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Mary Jane Phillips-Matz

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by Mary Jane Phillips Matz

The discovery during the past year of many documents new to Verdi scholars, some found in Parma and Cremona, others in Piacenza, Trieste, Florence, Venice, and non-Italian cities, draws attention to the importance of the Institute's concern for its microfilm archive and picture collection. Some of these documents have lain unexamined in libraries and city archives for a century or more. Others are in private collections, where only direct contact with their owners made it possible to study them. In some cases, entire new areas of Verdi scholarship have been opened, relating to persons or families or theatres where no *verdiani* have ever worked.

Among these private collections are groups of ten letters in Verdi's hand, or fifty, or seventy and more, many relating to his work and his few close friendships. The smallest of these collections, and one that invites immediate, continuing study, is in Busseto, where one family discovered, quite by accident, seven early documents, five of them in Verdi's hand. All are addressed to Antonio Barezzi; the two not in Verdi's hand are also part of the Barezzi family archive. None have previously been examined by any living Verdi scholar, although Gatti and other early biographers had seen some of them.

All of these documents are early, dating from before July 1835 to 1847. The first is a note from Verdi to Antonio Barezzi, which begins 'Amico mio . . .' and concerns the Busseto Società Filarmonica, of which Verdi was director. Since this letter predates Verdi's marriage to Margherita Barezzi, it shows the intimacy between Verdi and Barezzi in the light of a true friendship, rather than as a father-son or artist-patron relationship. The second, also a note, was written after Verdi and Margherita were married; in it the composer orders wine and liqueurs from his father-in-law and asks that they be added to his bill.

The three important letters that follow are dated 5 and 7 September 1838 and 6 October 1838. The first, written from Verdi's house in Busseto to Antonio Barezzi, asks for a loan of 'from 120 to 130 francs' so that Verdi and Margherita can go to Milan, where Verdi had some few contacts and the hope of seeing his

first opera put on at the Teatro Filodrammatici. The second finds the couple in Milan, where they could not find lodging for themselves, nor a stable for their horse, and had to take refuge with Verdi's former landlord, Professor Giuseppe Seletti, who was decidedly *not* a friend of the composer. In the third letter, Verdi tells his father-in-law that he and his wife are returning to Busseto at once.

The sixth and seventh of these documents, though not in Verdi's hand, relate directly to his long intimacy with the Barezzi. One is a bill of lading, which begins with the words 'I, the undersigned . . .'. It is the inventory of Verdi's furniture, which, after the deaths of his son and wife in Milan, he shipped back to Busseto. The document tells its own tragic story; everything is in groups of three or multiples of three—six mattresses; six pillows; three chests of drawers, in walnut; eighteen walnut chairs with their eighteen cushions. The calligraphy calls for further study, for certain words seem indeed to be in Verdi's distinctive hand, and if the document was in fact written by 'I, the undersigned . . . M^o Giuseppe Verdi' it more than confirms Giuseppe Demaldé's claim that Verdi was demented with grief at the time.

The last of the seven documents is a transcript of the letter that Verdi wrote to Barezzi informing his 'Dearest Father-in-law' that *Macbeth* was dedicated to him. The letter is almost certainly in the hand of Giovannino Barezzi, who was Verdi's closest friend for more than twenty years. There is a signature that may be a facsimile or may be Verdi's. The original of this letter remained in the Barezzi house until the early 1960s; it is now in the collection of Demetrio Barezzi's heir, Alba Caraffini, who lives in Fidenza and has her own large private collection of Verdi holographs and photographs. These, collated with the material at the Busseto library and with Cina Barezzi's collection, make up an important, unexplored area of Verdi studies.

To these should be added the collections of the Balestra-Accarini-Bonenti families and those of the Volpinis, the Manfredis, the Macchiavellis, and the Adornis, the collection of Gianfranco Stefanini, and a dozen

others in Piacenza, Parma, and Cremona. Many of these documents have an accompanying iconography, often portraits or miniatures of Verdi which no one has ever photographed. One of them, which came to light only after the exhibition at the Danville con-

gress, is an oil painting by a member of the Cavalli-Piatti family, one of whom was an early Verdi biographer and the brother-in-law of Giovannino Barezzi. It shows Verdi together with his parents outside the house at Roncole.

New Verdi Publications

Tutti i libretti di Verdi, introduction by Luigi Baldacci (Milan: Garzanti, 1975) [modern typesetting, to a single left margin, obscures the verse structures; Baldacci's introduction is reprinted, with a new conclusion and small changes, in the Massimo Mila *Festschrift* listed below.]

HUMBERT, JEAN: 'À propos de l'égyptomanie dans l'oeuvre de Verdi: attribution à Auguste Mariette d'un scénario anonyme de l'opéra *Aïda*', *Revue de Musicologie* 62 (1976) 229-56 [The author turned up a copy of Mariette's printed *Aida* scenario in the Fonds Cambon of the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra; the text, along with the Italian MS translation at Sant'Agata, is reproduced.]

PESTELLI, GIORGIO, ed.: *Il melodramma italiano dell'Ottocento: studi e ricerche per Massimo Mila* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1977). Part I, 'Verdi', contains Nino Pirrotta: 'Semiramis e Amneris, un anagramma o quasi', 5-12; Marcello Conati: 'Saggio di critiche e cronache verdiane dalla *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* di Lipsia (1840-48)', 13-43; Roman Vlad: 'Unità strutturale dei *Vespri siciliani*', 45-89; Carlo Parmentola: '*Rataplan*: confessioni sulla *Forza del destino*', 91-111; Luigi Baldacci: 'I libretti di Verdi', 113-23; Luciano Alberti: 'I progressi attuali [1872] del dramma musicale'. Note sulla *Disposizione scenica per l'opera "Aida"* . . ., 125-55; Wolfgang Osthoff: 'Il Sonetto nel *Falstaff* di Verdi', 157-83.

SCHMIDGALL, GARY: *Literature as Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) contains a chapter on *Macbeth*, 179-215. [bright prattle]

WEAVER, WILLIAM, ed. and trans.: *Verdi: a Documentary Study* (London & New York: Thames & Hudson, 1977), introduction, documents, 314 plates [a valuable, substantial, and attractive contribution to iconography and documentation, including much previously unpublished material]

PIERI, MARZIO: *Viaggio da Verdi* (Parma: La Pilotta, 1977: 176 pp.) [long-winded and self-indulgent causerie, but informed and at times provocative]

CONRAD, PETER: *Romantic Opera and Literary Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); a chapter on 'Operatic Shakespeare' (43-69) has some thoughts about *Otello* and *Falstaff* [high-flown]

MAUREL, VICTOR: *Dix Ans de carrière* (New York: Arno Press, 1977, reprint of 1897 Paris edition) contains 'À propos de la mise-en-scène du drame lyrique *Otello*', 3-148; and 'À propos de *Falstaff*', 179-197. [The first Iago adds, to the detailed instructions of the *Disposizione scenica*, his own careful observations on the way *Otello* should be staged and interpreted; the first Falstaff writes a brief essay on the opera.]

CORSI, MARIO: *Tamagno, il più grande fenomeno canoro dell'Ottocento* (New York: Arno Press, 1977 reprint of 1937 Milan publication, with added discography by W.R. Moran) [a biography of the tenor who 'created' *Boccanegra* II, *Don Carlos* II, and *Otello*]

Verdians' attention may also be drawn to the Arno reprints of autobiographies or biographies of Gigli, Rethberg, Gayarré, Litvinne, Lind, Battistini, Pinza, Ruffo, Bellinioni, and other singers important in Verdian performance history; a descriptive pamphlet of this 'Opera Biographies' series is available from Arno Press, 3 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

NOSKE, FRITS: *The Signifier and the Signified: studies in the operas of Mozart and Verdi* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977). Part II, 'Verdi', contains '*Otello*: drama through structure', 133-70; 'The musical figure of Death' [rev. from *Atti del III° Congresso* . . ., 1974]; '*Simon Boccanegra*: one plot, two dramas', 215-40 [rev. of paper read at the Chicago congress, 1974]; 'Ritual scenes', 241-70 [rev. from *Music & Letters* 54 (1973)]; 'The notorious cabaletta', 271-93; and 'Don Carlos: the signifier and the signified', 294-308. An appendix contains the complete Verdi-Boito correspondence about the revision of *Boccanegra*, in the original Italian with facing English translation, 335-413.