre are immortal in the future. Yet it may also mean that the past, beyond the familial and artistic links between the two composers, had its moments of tension: Past shall not be bothered any longer, and only Wagner’s art must remain.

On August, 17th 1876, in front of the many guests who he had invited in Bayreuth for a great feast at the end of the first *Ring* cycle, Wagner gave a toast in honor of the friend who had been, 25 years before, the first champion of his music:

“For everything that I am and have achieved, I have one person to thank, without whom not a single note of mine would have been known; a dear friend who, when I was banned from Germany, with matchless devotion and self-denial drew me into the light, and was the first to recognize me. To this dear friend belongs the highest honor. It is my sublime friend and master, Franz Liszt!”ⁱⁱⁱⁱ

Among the many composers that Liszt admired, that he played and of whom he conducted and transcribed the music, Wagner is unquestionably the one for whom he had the most absolute devotion. In 1868 he wrote to Agnes Street-Klindworth:

“If I had to write a book on Wagner, I would happily use as an epigraph this remark by Victor Hugo on Shakespeare: ‘I admire *everything*’—‘I admire like a fool.’ The only reservations I have do not involve the flawlessness of Wagner’s genius, but rather the public’s intellective capacities.”^v

His unreserved admiration was known by his close relatives as well as by the public. Many statements attest it^v and it became the object of many caricatures. One of them, Hungarian, was issued on the occasion of the premiere of the *Ring*. Liszt, huge and weeping, is wearing his traditional cassock. He is kneeling in worship of a small Wagner whom he raises from the soil in order to kiss his forehead as a sign of admiration. Its German title, *Nur die Niebelumpen sind bescheiden*, is a word play difficult to translate: “only the Niebelumpen are modest”, in that the suffix “lumpen” in the word “Niebelumpen” translates as “shreds.” The dialogue that stands with the caricature is even wittier, for it is both a parody of the admiration of the great Liszt and

the huge vanity of the small Wagner. It says, *crescendo*, that the later, as big as he may be, still owes much to Liszt — may be just because he remains his father-in-law:

Liszt: You're Dante! You're Shakespeare! You're Saint David!

Wagner: I'm big!

Liszt (crescendo): You're Napoléon I, II, III, IV! You're Byron! You're Kościuszko ! You're Christopher Columbus!

Wagner: I'm bigger!

Liszt (crescendo): You're the great Christopher of the Rhine! You're the Buddha of notes! You're the Christ of counterpoint! You're the Garibaldi of music of the future! You're the Kossuth of German music! You're the Kálmán Tisza of opera! You're the Richard Wagner of Richard Wagner!

Wagner: I'm the biggest!

Liszt: Yes! — You're my son-in-law.”^{vi}

For more than a century, our knowledge of the Liszt-Wagner relationship has been flawed, because traditional historiography is based on incomplete, modified, and censored sources — most of them were indeed published before Cosima's death in 1930, and the editorial praxis in the 50 years after the death of the two composers were generally very different from the today editorial criteria. General interpretation and hermeneutics, for instance of the letters, are based on little reliable documents, and until a complete and critical edition of Liszt's correspondence and other primary sources is available, one must rely on isolated critical studies or directly on manuscripts. Unfortunately, Liszt studies still lack the critical musicological tools necessary to fit the modern standards^{vii}. As far as Liszt and Wagner are concerned, it is however possible today to unveil some biographical and artistic features, and some recent publications help to reexamine their relationship—for example the new French edition of their correspondence issued in 2013 with a very complete critical appendix.^{viii} The field of sources studies is so vast in the Lisztian studies, that one could considerate writing a biography entirely based on unpublished documents, thus putting face to face the “poetical” truth and the “empirical” one^{ix}.

If Liszt's admiration for Wagner was absolute, it was also not totally blind on some aspects, in particular on the latter's —sometimes— awkward temperament. Let's quote, as example, two letters from Liszt to Hans von Bülow that were censored by La Mara in her 1898 edition^x, the only one available today, and published in 2009 only.^{xi} In October 1859, Liszt explains to his then son-in-law that he distanced himself from Wagner because of the pressure he generally puts on his relatives, his ingratitude, and his repeated jeremiads about his material situation:

“As long as I can serve him in anything, be sure that I won't fail, how singular may be his schemes and demands. The greatness of his genius helps me gladly to forget how upsetting his temperament can be. May he only not feel it himself—and not blame his friends for the sad disappointments he exposes himself with a sort obstinacy.”^{xii}

A few days later, Liszt advices Bülow to remain moderate about Wagner's solicitations:

“Relatively to the commissions that Wagner made you responsible for, I invite you to be appropriately measured, and to not strictly follow his instructions which are so often capricious and contradictory. It's to my opinion the only way to serve him effectively — what we do constantly, even if he would make it more difficult than what we expect. Don't you think that one has to treat him as a great Sovereign, a bit sick, but all the more irresponsible?”^{xiii}

The last sentence says a lot and proves that for Liszt, his artistic genius stands above any reproach on his oddity. His oeuvre is beyond anything. He forgets the man to consider only the artist, for whom his admiration is without any condition.

Wagner acknowledged Liszt's influence on his harmony, but believed that it should stay a private statement, and that its disclosure was for both a "jeopardizing" "indiscretion"^{xiv}. The true nature of their musical relations and influences has still to be studied, maybe even revealed, because it has often been reduced to hasty or biased conclusions rarely based on deep, complete and varied analysis. However, some recent very serious studies allow to improve our knowledge of their musical mutual influences, even if many facets are still to be studied in the scores.^{xv} Yet Aesthetics and Spirituality divided them off absolutely. According to John Deathridge, the two composers "had less in common than is usually thought, which is probably why they got on tolerably well."^{xvi} An example only: both wanted to put supernatural lights into music, for instance Liszt in his *Dante-Symphony* and his oratorio *Christus*, and Wagner in *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal*, but also at the end of *Rheingold*. In the *March of the Three Holy Kings* from *Christus* (1866), the violins and the harp feature the star that indicates where is Jesus, the Son of God among the men, whereas the wind and brass instruments play a solemn theme in D flat major (ex. 1). The orchestration, the harmony and the thematic are very similar to the end of *Rheingold* (1854), when the irradiant Bifröst appears to reveal the Walhalla and to lead the gods up to their celestial Burg (ex. 2). The similarity between these two pages is striking, but their signification are diametrically divergent, in the image of the world that stands between the two composers and of the universes that inspire them. Meanwhile with Liszt the Catholic, the light of the star indicates where the men can find the Child of God has descended on Earth, with Wagner the anti-dogmatic, the light shows the way to the fortress where the pagan gods are to take refuge, in the sky and far away from Humanity. In one case, God goes down to Earth and the men, in another the gods go up to flee from them! Liszt's and Wagner's cultures and beliefs also opposed on the *Dante-Symphony*, dedicated to Wagner, who nevertheless recognized that the *Divine Comedy* had found with Liszt his best exegete: "Here the soul of Dante's poem is shown in purest radiance"^{xvii}. However he also notes that

"This work has remained as good as unknown to our age and its public. [...] Plainly these conceptions of Liszt's are too potent for a public that lets *Faust* be conjured up for it at the Opera by the sickly Gounod, in the Concert-room by the turgid Schumann."^{xviii}

„Et ecce stella quam viderant in Oriente antecibat eos.“

The image shows a musical score for Violin and Piano. The Violin part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat major). It features a melodic line with a star symbol above it. The Piano part is written on two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of two flats. It is marked "Linke Hand" and "dolcissimo una corda". The score is divided into four measures, with a star symbol above the first measure of the Violin part.



Ex. 1 and 2. Franz Liszt, *Die heiligen drei Könige (Marsch)* from *Christus, «Walhall» aus dem Ring des Nibelungen*^{xix}

Wagner acknowledged Liszt's influence on his way of conceiving harmony, and he admires his conceptions in the *Dante-Symphony* and the symphonic poems, from which he took inspiration and that he called "*repaires de voleurs*" ["den of thieves"]^{xx}, but he couldn't understand the harmonic and formal explorations of his late works. Cosima writes down a conversation on the occasion of their mutual stay in Venice only a few weeks before Wagner's death:

"Richard starts again to talk about my father with an abrupt manner in his veracity; he considers his last works as "*folie en germe*" ["germinated madness"] and says that he tried to gain ... on dissonances, and explains all of that in a detailed way; I stay silent, sad not to be able to answer anything!"^{xxi}

This remark is partially erased in the manuscript of Cosima's diary, because, of course, it darkens the golden legend of their relationship. Likewise, *Das braune Buch*, the diary presented by Cosima to Wagner in 1864 at the beginning of their affair, contains statements that chip the corner of their idealized friendship^{xxii}.

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Liszt and Wagner met for the first time in Paris in 1840, when the former was at the top of his career as an international pianist, and the latter still totally unknown. They met again in 1844 in Dresden, where Liszt heard *Rienzi*. But the true starting point of their friendship and artistic relationship dates from 1848, when they met again in Dresden. Nine years later, Liszt remembered that moment with an emotion and an intensity that is typical of the first years of their correspondence:

"How could I fail to think of you always with love and fervent devotion, especially in this town, in this room, where we first drew nearer to each other, and your genius flashed its light on me?"^{xxiii}

In 1848, shortly after he settled in Weimar where he had been appointed Kapellmeister "in extraordinary service", Liszt conducts at the Hoftheater the Overture to *Tannhäuser* (12 November 1848), then, on the 16th February 1849, the complete opera. A few days after, he writes to Wagner a letter full of hope:

"To say it once and for all; from now on please count me among your most zealous and devoted admirers—from near or far you can rely on me and consider me at your service.

^{xxiv}

In May 1849, Wagner was fleeing Germany; a warrant had been issued after his involvement in the Dresden insurrection. Liszt helped him to stay under cover in Weimar, where he could secretly attend a rehearsal of *Tannhäuser*, then he helped him to escape from Germany. On August 28th 1850, Goethe's birthday, he conducted at the Hoftheater the Première of *Lobengrin*, which is dedicated to him.

In the 1850s, Liszt succeeded in turning the modest Weimar stage into the flagship of the *Neudeutsche Schule* music, and Wagner in particular; he always tried to use his influence on his patron, the Grand Duke Carl Alexander, to spread the music of his exiled friend, to support him financially and even to obtain his amnesty — unfortunately it was always in vain. In February 1861, the Grand Duke and Liszt talked about a cultural plan to “continue and complete Carl August's and Goethe's oeuvre in order to guarantee to Weimar in Germany the place that Florence occupies in Italy”^{xxxv}. Liszt immediately suggests to premiere *Tristan und Isolde* and the *Ring* in Weimar, and to call Wagner for conducting. In March 1861, when *Tannhäuser* falls at the Paris Opera, he begs Carl Alexander to give Wagner his House Order of the White Falcon (*Ordens vom Weissen Falken*), also known as the Order of the Vigilance (*Ordens der Wachsamkeit*). The Grand Duke writes in his diary that Liszt “spoke with fire about the shame that Germany abandoned his greatest modern composer”, but that he cannot grant his request.^{xxxvi} The reasons of his refusal are mainly political: Wagner is still a fugitive, officially searched by the police of his powerful neighbor, the King of Saxony. His amnesty was first only partial. It is at that time that Liszt left a description of his unrealized dream for Weimar: “a new period comparable to the one of Carl August, of which Wagner and I were the coryphaei, like once Goethe and Schiller. The pettiness, not to say the villainy of certain local circumstances, all kind of jealousies and stupidities from outside and from here prevented the achievement of this dream.”^{xxxvii}

In 1852, Wagner was amazed by Liszt's activity; he thought that he always had “plans to conquest the world in his head”^{xxxviii}. Indeed, in the 1850s, Liszt led a “Wagnerian propaganda”, to quote his own formula.^{xxxix} It was a three-facets strategy: 1) to conduct Wagner's operas, 2) to transcribe some excerpts for the piano, and 3) to write about them in order to initiate the audience. In 1859, he even wanted to publish together in Paris his three main essays on *Lobengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Der fliegende Holländer*, under the title *Trois operas de Richard Wagner considérés de leur point de vue musical et poétique*^{xxx}. This book would have been the first ever published on Wagner, and in French.

Between 1848 and 1859, Alan Walker lists 36 performances of works by Wagner, complete or partial, under Liszt's baton. Most of them (35) took place before 1857, with a climax in 1852 and 1853 (15). The works performed were *Lobengrin* (13 times), *Tannhäuser* (8 times), *Der fliegende Holländer* (2 times), the Overture to *Tannhäuser* (6 times), the duet from *Fliegender Holländer* (2 times), the *Faust Overture*, *Tristan's Prelude*, and *Das Liebesmahl der Apostel* (1 time).^{xxxxi} The first Wagner cycle of history took place in Weimar under Liszt's baton from 16th February to 5th March, 1853 (*Tannhäuser*, *Lobengrin*, *Der fliegende Holländer*).

Liszt's 14 piano works after Wagner (paraphrases and transcriptions) were composed over 35 years, from 1847 to 1882, and are based on 8 operas: *Tannhäuser*, *Lobengrin*, *Rienzi*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Das Rheingold*, and *Parsifal*. However, their chronology shows a peak in the 1850s; most of them (9) were actually composed between 1848 and 1861, a period corresponding to Liszt's most active presence in Weimar; notwithstanding the *Phantasiestück über Motive aus Rienzi*, there are four after *Tannhäuser*, three after *Lobengrin*, and the *Spinnerlied aus dem Fliegenden Holländer*, precisely the three operas that constituted the core of Liszt's Wagnerian propaganda, the only three that he conducted and on which he wrote substantial articles.

Liszt's writings on Wagner come from a narrow period of seven years (1849-1855), corresponding to his main activity as a conductor in Weimar. They were written in collaboration with princess Carolyn zu Sayn-Wittgenstein — but this is not a reason to deny Liszt's paternity.^{xxxii} They were published in various forms (articles and a brochure), and are related to four operas:

Tannhäuser (1849-51), *Lohengrin* (1850-51), *Der fliegende Holländer* (1854) and *Das Rheingold* (1855). They were originally written in French then translated into German. As they were published in one, two or three journals almost at the same time, there are many different versions. In the decade after their publication, some of them were even translated in English, Dutch and Russian. In 1851, Liszt decided to publish together his texts on *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*. The first German translations, with a few Gallicisms, were considered so little German that Lina Ramann decided to revise the whole language for the *Gesammelte Schriften*.

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The importance of Liszt's writings for the Wagner reception shall not be underestimated.^{xxxiii} Liszt used his name, his fame and his authority — although some contested it — to defend the works of his still unknown friend. On November 13, 1851, the *Journal de Francfort* published a laudatory review of Liszt's brochure *Lohengrin et Tannhäuser de Richard Wagner* ("Richard Wagner jugé par Franz Liszt" [Richard Wagner judged by Franz Liszt]). A few days later, the journal published long quotes of it, with this introduction:

"In our issue of November 13th, we made known to our readers the idea and the orientation of François Liszt's last work, while swearing to give some excerpts of this critic as profound as deep on one of the most distinguished German composers. Liszt has been with his piano Beethoven's apostle in the salons. He is now Richard Wagner's apostle in the [German] nation; because it is to this nation that he addresses his work, written in French, but in this way accessible to the general literature. This is how the poet and artist describes the very original manner and the totally new system of the composer."^{xxxiv}

The worship of Wagner's unknown genius, a kind of God of whom Liszt would be the apostle or the prophet, is one of the leitmotifs of the articles in which he tries to explain and spread the new musical system. But Liszt also thought that the public might also be interested by his own conception of Wagner's works^{xxxv}. This is important to consider, for we know that their conceptions differ on many topics. Indeed, Liszt did not share all of Wagner's ideas about music and drama, and this different point of view led him to write a series of articles about Beethoven, Weber, Mozart, Meyerbeer, etc. (later gathered together in the *Dramaturgische Blätter*).^{xxxvi} He also tried to publish them together in 1859 in parallel to his book on Wagner (the manuscript of the lost original French version was sent to a Paris publisher). Liszt's volume about opera was, in his mind, complementary of his volume on Wagner: a kind of history of opera after Liszt based on the link between libretto (drama) and music, in two parts, that one can summarize in this way: *Before Wagner, and Wagner and beyond?*

After his studies of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, Liszt's last big Wagnerian text is dedicated to *Der fliegende Holländer* (1854). Written as were the others in French, it was only published in a German translation. Only a small part of it was published in French, in 1855. But the French version, long considered to be lost, found its way to Beinecke Library (Yale University) where it surfaced at the beginning of the 2000s.^{xxxvii} It was used to reconstitute Liszt's book *Trois operas de Richard Wagner considérés de leur point de vue musical et poétique*.

Liszt's short article on *Das Rheingold* does not have the same dimension as the three previous ones. It was only, to quote him, a "small indiscretion" issued on January 1st, 1855 in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* as a surprise New Year gift for Wagner.^{xxxviii} It is worth remarking that Liszt's writings focus only on Wagner's three "romantic" operas and stop at the beginning of his next development step, *The Ring*, of which he would later write that "it shines of an immortal glory".^{xxxix}

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In his article *Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris (1860)*, the French poet Charles Baudelaire pays a tribute to Liszt and recommends his brochure *Lohengrin et Tannhäuser* (1851), that translates “all the master’s rhetoric with an infinite charm.”^{xl} It is true that Liszt’s texts on Wagner influenced the first 19th Century Wagnerian writers and some of them were reissued in the *Revue wagnérienne*. Bülow admired the way Liszt managed to “reproduce the content of the opera almost with Wagner’s own words, transferring the German poetry in French in a manner that one would have not thought to be possible”, and the critic August Wilhelm Ambros considered that he had

“with his book *Tannhäuser et Lohengrin* opened the path to Richard Wagner. Brilliant in his interpretation, with a very warm approbation and enthusiasm, illustrated with perfectly selected musical examples, this little book succeeds at doing what Wagner himself did not manage to do with his several books.”^{xli}

The title of Liszt’s book project, *Trois opéras de Richard Wagner considérés de leur point de vue musical et poétique*, gives an important clue to understand his main purpose. Because he knew that the combination of music and text is a central point to Wagner’s music drama system, it illustrates his will to consider both the composer and the poet (the union of music and poetry was also one of Liszt’s concerns as a symphonic composer, that led to the invention of the symphonic poem). The structure of his three main texts on Wagner is related to this feature: first he gives a general introduction, then a narrative exposé of the drama based only on the text. He finally explains again the narrative with poetical and musical complements. It is in these sections that Liszt explains the musical ways used by Wagner to make a fusion between drama and music. Liszt, as a pedagogue, tries to familiarize the public with the new system and his three operas.

Among the most significant elements of his book one may emphasize the esthetical autonomy that he gives to the *Tannhäuser* and *Fliegender Holländer* overtures, which he compares to symphonic poems; it was a common idea at the time, and Wagner himself wrote “programs” to introduce them for concerts. What is also notable is the description of the leitmotifs, a term not yet invented by Hans von Wolzogen. Liszt calls them “phrases artères” (“artery phrases”/ « leading phrases » in the present translation based on the German language, p. 182). This metaphor conveys the idea that these recurrent musical motifs, circulating in the score, give it its life as the blood gives it to the human body. After Liszt indeed:

“To a certain degree, his melodies are personified Ideas. Their repetition indicates moments of Feeling that words alone are not entirely capable of expressing. Wagner grants them the function of exposing all of the heart’s secrets to us .”[p. 120 of this volume]

The historian of literature Sarga Moussa, who has recently studied *Des Bohémiens, et de leur musique en Hongrie* with great care, states that Liszt’s writings shall be reevaluated from a stylistic and literary point of view:

“While Baudelaire publishes his *poèmes en prose*, Liszt invents a prose that is both serpentine and rhythmical, made of long sentences that allow letters, words and synthases to resonate together, as if the language was transforming itself into music — but a totally new music that would use all sounding registers.”^{xlii}

On several occasions in his texts on Wagner does Liszt develop a *mimetic* language, so to say that with his style he tries to reproduce for the reader the sentiments suggested by the music. Thus his

beautiful lines on *Lohengrin's* Prelude and the description of the Grail, partially quoted by Baudelaire, are one of the most inspired parts of the book:

“Wagner allows us to behold this temple as an enormous and real structure; as if he wanted to spare our weak senses, he only reveals it to us in the reflection of azure waves and reverberates it in iris-colored clouds. We behold a broad, dreamy, downwardly sinking melody, an aromatic ether, and a holy picture surrounds us— that is the beginning of the introduction-initiation. He divided up the violins exclusively. The composer separated them into eight different pulses and moved them into the highest tiers of their register.

Thereafter, the motive is absorbed by the softest wind instruments, which are joined by the horns and bassoons, and the trumpets and trombones break in. The latter repeats the melody for a fourth time with a truly blended radiance of color, as if in this single moment the holy temple was erected in its entire luminous and radiant splendor before our bedazzled eyes. Yet quickly, like a fiery meteor in the sky, it begins to expire until its solar blazing gradually increases into a vivid sparkling. It condenses itself into a translucent fragrance of the clouds, and bit by bit the vision disappears into multicolored fumes, and in its middle appears the first six measures of the piece until it concludes into ethereal pulses. Its character is an Ideal mysticism that is made perceptible throughout the orchestra, remaining *piano* overall. There are hardly any short moments where the brass instruments interrupt the wondrous lines of the single motive from the introduction that is still shining through. That is the image that is depicted in the listeners’ of this unequalled Adagio deeply stirred senses.” [p. 117-18 of this volume]

In a poetical way, Liszt’s prose tends to imitate, with its rhythm, the exhaustion of the language, the alliterations and assonances, and the profusion of a unusual vocabulary, the impressions caused by the music. Likewise, in his text on *Der fliegende Holländer*, his prose powerfully imitates the terrifying cracking and the spectral noise of the Ghost ship (p. 192 of this volume). Despite the quality of the translations as far as the content and the ideas are concerned,

The culture gathered in these pages is huge. Liszt’s studies are full of many references to music, of course, but also to philosophy, to the Bible, to the Greek, Latin and Nordic mythologies, to universal literature (Balzac, Chateaubriand, Dante, Goethe, Herder, Jean-Paul, Milton, Schiller, Shakespeare, Wieland etc.) and to the fine arts: Berghem, Flaxman, Raphael, Rembrandt, Ribera, Rubens, Leonard, etc. (a remarkable comparison is made, in the analysis on *Fliegender Holländer*, with the Flemish school).

Liszt also shares his own thoughts and some differ from Wagner’s. His Christianized analysis of the legend that inspired Wagner are a distinguished feature. Princess Wittgenstein commentary about the translation of the article on *Lohengrin* supervised by Wagner is an indicator of the gulf between them on that topic:

“Wagner was surprisingly moderate. He added only a single but long sentence. A stupidity of course, about the association of the Holy Grail with the Nibelungen-Horts! So that he can show himself a little miscreant! It changes nothing to your article. It will only make laugh the people who read it. Thanks God it’s not in your original.”^{xliii}

In the text on *Lohengrin*, Herder is described as “more decidedly Catholic than Christian” (certainly an idea of Princess Wittgenstein as Rainer Kleinertz and Gerhardt Winkler write^{xliiv}), and Elsa’s words in Act II, scene 2, are presented with a “naive grace” that bears “so well the seal of the humble dignity characteristic of the Christian virtue”. [See page 124 and endnote 721 on page 170]. Beyond the Christianized distortion of Wagner’s poetry, the interpretation of his

heroines as figures of redemption reflects naturally the traditional Christian martyrdom that fascinated both Liszt and Princess Wittgenstein. The end of *Tannhäuser's* study is symptomatic of this association between religious martyrdom and love, may it be profane or sacred, and combining the tradition of the *Song of Songs* and the Gospels. Indeed, upon the last description of the “Religious Principle” (the pilgrims’ theme), “radiant, pristine light” allowing the spirit to “surrender” “resistingly to the illusion”, Liszt compares the pilgrim’s journey toward Rome to the Way of Sorrows (*Via Crucis*) toward the Absolute Love (of the Christ, who is not named). He emphasizes the palindrome that transforms “Roma” in “Amor” (only the Latin passes on his original idea):

“This song resounds in the soul once again like the plaintive, Hopeful, and yearning voices of all of humanity on their pilgrimage to the great Rome, the mystical Rome, which, since its origin, its high priest designated it with the mysterious and prophetic name *Ερως*— the mainspring source of original, world-renewing Love.

All of us who are pilgrims on the painful path to Rome, let our tears unite with this lofty chorus, whose voices rise directly from the earth to heaven!”^{xlv} [page 77 of this volume]

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In 1851, Carl Alexander was enthralled by his Kapellmeister power:

“Liszt grows up in an undisputable importance. He grows up like a spiral because he always shows new facets — extraordinary person. I would not be surprised to see him withdraw entirely from music in order to take up literature only.”^{xlvi}

Eight years after, Liszt comes back to his texts on Wagner in a letter to Charles Dollfus, the redactor of the *Revue germanique et française*:

“One maintains that what I have published on Wagner contributed to the intelligence and spreading of his production. However I have not *preached* them; I have not indoctrinated — I contented myself to do my best in saying that I found them admirable by their description. In literature also I can only be an artist.”^{xlvii}

This last confidence invites us to reassess the importance of his literary work, to connect it more with his musical output and to regard it as an essential part of his legacy.

Nicolas Dufetel

IReMus (Institut de recherche en musicologie), CNRS, Paris

ⁱ Franz Liszt, letter to Carolyn zu Sayn-Wittgenstein, *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, ed. La Mara [pseud. Marie Lipsius], vol. 7 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1902), 351.

ⁱⁱ Wallet used by Liszt in 1883 containing various autograph notes. MS. D-WRgs 59/141,3, Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Weimar, Germany. For a brilliant study of Liszt’s annotated visiting cards and the insight they give about the composer’s faith, see David Butler Cannata, «Liszt & Minor Orders,» *Journal of the American Liszt Society*, The Bicentennial Issue, 61–62 (2011): 190-231.

ⁱⁱⁱ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years. 1861-1886*, vol. 3 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1996), 354. See *The New York Times*, September 4, 1876, for a detailed account of the banquet.

^{iv} Pauline Pocknell, ed., *Franz Liszt and Agnes Street-Klindworth: A Correspondence, 1854-1886* (Hillsdale: Pendragon, 2000), 268.

^v About Liszt's quotes and admiration for Wagner, see Franz Liszt, *Tout le ciel en musique. Pensées intempêtes*, ed. Nicolas Dufetel (Paris: Le Passeur, 2016), 72-79.

^{vi} *Üstökös*, 16 August 1876 (the text is translated from the original Hungarian, *Sämtliche Schriften: Lohengrin et Tannhäuser de Richard Wagner*, ed. Rainer Kleinertz and Gerhard J. Winkler, vol. 4 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1989), 273.

^{vii} Detlef Altenburg, «Eröffnungsvortrag. Auf dem Weg zu einem neuen Liszt-Bild,» in *Die Projekte der Liszt-Forschung. Bericht über das Internationale Symposium in Eisenstadt 18.-21. Oktober 1989*, ed. Detlef Altenburg and Gerhard J. Winkler, *Wissenschaftliche Arbeiten aus dem Burgenland*, 87 (Eisenstadt: Burgenländisches Landesmuseum, 1991), 9-17. This text, written 25 years ago, is still accurate as far as the methodology of the Liszt studies are concerned (the detrimental absence of critical editions and collective research programs: thematic catalogue of the musical and literary works, catalogue and edition of the correspondence). However, the *Sämtliche Schriften* and the *New Liszt Edition*, still not complete, are now fundamental editions.

^{viii} George Liébert, ed., *Franz Liszt—Richard Wagner. Correspondance*, French trad. by J. Lacant, L. Schmidt and Danielle Buschinger (Paris: Gallimard, 2013).

^{ix} See Nicolas Dufetel, «Franz Liszt et la 'propagande wagnérienne'. Le projet de deux livres en français sur l'histoire de l'opéra et sur Wagner (1849-1859)», *Acta musicologica* 82/2 (2010): 263-304.

^x La Mara, ed., *Briefwechsel zwischen Franz Liszt und Hans von Bülow* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1898).

^{xi} Dufetel, «Franz Liszt et la 'propagande wagnérienne,'» 263-304.

^{xii} Franz Liszt, letter to Bülow, 19 October 1859, MS. D-WRgs, 59/60,1 no 61, Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Germany; censored in *Briefwechsel zwischen Franz Liszt und Hans von Bülow*, 276-277. On 22 June 1864, Liszt wrote similar thoughts to Eduard Liszt; they have also been censored by La Mara (*Franz Liszt's Briefe*, ed. La Mara, vol. 2, 70) but edited in Michael Short, ed., *Liszt Letters in the Library of Congress* (Hillsdale: Pendragon, 2003), 329-330.

^{xiii} Franz Liszt, letter to Bülow, 24 October 1859, MS. D-WRgs, 59/60, 1 n° 62a et 59/60,1 n° 62b, Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Germany.

^{xiv} Richard Wagner, letter to Bülow, 7 October 1859, in Richard Wagner, *Sämtliche Briefe*, ed. Martin Dürrer and Isabel Kraft, vol. 11 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1999), 280-285.

^{xv} Alexander Rehding, «Liszt und die Suche nach dem 'TrisZtan'-Akkord,» *Acta Musicologica* 72/2 (2000): 169-188. Rainer Kleinertz, «Liszt, Wagner and Unfolding Form: *Orpheus* and the Genesis of *Tristan und Isolde*,» in *Franz Liszt and His World*, ed. Christopher H. Gibbs and Dana Gooley (Princeton et Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 231-254. Kenneth Hamilton, «Wagner and Liszt: Elective Affinities,» in *Wagner and his World*, ed. Thomas S. Grey (Princeton et Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 27-64.

^{xvi} John Deathridge, *Wagner Beyond Good and Evil* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2008), 201.

^{xvii} Richard Wagner, «The Public in Time and Space,» in *Religion and Art (Richard Wagner's Prose Works vol. 6*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1897), 85-94 (translated by William Ashton Ellis).

^{xviii} *Ibid.*

^{xix} From Leipzig: Schuberth, plate 4933; Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel (*Musikalische Werke IV*, 1/14) plate F.L.XIV.

^{xx} Cosima Wagner, *Journal*, ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack, trad. Michel-François Demet, vol. 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), 178. Wagner also praises Liszt's *Dante-Symphonie* and says "with a splendid joy that, as far as he is concerned, he has 'stolen' many things to the symphonic poems". See *Ibid.*, 177.

^{xxi} Cosima Wagner, *Journal*, vol. 4, 447. As other passages in the diary, the words from "he considers" to "dissonances" were made unreadable with ink. Twelve words are missing and the restitution of the remaining text is uncertain. (See note *, 447).

^{xxii} See for example *Das braune Buch*, 1st, 4 and 11 September 1865. Wagner wrote that Liszt "repels" him («Dein Vater ist mir widerwärtig»), and that he does everything he can to separate him from Cosima, whose hair he arranges in order to make her look old and awful («garstig»). Richard Wagner, *Das braune Buch. Tagebuchaufzeichnungen. 1865 bis 1882*, ed. Joachim Bergfeld (Munich: Piper, 1988), 74-75, 78 and 85-86.

^{xxiii} Liszt, letter to Wagner, 3 November 1857, in Franz Liszt, *Franz Liszt—Richard Wagner. Briefwechsel*, ed. Hanjo Kesting (Frankfurt-am-Main: Insel Verlag, 1988), 532.

^{xxiv} Liszt, letter to Wagner, 26 Februar 1849, in *Ibid.*, 63-64.

^{xxv} Transcription of the conversation between Carl Alexander and Liszt, 11 februar 1861, MS. D-WRI [Deutschland, Weimar, Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar] Grossherzogliches Hausarchiv AXXVI/560a, 156.

^{xxvi} Carl Alexander, Diary, 17 and 19 March 1861, MS. D-WRI, Großherzogliches Hausarchiv XXVI, Tagebuch 1959, f. 70rv, Carl Alexander's diaries, covering 50 years, are an extraordinary and still unpublished source

about Liszt, Weimar and the 19th Century German cultural history. It is almost exclusively written in French.

^{xxxvii} Liszt, Last Will («Mein letzter Wille», 14 September 1860), in Liszt, *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, vol. 5, 52-63.

^{xxxviii} Wagner, letter to Liszt, 3 October 1852, in Richard Wagner, *Sämtliche Briefe*, ed. Gertrud Strobel and Werner Wolf, vol. 5 (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1993), 66.

^{xxxix} Liszt, letter to Olga von Meyendorff, 17 December 1879, MS. US-CAh [United States of America, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library], AM16, Enveloppe IX.

^{xxx} See Dufetel, «Franz Liszt et la 'propagande wagnérienne'», op. cit.; Franz Liszt, *Trois opéras de Richard Wagner considérés de leur point de vue musical et poétique*, ed. Nicolas Dufetel (Arles: Actes Sud, 2013).

^{xxxxi} Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years. 1848-1861*, vol. 2 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1989), 285-295. However, the list is not complete and it is not sure that Liszt conducted all the performances listed. See Adolf Bartels, *Chronik des Weimarischen Hoftheaters 1817-1907. Festschrift zur Einweihung des neuen Hoftheater—Gebäu- des 11. Januar 1908* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1908), and the database *Theaterzettelpjekt* (Thuringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar and Universität Jena), <http://archive.thulb.uni-jena.de>.

^{xxxii} Nicolas Dufetel, «Les écrits de Franz Liszt. Quelques réflexions épistémologiques et méthodologiques sur leur paternité et leur typologie», dans *Ecrits de compositeurs (1850-2000). Une autorité en question*, dir. Michel Duchesneau, Valérie Dufour, and Marie-Hélène Benoit-Otis (Paris: Vrin, 2013), 265-87.

^{xxxiii} Rainer Kleinertz, «Zu Liszts Bedeutung für die Wagner-Rezeption», in *Die Projekte der Liszt-Forschung. Bericht über das internationale Symposium Eisenstadt*, dir. Detlef Altenburg and Gerhard J. Winkler, Wissenschaftliche Arbeiten aus dem Burgenland, 87 (Eisenstadt: Burgenländisches Landesmuseum, 1991), 77-89.

^{xxxiv} *Journal de Francfort*, 21 November 1851.

^{xxxv} Liszt, letter to Brockhaus, 15 June 1851, MS. f.11^f, Sächsisches Staatsarchiv, Bestand Brockhaus, Leipzig, Germany.

^{xxxvi} See Dufetel, «Franz Liszt et la 'propagande wagnérienne,'» op. cit.

^{xxxvii} *Ibid.*

^{xxxviii} Liszt, letter to Wagner, 1st January 1855, in Liszt, *Franz Liszt—Richard Wagner. Briefwechsel*, 396.

^{xxxix} Liszt, letter to Malwine Tardieu, 14 December 1883, in Liszt, *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, vol. 2, 354.

^{xl} Charles Baudelaire, «Richard Wagner et *Tannhäuser* à Paris», in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Claude Pichois, vol. 2 (Paris: Galimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1976), 779-815, 801.

^{xli} Hans von Bülow, letter to his mother, 21 June 1849, about Liszt's feuilleton on *Tannhäuser* in the *Journal des débats* (Hans von Bülow, *Briefe und Schriften*, éd. Marie von Bülow, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1896), 179); August Wilhelm Ambros, *Bunte Blätter* (Leipzig: Leuckart, 1872), 60.

^{xlii} Sarga Moussa, «*Bohémianiser* la langue. Sur l'usage de quelques mots rares dans *Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie*», in *La représentation des Bohémiens*, dir. de Ségolène Le Men, forthcoming.

^{xliiii} Baudelaire, «Richard Wagner et *Tannhäuser* à Paris», 783.

^{xliv} Carolyn zu Sayn-Wittgenstein, letter to Liszt, 25 April 1851, MS. D-WRgs, 59/33,3, Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Weimar, Germany.

^{xliv} Liszt, *Sämtliche Schriften: Lohengrin et Tannhäuser de Richard Wagner*, vol. 4, 280.

^{xlvi} Carl Alexander, Diary, 18 May 1851, MS. D-WRl, Grossherzogliches Hausarchiv AXXVI/1948, f. 58.

^{xlvii} Liszt, letter to Charles Dollfus, 12 mars 1859, MS. D-Wrgs, 59/62, 7a, Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Germany.