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Religious Workshop and Gregorian Chant: The Janus Liszt, or How to Make New with the Old

NICOLAS DUFETEL

Introduction: the vague Meaning of "religious" Music

Franz Liszt regarded his religious music as central to his output. In spite of renewed interest on the part of musicians and musicologists,[1] however, Liszt's Masses, motets, oratorios and psalm settings remain underappreciated. Some ten years ago, the second edition of Michael Saffle's Liszt research guide contained only 66 references to publications about Liszt's sacred music—this out of a total of 1500 references: a mere 4.4% of the total.[2] In the third edition of 2009, that number rose only slightly, because Liszt studies are still heavily biased toward his piano music.[3] Furthermore, the studies represented by this small percentage are as varied in presentation as they are in subject matter: they include dissertations, monographs, scholarly articles, and more popular writings, and they cover different fields such as biography, analysis, aesthetics, and influences. Unfortunately, these studies rarely attempt to define the relatively vague term "religious music." This last point is of fundamental importance, for as Joseph d'Ortigue wrote in his *Dictionnaire liturgique, historique et théorique de plain-chant et de musique d'église*—a book much read and used by Liszt—"religious" music in the nineteenth century was both everywhere and nowhere and remains an ambiguous concept:

> Yes, everyone admits to the existence of religious music, sacred music, church music because in the eyes of all, whether religious or indifferent, believers or non-believers, these words express one of the needs which, however vague and ill-defined, is nonetheless natural and profound, needs, in short, which each of us feels more or less powerfully. But even if that sentiment is widespread, there is no real notion of it and, even worse, there is no real theory of it either…. In this way, it is very easy for anyone to give his own definition of religious music. As soon as we base our thinking on what is called "religious sentiment," there are no longer any rules or limitations.[4]

This observation is central to Liszt's music, for one could almost say that his entire output, or at least the greater part of it, is "religious" inasmuch as it was inspired by his Catholic faith and culture, or

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[1] See, for instance: Zsuzsanna Domokos, "The 'Miserere' Tradition of the Cappella Sistina, Mirored in Liszt's Works," in: *Liszt 2000. Selected Lectures Given at the International Liszt Conference in Budapest, May 18-20,* 1999, ed. Klára Hamburger (Budapest: Hungarian Liszt Society, 2000), 117-134; "The Performance Practice of the Cappella Sistina as Reflected in Liszt's Church

[2] Saffle, *Franz Liszt: A Guide to Research*, 2nd ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2004). For statistics and charts, see Nicolas Dufetel, "Palingénésie, régénération et extase dans la musique religieuse de Franz Liszt," 2 vols. (dissertation, Université François-Rabelais, Tours, 2008), II :535-537.

[3] Saffle, *Franz Liszt: A Research and Information Guide*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[4] "Tous admettent une musique religieuse, une musique sacrée, une musique d'église, parce que, aux yeux de tous, religieux ou indifférents, croyants ou non croyants, ces mots expriment un de ces besoins vagues, indistincts, mais naturels et profonds, dont chacun a plus ou moins le sentiment. Mais si le sentiment est partout, la véritable notion, et, à plus forte raison, la véritable théorie n'est nulle part. [...] Cela étant, il est tout simple que chacun définisse la musique religieuse à sa manière. Dès lors qu'on se base sur ce qu'on appelle le *sentiment religieux*, il n'y a plus de règles, plus de limites" [Joseph d'Ortigue, *Dictionnaire liturgique, historique et théorique de plain-chant et de musique d'église au Moyen Age et dans les Temps modernes* (Paris: Potier, 1854), xxvii-xxx]. On the question of secularization in the nineteenth century, see René Rémond, *Religion et Société en Europe*: *La sécularisation aux XIXe et XXe siècles, 1789- 2000* (Paris: Seuil, 2001).

more generally by a certain idea of music as a bridge between the Finite and the Infinite. Some of his piano pieces, such as the *Années de pèlerinage*, the *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, and the *Légendes*, clearly have a religious aspect to them. Liszt himself said as much in a little-known letter that he wrote in 1865 to an unidentified correspondent:

> One can say that Music is religious in essence and that, like the human soul, it is "naturally Christian." And when it is combined with words, what more legitimate use is there for its energies than to sing of Man to God and in that way to serve as a rallying point between these two worlds, the finite and the infinite? It enjoys such a prerogative because it plays a part in both of them at once. Restricted in time, it is unlimited in the intensity of its expression.[5]

Not all religious music is church or liturgical music, however, and when one studies Liszt's output, one needs to ensure that the conceptual categories are well defined and adequately delimited, for each genre has its own specific character.

A Life-Long Quest for a New, "Regenerated" Church Music

It was during the 1830s, while he was living in Paris, that Liszt first developed an interest in plainchant and in the music of the Renaissance. In his own words, he wanted to play a part in the "regeneration of religious music." This phrase is taken from his famous essay of 1835, *De la musique religieuse*.[6] Most studies of Liszt's religious works understandably quote from and draw extensively on this essay. It is worth emphasizing, however, that Liszt spoke not about "reform" but about "regeneration."[7] There are repeated references in Liszt's writings to this peculiar idea of progress, and they all occur within the context of a dialectic involving past, present, and future. To give but one example from *De la Fondation Goethe à Weimar*, Liszt quotes a maxim attributed to Leibniz that underpins all the major nineteenth-century narratives on the subject of progress: "Engendered by the past, the present gives birth to the future."[8] Liszt's thinking on the philosophy of history finds concrete expression in his relations to plainchant, for we need to approach him from one perspective as a composer keen to cast his lance far into the future, while from another as the advocate of a centuries-old tradition.

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[5] Liszt to an unidentified correspondent, May 20, 1865, D-WRgs 60/59, 76, 33. Reproduced with minor variants in FLBr VIII:170-171. "On peut dire que la Musique est religieuse par essence, et comme l'âme humaine 'naturellement chrétienne'. Et puisqu'elle s'unit à la parole, quel plus légitime emploi de ses énergies que de chanter l'hom[m]e à Dieu, et de servir ainsi de point de ralliement entre les deux mondes, – le fini et l'infini? Une telle prérogative lui appartient car elle participe à la fois de l'un et de l'autre. Bornée par le temps, elle est sans limites dans l'intensité de son expression."

[6] Franz Liszt, "De la musique religieuse" [quoted from *Franz Liszt: Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 1 (*Frühe Schriften*), ed. Rainer Kleinertz and Serge Gut (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2000), 52-58].

[7] See Dufetel, "La musique religieuse de Liszt à l'épreuve de la palingénésie de Ballanche: réforme ou régénération?" *Revue de musicologie* 95, no. 2 (2009): 359-398.

[8] "Ainsi que dit Leibniz 'Le Présent engendré du Passé, enfante l'Avenir » [Franz Liszt, "De la Fondation-Goethe à Weimar," in: *Franz Liszt: Sämtliche Schriften* 3:70]. There are many variants for this Leibniz quotation, which was famous in the nineteenth century. "Die gegenwärtige Zeit ist schwanger von [sometimes *mit*] der Zukunft" was the epigraph of one of the most important masonic German journals of the time, *Minerva, ein Journal historischen und politischen Inhalts*. See Wolfgang Brassat, *Das Historienbild im Zeitalter der Eloquenz: von Raffael bis Le Brun* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2003), 349.

Liszt began to take an interest in early religious music during the 1830s.[9] This resulted in works like the *De Profundis* for piano and orchestra, which although significant, has little in common with his later Gregorian-influenced works.[10] Most of his contributions to that genre began in 1855 and figured more prominently in his oeuvre after 1861, the year he settled in Rome.[11] By the late 1850s he was taking a detailed interest in plainchant. He made copious notes on the subject and followed current developments in the Gregorian revival, either through the medium of specialist journals in Paris such as *Le Plain-chant* and *La Maîtrise*, or through German-language publications emanating from the Caecilianists of Regensburg. At the same time, Liszt also studied French liturgical publications from Dom Prosper Guéranger, abbot of the Benedictine Abbey at Solesmes. His sketchbooks, history books, and liturgical books, heavily annotated, are now in Weimar and Budapest. These exceptional sources enable us to analyze the ways in which he treated plainchant—especially those ways in which, as a composer, he interpreted, integrated, and assimilated Gregorian melodies into his own music.[12]

In 1853, in the introduction to his *Dictionnaire liturgique, historique et théorique de plain-chant*, d'Ortigue sought to champion the music of the past: "The reader will understand that it is not our aim to say much that is new. Our aim, rather, is to provide much that is old – old in a good sense. This is arguably harder to find than the new. It becomes new by dint of being old."[13] Two years after d'Ortigue's dictionary was published, Liszt wrote to Carolyne zu Sayn-Wittgenstein to inform her that "[his] travel reading was the plainchant dictionary of Joseph d'Ortigue," full of "interesting things."[14] In 1861 Liszt settled in Rome—in part because Carolyn was living there,[15]in part as fulfillment of his youthful dream of devoting himself to religious music. More important, he accepted an invitation from

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[9] See Domokos, "Liszt's Roman Experience of Palestrina in 1839: The Importance of Fortunato Santini's Library," *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 54-56 (2003-2005): 45-55.

[10] Despite its obvious religious basis, the *De profundis* was not conceived as church music; it is a good illustration of d'Ortigue's idea about religious sentiment. Like the *Dies irae* melody, which was frequently employed in secular instrumental compositions, the *De profundis* may also be perceived as a secular or mixed genre. On the other hand, *De profundis* is actually a faux-bourdon, and this makes a significant difference in the possibilities for musical use. Liszt could not have done with it what he later did with plainchant melodies, as we shall see below.

[11] The exceptions are a *Pater Noster,* an *Ave Maria,* and the *Missa quattuor vocum ad aequales.*

[12] Liszt's heavily annotated sketchbooks, history books and liturgical books are now in Weimar and Budapest. See *Ferenc hagyatéka a Budapesti Zeneművészeti Főiskolán. I. Könyvek / Franz Liszt's Estate at the Budapest Academy of Music. I. Books*, ed. Mária Eckhardet (Budapest: Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Főiskola, 1986); and Eckhardt and Evelyn Liepsch, *Franz Liszts Weimarer Bibliothek* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1999).

[13] "[...] on comprendra que nous n'avons pas eu la prétention de donner beaucoup de neuf. Notre ambition, au contraire, a été de donner beaucoup de vieux, de ce bon vieux qui est peut-être plus difficile à trouver que le neuf, et qui redevient neuf à force d'être vieux » [D'Ortigue, *Dictionnaire liturgique, historique et théorique de plain-chant*, col. XV-XVI].

[14] Letter from Liszt to Princess Wittgenstein, August 9, 1856: "ma lecture de route était le dictionnaire de plain-chant de J. d'Ortigue […] tout plein de choses intéressantes" [FLBr IV:311].

[15] See the foundational studies by Donna Di Grazia, "Liszt and Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein: New Documents on the Wedding that Wasn't," *19th-Century Music*, 12 [1988], 148-162; and by Alan Walker and Gabriele Erasmi, *Liszt, Carolyne and the Vatican. The Story of a Thwarted Marriage* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon, 1991). Other, still-unpublished sources cast new light on Liszt and the Princess, notably the so-called "Affaire Wittgenstein" documents in the grand-ducal archive in Weimar: Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Großherzogliches Hausarchiv A XXV Akten.

Monsignor Gustav zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, the Pope's Grand Almoner. As he wrote in 1859, Hohenlohe wanted to give Liszt the opportunity to realize his "plan" for "saving" church music:

> Opinions on sacred music are nowadays well and truly divided, and it is up to your genius to decide on the form that it should take from now on. May your inspiration guide you by the grace of God. This inspiration will be the soul and the delight of the faithful, a powerful weapon that will bring more and more of our prodigal children back into the bosom of our holy mother, the Church. Once you are in Rome, I very much look forward to learning details of the plan that you have formed with regard to religious music, and I am writing to you now to offer you a modest place to stay with me in the Vatican, an offer that I make in all sincerity and with immediate effect.[16]

How could a composer with profoundly Catholic sensitivities resist such blandishments, especially when that composer had for decades harbored ambitions for the future of religious music? Liszt's "plan," as mentioned by Hohenlohe, can be reconstructed in part thanks to Liszt's writings and various other documents. One letter regarding the "canon of the chant of the church," is of particular importance. Liszt wanted to adapt what he called the "old" notation and wrote about this idea to Carolyne on July 24, 1860, when he was preparing for his future work on Catholic music and his Roman stay.[17] Two months after his arrival in Rome, he told his daughter Blandine that he was reading d'Ortigue's *Dictionnaire*, for him "a great source of instruction."[18] As if to highlight his attachment to this volume, Liszt went on to explain to Blandine that he had "given it the honor of having it bound in a beautiful white parchment *à la romaine*, perfectly matching the contents of this excellent work."[19] Unfortunately, Liszt's copy of this *Dictionnaire* has been lost, but it was almost certainly heavily annotated. Its loss represents a setback for the study of his religious music, because he—by his own admission—was particularly fond of dictionaries.[20]

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16 "De nos jours, les opinions sont bien divisées sur la musique sacrée, c'est à Votre génie à décider [sic] la forme que dorénavant elle doit prendre, Vos inspirations qui par la grâce de Dieu, Vous guident, en seront l'[â]me, les délices des fidèles, une arme vigoureuse pour ramener de plus en plus les enfants prodigues vers Notre Sainte Mère l'Eglise. Je me réjouie [sic] bien d'apprendre lorsque Vous serez à Rome, les détails du plan que Vous avez formé relativement à la musique religieuse, je Vous offre dès à présent et bien sincèrement une habitation modeste chez moi au Vatican" [Liszt to Gustav Hohenlohe, September 28, 1859; D-WRgs 59/18, 11 n° 1. Published with minor variants in LBrZ II:251].

17 Liszt to Carolyne, July 24, 1860, D-WRgs 59/81,1 n° 21. Published with minor variants in FLBr V:33-36.

18 "[D]'un grand secours d'instruction" [Liszt to Blandine Ollivier, December 25, 1861. Published in *Correspondance de Liszt et de sa fille Madame Blandine Ollivier (1842-1862*), ed. Daniel Ollivier (Paris: Grasset, 1936), 298.

19 "[L]es honneurs d'une reliure en beau parchemin blanc à la romaine, parfaitement assortie avec le contenu de cet excellent ouvrage" [Ibid].

20 See for instance what Liszt wrote Carolyne on February 12, 1861: "[…] j'ai toujours gardé la manie des Dictionnaires! Puissé-je bientôt trouver le loisir de la cultiver davantage – près de vous" ("I have always had a mania for dictionaries! May I find soon the pleasure to cultivate it more—close to you") [D-WRgs 59/82, 1, n° 8. See FLBr 5:131, where an important part of the letter, before the last sentence, does not appear. That part contains quotations from the definition of "onomastique" as found in two different dictionaries: the Académie française and the Bescherelle]. The catalogue of the 1887 auction of Liszt's library in Erfurt reports on a "Dictionaries" section with 44 titles (Nos. 440-483), but each title may have run to several volumes, and we know that two dictionaries are not included in this section (Nos. 438 and 439). See the *Verzeichnis No. 365 des antiquarischen Bücher-Lagers der Otto'schen Buchhandlung in Erfurt, Paulstrasse Nr. 31. Bücher vermischten Inhalts aus Franz Liszt's Nachlass. 1887* (Erfurt: J. G. Cramer, 1887), 11-13. Reproduced in Eckhardt and Liepsch, *Franz Liszts Weimarer Bibliothek*, 32-34. See also Nadine Helbig, "Franz Liszt in Rom. Aufzeichnungen," *Deutsche Revue* (January and February 1907): 71-77; and 173-180.

Liszt and Plainchant*:* Traditionalism and Modernism

Liszt is often held up as an avant-garde or progressive composer whose sights were turned toward the future, and rightly so. Much has been written about the "modernity" of his music in academic studies,[21] and the success of the *Via Crucis* confirms the public's agreement. There is no doubt that Liszt himself always took responsibility for his modern ideas. In 1874, for example, he wrote: "My only ambition as a musician was and will be to cast my lance into the infinite space of the future.… Provided that this lance is well-tempered and does not fall to earth, the rest is of no importance to me."[22] This expression, with its promise of a fine future, is not in fact *solely* by Liszt, who is repeating word for word a phrase used in one of Carolyne's letters; he himself places it in quotation marks. Marie Lipsius, who used the pseudonym "La Mara," removed these quotation marks and in that way altered our perception of the matter.[23] Whatever its ultimate origins, this statement serves merely as one more example of the need for a critical study of the sources.

What business, then, did plainchant have in Liszt's modernism? Why did a famous "progressive" like Liszt take an interest in it? Liszt never gratuitously rejected the past or its traditions, especially in matters of religion. As Carl Dahlhaus explained, during the 1830s and 1840s there was no unbridgeable gulf between the adherents of Classicism and the champions of progress.[24] For Liszt, however, "traditionalism" was naturally linked to religion: "Here, as elsewhere," he wrote, quoting Jean-Baptiste-Henri Lacordaire, "it is a matter of 'going back to the roots'."[25] In the field of music, these principles include plainchant and Renaissance polyphony: the official musical languages of the Church, if not its mother tongues.

During the 1860s Liszt returned to the question of the "enemies" and "opponents" he had to face all his artistic life and especially during the Weimar years in terms of the development of his own

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[21] René Leibowitz, *L'évolution de la musique, de Bach à Schoenberg* (Paris, Corrêa, 195; see the chapter "Les prophéties de Franz Liszt," 141-153); László Somfai, "Die Metamorphose der 'Faust-Symphonie' von Liszt," *Studia Musicologica* 5 (1964): 283–293; Dorothea Redepenning, *Das Spätwerk Franz Liszts: Bearbeitungen eigener Kompositionen* (Hamburg: Karl Dieter Wagner, 1984); *Liszt the Progressive*, ed. Hans Kagebeck and Johan Lagerfelt (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2001); *Franz Liszt. Les éléments du langage musical* (Paris, Zurfluh, 2008, new ed.); and Rossana Dalmonte, "Le côté français des 'prophéties' de Franz Liszt," in *Liszt et la France. Musique, culture et société dans l'Europe du XIXe siècle,* ed. Malou Haine and Dufetel, with Dana Gooley and Jonathan Kregor (Paris, Vrin, 2012), 567-582.

[22] "Ma seule ambition de musicien était et serait de lancer mon javelot dans les espaces indéfinis de l'avenir — comme nous disions autrefois dans le journal de Brendel [i.e., the NZfM]. Pourvu que ce javelot soit de bonne trempe et ne retombe pas à terre — le reste ne m'importe nullement!" [FLBr 7:57-58]. See Dufetel, "Nella Selva Oscura…: Discovering Liszt," in *Liszt. A Chorus of Voices. Observations from Lisztians around the World*, ed. Saffle, John C. Tibbetts, and Claire McKinney (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2012), 106-114.

[23] Again, see FLBr VII:57-58 with reference to D-WRgs 59/89, no. 7.

[24] "The classical works kept alive in concert and opera repertoires were meant to serve as a foundation for what one then believed to be the ineluctable march of progress…. Thus, to advocate the new and to cherish the old were complementary, not contradictory, stances" [Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 139-140 and 26-35].

[25] Liszt to Agnes Street-Klindworth; September 16, 1856. "Là comme ailleurs, écrit-il, il s'agit de 'remonter aux fondemens' comme dit Lacordaire, et de pénétrer à ces sources vives qui rejaillissent jusqu'à la vie [é]ternelle" [*Franz Liszt and Agnes Street-Klindworth: A Correspondence, 1854-1886,* ed. Pauline Pocknell (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2000), 108, 330].

works and the *Neudeutsche Schule*.[26] His comments in an 1860 letter to Agnes Street-Klindworth help us understand his relationship with—or more precisely his appreciation of—musical tradition:

> If, when I settled here [Weimar] in 1848, I had decided to attach myself to the *posthumous* party in music, to share in its hypocrisy, to flatter its prejudices, etc., nothing would have been easier for me through my earlier connections with the chief bigwigs of that crew. By so doing I would certainly have won myself more esteem and pleasanter relations in the outside world; the same newspapers which have assumed the responsibility of abusing me with a host of stupidities and insults would have outdone each other in praising and celebrating me, without my having to go to much trouble about it. They would have gladly *whitewashed* a few of my youthful peccadillos in order to laud and boos in every way the *partisan* of good and sound traditions from Palestrina up to Mendelssohn.
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> But that was not to be my fate; my conviction was too sincere, my faith in the present and future of the art was both too fervent and too firm for me to be able to be content with the empty objurgatory [from *objurgate*: "to scold or rebuke sharply; berate"] formulae of our pseudo-classicists, who shriek until they are blue in the face that the art is being ruined.[27]

Liszt refers here to his sincere and long-standing interest in "fine and wholesome traditions" that were not, however, understood by what he ironically coined "pseudo-Classicists": those who thought the only one way to celebrate the past and tradition was to treat them as sacred and untouchable. Such people, conservative from Liszt's point of view, were blinded by his much-touted progressivism and consequently unable to appreciate his paradoxical traditionalist "zeal." The truth of the matter is that Liszt was a Janus-like figure who wanted to reconcile tradition and modernity. Fortunately, he left evidence that both deals specifically with this idea of a dialectic between the past and modernism, and addresses the importance of that dialectic in terms of music in general and his own profession as a composer.

A first piece of evidence, another letter to Street-Klindworth (1863), represents a more generalized statement on music. In it Liszt explains that he is following what he calls "the system used constantly in Rome with regards to the Christian monuments," and he defines this method as follows:

> Do not the magnificent pillars of Sainte Marie des Anges come from Diocletian's thermal baths, and has not the bronze from the Pantheon found a use as the baldachin of Saint Peter's altar? One could go on for ever listing similar transformations, for at every turn here, one is struck by the harmony in

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[26] The term "Neudeutsche Schule," or "New German School," represents composers who, influenced by Liszt, Berlioz and Wagner, composed music after certain aesthetics and musical language (program music for instance); their works were played from 1859 at the Tonkünstler-Versammlungen festivals of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein founded in 1861 by Liszt and Franz Brendel.

[27] "Si lors de ma fixation ici [Weimar] en 48 j'avais voulu me rattacher au parti posthume en Musique, m'associer à son hypocrisie, caresser ses préjugés etc rien ne m'était plus facile par mes liaisons précédentes avec les gros bonnets de ce bord. J'y aurais certainement gagné à l'extérieur en considération et en agrémens; les mêmes journaux qui ont pris à charge de me dire force sottises et injures m'auraient vanté et célébré à l'envi, sans que je me donne grand peine pour cela. On aurait volontiers innocenté quelques peccadilles de ma jeunesse, pour louer et relever de toutes manières le zélateur des bonnes et saines traditions depuis Palestrina jusqu'à Mendelssohn. Mais tel ne devait pas être mon lot; ma conviction était trop sincère, ma foi dans le présent et l'avenir de l'art trop ardente et trop positive à la fois, pour que je puisse m'accommoder des vaines formules d'objuration de nos pseudo-classiques qui s'évertuent à crier que l'art se perd, que l'art est perdu" [Liszt to Agnes Street-Klindworth, November 16, 1860; *Franz Liszt and Agnes Street-Klindworth*, 187, 352].

> the divine plan and between what was, what is, and what will be. And so I am singularly attached to Rome […].[28]

This description of "palimpsest" composition offers a useful and new guideline to any analysis of his music: the absorption of tradition and the superposition of layers.

A second piece of evidence is directly concerned with plainchant. In 1862, Liszt wrote to his old friend d'Ortigue, asking to renew his own subscription to the *La Maîtrise*, a sacred-music publication. He also asked about the current state of research into the question of plainchant and, in particular, d'Ortigue's opinion of the Abbé Raillard: one of many figures seeking to revive plainchant at this time. Liszt, who calls Raillard the "knight without fear of Gregorian Chant" ("chevalier sans peur du Chant Grégorien"), writes that: "The most daring excesses of the music of the future are no more than childish timidity when set beside the heroism of true plainchant, which is stuffed full of quarter-tones, tristropha and strophicus authenticated by the Abbé Raillard."[29]

Liszt's claims are unambiguous: the music of the future is unadventurous when compared with the "heroism of true plainchant." Of course, there are in fact no quarter-tones or "tristropha" in his own religious music. Much of that music does, however, contain Gregorian elements—elements that can be used to renew musical language and, paradoxically, as old things become "new by dint of being old," can also represent a turn toward the future. These two quotations about the Roman method and the "heroism of true plainchant" are, from my point of view, important keys that open the door to a greater understanding of Liszt's religious music. These invite us to examine in greater detail his relations with Gregorian chant and his general conception of (music) History as far as the idea of Progress is concerned.

Liszt's Gregorian Workshop I: An "Authentic Ecclesiastical Liturgical Hunt" for Saint Elisabeth's Liturgy

The score of *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth* was published with an appendix (or *Schlussbemerkung*) in which Liszt both explains how he used Gregorian chant in that work and thanks the Hungarians who helped him to find the "original" melodies.[30] A study of the sources can explain how all these discoveries happened, and how other people, not mentioned in Liszt's note, were also involved. In 1857, Liszt began work on *Elisabeth*. He immediately put in place a web of informants extending across Belgium, France, Germany, and Hungary who were charged with providing suitable

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[28] "Les magnifiques colonnes de Ste Marie des Anges ne proviennent-elles pas des thermes de Dioclétien, et le bronze du Panthéon n'a-t-il pas trouvé son emploi dans le baldaquin de l'autel de St Pierre? – On n'en finirait pas d'énumérer de semblables transformations car à chaque pas ici, on est frappé par les concordances du plan divin entre ce qui a été, et ce qui est et sera. Aussi je m'attache singulièrement à Rome' [Liszt to Agnes Street-Klindworth, August 30, 1863. *Franz Liszt and Agnes Street-Klindworth*, 217, 360].

[29] "Les témérités les plus excessives de la musique de l'avenir ne sont que des timidités enfantines, en regard de l'héroïsme du vénérable Plain-Chant, farci de quarts de tons, de tristrophus, et de groupes strophicus, authentiqués par Mr l'abbé Raillard" [Liszt to d'Ortigue, November 28, 1862; FLBr VIII:155-158].

[30] *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth* (Leipzig: C.F. Kahnt, [1871], Plate 1230), 311. The melody that Liszt believed was liturgically connected with Saint Elisabeth of Hungary was in fact connected to Saint Elisabeth of Portugal.

musical material. In a letter to his son-in-law Émile Ollivier, he explained that he was undertaking research into what he called elsewhere his "dusty sources" (*sources poudreuses*):[31]

> In order to ensure that my work has a Catholic and highly obvious cachet I should like to introduce and develop some of the liturgical intonations that have no equivalent in music today. Now, I am convinced that with a little effort this can be found in Paris, and since this is a task to which I attach a good deal of importance, I have no qualms about troubling you.[32]

Liszt asked Ollivier to contact Charles de Montalembert to inquire whether, while Montalembert had worked on his own monumental *Histoire de sainte Élisabeth de Hongrie, duchesse de Thuringe,*[33] he had come across any "musical notation" in manuscripts he had consulted. Montalembert replied that he remembered no such notation.[34] Next, Liszt sent Joseph d'Ortigue, still with Ollivier's intercession, some of the liturgical texts taken from Montalembert's book and asked him to look through the holdings of the Bibliothèque impériale in search of corresponding music. D'Ortigue was instructed to copy out these "simple plainchant intonations" (*simples intonations de plain-chant*).[35] At the same time, Carolyne sent Ollivier additional details about the notations sought by Liszt.[36]

In Pest, Liszt asked colleagues to look in local libraries for manuscripts or printed editions in which he was sure "may be found musical intonations relating to the Office of Saint Elisabeth."[37] "I am convinced," he went on, "that there must be some old plainchant manuscripts … which I shall put to very good use."[38] Several Hungarian composers and clerics and a few others were conscripted and some of them—Michael von Rimely, Anton von Augusz, Maurus Czinár, Kronperger, the Pater "Guardian" (Agapius Dank), Gabriel Mátray, Mihály Mosonyi (Michael Brand), Ede Reményi, and Alexander Wilhelm Gottschalg—were acknowledged in Liszt's *Schlussbemerkung*. It was composer Mosonyi, however, who acted as Liszt's special, most active emissary. He and his assistants searched through Hungarian libraries, including that of the Franciscans, and sent to Weimar what with some

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31 Liszt to Agnes Street-Klindworth, December 17, 1860. *Franz Liszt and Agnes Street-Klindworth*, 354.

32 "Pour imprimer à mon ouvrage un cachet catholique, très ostensible je desirerais y introduire et développer quelqu'une de ces intonations liturgiques qui n'ont pas d'équivalent dans notre musique moderne. Or, j'ai la persuasion qu'avec un peu de peine, cela doit se découvrir à Paris [?] et puisqu'il s'agit d'un travail auquel j'attache assez d'importance je ne me fais pas trop scrupule de vous molester" [Liszt to Ollivier, July 3, 1858, F-Pn NAF 25180 f. 88-91. Published with minor variants in Hamburger, "Liszt and Emile Ollivier," *Studia Musicologica* 28 (1986): 65-77].

33 See Charles de Montalembert, *Histoire de sainte Élisabeth de Hongrie, duchesse de Thuringe* (Paris: Debécourt, 1836).

34 Montalembert to Liszt, June 30, 1858, D-WRgs 59/24, 2. Published with minor variants in BrHZ III:36-37.

35 Liszt to Ollivier, July 3, 1858; F-Pn NAF 25180 f. 88-91. Liszt's original letter to d'Ortigue and his response seem to have disappeared.

36 Carolyne to Ollivier, August 5, 1858. Quoted in *Émile Ollivier et Carolyne de Sayn-Wittgenstein: Correspondance 1858-1887*, ed. Anne Troisier de Diaz (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), 37-38.

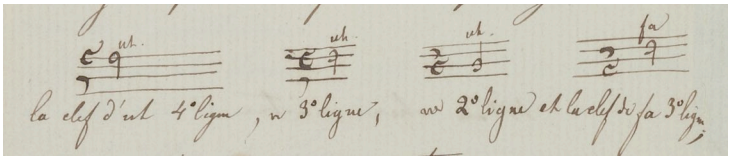
37 Liszt to János Danielik, 16 June 1858. Quoted in *Franz Liszt. Briefe aus ungarischen Sammlungen: 1835-1886*, ed. Margit Prahács (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1966), 101-102. Like Montalembert, Danielik also published a "life" of Saint Elisabeth [*Magyaroszági Szent Erzsébet élete* (Pest, 1857)], which Liszt read. His copy is preserved in Weimar at the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek: D-WRz L 608.

38 "J'ai la persuasion, poursuit-il, qu'il doit se rencontrer à *Pest* de vieux manuscrits de Plain-Chant avec l'office de *Ste Elisabeth* dont j'aurai un grand parti à tirer" [Liszt to Augusz, June 26, 1858. Quoted in *Franz Liszt's Briefe an Baron Anton Augusz. 1846-1878*, ed. Wilhelm von Csapó (Budapest: Franklin, 1911), 85-86].

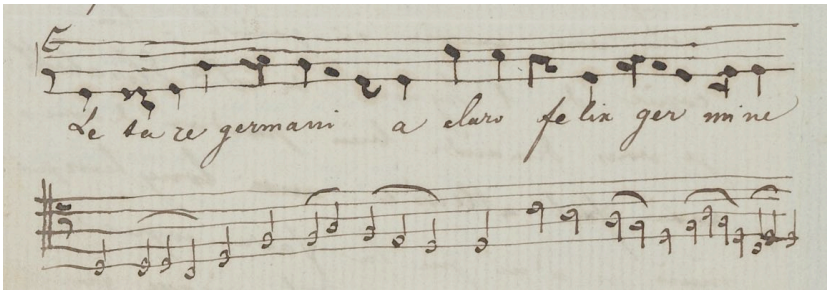
justification was described as the results of an "authentic ecclesiastical liturgical hunt" (*authentische kirchlich-liturgische Jagd*).[39] On Liszt's behalf other Hungarians visited the Benedictine Abbey at Martinsberg near Sopron, from which the composer received several copies of local manuscripts.

In Brussels, Liszt sought the help of Eduard Lassen. In a letter to Liszt dated 17 July 1858, Lassen apologized for not having found either the Breviary of the Dominicans nor the Missal of the Premonstratensians.[40] He also called on the Bollandists but found nothing there either.[41] Lassen also wrote that he was hoping that Édouard Fétis might be able to help him. In another letter, unfortunately undated, Lassen did send Liszt a copy of some music he himself had prepared: the first antiphon from the Vespers of Saint Elisabeth, *Letare Germania claro felix germine*:

> I am enclosing a copy of the hymn of Saint Elisabeth and apologize for having kept you waiting for it so long, but I was unable to have it copied by anyone else better than I initially thought; to do so, I would have had to ask for special permission from the minister, which would have taken a long time; and so I am sending you my own copy, and even if it is unattractive, I can assure you that it is at least exact. I have not rewritten it in modern notation because you will be able to read it more easily as it is.
>
> There are four clefs used:



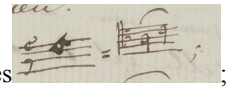
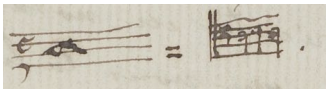
> Each dot [*barre*] is a note; for example:



[39] Brand to Liszt, July 1, 1858; D-WRgs 59/9, 8.

[40] Lassen to Liszt, July 17, 1858; D-WRgs 59/21, 18 no. 9. The music manuscript is kept in D-WRgs 60/Z50c.

[41] The Order of Canons Regular of Prémontré is a Roman Catholic religious order founded at Prémontré near Laon in 1120 by St. Norbert; members of the order are also called Norbertines. The Bollandist Society is an association of scholars, philologists, and historians named after named after Jean Bolland or Bollandus (1596–1665), who edited the first volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum* series, focused on hagiography and the history of the saints.

> This sign,  which is found at the end of every part and before each change of clef, is not a note but a custos; in some cases I've marked it unduly heavily as I don't know how to write this notation, but you'll easily recognize it.
>
> These are two notes ; and these are three 
>
> I hope, my dear master, that this will be of help to you. […][42]

As it happened Liszt was apparently unable to use this melody. Unlike the other copies that were sent to him from Hungary and that are now preserved in Weimar, Lassen's copy includes no annotations in Liszt's hand.

Other copies of plainchant in square-note notation sent to Liszt by his emissaries and located today in Weimar do include his annotations, especially those made by Mosonyi. Liszt's annotations were apparently made so that he could more easily read the manuscripts. The clefs, for example, were transcribed by him, and the same kinds of annotation appear in most of the printed books on Gregorian chant that he owned.[43] Preserved today in three envelopes, their contents can be summarized as follows:

> 1. First envelope (Z50a): three folios with four melodies in square-notation; a note by Mosonyi to Liszt (July 3, 1858); a double folio with Latin liturgical texts translated into German (Mosonyi's hand). Liszt made annotations on the music sheets.
>
> 2. Second envelope (Z50b): double folio with a letter by Kronperger to Mosonyi (July 7 [1858]; eight melodies in square-notation; a letter by Mosonyi to Liszt (July 12, 1858). Liturgical texts copied by Czimár from a Dominican Breviary from 1519 (7 pages). Liszt made annotations on the music sheets.
>
> 3. Third envelope (Z50c): a 9-page copy by Lassen of *Letare germania claro felix germine*, in hufnagel notation. No annotation by Liszt (see before).[44]

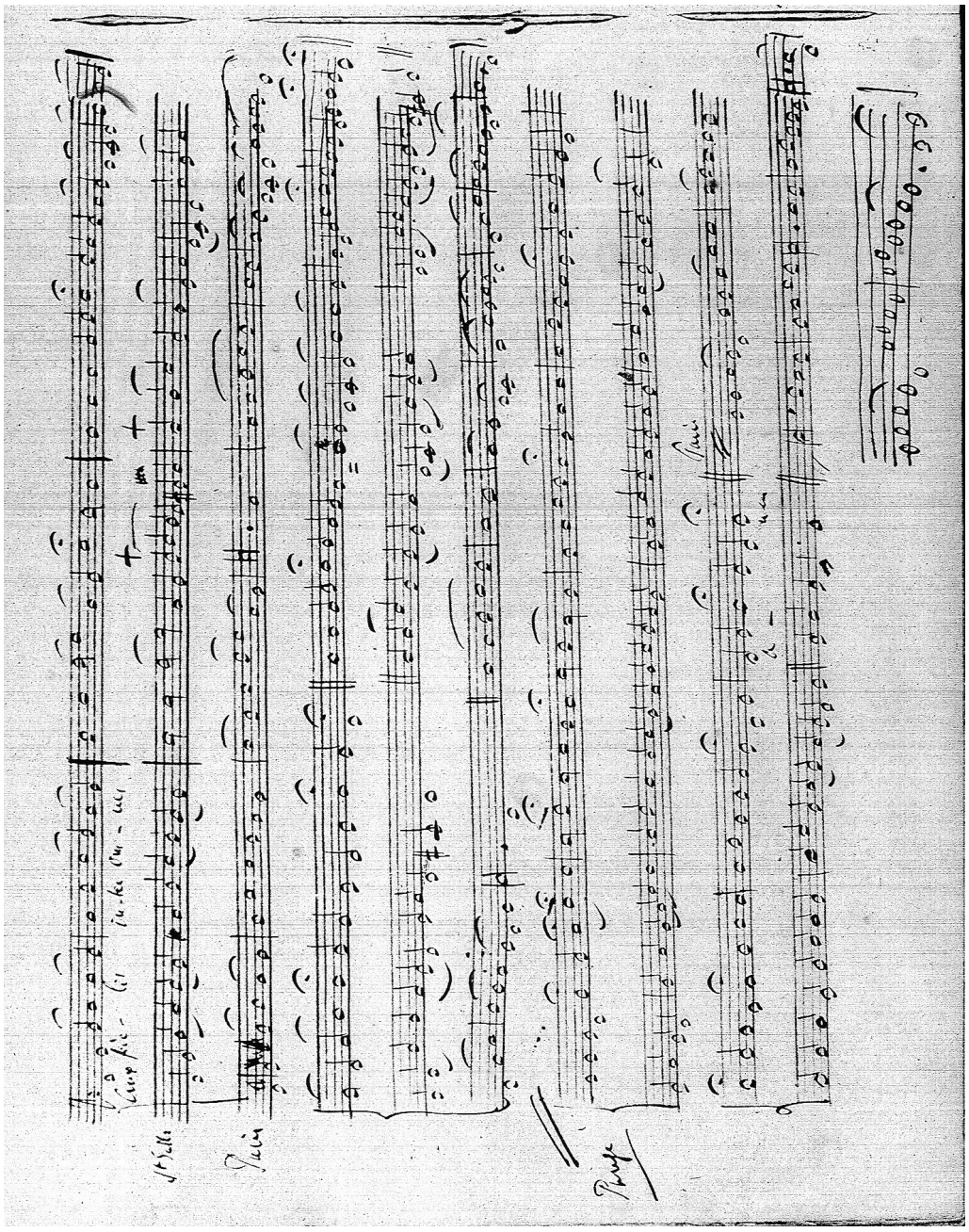
Insofar as I can determine, only the Hungarians are thanked in Liszt's *Schlussbemerkung* because only the material they sent him had proven helpful. Liszt's acknowledgement, of course, was also a promotional "effect," because a nationalistic oratorio like *Elisabeth* represented Hungary and its helpful citizens.

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[42] Lassen to Liszt, undated [summer 1858?]; D-WRgs 59/21, 18 no. 10. Lassen's copy of the hymn (9 pages) was separated from the letter with which it belongs, but today it is owned by the same archive as other plainchant sources (see below, D-WRgs 60/Z50c).

[43] Preserved in D-WRgs 60/Z50a, b, c, together with other manuscript documents copied by Mosonyi, Kronperger (the editor of the journal *Der katholische Christ*), Czimár ("custodos" of the library at Martinsberg Abbey), and Lassen. All of these documents pertain to Liszt's search for St. Elisabeth's liturgy.

[44] I presented a detailed study of these documents entitled "Liszt's Gregorian Sources, in Weimar and Budapest: *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth* and *Christus*" at the 2011 conference *Der ganze Liszt — Liszt-Interpretationen. Internationaler Liszt-Kongress*, sponsored by the Institut fur Musikwissenschaft Weimar-Jena.



Example 1: Liszt's Sketchbook, D-WRgs 60/N4, 141 and 138 [reverse pagination]. Different versions of the *Magnificat*, *Crux fidelis* and *Pange lingua* plainchants in the hand of the composer (c. 1855-1862)

Liszt's Gregorian Workshop II: Sketchbooks and Annotated Books

Sketchbook N4 in the Liszt-Bestand of the Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv, Weimar, contains the most Gregorian material in the composer's hand.[45] This sketchbook demonstrates that Liszt was interested in different versions of the same plainchant melody and, above all, that he compared these different versions with each other. This point is of fundamental importance, because it was very much this kind of method the Benedictine monks at Solesmes systematically employed in their attempt to revive plainchant and to establish an "authentic" version.[46] (See Example 1).

On pages 138 and 141 of N4, Liszt copied out four versions of the *Magnificat*, three of the *Crux fidelis*, and three of the *Pange lingua*. In the case of the *Magnificat*, he numbered these versions [1] to 4 (p. 141). The first three versions are in part accompanied by a fauxbourdon, and at the start of the fourth Liszt added the words "Vêpres des morts" ("Vespers for the Dead"). On page 138 he added the words "St Gall" and "Paris" opposite the second and third versions of the *Crux fidelis*. The word "Paris" has also been added to the *Pange lingua*. These three melodies appear respectively in the *Dante* symphony, *Hunnenschlacht*, and *Der nächtliche Zug*, and they have long been familiar to Liszt scholars.

Liszt's library contains similar material. His copy of Adrien Le Clere's *Antiphonarium Romanum*[47] contains these words and symbols, written in ink above the hymn *Lucis Creator optime*, "+ Ganz anders—in Niedermeyer / gleich mit [wie?] Clement Paroissien / Romain."[48] See Example 2.



Example 2: *Antiphonarium Romanum*... Liszt's copy with marginalia. Budapest, Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Research Center, library, LK 7

Chromaticism is

[45] D-WRgs 60/N4. See the description below for some details.

[46] See Dom Pierre Combe, *Histoire de la restauration du chant grégorien d'après des documents inédits* (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1969); and Katherine Bergeron, *Decadent Enchantments: The Revival of Gregorian Chant at Solesmes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

[47] The French liturgy was at the time divided between the Roman and Gallican rites, but when Liszt used Parisian books he used Roman ones.

[48] *Antiphonarium Romanum, quod ad cantum attinet, ad gregoriam formam redactum, ex veteribus manuscriptis et duplici notatione donatum. Notae recentoriores* (Paris: Le Clere, 1857), 17. This copy is preserved in the library of the Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Research Center, Budapest, LK 7. See *Ferenc hagyatéka a Budapesti Zeneművészeti Főiskolán. I. Könyvek*.

usually cited as the principal line of attack through which music broke free from the tonal system. At the beginning of Liszt's search for ways of avoiding the beaten path of Classical tonality—which is to say, from the very beginning of the 1830s (Reicha, his teacher for theory, had already been an unconventional harmonist)—we can identify two other principal ways: harmony (in terms of Fétis's use of the term "omnitonic") and modality.[49] The role played by modality should not be underestimated. As Serge Gut observes, "the first attack on the omnipotence of tonality came initially from the slow infiltration of modal phrases."[50] In the final analysis, modality perhaps played a part as important as that of chromaticism in Liszt's expansion of the language of tonality.

From the late 1850s onward Liszt took a lively interest in everything that touched on modal theory. In his books on plainchant, he repeatedly wrote down the number of each mode, whether it was authentic or plagal, and its final and dominant pitches. The table listing the different modes in Liszt's copy of the *Traité théorique et pratique de l'accompagnement du plain-chant* by d'Ortigue and Louis Niedermeyer includes other kinds of annotation: notes have been added to twelve of the fourteen modes that it contains (Nos. 1–10 and 13–14), and names have been added to eleven of them (Nos. 1–10 and 13). The authentic modes have been underlined in order to set them apart. Liszt has also written out the finals and dominants at the end of each stave.[51]

N4 also contains two pages (pp. 112 and 114) of modal exercises that reflect Liszt's lively theoretical curiosity. On those pages he analysed the construction, transpositions, and "points of repose" of several modes, copied out several types of tetrachords, and jotted down several definitions of the effects and characters of certain modes. On page 112 Liszt quoted Jean-Jacques Rousseau and François-Joseph Fétis and copied out the definition of the "hypoproslambanomenos" from Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique*,[52] while on page 111 he and princess Wittgenstein copied out the following definition of "podosophes" from Fétis's *Résumé philosophique de l'histoire de la musique*:

> [Liszt's hand:] Podopsophes – time beaters – so called from the noise made by their feet. It was their custom to strike the floor of the stage with wooden sandals tipped with iron, adding to it the sound of their hands struck one against the other. For the dance they marked the beat with shells and animal bones that were struck against each other, much as people do today with castanets. [Carolyne's hand:] Although it must have come close to destroying the melody played on feeble instruments, all this noise was pleasing to the ears of the Greeks because it marked the rhythm of the music, and because this rhythm was for them the most important part of music .... Because of what has just been said of the various rhythms of Greek poetry, it is easy to understand that they gave more or less

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[49] See Thomas Christensen, "Fétis and Emerging Tonal Consciousness," *Music Theory in the Age of Romanticism*, ed. Ian Bent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 37-56. In his copy of RLKM, Liszt wrote himself: "historische Entwickelung / Unitonie – Pluritonie (polytonie) /Chromatik Enharmonik— / Endziel, / Omnitonie" ("historical progress / unitony – pluritony (politony) / chromatic, enharmonic—/final goal: omnitony") [RLKM I:207, preserved in D-WRgs, 59/352,2)].

[50] "[L]a première atteinte à la toute-puissance de la tonalité vient d'abord de la lente infiltration de tournures modales dans le langage musical avec des répercussions sur l'écriture mélodique et harmonique" [Serge Gut, *Franz Liszt. Les éléments du langage musical* (Paris: Zurfluh, 2008), 362].

[51] Louis Niedermeyer and d'Ortigue, *Traité théorique et pratique de l'accompagnement du plain-chant* (Paris: Repos, 1859), 23. Budapest, Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Research Center, library, LK 147.

[52] Taken from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Hypo-Proslambanoménos," *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris: veuve Duchesne, 1768), 249.

> rapidity or slowness, softness or strength, and that it often resulted in picturesque images. The musical mode had to be related to the rhythm of the verse. If this rhythm was solemn and majestic, the mode was too, and the *Dorian* was the one that was chosen. If it was harsh and forceful, they used the *Phrygian* mode. If it was soft and mellow, they fell back on the *Aeolian* mode and so on for the rest & [Fétis. Res. Ph *CXX* –][53]

Almost certainly this passage predates May 1860, when Carolyne left for Rome. Their collaborative effort was probably undertaken at the Altenburg, where they had an extensive, well-stocked library at their disposal. Moreover, these few lines add a particular dimension to the shared task undertaken by Liszt and his companion. After all, we may recall that Liszt several times refers to "their" work together, notably on "their" *Liturgie romaine*. This, then, is a good example of the way in which the Princess was able to help and support Liszt in his projects and is also a fine symbol of their intellectual union.

Whenever he encountered a Gregorian melody, Liszt tried to identify its mode, as if he were studying the history of medieval music. In Le Clere's *Antiphonarium Romanum*,[54] for example, the identification of the mode is missing from the *Feria quinta in coena Domini, Lectio III, Manum suam misit hostis*. Apparently Liszt himself added "VI" in ink to the blank space before the beginning of the melody, identifying it as the sixth mode.[55]

Modality was not the only element of Gregorian chant that intrigued Liszt. Rhythm too was the object of his "studies." In N4 he also copied out plainchant melodies using modern instead of square notation. In his letter from July 24, 1860, to Carolyne, Liszt refers to the necessity of this "modern" practice.[56] Some of his marginalia reflect attempts to reconstruct rhythm from square notation and add melodic elements to existing Gregorian formulas. See Example 3. Notations in Liszt's copy of Louis Lambillotte's *Chants communs* reveal his interest in identifying clefs.[57] A small sketch for the

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[53] "[Liszt:] [Podopsophes – batteurs de mesure – ainsi appelés à cause du bruit de leurs pieds. Ils avaient l'habitude de frapper le plancher de la scène avec des sandales de bois garnies de fer, en y joignant le bruit des mains frappées l'une dans l'autre. Pour la danse, on marquait la mesure avec des coquilles et des ossemens d'animaux qu'on frappait l'un contre l'autre à peu près com[m]e on fait aujourd'hui des castagnettes.] [Carolyne:] Tout ce bruit bien qu'il dût à peu près anéantir la melodie jouée par de faibles instrumens était agréable à l'oreille des grecs parce qu'il marquait le rhythme, et que ce rhythme était pour eux la partie la plus importante de la musique…. D'après ce qui vient d'être dit des rhythmes divers de la poesie grecque, il est facile de comprendre qu'ils donnaient aux vers plus ou moins de rapidité ou de lenteur, de douceur ou de force, et qu'il en resultait souvent des images pittoresques. Le mode musical devait être en rapport avec le rhythme poetique. Si celui-ci etait grave et majestueux, le mode l'etait aussi, et le *dorien* etait celui qu'on choisissait. S'il etait âpre [et] vehement, on se servait du *phrygien*. S'il etait doux et moelleux on avait recours à l'éolien et ainsi des autres & ['(Fétis. Res: Ph / *CXX* –']" [D-WRgs 60/N4, 113. Quoted incompletely from Joseph Fétis, *Résumé philosophique de l'histoire de la musique*, in *Biographie universelle des musiciens précédée d'un sommaire philosophique de l'histoire de la musique*, 8 vols. (Paris: H. Fournier, 1835-1844), I:cxx].

[54] See note 48.

[55] *Antiphonarium Romanum,* 143 (Budapest, Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Research Center: shelf number LK 7).

[56] See note 17.

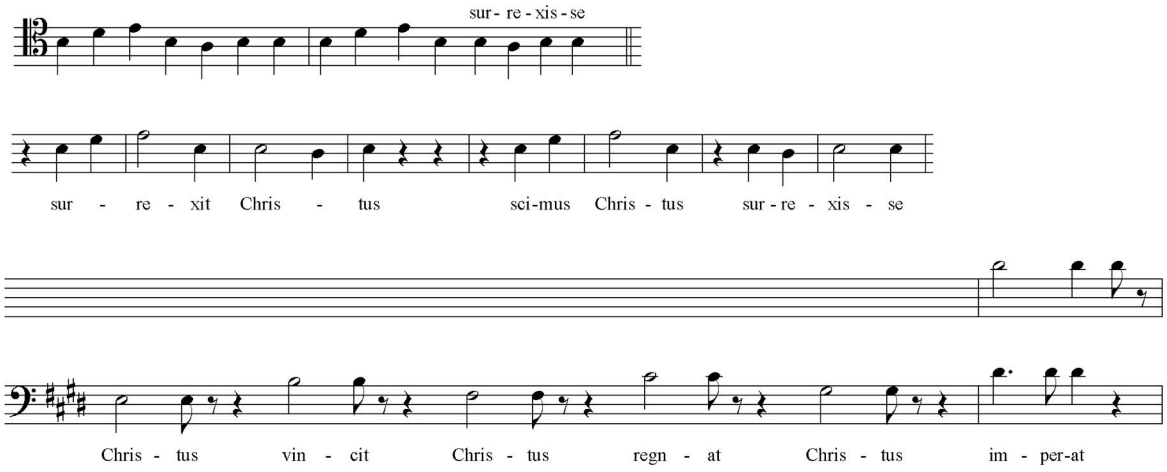
[57] Louis Lambillotte, *Chants communs des messes d'après le graduel romain* (Paris: Adrien Le Clere, 1858), II-III (Budapest, Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Research Center: shelf number LK 106).

"Resurrexit" of *Christus* also shows how he gave birth to a vocal line from a regular Gregorian melody. See Example 4.[58]



Example 3: *Paroissien romain complet noté d'après le chant grégorien. Plain-Chant* (Paris: A. Le Clere, 1860), 117, with Liszt marginalia. Budapest, Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Research Center, library, LK 172

[58] Apparently he did not use it in any of his compositions. See Example 4: the first line is a Gregorian-like profile, the second one Liszt's re-elaborated version, and the third one a first version of the "Resurrexit" fugue thema he eventually used. See also Example 5a, letter B.



Example 4: Sketch for Liszt's *Resurrexit* in *Christus*. D-WRgs 60/U21

Gregorian Melodies in Liszt's Works: Some Examples from *Christus*

Naturally, Liszt's interest in plainchant is also reflected in his works. As seen in his oratorio about Saint Elisabeth, his compositions show how he "revived" and used plainchant. A few studies have been published on this subject, and Heinrich Sambeth's work is still worth consulting.[59] Liszt's oratorio *Christus* is based in part on Gregorian melodies used as recurrent motives, and they work more or less as *Leitmotive*. Their skillful organization—some return at key moments in the work—also reflects Catholic liturgical practices. One example is the return as Easter bells in a Gregorian-inspired "Alleluia" motif in the *Weihnachtsoratorium* ("Christmas Oratorio"), and in the *Passion und Auferstehung* ("Passion and Resurrection") section. Compare measure 154 of the first *Pastorale* with mm. 7-23 and 148-150 of the *Verkündigung des Engels* and 261-278 of the *Resurrexit*. Liszt also used motivic cells in a cyclical fashion and broke down some of his melodies into centos: typical chant formulas identified as such by Dom Paolo Ferretti.[60] Compare the opening measures of the *Einleitung* (*Rorate coeli desuper*) with the instrumental introduction of *Die Seligpreisungen* and mm. 176-191 of *Das Wunder*.

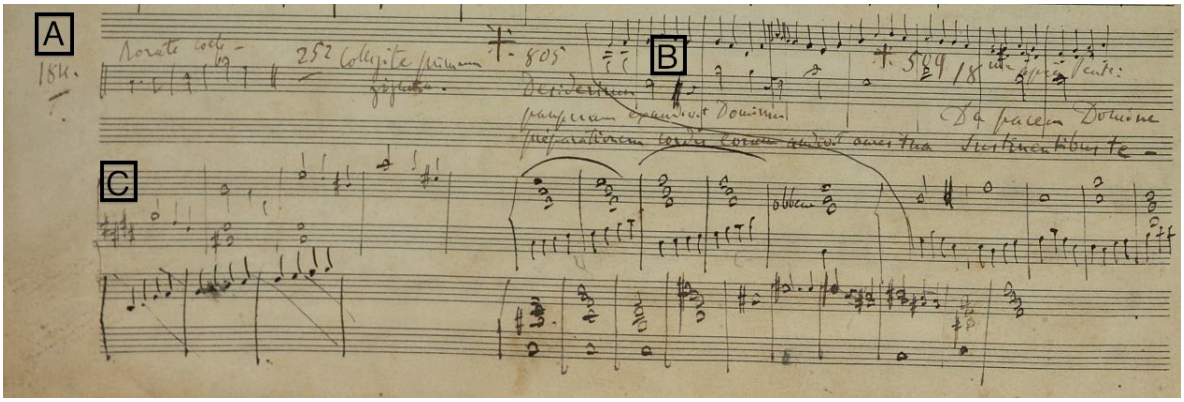
Few sketches survive for *Christus*, but among them is the incipit of the *Rorate coeli desuper* melody that opens the oratorio and that Liszt employs in the *Einleitung* ("Introduction").[61] See Examples 5a-b.

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[59] Heinrich Sambeth, "Franz Liszt und die Gregorianische Melodien und ihre Bedeutung für die Entwicklung seiner Religiosität und Kunstanschauung" (dissertation: Universität Münster, 1923). Sambeth also published an article from his based on his dissertation: "Die Gregorianische Melodien in den Werken Franz Liszts, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner kirchenmusikalischen Reformpläne," *Musica sacra* 55 (1925): 255-256.

[60] See Dom Paolo Ferretti, *Esthétique grégorienne, ou traité des formes musicales du chant grégorien* (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1938).

[61] D-WRgs 60/B2[4].



Example 5a: Liszt's sketch for *Christus* ("Rorate coeli desuper", letter A) with notes about the melody. D-WRgs 60/B2[4]



Example 5b: Liszt, *Christus* (Einleitung with the "Rorate" thema) (Leipzig, Schuberth, [1872], plate 4933), [3]

Here Liszt began by writing a quarter note, then replaced it with a half note. As in other Liszt works inspired by Gregorian chant, the phrase begins on an upbeat, and a ternary structure provides a strong sense of balance and respiration. A similar upbeat and structure appear at the beginning of *Via Crucis*, which was also the fruit of a laborious quest for perfection, as the composer's manuscript shows.[62]

In the *Rorate coeli* sketch (see Example 5a), the numbers and Latin phrases probably refer to the pages in a book relating to this melody. I have not been able to identify this book, but it seems we are dealing with another example of Liszt's comparing existing melodies. The composer himself indicates that page number 509 (?), for instance, refers to the "Introit" for the eighteenth Sunday after Whitsuntide, *Da pacem Domine sustinentibus*, which is built on the same melody as the *Rorate coeli*.[63] Liszt, it seems, was unwilling to take a given plainchant melody and simply change its rhythms.

[62] H-Bn Ms. mus. 14, f. 2rv.

[63] See Example 5a.

Instead, he studied every iteration of each melody within the liturgical year and examined—or at least intended to examine—the whole of the vast Gregorian repertory.

Another Gregorian melody found in *Christus* is the *Angelus ad pastores ait*. Unlike the *Rorate coeli desuper*, the *Angelus* is sung, and it also appears in the *Weihnachtsoratorium*. Compare the page from Liszt's copy of the *Graduale Romanum*[64] (see Example 6a), where this melody occurs with his own final version (Example 6b). In this instance the manuscript and the published score are almost identical:

Can the 1857 Budapest *Graduale Romanum* be the source of Liszt's version of the "Angelus ad pastores ait"? The melodic outline is almost the same, and the bar lines are in the same places. Moreover, the dotted note values correspond to the tonic accents of the Latin prosody ("*An*gelus," "*a*it," "an*nun*tio," "*gau*dium" and "*na*tus"). But Liszt also employed alternating quarter and half notes, creating greater rhythmic interest. Above all, he introduced a moment's silence after the first word in order to emphasize the commas written in the printed sources, and this gives his melody its three-dimensional character. The *Angelus ad pastores ait,* however, does not lend itself to further development and cell division, unlike the *Rorate*: it appears in its entirety in *Christus* and is not treated as cyclical material.

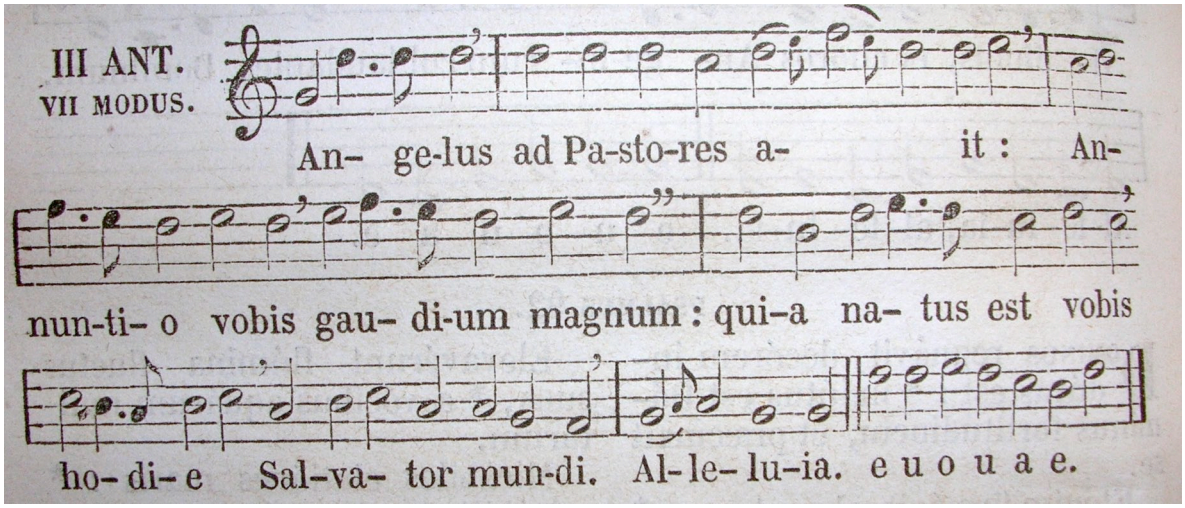
In Liszt's copy of the *Graduale Romanum*, the page containing the *Angelus ad pastores ait* has been turned down. This is insufficient to prove that Liszt found the *Angelus* melody in his copy of the volume in question, even if it elsewhere bears his annotations. He may have located it elsewhere or even heard it during services. It is unlikely, however, that any of his contemporaries would have created a version as rhythmically varied as Liszt's. It is the composer himself who seems to be at work here, not the archeological transcriber of material found in previous publications.[65] It is important to note, however, that Liszt's version suggests a hypothetical Gregorian *Urfassung* of the *Angelus* melody: the sort of reconstruction the monks at Solesmes Abbey were looking for. Liszt possessed some Solesmes publications in his library and some of them may contain a few marginalia, although these publications are not music books and contain no chant.[66] Nevertheless, he arrived at his own result through art and musical intuition not through philology, although he demonstrated an interest in historical research and in books where he could find the basic musical material to be transformed. As a musician, he possessed an intuitive understanding of the ways in which Gregorian melodies were originally declaimed, and he rediscovered or revived aspects of the Gregorian spirit—"spirit" in the sense of breathing (from the Greek *pneuma* that gave *neuma*).

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[64] *Graduale Romanum quod ad cantum attinet, ad gregoriam formam redactum ex veteribus Mss. Undique collectis et duplici notatione donatum. Notae recentiores* (Paris: Le Clere, 1857), 58. Budapest, Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Research Center: shelf number LK 71.

[65] This is not the place to compare Liszt's use of Gregorian material with his piano fantasies and paraphrases. In both cases, however, Liszt operated as a *faiseur de fantaisie*: a creative mind stimulated by external elements to be re-worked and transcended.

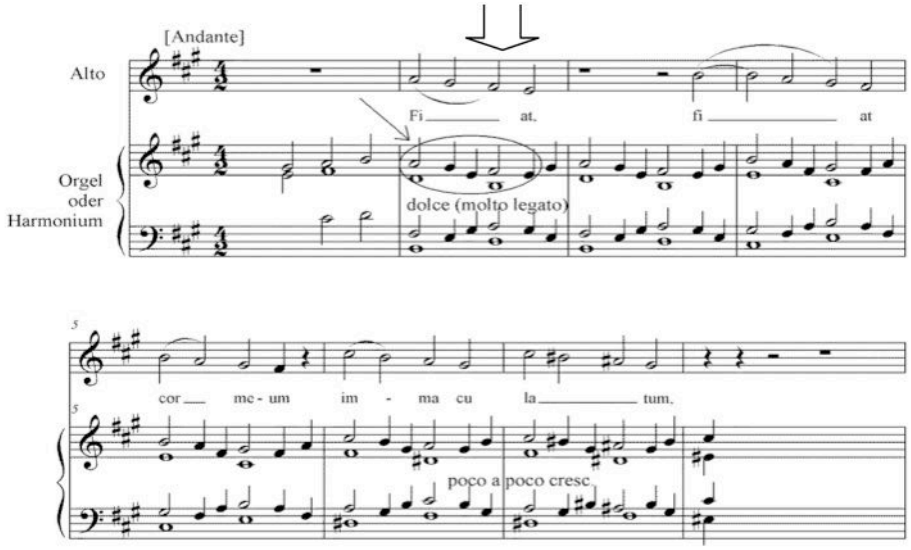
[66] Dom Prosper Guéranger, *L'Année liturgique: L'Avent* (Paris: Julien, Lanier, Cosnard et C°, 1858); *L'Année liturgique: Le temps de Noël* (Paris: Julien, Lanier, Cosnard et C°, 1859); *L'Année liturgique: Le temps de la Septuagésime* (Paris: Julien, Lanier, Cosnard et C°, 1861); *L'Année liturgique: Le carême* (Paris: H. Vrayet de Surcy, 1860); and *L'Année liturgique: Le temps pascal* (Paris: Vrayet de Surcy, 1859 and 1862). These books were preserved in the library of the Franciscan convent in Budapest, to which they and other religious books were given just shortly after Liszt's death under the supervision of Carolyne. They are now on deposit at the Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Reserach Center, Budapest.See *Liszt Ferenc hagyatéka a Budapesti Zeneművészeti Főiskolán. I;* and Dufetel, "Franz Liszt, franciscain 'du berceau jusqu'à la tombe'," *Études franciscaines* 2, no. 2 (2009): 303-339.



Example 6a: "Angelus ad pastores ait," from Liszt's copy of the *Graduale Romanum*, 58. Budapest, Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Research Center, library, LK 71



Example 6b: Liszt, "Angelus ad pastores ait" from *Christus* (autograph score). GB-Lbl Add 34182, p. 19



Example 7: Liszt, *Sancta Caecilia*, m. 32-39, from *GA* V/6, 125



Example 8: Liszt, *Sancta Caecilia*, m. 32-39. F-Pn Ms 165, f. 3r

Conclusion

Liszt succeeded as both a traditionalist and a progressive. To paraphrase what he wrote about the "pseudo-Classicists," however, he was neither a "pseudo-traditionalist" nor a "pseudo-progressive." A true Janus-figure, he turned his eyes toward both past and future. He was utterly convinced that plainchant, as a popular[67] and historical repertory, had a potential in the modern world of music (if not in the realm of spirituality). On a concrete, musical level he found in Gregorian chant the seeds of a

[67] When Félix Danjou founded the *Revue de la musique religieuse, populaire et classique* in 1845, plainchant was conceived a popular music, as the expression of the Christian people since the beginning.

possible modernity: a behavior corresponding to his sense of the philosophy of history, connected with the idea of regeneration.[68] His interest was neither exclusively aesthetic nor antiquarian; instead, he was willing to get involved, and we find in his praxis as a religious composer concrete traces of his theoretical and concrete interest in plainchant. Liszt kept abreast of the latest publications and of advances in his contemporaries' understanding of chant. In a sense he returned to school, something that should not surprise us: Liszt as a composer was always searching for the Ideal and always seeking knowledge, justification and progress.[69]

In her lecture about analytical methods during the "Liszt's Legacies" conference held in Ottawa, Canada, in 2011, Rossana Dalmonte made an important point in highlighting that on the one hand, many kinds of analysis had to be brought together in order to ensure a more complete understanding of Liszt's music. On the other hand, Dalmonte observed how philological studies have to come first in order to guarantee a well-founded basis for other analytical and theoretical approaches. This is true. First, manuscripts and other sources are the only documents that reveal Liszt's creative process. Second, they cast light on the poor state of Liszt's published religious oeuvre. Consider the quotation marks around the expression "javelot" at the beginning of the present article. It is only a detail, but as such, an important clue for anyone seeking rigorous knowledge.

To conclude, I would like to mention another example of such a philological detail, now in the field of music.

Liszt's *Sancta Caecilia*, a motet for alto solo and organ or harmonium accompaniment composed between 1880 and 1885, is based on the Gregorian melody of the *Benedicamus* or *Ite missa est*. The text is the first antiphon in the Vespers for Saint Caecilia (November 22): *Fiat cor meum immaculatum ut non confundar* ("Let my heart be undefiled, that I be not ashamed"). The vocal line published in the Breitkopf & Härtel "complete" Liszt edition (or *GA*) is the only available published score to my knowledge. (See Example 7).The word "fiat" ends on the final note in the traditional manner that many composers would have followed. But this is not what Liszt wrote. In the only autograph known, preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (F-Pn Ms 165), Liszt provided two notes for the *deposition.* (See Example 8).

Sancta Caecilia appeared posthumously, so Liszt had no control over its publication. The small arrow in Example 8 indicates a melody taken from the Gregorian *Benedicamus Domino* or *Ite missa est*, as used by Liszt earlier in "Der Einzug in Jerusalem" from *Christus*; it also appears above in Example 3 and Example 5a (letter C).

There are two probable explanations for the fact that the published score differs from his autograph. First, it is possible that whoever prepared the Breitkopf edition simply made a mistake. Second, it is possible that the same editor or editors found Liszt's autograph bizarre or erroneous and deliberately "corrected" it. But there is nothing strange about what Liszt wrote, which is itself exemplary of the Gregorian idiom the composer made his own.

It would be easy to cite more examples of this kind, but this one suffices both as a warning to future editors and as an invitation to look at Liszt's music differently and carefully. Was it not Liszt

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[68] Dufetel, "La musique religieuse de Liszt."

[69] See Cannata, "Liszt & Minor Orders," 190-231.

himself who said, quoting Lacordaire, that in religion "as elsewhere we need to return to first principles"? This "elsewhere" can and must also apply to philology for a better and more precise understanding of his compositional legacy.[70]

Nicolas Dufetel

[70] This idea was brought to me during long discussions with Dom Daniel Saulnier, the last director of the "Atelier de paléographie" at Solesmes Abbey, the heir of a long tradition going back to Liszt's time. I am deeply indebted to Dom Saulnier for having shared with me his amazing and unique knowledge of the Gregorian repertory and the history of its restoration.