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Cormon Revisited: Some Observations on the Original Don Carlos

Harold Powers, Princeton University

In July 1865 a prose scenario for Don Carlos was brought to Verdi at Sant’Agata by his Parisian publisher, Léon Escudier, with a cover letter addressed to Verdi from Émile Perrin, the director of the Paris Opéra. In the course of his cover letter Perrin noted two major deviations from Schiller:

Schiller’s play, followed very faithfully in the scenario, has nonetheless undergone some felicitous modifications. The first act is completely new; the part of Charles V, whose mysterious end makes this invention admissible, seems to me well-contrived.

A few days earlier Verdi had written to Escudier:

Don Carlo, magnificent drama, but perhaps lacks a bit of spectacle. For the rest, excellent the idea of having Charles V appear, as is excellent also the scene at Fontainebleu. I would like, as in Schiller, a little scene between Philip and the Inquisitor, and the latter, blind and very old; Escudier will tell you why. I would like besides, a Duo between Philip and Posa.

So Verdi liked the scenario Perrin had brought him from Joseph Mery and Camille Du Locle, though he wanted Schiller’s long dialogue between King Philip and Posa to be added, of which there was no mention in the scenario, as well as Schiller’s private confrontation between the King and the Grand Inquisitor. And he liked the more developed treatment of Don Carlos’s grandfather, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. In the last act of Schiller’s play a superstition about the ghost of Charles V is introduced as a way of getting the Prince into the Queen’s apartments, but in their scenario the librettists brought the ghost to life, made him into an actual Charles V living incognito in the monastery of St. Juste, and an active participant in the Prince’s destiny. This feature is rather more convincing as told in the scenario than it became in the eventual libretto, but Verdi’s music for the monks’ chorus and the mysterious monk himself at the beginning of Act II and at the end of the opera — music that actually frames the four-act version with the original Act I excised — goes a long way toward making the device work. In the original five-act libretto, moreover, the identification of the monk with Charles V is entirely the reaction of the onlookers; the stage direction reads only “the grill opens, the monk appears, enfolds Carlos in his arms and covers him with his cloak.” In the revised version in four acts, to the contrary, the identification of the monk and the Emperor is explicit in the stage direction itself: “The grill opens, the monk appears. It is Charles V with cape and royal crown.”

Verdi also liked Act I of the scenario, the non-Schillerian Fontainebleau act.

The revisions of individual numbers in the four-act version of Verdi’s Don Carlos that was performed in Milan in 1884 were in considerable part a case of “Schiller revisited,” as Martin Chusid illustrated in his essay with that title. Chusid also pointed out that the most extensive deletions for the Milan performance of 1884 were sections which had no counterpart in Schiller: the ballet “La peregrina,” the masquerade scenes preceding the ballet, and the entire first act.

Some time after Chusid’s essay was published the model for Mery and Du Locle’s “entire first act” — “completely new” — was revealed in an essay by Marc Clémeur. It was the Prologue entitled L’étudiant d’Alcala to the 1846 play Philippe II...imité de Schiller by Eugène Cormon, later the librettist for Bizet’s Les pêcheurs des perles. Cormon’s Prologue indeed “had no counterpart in Schiller,” though the University of Alcala is mentioned in passing in Schiller’s play.

Like Mery and Du Locle’s Act I, Cormon’s L’étudiant d’Alcala takes place in France before the main action of the play in Spain “imité de Schiller.” It was meant to place before the eyes of Cormon’s audience the basis for Don Carlos’s obsession with Elisabeth of Valois, his young stepmother, that is simply a donné in Cormon’s Philippe II itself and its Schillerian model. Clémeur summarized the transformation of L’étudiant d’Alcala into Act I of the 1857 Don Carlos:
Saint-Germain becomes Fontainebleau, gardeners become woodcutters, the hoped-for rendezvous a chance encounter, the Duke of Alba the Count de Lerma, the political needs of Henry II the social need of the French people.11

Some of these differences between Cormon's Prologue and Méry and Du Locle's Act I are trivial, such as the change of place from a garden by the palace of Saint-Germain rather than a forest near Fontainebleau. In L'étudiant d'Alcala the portrait through which the Princess learns that the Spanish nobleman is her promised fiancé Don Carlos is her own, sent to him in Spain on the occasion of the engagement; this continued to be the case in the scenario, though in the libretto it was changed to a portrait of Don Carlos himself, given to Elisabeth by him on the spot, obviously more in keeping with the chance nature of their encounter. In L'étudiant d'Alcala the Prince had come to France incognito in disobedience to his father's command, exactly as in Act I of the libretto, though he had identified himself not only as a nobleman but also a University student travelling for pleasure, and as the Prologue opens he had been in France some time, rather than having just arrived as a member of the Spanish entourage.

Other differences are more substantial. In Cormon's Prologue the Spanish nobleman has been wounded while stopping the Princess's runaway horse, and for some time she has been meeting him incognito, while he is recovering from his wounds under the care of the head gardener at Saint-Germain. In due course she begins to regret her imprudence and reveals herself and her rank; the Spanish nobleman then shows her that portrait of herself that identifies him as her affianced Don Carlos, to whom the portrait had been sent. It is highly improbable, however, that a Princess royal would engage in secret visits to a young man recovering from injuries suffered in a rescue, no matter how heroic. Two other complexities in L'étudiant d'Alcala simplified in Méry and Du Locle's transformation are the entrance of King Henry II of France, Elisabeth's father, which they replaced with a choral expression of relief lead into a varied reprise of the stretta.13

Beyond that, in the composition of the opera Verdi used the melody first heard as Elisabeth sings "De quels transports poignants et doux / Mon âme est pleine" (see Example 1, page 41) not only as the principal musical subject for the slow movement of a complex and highly dramatic scene for the young lovers but also as the palpable source for two strategically placed instrumental reminiscences: first, in the middle of the mournful introduction to Act IV set 2, as Don Carlos is brooding alone in prison before his friend Posa enters; then later for the young Queen's nostalgic recollection of "France!" and "Fontainebleau!" in the third stanza of her aria in Act V, before Don Carlos enters. In the four-act version without the Fontainebleau act, however, these two reminiscences are only disembodied recollections of an instrumental
statement of the melody now appearing once in the new scène preceding Don Carlos's Romance, rescued out of the Fontainebleau act, revised musically, and given a very different, new and bitter text. The new scène and new text for the Romance provided something of a verbal foundation for Don Carlos's pervasive obsession, but the "Fontainebleau" melody now became a reminiscence motive even here at its first appearance, sounding once between the words "...ma belle fiancée!" and "Ah! Qu'il fut pur et beau ce jour." It has lost its former representational ground; it is now a mere forerunner of two later reminiscences of itself.

As Verdi's single-number "scene et duo" in the Fontainebleau act — Nos. 2 and 3 in the Escudier vocal score — is shaped à l'italienne in that the medial and final ensembles, labeled 2 and 4 in the outline, are different, like a slow movement and stretta in the Italian tradition. These two lyric movements themselves, however, are shaped internally à la française, with the same music at the beginning and end. Movement 4 has two contrasted musical subjects, labeled "a1" for the two principals and "a2" for the chorus, twice combined in an ironic musical symbiosis of despair and rejoicing.

In the articulated summary of Verdi's "scene et duo" that follows, page numbers from Escudier's 1867 vocal score and from the Ricordi composite Edizione Integrale are supplied in the headings.17

Don Carlos (1867) Act I, Escudier 1867 nos. 2 and 3 (Verdi's autograph "Scene et Duo")

Verdi's "scene et duo" in the Fontainebleau act is the first of the three duet scenes for Carlos and Elisabeth that tell the story of their doomed love: initial rapture followed by despair here in Act I, medial desolation and momentary madness in Act II; final resolution and transcendence concluding Act V.


The rapturous phase of the relationship is set forth in the first half (divisions 0-1-2) of Verdi's "scene et duo."

0: The sound of a hunt fades into the distance. Elisabeth and her page Thibault have gotten separated from her entourage. They encounter Carlos, incognito, who identifies himself as a member of the Spanish embassy. Thibault sees the lights of the castle in the near distance and goes to fetch the suite.

1: Allegro assai moderato, 4/4, Db. Carlos makes a fire; he mentions Elisabeth's engagement. In a pair of matched
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stanzas (Allegro agitato) she seeks assurance that her fiancé will love her, to each of which he responds with reassurance. He gives her a portrait (of himself), identifies himself, tells her he loves her.


E: "De quels transports poignant et doux / Mon âme est pleine" (Example 1-A page 40)
C: "Ah! Je vous aime, et Dieu lui-même"

b) Poco più mosso, 4/4, modulating. A cannon shot announces the signing of the treaty and the castle is illuminated. Enraptured, they believe their betrothal is confirmed.

c) Allegro assai moderato, 3/4, E Major. "Bois dépouillés ... dans le baiser des fiançailles."

a 2 a) Allegro giusto, 4/4, Db:

C: "Ne tremble pas, reviens à toi / Ma belle fiancée" (Example 1-B, page 40)
E: "Je tremble encore, mais non d'effroi / Lisez dans ma pensée"

Don Carlos's words "Ne tremble pas, reviens à toi / Ma belle fiancée," in what is now the a 2 return of the melody of this slow movement, originally began the movement and were the words to which Verdi first set his melody. Elizabeth's eventual opening stanza, "De quels transports...," is in a draft copy of the libretto in Verdi's hand. Note in Example 1-B the syllabic settings of syllables 2-5 of the six-syllable line "Ma belle fiancée," as opposed to the slurred eighth-note pairs adapted to syllables 2-3 of Elizabeth's four-syllable line "Mon âme est pleine."18


In the second half of Verdi's "scene et duo" (divisions 3-4), rapture is replaced by despair.

3: Thibaut enters with pages carrying torches. He approaches Elizabeth and calls her future Queen of Spain and wife of Philip II.

4: Allegro agitato, 4/4, c minor

a1) E: "L'heure fatale est sonnée / Non! Contre la destinée / Combattre est vaillant et beau."
C: "L'heure fatale est sonnée / La cruelle destinée / Brise ce rêve si beau." (Example 2-A page 42)

The difference between Elisabeth's and Carlos's continuations of "l'heure fatale est sonnée" characterizes their respective attitudes up until Act V: Elisabeth will do her best to rise above her fate and do her duty as King Philip's wife and queen; until just before the end, to the contrary, Don Carlos will go on brooding over his cruel disappointment and continuing guilty passion for Elisabeth, who will have become his father's wife and thus his stepmother. This stanza of Elisabeth's is entered in the final libretto draft in Verdi's hand, under Don Carlos's verses, which were originally intended to be sung by her as well by him. Her diverging stanza encapsulates the tone of a passage in an earlier version of the libretto that Verdi had eliminated, in which she justifies her decision to Don Carlos at length (and he responds at comparable length).19 When subject a1 returns coupled with subject a2, however, Carlos's text is also given to Elisabeth, as indicated below and in Example 2-B.

Suite de final. Courtiers and populace are heard in the distance, gradually approaching; they arrive on stage, along with the Count de Lerme and other notables.20

a1/2) Poco più lento, 4/4, C Major: Chorus: "O chants de fête et d'allégresse..." E/C: "... ... l'heure fatale est sonnée..." (Example 2-B, page 43)

b) Récit. The Count de Lerme asks Elisabeth if she will consent to the marriage with King Philip, followed by a brief unison women's chorus, a tempo: "O princesse, acceptez Philippe pour époux! / La paix! Nous souffrons tant, ayez pitié de nous."
Example 2-A: fortitude versus despair in the Act I duet

Allegro agitato pas trop vite

Elisabeth

Carlos

L'héure fatale est sonnée

Non! contre la destinée combattre est vain.

La cruelle destinée

lant et beau.

bris ce rêve si beau.
In the version finally performed at the première on 11 March 1867 this is all that remains to account for the Princess's motives for accepting King Philip, originally fully grounded on stage by her encounter with the woodcutters in the opening scene of the opera, which was eliminated after the dress rehearsal on 24 February 1867.

After a moment's hesitation the Princess consents: "Oui."


E/C: "C'est l'angoisse suprême / Je me sens mourir!"

a₂) *Tempo primo*, 4/4, *C* Major: Chorus: "Ô chants de fête et d'allégresse"

E/C: "C'est l'angoisse suprême / Je me sens mourir!"

d) *un peu plus vite*: Chorus: "Gloire à vous, reine d'Espagne!"

E/C: "C'en est fait! Ô douleurs! Ô regrets..."

a₁/₂) Chorus: "Ô chants de fête et d'allégresse..."

Carlos: "Hélas! ... l'heure fatale est sonnée..."

What bothers him is the absence of one or two scenes where the setting could impress the public. He would like something startling, as for example the skaters' scene in *Le prophète* or the one in the church, a high point.²¹

Schiller's play has no scenes that would have served this purpose, but in two of the several deviations from Schiller
in Cormon's *Philippe II* Méry and Du Locle found episodes with "something startling" that they could adapt and graft on to actions already outlined in their *scenario*, one for their Act IV Finale, the other for their Act III Finale.

Schiller's powerful, direct confrontation between King Philip and the Grand Inquisitor, which Verdi requested and got in Méry and Du Locle's eventual libretto, is dimly reflected in their *scenario*, as an episode in a public scene. The King is consulting with his counsellors regarding Don Carlos, now imprisoned, and the Grand Inquisitor intervenes:

The Grand Inquisitor reproaches his pupil, Philip, with having failed to confide in the Holy Office and thereby having misused the power that he holds from God. Philip's pride resists, but the priest's speaks louder; he bespeaks the will of God. Philip, in spite of his hatred towards his son, recoils before the idea of a bloody sacrifice, and intercedes for his son. Lerma tries to save the Prince. The Grand Inquisitor invokes the interest of the Faith and raison d'état. Philip becomes calm and sends them all away without telling either his decision or his thoughts.22

This quasi-Schillerian confrontation of King and Priest in the *scenario* is not in Cormon's play, but there is a striking non-Schillerian aspect of the Grand Inquisitor's operatic persona absent from the *scenario* that does come from Cormon's play.23 The Grand Inquisitor appears in two scenes of the play, Act IV scene 6 and Act V scene 3, but in the latter he is silent, present only as the chief of the inquisitorial group that has already condemned Don Carlos. The final scene of Cormon's Act IV, however, is the model for the conclusion of the riot that ends Act IV of Verdi's opera, a conclusion very different from that of Act IV in the *scenario*.

The populist rising in favor of Don Carlos in Cormon's play comes from the end of Schiller's Act IV scene 5, though it is somewhat differently instigated there. And as in Schiller, so too at the height of the riot in Act IV of both Cormon's play and the opera, the King is demoralized and throws off his royal mantle. Act IV of the opera, however, goes on to end not as in Schiller or the *scenario*. It is modeled rather on the brief scene 6 that ends Cormon's Act IV, which features a melodramatic entrance of the Grand Inquisitor.

THE GRAND INQUISITOR: Arise, Philip II.
ALL: The Grand Inquisitor! (*everybody bows with respect*).

THE GRAND INQUISITOR, to the King. I placed you on the throne of Spain, as I had placed your father forty years ago. And this is how I have to find you? Trembling and humiliated before a rebellious son? Arise, King! This man (*he points to Carlos*) is marked on the forehead with the seal of heresy; he belongs to our tribunal.

THE KING, who has recovered himself bit by bit. Then do your duty! (General movement, the Queen emits a cry; the King turns towards her angrily; Carlos remains dignified and cold; the curtain falls.24

In Cormon's scene the Grand Inquisitor touches on themes from his confrontation with the King in Schiller's penultimate scene, themes that the librettists later transferred to their subsequent adaptation of Schiller's scene itself, but the Grand Inquisitor's sudden appearance, his revival of the King's pride, and the placement of the encounter at the climax of the action, were all taken over by Méry and Du Locle for Verdi's opera, and this very non-Schillerian scene survived the revision for the four-act version.

III

In a still more striking addition to the scheme outlined in their *scenario*, an addition that also survived intact into the revised *Don Carlos*, Méry and Du Locle wrapped a frame around the Act III Finale already outlined in their *scenario*, turning the whole into the celebrated scene of the *auto-da-fe*, the better to "impress the public."25

The first set of Act III in Méry and Du Locle's *scenario* outlines what became the assignation duet and subsequent trio in the opera, nos. 13 and 14 in the Escudier vocal score of 1867 (pages 352-76 in the *Edizione Integrale*). The veiled Princess Eboli, whom Carlos at first believes to be the Queen, once unveiled soon realizes that Carlos loves the Queen, is interrupted by Posa and leaves, whereupon Posa persuades Carlos to hand over any incriminating documents to him. In the *scenario* the set then ends with a stage direction: "At this moment the bells ring, the fanfares blare. Carlos and Posa separate with a handclasp."26 This joyful noise of bells and brass signals the change to the second set of the *scenario*, with the procesional entrance of the crowned King and Queen, the Ballet, the plea of the Flemish deputies, the King's rejection, Carlos's drawing of his sword, and Posa's taking it from him, all as in the libretto and opera to come, except for the placement of the Ballet. And there is no mention of an *auto-da-fe*.

Like the University at Alcalá, an *auto-da-fe* is mentioned only in passing in Schiller's play, just twice in Act I, during the scene in the garden at Aranjuez.

I.3 Mondecar: And very soon how lively things will be Up in Madrid! The Plaza Mayor will Be readied to accommodate a bull fight And we were promised an *auto-da-fe* As well -

Queen: Were promised! Do I hear this from My gentle Mondecar?

Mondecar: Why should they not? What we see in the flames are heretics.27
Lady Mondecar's casual equating of bulls and heretics as quasi-Gilbertian "sources of innocent merriment" is the thoughtless flip side of the Spanish Mikado's all too seriously motivated "object all sublime," as voiced in an exit speech of King Philip's later in the set, after he has dismissed Mondecar for leaving the Queen unattended. The speech is directly connected with Schiller's theme of religious persecution of the Protestant Flemings, hence with the plot thread involving Don Carlos and Posa.

1.6 King: No more of this

(He turns towards his retinue)

I haste now to Madrid

My royal office summons me. The pest

Of heresy infects my peoples and Disorder rises in my Netherlands;

It is high time. A terrible example Shall bring back those in error to the truth.

The great oath that all kings in Christendom

Have sworn I shall myself redeem tomorrow

This execution shall outdo all custom;

My entire court is solemnly invited.

(He conducts the Queen away.

The others follow.)

But suggestive as it may be, this is all there is of an auto-da-fe in Schiller. There is much more in Cormon's Philippe II, with audible and visible evidence of an auto-da-fe actually taking place offstage throughout most of his Act II. The act begins with the Grandees assembled in a grand salon overlooking a large outdoor arena offstage.

A great hall in the King's palace in Madrid. At the left, the King's apartments; at the right, those of the Queen. In a corner to the right a window looks out on the plaza of the palace. A large gallery to the rear.

The very first spoken line then calls attention to what is going to take place in the "plaza of the palace" offstage, describing the scene and the crowd that will be made pappable in Méry and Du Locle's libretto and Verdi's opera.

DE FERIA: See, gentlemen, the stakes are being set up... the crowd hastens, fills up the plaza... A crowd silent, gloomy, yet eager for the spectacle to be offered them.

In the second scene the King enters and delivers a blood-thirsty speech modeled on the one that ends Schiller's Act I scene 6 quoted above.
Just before the end of scene 9 it becomes clear that the *auto-da-fé* is finished; the stage direction reads: *The sound of the bells begins again - the courtiers reappear in the gallery to the rear.* The first words in scene 10 are King Philip's cold complaint to his son: "You left the ceremony without my permission." As illustrated earlier, there can be no question that Mery and Du Locle borrowed the end of Act IV, the Grand Inquisitor's entrance into the riot scene, directly from Cormon's *Philippe II*; there is no trace of any such action in Schiller, and they had already used Cormon's Prologue for the entire first act. Given their familiarity with Cormon's work, the idea of wrapping the *auto-da-fé* around their already well-planned central Finale, in response to Verdi's desire for more spectacle, will also have come to mind from the audibly and visually graphic Act II of Cormon's play.

As for Verdi's "Scene et duo" above, so for the articulated summary of Verdi's "Finale" that follows, page numbers from Escudier's 1867 vocal score and from the Ricordi composite *Edizione Integrale* are supplied in the headings.

**Don Carlos (1867) Act III, Escudier 1867 no. 14 (Verdi's autograph "Finale")**

**Choeur, Marche, Final.** Escudier 1867, 206-57 // EI 377-433

This grand internal Finale—*coupé à la française* in that it opens and closes with the music for the framing *auto-da-fé*—with its rejoicing populace honoring their ruler, its unforgiving religious condemning their enemies, its processional, and its central slow ensemble led off by baritone voices following a well-meaning intervention by the principal tenor, is the obvious model for the Triumphal Scene in that most French of Verdi's purely Italian operas, *Aida.* Divisions X and X, in the outline that follows are the *auto-da-fé* frame suggested in Cormon's Act II that was wrapped around the action sketched out in Mery and Du Locle's scenario, which is realized in divisions 1, 2 and 3.

**X. Allegro assai sostenuto, 4/4, E Major**

a) the people: "Ce jour heureux est plein d'allégresse / Honneur au plus puissant des Rois..."

The 9-syllable first line is incompatible with the 8-syllable lines of the rest of the 8-line stanza and the following 8-line stanza for the Inquisition monks. In the published libretto this first line is also an 8-syllable line—"Ce jour est un jour d'allégresse"—which is not only semantically contrasted with the line "Ce jour est un jour de colère" that opens the monks' stanza that follows, but also syntactically parallel with it.

b) the monks: "Ce jour est un jour de colère / Un jour de deuil, un jour d'effroi /..."

(orchestraally accompanied by Example 3-A [E minor] p. 48)

"Mais le pardon suit l'anathème / Si le pécheur épouvanté / Se repent..."

(accompanied by the cello melody in Example 3-B [G Major] p. 48)

a) the people: [E Major] "Honneur au plus puissant des Rois..."

**Marche** c) march no.1: representatives from all parts of King Philip's realms, Grandees of Spain (including Posa), the Queen and her ladies, and so on, enter in procession from the palace.

a) the people: "Ce jour heureux est un jour d'allégresse..."

1. a) *Andante sostenuto, 4/4, C Major:*

   Herald: "Ouvrez-vous, o portes sacrées..."
   People: "Ouvrez-vous, o portes sacrées..."

b) *Allegro assai sostenuto, 4/4, C Major*

   march no.2: The King (crowned) and Inquisition monks enter in procession from the church.

c) *Maestoso, modulations:* Récit of King Philip

   "En plaçant sur mon front, peuple, cette couronne
   J'ai fait serment au Dieu qui me la donne
   De le venger par le fer et [par] le feu."

   [This speech summarizes the speech from Schiller Act I scene 6 quoted above, supplemented by the specific reference to fire.]
d) Allegro mosso, modulations
Carlos enters, bringing six deputies from Flanders to plead their cause before the King

Ensemble et Final

2. Andante assai mosso, 4/4, Ab
Flemish deputies: "Sire; la dernière heure / A-t-elle donc sonné pour vos sujets flamands?"
King Philip: "A Dieu vous êtes infidèles / infidèles a votre Roi."
Monks: "Les Flamands sont des infidèles / Ils ont bravé la sainte loi."
Queen, Rodrigue, Carlos, chorus: "Étendez sur leurs fronts votre main souveraine."

French poetic meters do not connect with strong musical rhythms the way Italian poetic meters do, but there are three different kinds of stanza here: (a) four couplets of a six-syllable line plus a
Verdi’s music for the three different groups has three different kinds of rhythmic pacing, often going on simultaneously after the initial presentations; see Example 4, extracted from measures 49-57 of the ensemble. The melody for the Flemish deputies moves in a calm and steady pace made up mostly of quarter-notes and eighth-notes, as in Example 4-A; the King and the Inquisition monks mostly sing in a broken pace made up of longer note values and sixteenth-note groups, as in Examples 4-B; the rhythms for the Queen, Rodrigue, and others in the ensemble are made with evenly-paced triplets, as in Examples 4-C.

The threefold simultaneous rhythmic pacings in the concertato movements of the Finales of Otello Act III and Falstaff Act II are adumbrated in this Finale, though in those operas they ride on Arrigo Boito’s manipulations of Italian verse meter: in the Otello concertato the same syllable count is scanned three different ways; in the Falstaff laundry-basket concertato there are separate poetic meters, as well as musical rhythms, for the three

Example 4: melodic rhythms in the concertato of the Act III Finale (mm. 49-57)

[Andante assai mosso]

C

B

A

B

A

49
groups: the lovers behind a screen, the men approaching the screen, and the women plus Falstaff around and inside the laundry basket.

3. Allegro, 6/8, modulations: Carlos wants the King to entrust Flanders to him.
Allegro, 4/4, modulations: The King refuses to give Carlos the means to rebel.
[This part of the dialogue reflects a fragment of the dialogue of the King with his son in Schiller Act II, scene 2]
Carlos draws his sword; no one moves despite the King's demands that Carlos be disarmed; Rodrigue steps forward, takes Carlos's sword, gives it to the King.

Allegro, C Major: The melody of Carlos and Posa's oath of friendship from Act II "Dieu tu semas dans nos âmes / Un rayon des mêmes flammes" is heard in the orchestra.
King Philip: "Marquis, vous êtes duc. Maintenant, à la fête!"

X: L' Tempo (Allegro assai sostenuto), 4/4, E Major

a') the people: "Ce jour heureux est plein d'allégresse / Honneur au plus puissant des Rois..."
b') monks [E minor]: "C'est un jour de colère."

a 3: an offstage voice: "Volez vers le Seigneur, volez ô pauvres âmes..." (E Major)

The offstage "voice from Heaven" sings the G-major melody played by the orchestral cellos that accompanied the monks' words "Mais le pardon suit l'anathème / Si le pécheur épouvanté / Se repent..." in division X.b (cf. Example 3-B).

the monks: "C'est un jour de colère..." (E minor) the Flemish deputies: "...Dieu n'éteint pas ces flammes...ces bûchers tout en feu!"

a') the people: (E Major): "Gloire à Dieu!"
1. Méry and Du Locle’s scenario, along with Perrin’s cover letter to Verdi, was published by Ursula Günther in L’avant-scène Opéra 90/91 (September/October 1986): 28-35.


La pièce de Schiller, suivie assez fidèlement dans le scénario, a cependant subi d’heureuses modifications. Le 1° acte est tout entier nouveau: le personnage de Charles-Quint dont la fin mystérieuse rend cette fiction admissible me semble bien trouvé.


D.° Carlo magnifico dramma ma cui manca forse un po’ di spettacolo. Del resto ottima l’idea di far apparire Carlo Quinto, come è ottima la scena a Fontainebleau. A me piacerebbe, come in Schiller, una piccola scena tra Filippo e l’Inquisitore, e questo cieco e vecchissimo; Escudier ne dirà a voce il perché. Ameri e oltre un Duò tra Filippo e Posa.

4. La grille s’ouvre, le Moine paraît, attire Carlos dans ses bras et le couvre de son manteau.

5. Il cancello si apre, apparisce il Frate. È Carlo Quinto col manto e colla corona reala.


8. Marc Clémeur, “Eine neu entdeckte Quelle für das Libretto con Verdis Don Carlos,” Melos: Neue Zeitschrift für Musik 6 (January-February 1977): 496-99. This fine and all too brief essay is derived, the author tells us, from his Cologne Master’s thesis, “Die Urfassung von Verdis ‘Don Carlos’ und ihre Quellen.” Among other aspects of Cormon’s play to which Clémeur has adverted in his essay that were reflected in the eventual 1867 Don Carlos libretto are the two particularly vivid ones discussed in sections II and III below, the entrance of the Grand Inquisitor to conclude Act IV, and the auto-da-fé wrapped around the Act III Finale of the opera itself.


10. Friedrich Schiller, Don Carlos, Infant von Spanien: ein dramatisches Gedicht (Augsburg: Goldmann Verlag, 1884); this edition has the advantage of numbered lines. References to Alcala are in Act I scenes 2 (lines 173-77) and 6 (lines 870-73), with reference to Don Carlos, and in Act III scene 6 (lines 2900-04), with reference to Posa. Corresponding lines in the English translation by Charles E. Passage (New York: Ungar, 1959) are lines 173-77, 872-75, and 2002-06, respectively.

11. Clémeur, “Eine neu entdeckte Quelle,” 498:

Saint-Germain wurde zu Fontainebleau, Gärtner wurde zu Holzfeldern, das erhoffte Rendez-vous zu einem zufälligen Treffen, Herzog von Alba zum Grafen von Lerma, die politische Not Heinrichs II zur sozialen Not des französischen Volkes.

12. Martin Chusid, A catalogue of Verdi’s operas (Hackensack NJ: Joseph Boonin, 1974): “Don Carlo I,” 42-51, p. 44. Chusid’s pages on the first Don Carlos also include a convenient conspectus of the materials eliminated in connection with the Paris 1867 production, with references to the studies reporting their discovery.

13. The route from Méry and Du Locle’s scenario to the version of the libretto as set by Verdi was a tortuous one. For a detailed account of the path travelled for the Fontainebleau act, see Ursula Günther, “Le livret français de Don Carlos: Le premier acte et sa revision par Verdi,” Atti del II° congresso di studi verdiiani (Parma: Istituto di Studi Verdiani, 1971), 90-140.

14. Don Carlos / Grand Opéra en Cinq Actes / Reprisenté sur le Théâtre Impérial de l’Opéra / poème de : M. M. Méry & C. Du Locle / Musique de G. Verdi (Paris: Léon Escudier, [1867]) / pl. no. L.E.2165), pp. 9-47: No. 2. “Scène et Duo” (p. 9) and later “Duo” (p. 13); No. 3, “Scène et Morceau d’ensemble final” (p. 27) and later “Suite du final” (p. 31).

15. This is the scheme promulgated in my essay “La solita forma’ and ‘The uses of convention,” Acta musicologica 39 (1987), 65-90; see Table I, p. 69.


Come il y aura beaucoup de Duos dans l’ouvrage je désirerais que quelques uns fussent coupés à l’italienne, c.a.d. où les paroles et les Rhythmes de l’ensemble du milieu et de la fin soit différent... d’autres à la française, c.a.d. où les paroles de l’ensembles du milieu se répètent aussi à la fin. (Huebner’s note 20, p. 231.)


18. See Günther, “Le livret français...” op. cit., 113-18. The syllabification is reckoned in the French manner here and elsewhere in this essay, with final e caduc not part of the count.


20. In all manuscript drafts of the libretto the Princess’s father, King Henry II of France, is included among those who enter here for the end of the act, as he is in both Cormons Prologue and Méry and Du Locle’s scenario, but he does not appear in the printed libretto or Verdis autograph. See Günther, “Le livret français...” op. cit., 129, and photograph 1.

21. After Günther, La genèse de ‘Don Carlos.” 24:

Ce qui le préoccupe c’est l’absence d’une ou deux scènes où la décoration puisse saisir la publique. Il voudrait quelque chose d’imprévus comme par exemple la scène des Pâtres du Prophtie ou celle de l’église, un point culminant.”

22. Méry and Du Locle’s scenario, ed. Günther, 33-34:

Le grand inquisiteur reproche à Philippe, son élève, d’avoir manqué de confiance dans le Saint-Office et d’avoir ainsi méprisé d’un pouvoir qu’il tient de Dieu. L’orgueil de Philippe se révolte, mais celui de prêtre parle plus haut que lui. Il fait parler la volonté de Dieu. Philippe malgré sa haine pour son fils, recule devant la pensée d’un sacrifice sanglant, et intercède pour son fils. L’ermite cherche à sauver le Prince. Le Grand Inquisiteur invoque l’intérêt de la foi et la raison d’État. Philippe se calme, et sans dire sa résolution ni sa pensée les congédie.


24. Cormon, Philippe II, 26:

LE GRAND INQUISITEUR: Debout, Philippe II.
TOUS: Le Grand Inquisiteur! (tout le monde s’incline avec respect).

LE GRAND INQUISITEUR, au roi. Je vous ai placé sur le trône d’Espagne, comme j’avais placé votre père quarante années auparavant. Est-ce ainsi que je devais vous retrouver? Tremblant et humilié devant un fils rebelle? Debout, roi! Cette homme (il montre Carlos) est marqué au front du sceau de l’hérésie; il appartient à notre tribunal. LE ROI, qui s’est relevé peu à peu. Faites donc votre devoir! (Mouvement général, la reine pousse un cri; le roi se tourne vers elle avec colère; Carlos reste digne et froid; le rideau baisse.)
Cf. Escudier 1867, 324-28 // Edizione Integrale, 580/81-84.

26. Méry and Du Locle's scenario, ed. Günther, 33:

A ce moment les cloches sonnent, les fanfares éclatent. Carlos et Posa se séparent en se serrant le main.

27. Schiller, Don Carlos, Act I scene 3, translated by Charles Passage (lines 415-21), from Schiller, Don Carlos (ed. cit.). Act I scene 3, lines 415-21 (text and translation references in note 10 above):

1.3 Mondekar: Und wie lebendig es mit nächstem in Madrid sein wird! Zu einem Stieregefechte Wird schon die Plaza Mayor zugetrich, Und ein Autodafe hat man uns auch Versprochen -

König: Uns versprochen! Hör ich das

Mondekar: Warum nicht? Es sind ja Ketzer die man brennen sieht.

28. Schiller, Don Carlos, Act I scene 6, translated by Charles Passage (lines 891-900), from Schiller Don Carlos (ed. Cit.) Act I scene 6, lines 889-91 (text and translation references in note 10 above):


29. Quotations from Cormon's Philippe II that follow in division I are from the first two-thirds of Act II, pp. 13-17.
31. DE FÉRIA: Regardez, messieurs, les bûchers se dressent... la foule se presse, encombre la place...Une foule muette, morn...et pourtant, avide du spectacle qu'on va lui offrir.
32. LE ROL, parcourant le cercle d'un oval rapide. Couvrez-vous, messieurs ! je vous sais gré de vous associer par votre présence à la lèçon que je donne à mes peuples. C'est un grand scé qui il nous est donné d'accomplir aujourd'hui! Il aura du retentissement dans tous les parties de notre royaume, les rois de la terre nous applaudiront, et Dieu nous en tiendra compte dans le ciel.
33. Mes présentiments ne m'avaient donc pas trompés (Pleureant) O mon père! Et toi, ma noble mère! dans ton malheur, tu n'as pas même la consolation d'embrasser ton fils! (A ce moment, de sourdes rumeurs se font entendre sur la place du palais) Ce bruit! Cette rumeur...ces cris éveignés! Que se passe-t-il donc? (Une lueur rougeâtre brille à travers les vitres de la fenêtre; d'Egmont s'élance, regarde sur la place, et recule avec horreur.) Ah! C'est vrai, je l'avais oublié. Ici, à Madrid...des bûchers! à Bruxelles, peut-être des échaudais!
34. DON CARLOS. Ecoute...j'étais debout à la droite du roi; j'assistais sans rien voir à l'horrible scène qui vient de se passer sur cetter place...une seule pensée m'occupait...fuir Madrid à tout prix!.......

INES. C'était le premier fois que j'assistais à un pareil spectacle, et je n'ai pas été maître de la terreur que j'ai ressentie....
35. Le son des cloches recommence-les seigneurs repassèrent dans la galerie au fond.
36. Vous avez quitté la cérémonie sans mon ordre.
37. The full-length scenario for Aida was by Camille Du Locle. It has been published (in English only) in Hans Busch, Verdi's Aida: the history // an opera in letters and documents (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974), 448-71; see pp. 459-62 for the Finale.
38. Don Carlos / opéra en cinq actes / Paroles de / Méry et Camille Du Locle / musique de / G. Verdi / Representé, pour la première fois, sur le théâtre Imperial de l'Opéra / le 11 Mars 1867 (Paris): Michel Lévy ... Léon Escudier, [1867]), 53, 60.