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## The Mise en Scène of Rossini's *Le Siège de Corinthe* and the conventions of staging at the Paris Opéra in the 1820s

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THE *MISE EN SCÈNE* OF ROSSINI'S *LE SIÈGE DE CORINTHE* AND THE  
CONVENTIONS OF STAGING AT THE PARIS OPÉRA IN THE 1820S

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
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in

The School of Music

by  
Tina Huettenrauch  
B.A., Millsaps College, 2005  
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## ABSTRACT

Shortly before 1800, the publication of *livrets de mise en scène*, short manuals including information regarding costumes, set designs, and blocking (i.e., the movement of characters on stage), became increasingly popular in France. While theater scholars (Gösta M. Bergman, Marvin Carlson, Hellmuth Christian Wolff) have recognized the value of these documents for the history of staging (and blocking in particular), musicologists have tended to focus on their impact on visual aspects and realization of drama. Those who have looked at staging (H. Robert Cohen, Rebecca S. Wilberg, M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet) have largely ignored the period prior to 1827, possibly because *livrets* dating from that time are scarce.

Focusing on the *livret* of Rossini's *Le Siège de Corinthe* (Opéra, 9 October 1826), recently made available through the work of H. Robert Cohen, this thesis reexamines the conventions of staging at the Opéra during the 1820s. It shows that staging had largely been rooted in Baroque conventions until ca. 1800, broke with these conventions between 1800 and 1827, and—after the appointment of the Comité de mises en scène (April 1827) and *régis seur de la scène* Jean-Pierre Solomé (September 1827)—consolidated the new conventions explored in *Le Siège*. Although the Comité and Solomé were instrumental in implementing these conventions, their influence has been overstated (Bartlet). This thesis shows that many of Solomé's ideas were already being explored in *Le Siège* and thus cannot be exclusively attributed to the appointment of the Comité in 1827; rather, they are an extension of trends that had already been explored.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the publication of *livrets de mise en scène* became increasingly popular in France. These short manuals document the staging of plays and operas and include important information regarding costumes, set designs, and blocking (i.e. the movement of the characters on stage). The *livrets* were first described in a dissertation by Mary-Antoinette Allevy,<sup>1</sup> who also compiled the first systematic catalog of the *livrets* housed today in the main branches of the Bibliothèque nationale de Paris, most notably the Bibliothèque de l'Association de la régie théâtrale; twenty-two of these *livrets* have recently been published in facsimile.<sup>2</sup>

The *livrets* document not only specific staging but, as a corpus, also changes in staging over time. While theater scholars such as Gösta M. Bergman, Marvin Carlson, and Hellmuth Christian Wolff have recognized the value of these documents for the history of staging, in particular blocking, musicologists have tended to focus on their impact on visual aspects and realization of drama.<sup>3</sup> Only a few musicological studies have looked beyond.<sup>4</sup> Standing out as most significant among the latter is M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet's article "Staging French Grand

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<sup>1</sup> Mary-Antoinette Allevy, *La mise en scène en France dans la première moitié du dix-neuvième siècle* (Paris: E. Droz, 1938).

<sup>2</sup> Published and edited in two volumes by H. Robert Cohen, *The Original Staging Manuals for Twelve Parisian Operatic Premières 1824–1843*, Musical Life in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century France, vol. 3 (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, c1991) and *The Original Staging Manuals for Ten Parisian Operatic Premières 1824–1843*, Musical Life in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century France, vol. 6 (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Marvin Carlson, "French Stage Composition from Hugo to Zola," *Educational Theatre Journal* 23, no. 4 (December 1971): 363–79 and "Hernani's Revolt from the Tradition of French Stage Composition," *Theatre Survey: The American Journal of Theatre History* 13, no. 1 (May 1972): 1–28; Hellmuth Christian Wolff, "Die Regiebücher des Louis Plianti für die Pariser Oper 1830–1870," *Maske und Kothurn* 26 (1980): 74–84; and Gösta M. Bergman, "Der Eintritt des Berufsregisseurs in das französische Theater," *Maske und Kothurn* 3–4 (1964): 431–54.

<sup>4</sup> Ground-breaking works on the *mise en scène* in French opera of the nineteenth century are: H. Robert Cohen, "On the Reconstruction of the Visual Elements of French Grand Opera: Unexplored Sources in Parisian Collections," in *International Musicological Society: Report of the Twelfth Congress, Berkeley, 1977*, ed. Daniel Hertz and Bonnie Wade, 463–81 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1981); Rebecca S. Wilberg, "The *Mise en scène* at the Paris Opéra—Salle Le Peletier (1821–1873) and the Staging of the First French *Grand opéra*: Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable*" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1990); H. Robert Cohen and Marie-Odile Gigou, *Cent ans de mise en scène lyrique en France (env. 1830–1930)*, Musical Life in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century France, vol. 2 (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1986); Cormac Newark, "Staging Grand Opéra: History and the Imagination in Nineteenth Century Paris" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford, 1999).

Opera: Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (1829),”<sup>5</sup> which focuses on blocking at the Opéra in the period following the consequential appointment of the Comité de mises en scène in April 1827.

The goal of the Comité was to update the staging practices at the Opéra according to the more modern ones found at the popular boulevard theaters. Jean-Toussaint Merle, for instance, complains in 1827: “The mise en scène is the aspect most neglected by the Opéra. . . . The Opéra is quite far from the boulevard theaters in the art of preparing the effects, grouping the masses, placing the actors on stage, and having them enter and exit.”<sup>6</sup> The installation of the Comité was an important step in implementing revisions at an institution so resistant to change, and Bartlet especially credits Jean-Pierre Solomé—hired by the Comité as new *régisseeur de la scène*—with introducing the first innovations.<sup>7</sup>

Although the influences of the Comité and Solomé were significant, Bartlet overstates them. As my thesis will show, many of Solomé's staging ideas were already being explored prior to his appointment. In addition, current research has focused on the period after 1827, possibly because *livrets* dating from the pre-Comité period are scarce. For works premiered at the Opéra prior to 1827, only one *livret* has so far been catalogued and recently become available in facsimile: Rossini's *Le Siège de Corinthe*.<sup>8</sup> The *livret* of *Le Siège* is a manuscript in the hand of Paliani and has not yet been examined for innovations Bartlet attributes to the Comité or Solomé.

Focusing on *Le Siège de Corinthe*, this thesis will reexamine the conventions of staging at the Opéra during the 1820s. It will show that staging had largely been rooted in Baroque

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<sup>5</sup> M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, “Staging French Grand Opera: Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (1829),” in *Gioachino Rossini 1792–1992: Il testo e la scena*, ed. Paolo Fabbri, 623–47 (Pesaro: Fondazione Rossini, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> “La mise en scène est la partie la plus négligée de l'Opéra. . . . L'Opéra est bien loin des théâtres du boulevard [*sic*] dans l'art de préparer les effets, de grouper les masses, de placer les acteurs en scène et de les faire entrer et sortir.” Jean-Toussaint Merle, *De l'Opéra* (Paris: Baudouin frères, 1827), 33.

<sup>7</sup> Bartlet, “Staging French Grand Opera,” 643–44.

<sup>8</sup> It is reproduced in Cohen, *Ten Parisian Operatic Premières*, 181–207. Another *livret* that has not yet been examined but that may contain evidence regarding the staging of performances prior to the Comité's appointment is the *livret* of Rossini's *Moïse* (Opéra, 26 March 1827). It is reproduced in *ibid.*, 173–81.

conventions until ca. 1800, broke with these conventions between 1800 and 1827, and—after the appointment of the Comité de mises en scène (April 1827) and *régisseur de la scène* Jean-Pierre Solomé (September 1827)—consolidated the new conventions explored in *Le Siège*. Thus, not all innovations of the latter period can be attributed to the appointment of the Comité; rather, they are an extension of trends that had already been explored.

Chapter 2 will set the context. It will outline the history of the *livrets de mise en scène* during the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, focusing on their scope, impact on Parisian theatrical life, authorship, production, and distribution. Cohen, Bartlet, Allevy, Wilberg, and Arne Langer have already provided a good but general foundation for a great variety of European theaters;<sup>9</sup> articles by theater scholars and musicologists, as well as primary sources specific to Paris (such as newspapers, dictionaries, and encyclopedias of the French theater) will create a fuller and more specific picture.<sup>10</sup>

Chapter 3 will illustrate the conventions of staging practiced at the Opéra before *Le Siège*. Positioning, movement, and interaction of the principal characters, the choir, and the extras will be the main focus, though other points such as stage props and set design may also be of interest. Examples will be drawn from the *livret de mise en scène* of Gaspare Spontini's *La Vestale* (Opéra, 15 December 1807) and the annotations contained in the libretto of André Campra's *Tancrède* (Versailles, 1748).<sup>11</sup> I will supplement my discussion using visual sources

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<sup>9</sup> See notes 4 and 5 and Arne Langer, *Der Regisseur und die Aufzeichnungspraxis der Opernregie im 19. Jahrhundert*, Perspektiven der Opernforschung, vol. 4 (Berlin: Lang, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> In addition to the sources in note 3, see, for instance, François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique*, 8 vols. (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1880); Patrice Pavis, *Dictionnaire du théâtre: Termes et concepts de l'analyse théâtrale* (Paris: Editions sociales, 1980); Adolphe Bréant de Fontenay, *Annuaire dramatique* (Paris: Chez l'éditeur, 1845).

<sup>11</sup> I am indebted to Mme. Marie-Odile Gigou for graciously providing me with a photocopy of the *livret* of *La Vestale*. "Gaspare Spontini: *La Vestale*: Livret de mise en scène manuscrit," Bibliothèque de L'Association de La Régie Théâtrale, V 4 (I). I was not able to locate a *livret* of an original production at the Opéra before 1800; Antonia Banducci, however, has examined a document with specific staging instructions in the form of an annotated score of André Campra's *Tancrède* (Versailles, 1748). Antonia Banducci, "Staging a *Tragédie en musique*: A 1748 Promptbook of Campra's *Tancrède*," *Early Music* 21 (May 1993): 181–90. A list of the annotations is available in



including pictorial evidence (such as performance engravings found for instance in Lesure's *L'opéra classique française* or Wolff's *Oper, Szene und Darstellung von 1600 bis 1900*),<sup>12</sup> librettos of plays, performance reviews by major Parisian newspapers, and first-hand accounts of opera-goers (such as Merle's *De l'Opéra*), which contain descriptions and images of staging at the Opéra and similar theaters.

Chapter 4, finally, will concentrate on the *livrets* and librettos of Rossini's opera *Le Siège de Corinthe* (including a full transcription and translation of this *livret*) and operas immediately following the Comité's appointment. The examination of these documents will focus on the elements discussed in Chapter 3 (principal character movement, interaction, and role of the choir) and determine which are traditional and which modern. By comparing the staging of *Le Siège* to the staging of Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, Chapter 4 will determine to what extent *Le Siège* anticipates innovations generally attributed to the Comité.<sup>13</sup> Like Chapter 3, Chapter 4 will support the findings by contemporary reviews and first-hand accounts of opera-goers. Through such a comparative analysis, I hope to show the importance of *Le Siège* in the early history of staging and demonstrate that the change in the conventions at the Opéra was a gradual process rather than a sudden change brought about by the Comité.

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the recent facsimile edition of the full score to *Tancrède*. André Campra, *Tancrède: Tragédie en musique* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2006). Though not staged at the Opéra but at the Petits Appartements Theatre in Versailles, the production nevertheless includes contributions by members of the Opéra's stage team, such as the principal machinist Arnould, the first painter and scenic designer Denis Charles Tramblin, and the *inspecteur général* François Rebel, who most likely conducted the performance. Banducci, "Staging a *Tragédie en musique*," 181–182. The position of *inspecteur général* was created at the Opéra around 1713 by Louis XIV. The responsibilities included running the administrative and musical aspects of the Opéra, such as controlling the payments of the monthly salaries, the assignment of pensions, and the endorsement of the accounts of box-office receipts after each performance. The position did apparently not include specific duties associated with staging. For a full account of the duties of the *inspecteur général* see Lois Rosow, "From Destouches to Berton: Editorial Responsibility at the Paris Opéra," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40 (1987): 285–309.

<sup>12</sup> François Lesure, *L'opéra classique française, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècle*, Iconographie musicale, vol. 1 (Geneva: Minkoff, 1972); Hellmuth Christian Wolff, *Oper, Szene und Darstellung von 1600 bis 1900*, Musikgeschichte in Bildern, vol. 4 (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1968).

<sup>13</sup> The *livret de mise en scène* for *Guillaume Tell* is reproduced in Gioachino Rossini, *Guillaume Tell*, ed. M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, 4 vols. (Pesaro: Fondazione Rossini, 1992), 2:117–81.

## CHAPTER 2: DEVELOPMENT OF THE *LIVRETS DE MISE EN SCÈNE* IN PARIS

In 1791 the National Assembly stripped the Académie Royale de Musique, commonly called the Opéra, and the Opéra-Comique of their monopoly on staged musical performances in Paris. Immediately, a great number of smaller theaters and opera houses sprung up all over the city.<sup>14</sup> Particularly the boulevard theaters won the favor of the public, and soon their presence threatened the revenues of the official institutions (the Opéra, the Opéra-Comique, the Théâtre de l'Empereur, and the Théâtre de l'Impératrice). One journalist wrote:

At the Opéra, nothing changes—the singing is always bad, and the dancing is always good. Women go there to be seen, and the men to enjoy the dual spectacles on the stage and in the boxes. The evening ends in considerable boredom, and when the habitués of the theater leave, they look like schoolchildren who have just been scolded. . . . And then there are the boulevard theaters, where so many good plays, distinguished actors, and new or original things can be seen that the crowds are deserting the theaters at the city's heart. Boxes are reserved eight days in advance, and the tickets are gone by five o'clock.<sup>15</sup>

Especially popular were the productions of the Porte-St-Martin and the Ambigu, because they used different stage levels and lighting effects that allowed for realistic movements.<sup>16</sup> In 1806, Napoleon decided to strengthen the declining position of the Opéra by giving it the exclusive right of performing ballets on historical or mythological subjects. The effect of this adjustment on the theaters and public was minimal, and Napoleon thus limited in 1807 the maximum number of Parisian theaters to eight, aiming to snuff the competition of the boulevard theaters for good. Yet, with the boulevard theaters gone, the public now expected the other Parisian theaters to provide the same spectacular, original, and realistic productions.

Realizing that its own productions were outdated, the Opéra began to update them, rendering them more picturesque, realistic, and historically accurate with the ultimate goal of

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<sup>14</sup> Patrick Barbier, *Opera in Paris, 1800–1850: A Lively History* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1987), 8.

<sup>15</sup> *Journal des dames et des modes*, 15 September 1806; translated in Barbier, *Opera in Paris*, 9–10.

<sup>16</sup> David Charlton, “On the Nature of ‘Grand Opera,’” chap. 13 in *French Opera 1730–1830: Meaning and Media* (Brookfield, VM: Ashgate, 2000), 95.

appealing to the eye as well as to the ear.<sup>17</sup> Because of the Opéra's repertoire, which consisted mostly of grand operas, the productions required a stage much larger than the stage of the average boulevard theater, and the positioning and movement of the characters and sets had to be carefully planned to avoid creating empty space.<sup>18</sup>

In France, the elements involved in the staging of a production were called the *mise en scène*, as Arthur Pougin explains in his *Dictionnaire* of 1885:

The *mise en scène* includes everything, consists of everything, [and] embraces everything regarding both the material aspects and the personnel: [in the *mise en scène*,] the two are often so well merged, that one would not know how to disentangle them and treat them separately. In essence, the *mise en scène* is the art of regulating the action on stage considered in all its facets and all its aspects, not only in regard to the isolated or combined movements of each of the characters contributing to the execution of the represented work, not only in regard to the evolution of the masses (groupings, marches, processions, battles, etc.) but also in regard to what harmonizes these movements, these evolutions with the ensemble and the details of the sets, the décor, the costumes, the props.<sup>19</sup>

The *mise en scène* in Pougin's description has two parts: the *mise en scène* "humaine," which concerns the actors, dancers, and extras of the ensemble, and the "*mise en scène* matérielle," which concerns the sets, décor, costumes, and props. Both aspects are distinct, yet it is only when they are brought together that a satisfying production is achieved. At the time Pougin was writing his *Dictionnaire*, the *mise en scène* had become one of the most important aspects of any single production.

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<sup>17</sup> Bartlet, "Staging French Grand Opera," 624.

<sup>18</sup> Bergman, "Eintritt des Berufsregisseurs," 453. The entire width of the stage in the Salle Le Peletier—the home of the Opéra from 1821 until 1873—(including the side stage) was 180 feet. Wilberg, "The *Mise en scène* at the Paris Opéra," 120.

<sup>19</sup> "La mise en scène englobe tout, comprend tout, embrasse tout, aussi bien au point de vue du matériel que du personnel: l'un et l'autre se trouvent même souvent en elle si bien confondus, qu'on ne saurait les dégager et les traiter séparément. En effet, la mise en scène est l'art de régler l'action scénique considérée sous toutes ses faces et sous tous ses aspects, non seulement en ce qui concerne les mouvements isolés ou combinés de chacun des personnages qui concourent à l'exécution de l'œuvre représentée, non seulement en ce qui concerne les évolutions des masses: groupements, marches, cortèges, combats, etc., mais encore en ce qui est d'harmoniser ces mouvements, ces évolutions avec l'ensemble et les détails de la décoration, de l'ameublement, du costume, des accessoires." Arthur Pougin, *Dictionnaire historique et pittoresque du théâtre* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1885), 522.

The title as well as the position in charge of creating the *mise en scène* changed throughout the course of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The title most often attached to the position was that of *régisseur*. According to Langer, it was not associated with the theaters in Paris before 1789 but was established during the Revolution and early Empire in conjunction with such newly formed theaters as the Théâtre des Variétés-Amusantes (1791–98).<sup>20</sup> Before the position was created, productions at the Opéra were led by a multitude of personnel, and the three *maîtres du chant* (the directors of the long rehearsals for soloists and choir) especially contributed to the staging. As *chefs de la scène* (their additional title and function), they made suggestions regarding entries, exits, and positions of the singers, though always in consultation with the leading singers or actors and the choreographers.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps the earliest description of the position of *régisseur* appears in François Antoine Harel's *Dictionnaire théâtral* of 1824, which, curiously, does not include an entry for *mise en scène*:

[The *régisseur*] looks after the *mise en scène*, he selects the repertoire, he fines, he signs the service tickets, certifies indispositions, receives the insults from some, the small presents from others, solemnly speaks to the public in tumultuous days, and usually receives an annual income of 4000 to 5000 fr.<sup>22</sup>

According to Pougin, “[Harel’s] small, unreliable sketch is not completely accurate, especially because it puts on the shoulders of one individual a task that is generally divided between

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<sup>20</sup> Langer, *Regisseur und Aufzeichnungspraxis*, 60.

<sup>21</sup> Arnold Jacobshagen, “Von der Revolution zur ‘Grand Opéra:’ *Mise en scène* an der Pariser Oper im frühen 19. Jahrhundert,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 153, no. 10 (1992), 8. The position of the *régisseur général* (and thus presumably that of a *metteur en scène*) was not created at the Opéra until 1816 (see below).

<sup>22</sup> “Il veille à la mise en scène, il compose le répertoire, il applique les amendes, il signe les billets de service, constate les indispositions, reçoit les injures des uns, les petits présents des autres, harangue le public dans les jours de tumulte, et reçoit habituellement un traitement annuel de 4 à 5,000 fr.” François Antoine Harel, *Dictionnaire théâtral; ou, Douze cent trente-trois vérités sur les directeurs, régisseurs, acteurs, actrices et employés des divers théâtres*. . . . (Paris: J.-N. Barba, 1824), 261.

three.”<sup>23</sup> the *régisseur général*, the *metteur en scène*, and the *sous-régisseur* (who is subordinate to the other two). Of these three, the *régisseur général* as well as the *sous-régisseur* were charged with the administrative duties, the *metteur en scène* with creating the *mise en scène*:

[The authority] of the *metteur en scène* is circumscribed and limited by the boards of the stage; but there it is complete, even absolute, and everyone owes him obedience. It is the *metteur en scène* who together with the author *mounts* the works; directs the rehearsals; regulates the flow of the action on stage; gives to the actors directions, advice, [and] the information they might need; determines the place that each of them must occupy on stage; indicates the passages, the entries, the exits; directs the masses of supers and extras; who brings, in one word, a work to the point of performance; and who is responsible for its good execution.<sup>24</sup>

Particularly during the early part of the nineteenth century, the *metteur* may consult with the author, the composer, and theater director in the creation of the *mise en scène*.<sup>25</sup> The terminology of the various artistic and administrative positions, however, is not only inconsistent over time but also from one theater to another. In 1810 the position of *régisseur en chef* is used at the boulevard theaters,<sup>26</sup> but whether the position was more akin to the *régisseur général* or included the duties of a *metteur en scène* is not clear. At the Opéra, these duties were performed by the *régisseur de la scène*, a position created together with that of the *régisseur général* in 1816.<sup>27</sup> In 1824 the title of *régisseur de la scène* changed to *directeur de la scène*<sup>28</sup> and according to Jean Toussaint Merle’s description of 1827 included the following duties:

The *directeur de la scène* is responsible especially for the personnel; he coordinates the repertoire with the general administrator, distributes the roles, supervises the production, directs the rehearsals and the *mise en scène* of the works; he orders the construction of the

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<sup>23</sup> “Ce petit croquis fantaisiste n’est pas tout à fait exact, surtout par ce fait qu’il accumule sur les épaules d’un seul individu une besogne qui est généralement répartie entre trois.” Pougin, *Dictionnaire*, 642.

<sup>24</sup> “[L’]autorité du metteur en scène est circonscrite et limitée aux planches du théâtre; mais là elle est complète aussi, absolue, et chacun lui doit obéissance. C’est le metteur en scène qui *monte* les ouvrages, conjointement avec l’auteur, qui en dirige les études, en règle la marche scénique, donne aux acteurs les indications, les conseils, les avis dont ils peuvent avoir besoin, fixe la place que chacun d’eux doit occuper en scène, indique les passades [*sic*], les entrées, les sorties, fait mouvoir les masses des figurants et des comparses, qui met, en un mot, une pièce en état d’être représentée et qui est responsable de sa bonne exécution.” Ibid., 642.

<sup>25</sup> Langer, *Regisseur und Aufzeichnungspraxis*, 60.

<sup>26</sup> Bergman, “Eintritt des Berufsregisseurs,” 445.

<sup>27</sup> Bartlett asserts that this position was not created until 1827. Bartlett, “Staging French Grand Opera,” 630.

<sup>28</sup> Langer, *Regisseur und Aufzeichnungspraxis*, 62.

sets, the machinery, [and] the costumes according to the programs relayed to him by the directors of other services, and, together with the *chef de la danse*, [he] regulates the programs of the ballets.<sup>29</sup>

As this description implies, the *directeur de la scène* collaborated with and had at his disposal several of the other directors of the Opéra, namely the *chef de la musique*, the *chef de la danse*, the *chef des décorations et des machines*, and the *chef du matériel*.<sup>30</sup>

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the Opéra was strongly criticized for its minimal effort regarding the *mise en scène*. Merle complains:

The *mise en scène* is the aspect most neglected by the Opéra; it is [the *mise en scène*] which, in its current state, destroys the effect of all other [aspects] and shows among the directors of the administration [either] a nonchalance that is quite reprehensible or an ignorance that is quite ridiculous. The Opéra is quite far from the boulevard theaters in the art of preparing the effects, grouping the masses, placing the actors on stage, and having them enter and exit. This is a talent that requires a lot of knowledge, most of all a lot of imagination, and continuously renewed study [in preparation] for every new piece in order to study the morals, localities, characters, and conventions.<sup>31</sup>

Consequently, in 1827 the newly appointed director of the Opéra, Emile-Timothée Lubbert, established the Comité de mises en scène pour l'Académie Royale de Musique as an advisory body in matters of sets, costumes, and machines. Its members included several prominent figures of the Parisian musical life, not all of them employed by the Opéra.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the Opéra's

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<sup>29</sup> "Le directeur de la scène serait spécialement chargé du personnel; il réglerait le répertoire avec l'administrateur général, ferait la distribution des rôles, surveillerait les représentations, dirigerait les répétitions et la mise en scène des ouvrages; il ferait exécuter sous ses ordres les décorations, les machines et les costumes, d'après les programmes qui lui auraient été remis par les chefs des autres services, et réglerait avec le chef de la danse les programmes des ballets." Merle, *De l'Opéra*, 12.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>31</sup> "La mise en scène est la partie la plus négligée de l'Opéra; c'est celle qui dans l'état où elle est détruit l'effet de toutes les autres, et qui montre dans les chefs de cette administration une insouciance bien condamnable ou une ignorance bien ridicule. L'Opéra est bien loin des théâtres du boulevard [*sic*] dans l'art de préparer les effets, de grouper les masses, de placer les acteurs en scène et de les faire entrer et sortir; c'est un talent qui exige une foule de connaissances, sur-tout beaucoup d'imagination, et des études sans cesse renouvelées pour chaque ouvrage, afin d'en étudier les mœurs, les localités, les caractères et les convenances. Ibid., 33–34.

<sup>32</sup> Allevy, *La mise en scène en France*, 59. The members of the first committee include Lubbert, the former Opéra director Raphaël de Frédot Duplantys, the composer Gioachino Rossini, the architect Edmond Duponchel, the Count Turpin, the painter François Pascal Simon Gérard, and four others, identified by Allevy only as Darcet, E. David, Lenormant, and Jeanson.

administration appointed Louis Jacques Solomé to fill the position of *régisseur de la scène*.<sup>33</sup> Lubbert recognized the importance of having one person in charge of everything involving the *mise en scène* and Solomé had the necessary experience, having held a similar position at the Théâtre Français (the Comédie Française), which had already employed advanced staging practices similar to those at the boulevard theaters.<sup>34</sup> Solomé's reputation as one of the first major *régisseurs de mises en scène* was celebrated by the Parisian press: "Mr. Solomé has greatly contributed to the beauty of the performance of [Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (1829)]. For a long time, he has been making a reputation for himself by essentially creating the art of staging."<sup>35</sup>

Given the extensive coordination of resources and personnel the *régisseur de la scène* had to supervise, it is not surprising that he continued to rise in importance until his name began to be printed next to that of the composer and librettist in the same type size as, for example, in the *livret* of Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (Opéra, 1829).<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, if a production failed, all of the responsibility rested on his shoulders, as the German writer August Lewald confirmed after a trip to Paris in 1836:

This complicated business [of the *mise en scène*]*—the great importance of which is evident at every theater—is given to a man, with the title *régisseur*, who supposedly is held responsible for even the slightest problem of every performance. . . . Thus, an actor—once we have convinced ourselves of his skill and talent—should only rarely be held responsible . . . for his failure in a new part . . . ; Instead, we should hold responsible only the *régisseur*.*<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> In the decades following 1824, the Opéra usually employed both a *régisseur de la scène* and a *directeur de la scène*, hence the inconsistency in terminology. Langer, *Regisseur und Aufzeichnungspraxis*, 62. To avoid confusion I will use *régisseur de la scène* rather than *directeur de la scène* when referring to the position charged with creating the *mise en scène* because of Solomé's official title.

<sup>34</sup> Bartlet, "Staging French Grand Opera," 630–31.

<sup>35</sup> "M. Solomé n'a pas peu contribué à la beauté de la représentation de cet ouvrage. Depuis long-temps il s'est fait une grande réputation en créant réellement l'art de mettre en scène." Y., *L'observateur des beaux-arts: Journal des arts, du dessin, de la musique, de l'art dramatique, etc.*, 13 August 1829, 156.

<sup>36</sup> Bartlet, "Staging French Grand Opera," 625.

<sup>37</sup> "Dieses complicirte Geschäft, dessen hohe Bedeutung für jede Bühne einleuchtet, wird einem Manne übertragen, der den Titel *régisseur* führt und der bis zur geringsten Umständlichkeit für jede Vorstellung verantwortlich gemacht werden soll. . . . Daher sollte ein Schauspieler, von dessen Fähigkeit und Talent man einmal

Nevertheless, it is evident that Pougin does not exaggerate when he concludes that “a good *metteur en scène* is a precious man in a theater.”<sup>38</sup>

The rapid rise in status of the *mise en scène* and the *régis seur de la scène* at the beginning of the nineteenth century was accompanied by the development of repertory opera. Instead of demanding new works every season, the European public now demanded reproductions of earlier successful works.<sup>39</sup> As a result, composers not only saw their works performed for more than one season at the big theaters of Paris but increasingly also on the smaller stages across the country. In addition, this development of repertory opera was accompanied by a new understanding that multiple productions of one piece, no matter at what theater, should be governed by an overall “Einheitston.”<sup>40</sup> In other words, all subsequent productions of a piece were expected to follow the same stage design and blocking of the original performance.<sup>41</sup> Smaller theaters wanted to emulate the big productions at the Opéra, with the understanding that they would be less elaborate but as close to the original as possible. This desire for uniformity necessitated the development of some sort of written record of the original *mise en scène* that would describe the blocking, the sets, and perhaps even the costumes and props employed at the premiere.<sup>42</sup>

France had always been a leader in the creation of written records for its many theaters. Ever since the seventeenth century, scores and librettos had been printed with stage directions, necessitated especially by the opera’s elaborate ballets.<sup>43</sup> The real boom of stage directions came

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die Ueberzeugung gewonnen, . . . für das Misslingen einer neuen Rolle, . . . nur selten verantwortlich gemacht werden, die Verantwortlichkeit treffe hingegen stets nur den Regisseur.” August Lewald, *Ein Menschenleben*, August Lewald’s Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 5 (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1844), 31–33.

<sup>38</sup> “Un bon metteur en scène est un homme précieux dans un théâtre.” Pougin, *Dictionnaire*, 642.

<sup>39</sup> Roger Parker, “Reading the ‘Livrets’ or the Chimera of ‘Authentic’ Staging,” in *La realizzazione scenica dello spettacolo verdiano*, ed. Pierluigi Petrobelli and Fabrizio Della Seta (Parma: Istituto nazionale di studi verdiani, 1996), 349.

<sup>40</sup> Bergman, “Eintritt des Berufsregisseurs,” 439.

<sup>41</sup> Wilberg, “The *Mise en scène* at the Paris Opéra,” 9.

<sup>42</sup> Cohen/Gigou, *Cent ans de mise en scène*, xi.

<sup>43</sup> Langer, *Regisseur und Aufzeichnungspraxis*, 119.



around 1750, however, sparked by a change in style of dance. The stylized, unexpressive, and complicated steps of the Baroque tradition began to give way to innovative, expressive, and simpler steps of a new generation of dancers.

Possibly the first push in this direction came from the English dancer John Weaver in 1717. In a series of three librettos titled *A Dramatic Entertainment of Dancing*, he called for the revival of ancient Greek and Roman practices of expressive dance and pantomime. In the scenario of *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, Weaver first thanks the dancers for their willingness to perform in a new way and then goes on to describe the mimes and pantomimes of ancient Greece:

[T]hese Mimes and Pantomimes were Dancers that represented a Story or Fable in Motion and Measure: They were Imitators of all things, as the Name of Pantomime imports, and perform'd all by Gesture and the Action of the Hands, Fingers, Legs and Feet, without making use of the Tongue. The Face or Countenance had a large Share in this Performance, and they imitated the Manners, Passions, and Affections, by the numerous Variety of Gesticulations.<sup>44</sup>

Weaver was unsuccessful in finding followers of his new style of dance, but his ideas reemerged some forty years later with the French dancer Jean Georges Noverre.<sup>45</sup> In his *Lettres sur la danse* (1760), Noverre writes:

Children of Terpsichore, renounce your *caprioles*, *entrechats*, and over-complicated steps; abandon simpering and give yourself over to sentiment, simple grace and expressiveness. . . . Give up these lifeless masks, imperfect copies of nature; they conceal your features, eclipse, one might say, your soul and rob you of your most important means of expression.<sup>46</sup>

The new approach to dance carried over to plays, where more naturalness and expressiveness began to be expected of the actors. The result was increased commentary on aspects of design, such as sets, props, and costumes, and aspects of acting, such as posture,

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<sup>44</sup> John Weaver, *The Loves of Mars and Venus* (London, 1717); translated in Selma Jeanna Cohen, ed., *Source Readings in Dance History from 1581 to the Present* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1974), 51–52.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>46</sup> Jean Georges Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse*, 1760; translated in Caroline Wood and Graham Sadler, *French Baroque Opera: A Reader* (Burlington, VM: Ashgate, 2000), 129.

mood, and pantomime,<sup>47</sup> which in turn led to innovative ways of notating these elements. In the foreword to his comedy *La coquette corrigée* (1756), the French actor and playwright Jean Baptiste Sauvé de La Noue presented, possibly for the first time, a precise method of notation:<sup>48</sup>

In the provinces, I have often seen much embarrassment or much negligence in the manner of placing the actors. Since in Paris they give a lot of thought to this subject (which is often of great consequence for the play), I believe I have found a very simple means of transferring this set arrangement ready-made to print. At the beginning of each scene, I have always named the first [character]—the one who must be the closest to the King's box—and the others successively. Nobody ignores that the box of the King is always to the left of the actors.<sup>49</sup>

A similar idea was perpetuated by the French playwright Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais in the *Advertissement* accompanying his play *La folle journée ou Le mariage de Figaro* (Théâtre de l'Odéon, 1784):

To facilitate the theatrical performances, we took care to write at the beginning of each scene the name of the characters in the order in which the audience sees them. If they have to make some momentous movements on the stage, it is designated by a new order of names, written in the margins at the moment in which it happens. It is important to maintain the good stage positions.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, Beaumarchais began to add brief analyses of the characters (in addition to the usual list of their names), a description of their costumes, and blocking information into the text of his plays. Some of these instructions were so detailed that they could have easily been extracted and published as a separate booklet accompanying the play.<sup>51</sup> A good example of the

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<sup>47</sup> Langer, *Regisseur und Aufzeichnungspraxis*, 121.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>49</sup> “J’ai vu souvent dans les provinces beaucoup d’embarras ou beaucoup de négligence dans la manière de placer les acteurs. Comme on fait à Paris beaucoup de réflexions sur cet article, qui est souvent de grande conséquence pour le jeu, je crois avoir trouvé un moyen bien simple de transporter dans l’imprimé cet arrangement tout fait. Au commencement de chaque scène, j’ai toujours nommé le premier, celui qui doit être le plus proche de la Loge du Roi, et les autres successivement. Personne n’ignore que la Loge du Roi est toujours à gauche des acteurs.” Jean Baptiste Sauvé de La Noue, *La coquette corrigée: Comédie en cinq actes en vers* (Paris: Chez la veuve Duchesne, 1756).

<sup>50</sup> “Pour faciliter les jeux du théâtre, on a eu l’attention d’écrire au commencement de chaque scène le nom des personnages dans l’ordre où le spectateur les voit. S’il font quelque mouvement grave dans la scène, il est désigné par un nouvel ordre de noms, écrit en marge à l’instant qu’il arrive. Il est important de conserver les bonnes positions théâtrales.” Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, *Théâtre complet*, ed. Pia Pascal, Les Portiques, vol. 45 (Paris: Club français du livre, 1956), 304.

<sup>51</sup> Bergman, “Eintritt des Berufsregisseurs,” 438.

extensive blocking information given by Beaumarchais appears in Act IV, Scene 9 of *Le mariage*, during which the Count and Countess receive the two wedding parties, Suzanne and Figaro and Marceline and Bartholo (Figure 2.1).<sup>52</sup>

#### SCENE 9

The Count and Countess (seated); the procession (comes in, to the tune of “Les folies d’Espagne”).  
 Bridal Procession. Huntsmen, with guns on shoulders. Policeman, The Magistrates, Brid’oison.<sup>53</sup>  
 The Village Men and Women in their best clothes. Two Young Girls, bearing the bridal crown with its white feathers. Two other girls with the white veil. Two others with the gloves and bouquet. Antonio offering his arm to Suzanne as the man who is giving her away. Other young girls, bearing a second crown, a second veil, a second white bouquet, like the first, for Marceline. Figaro offering his arm to Marceline, as the man giving her away to: Doctor Bartholo who brings up the rear, with a large bouquet.  
 As the young girls pass before the Count, they hand over to his valets all the items of dress intended for Suzanne and Marceline.  
 When the Villagers have formed two lines down each side of the gallery, the fandango is danced again, with castagnettes. Then, while the refrain for the duet is being played, Antonio leads Suzanne towards the Count; she kneels before him.  
 While the Count sets the veil and crown over her head and gives her the bouquet, two young girls sing the following duet.

Figure 2.1: Excerpt of Act IV, Scene 9 of Beaumarchais’s *The Marriage of Figaro*

Similarly, the Opéra began to distribute during its rehearsals copies of the libretto with extra-wide margins on which each *chef* made comments related to his responsibilities.<sup>54</sup> For instance, the *chef de la musique* would record details regarding the movement, placement, and gestures of the choir, the *chef de la danse* those regarding the ballet, and the *directeur de la scène* those regarding the principals. From this point onward, the staging manuals, or *livrets de mise en scène*, as they were called by Marie-Antoinette Allevy,<sup>55</sup> evolved rapidly, including

<sup>52</sup> Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, *The Marriage of Figaro*, trans. Graham Anderson (Widcombe, UK: Absolute Press, 1993), 211–12.

<sup>53</sup> Don Guzman Brid’oison, a judge.

<sup>54</sup> Bartlet, “Staging French Grand Opera,” 626.

<sup>55</sup> Allevy, *La mise en scène en France*, 127. The *livrets* may also be called *livrets scéniques*, *indications générales* or—in Italy—*disposizioni sceniche*, though the manuals were never as common in Italy as they were in France. Gerardo Guccini, “Spielleitung und Regie,” in *Die Oper auf der Bühne*, vol. 5 of *Geschichte der italienischen Oper*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, trans. Claudia Just and Paola Riesz, 6 vols. (Laaber: Laaber, 1991), 184.

more and more substantial information necessary for reproduction. The contents of the *livrets* could cover a wide array of aspects:

Composition, placement, and movement of the sets, stage business of principal characters at every reply, arrangements of the groups of extras, description of costumes, list of the props for every act: there is not a single detail of the *mise en scène* that is not found carefully recorded in these small books. They often also try hard to provide ways of simplifying the execution of complicated and costly stagings, such as those that were produced in the capital, in order to allow the directors of the province (for whom this documentation was especially intended) to produce the works of the Parisian repertoire.<sup>56</sup>

In addition, the *livrets* sometimes contained a list of the original performers, characterizations of their parts, and notes on lighting (though rarely).<sup>57</sup>

The new *livrets* not only appealed to the smaller, provincial theaters, but also to the Parisian middle class and theater connoisseurs. Newspapers such as *Le Moniteur des théâtres*, *Le Gil blas* and *La Revue du théâtre* included leaflets in their publications containing bits and pieces of the *mise en scène* of recent productions: “Thus, we shall be able to satisfy the tastes of the various classes of our subscribers by putting on a separate leaf (which will also add greater variety to the publication) the lists of the personnel and the explanation of productions.”<sup>58</sup>

The bulk of the *livrets*, however, was distributed by theater agencies. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, four of these agencies were in existence; the oldest, the Correspondance générale des théâtres had been established as early as 1780.<sup>59</sup> Other agencies around 1806 included the Café des comédiens, Correspondance des spectacles, Bureau

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<sup>56</sup> “Composition, plantation, et manœuvre des décors, jeux de scène des principaux personnages à chaque réplique, disposition des groupes de comparses, description des costumes, liste des accessoires à chaque acte, il n’est pas un détail de mise en scène qui ne se trouve soigneusement consigné en ces petits livrets qui s’ingénient souvent aussi à donner des moyens de simplifier l’exécution des mises en scène compliquées et coûteuses, telles qu’elles étaient réalisées dans la capitale, afin de permettre aux directeurs de province, auxquels était surtout consacrée cette documentation, de représenter les œuvres du répertoire parisien.” Allevy, *La mise en scène en France*, 128.

<sup>57</sup> Wilberg, “The *Mise en scène* at the Paris Opéra,” 8. Contrary to Allevy, Wilberg states that directions for the movement of scenery are not included in the *livrets*.

<sup>58</sup> “Désormais, nous pourrons satisfaire les goûts des diverses classes de nos souscripteurs en mettant sur une feuille à part, qui donnera aussi plus de variété au recueil, les tableaux du personnel et l’explication des mises en scène.” *Revue du théâtre* 1, no. 2 (1834–35): 63.

<sup>59</sup> Bergman, “Eintritt des Berufsregisseurs,” 438.

dramatique, and the Agence générale des théâtres. The *Annuaire dramatique* of 1806 wrote about the latter:

This agency does not limit itself to the simple brokerage of contracts; it is responsible for supplying all the theaters of the *départements* and those abroad and takes particular care to point out the way in which the new pieces must be performed, either through indicative notes or images and choreographic drawings of the interaction on stage, positions, costumes, and sets.<sup>60</sup>

So far, the earliest *livret* that has been found and that allows us to trace with certainty the publishing activities of these agencies is the *livret* of Alexander Duvals *Henri V* (Comédie-Française, 1806).<sup>61</sup> The play was first published by the agency Correspondance des spectacles, founded around 1800 by Étienne Perle.<sup>62</sup> Perle began publishing between 1799 and 1802 but confined his publications to small leaflets of decorations and figures. Between 1806 and 1810, after a period of directing the theaters of Lyons (1803–06), he returned to the publishing business, this time publishing small books labeled *Costumes des personnages, décors et mouvements des scènes*, or *Caractères et costumes des personnages*. These publications did not contain any pictures (which presumably were published separately) and ceased around 1810. The next surviving *livret*—documenting the *mise en scène* of Méhul’s *La Journée aux aventures*—dates from 1816. Its publisher is not known.<sup>63</sup>

It was not until 1827 that the *régisseurs de la scène* realized the potential for profit in Perle’s idea and began to publish their own *livrets*, mainly perhaps to document their personal achievements, or, as Lewald suggests, to protect themselves from being blamed for the mistakes of others:

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<sup>60</sup> “Cette agence ne se borne pas au simple courtage des engagements; elle se charge de toutes les fournitures pour les Théâtres des départements et de l’étranger, et prend un soin particulier à indiquer la manière dont les pièces nouvelles doivent être représentées, soit par des notes indicatives, soit des tableaux et dessins choréographiques des jeux de théâtre, positions, costumes et décors.” *Annuaire dramatique*, 1806; quoted in Bergman, “Eintritt des Berufsregisseurs,” 439.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 439.

<sup>62</sup> Langer, *Regisseur und Aufzeichnungspraxis*, 200.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 203–7.

For some time now the audience has been hearing [the] expression [“newly staged by *régisseur* X”] and in some cities even has been reading it printed on paper (as, for example, in Stuttgart: “*The Cousin from Bremen*,<sup>64</sup> newly staged by *régisseur* \*” or: “*The Jew*,<sup>65</sup> newly staged by *régisseur* \*\*”). . . . I would like to try at this point to give an explanation about this subject and would only alert [the reader], that in the cases that are closest to us (such as they are), the stage director is mentioned less out of an addiction to fame than an impulse of diligence, so that one person may not fall victim to the mistakes and absurdities of another, that [the latter] is forced to let pass or even to commit.<sup>66</sup>

An example of a *régisseur* who published the *mises en scène* he designed is Solomé. His *livrets*, called by him *Indications générales pour la mise en scène*, outline in great detail the aspects of his staging. His publications, which include a combination of images of costumes, set designs, and props with descriptions of blocking and interaction of characters, set the standard for *livrets de mises en scène* published throughout most of the nineteenth century.<sup>67</sup> Another well-respected publisher of the mid-nineteenth century was Vieillard Duverger, *régisseur général* at the Opéra-Comique, who together with his son Eugène Louis-Camille Vieillard Duverger published a small number of *livrets* between 1829 and 1836.<sup>68</sup>

Perhaps one of the most famous names associated with the collection and dissemination of *mises en scène* in the latter part of the nineteenth century is Louis Palianti. Born in Cadiz on 9

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<sup>64</sup> *Der Vetter aus Bremen* (1812), comedy in one act by Carl Theodor Körner.

<sup>65</sup> Most likely Lewald refers to *Der Jude von Malta* (1592), drama by Christopher Marlowe.

<sup>66</sup> “Das Publicum hört nun schon seit geraumer Zeit diese Redensart und es liest sie sogar in einigen Städten gedruckt auf dem Zettel (wie z.B. in Stuttgart: ‘Der Vetter aus Bremen, neu in die Scene gesetzt vom Regisseur \*’ oder: ‘Der Jude, neu in die Scene gesetzt vom Regisseur \*\*’). . . . Ich will hier versuchen, über diesen Gegenstand einige Aufklärung zu geben, und schicke nur voran, daß in den uns zunächst liegenden Fällen, wie die Sache einmal beschaffen ist, die Nennung des in die Scene Setzenden weniger aus Ruhmsucht geschieht, als aus einer Regung der Gewissenhaftigkeit, damit dem Einen nicht Fehler und Lächerlichkeit des Andern zu Schulden kommen möchten, die er oft durchschlüpfen zu lassen oder gar zu begehen gezwungen ist.” Lewald, *Ein Menschenleben*, 29–30.

<sup>67</sup> Langer, *Regisseur und Aufzeichnungspraxis*, 209–10. In fact, whether unaware of Perlet’s earlier publications or purposefully disregarding them, Allevy views Solomé’s written record of Louis Benoît Picard and Edouard Joseph Ennemond Mazère’s *Les trois quartiers* (1827) as the first real example of a *livret de mise en scène*. Allevy, *La Mise en scène en France*, 127.

<sup>68</sup> Langer, *Regisseur und Aufzeichnungspraxis*, 213–14. To my knowledge, no research so far has addressed the point whether the French publishers held the commercial rights to their *livrets* and the stagings contained within, as was the case for instance with the publishing firm Ricordi that was largely responsible for the dissemination of staging manuals in Italy. For information on the latter firm see James Hepokoski, “Staging Verdi’s Operas: The Single, ‘Correct’ Performance,” in *Verdi in Performance*, ed. Alison Latham and Roger Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 11–20.

September 1810, he came to Paris at the age of seven and, working as *sous-régisseur* at the Opéra-Comique between 1836 and 1872, published *livrets* either separately or in collections.<sup>69</sup> The largest, known as *Collection de mises en scène rédigées et publiées par M. L. Paliani*, contains over 200 *livrets*.<sup>70</sup> Cohen divides the *livrets* contained in this collection into five categories, the largest of which comprises manuals dating from the creation of an opera.<sup>71</sup> It is unlikely that all of the *livrets* of Paliani's collection reflect Paliani's own staging, since he sometimes mentions the names of other *régisseurs*.<sup>72</sup> We know, however, that his transcriptions are very thorough. In a letter dated 2 December 1849 and published at the back of several *livrets*, librettist Eugène Scribe bestows on Paliani the highest praise for his work:

Above all I express my thanks to you for the service which you have rendered to me in particular, to all of my colleagues, and to dramatic art in general. I believe your work to be done with such great care and intelligence, that it makes manifestly clear the intentions of the author and may stand in his stead at rehearsals, that it should greatly help dramatic works succeed in the provinces and abroad, and that its usefulness is beyond all doubt. . . . The proper traditions are henceforth impossible to forget and it is regrettable that such work was not done long ago.<sup>73</sup>

When Paliani died on 16 November 1875, his obituary included similar praise: "He has also rendered a great service to the theaters of the province and abroad through the publication of *mises en scène*, scrupulously exact, of all the works given during his long career at the Opéra

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<sup>69</sup> Langer, *Regisseur und Aufzeichnungspraxis*, 219.

<sup>70</sup> Cohen, *Twelve Parisian Operatic Premières*, xvii. The full bibliographical title according to Wolff is *Collection de mises en scène des grands opéras et d'opéras comiques représentées pour la première fois à Paris, rédigées et publiées par M. L. Paliani*. The bulk of the *livrets* (20 volumes, organized in alphabetical order) is housed in the Cabinet des estampes of the Bibliothèque Nationale. A smaller part is housed at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra. Wolff, "Regiebücher des Louis Paliani," 74.

<sup>71</sup> Cohen's other categories are (2) *livrets* dating from the first Parisian performance of a contemporary composition created elsewhere, (3) *livrets* dealing with operas revived in Paris, (4) *livrets* dealing with works revised for Paris, and (5) *livrets* previously published by the Duverger firm. Cohen, *Twelve Parisian Operatic Premières*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>72</sup> Wolff, "Regiebücher des Louis Paliani," 74.

<sup>73</sup> According to Cohen, the letter can be found on the back cover page of *La chanteuse*, *Le domino noir*, *L'eau merveilleuse*, *L'éclair* and *La juive*; quoted in translation in Cohen/Gigou, *Cent ans de mise en scène*, xlv.

and the Opéra-Comique.”<sup>74</sup> Robert Cohen, in his work on the Paliani collection, confirms that the instructions in Paliani’s *livrets* matched with great accuracy the depiction of specific scenes in the illustrated newsweekly *L’Illustration*.<sup>75</sup>

The idea of *régisseurs* studying the staging of older colleagues either to gain insight for a re-staging or simply to compare ideas, is a relatively recent trend. In 1907 theater regisseur Hubert Génin suggested the forming of an association for *régisseurs*, “first of all to get to know one another better, and further, to seek out in common some mutual support, both professional and oral, which could not help but be beneficial to all branches of the theatrical profession.”<sup>76</sup> In 1911 a first meeting of thirteen *régisseurs* took place at the Théâtre du Châtelet.

Today, the single most important organization working on the preservation and cataloguing of *livrets de mise en scène* is the Bibliothèque de l’Association de la régie théâtrale (A.R.T.). Originally named Bibliothèque des mises en scène et de la documentation théâtrale, the library was founded in 1920 by members of the Association des régisseurs des théâtres français and changed name in 1976. It has been housed at the Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris since 1970 and contains close to 1,700 documents on staging of some 600 operas, opéra-comiques, and operettas.<sup>77</sup>

The merit of this collection and the merit of the *livrets* for the scholarly and theatrical world in general has been the subject of much debate. The ambiguous authorship, limited detail in the early *livrets*, and inaccessibility of those that are preserved has led many modern

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<sup>74</sup> “Il a rendu aussi un grand service aux théâtres de la province et de l’étranger, par la publication des *mises en scène*, scrupuleusement exactes, de tous les ouvrages données pendant sa longue carrière à l’Opéra et à l’Opéra-Comique,” *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* 42, no. 45 (7 November 1875): 359.

<sup>75</sup> Cohen/Gigou, *Cent ans de mise en scène*, xlv.

<sup>76</sup> Excerpt from an article by Génin in the *Bulletin de l’Association amicale des régisseurs de théâtres*, February 1914; quoted in translation in Cohen/Gigou, *Cent ans de mise en scène*, xlviii.

<sup>77</sup> Cohen/Gigou, *Cent ans de mise en scène*, xlvii.



stage directors to ignore these manuals. Though it is impossible to know for sure whether the productions captured in the *livrets* represent the intention of the composer, they do nonetheless document practices of staging at the time of their creation. Thus, the *livrets* are of great value especially for the music historian, because they reveal contemporary and local staging practices as well as their evolution, dissemination, and influence. But modern stage directors too have something to gain from an examination of the original *livrets*, especially if complicated special effects or difficult scene changes are necessary. A *livret* of an original production might include solutions to these problems that are intriguing, effective, and more authentic, if indeed a staging closer to the original performance is desired.

### CHAPTER 3: CONVENTIONS OF STAGING AT THE OPÉRA BEFORE *LE SIÈGE DE CORINTHE*

Prior to examining the *livret de mise en scène* of *Le Siège de Corinthe*, we must examine the practices of staging already in existence at the Opéra during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps the greatest obstacle in this endeavor is the lack of available *livrets* of productions predating the crucial appointment of the Comité: of the 625 *livrets* catalogued by Cohen and Gigou, only seventeen pertain to musical productions before 1827; of these, only five are for productions staged at the Opéra and only one, the *livret* of *Le Siège de Corinthe*, is readily available in print. Furthermore, conclusions drawn from the few *livrets* that are preserved must be treated with caution, as we cannot be sure whether the often scarce information in these *livrets* documents actual staging practice or innovations of an emerging tradition.

While this chapter does not attempt to study thoroughly the conventions of staging at the Opéra prior to 1820, it will survey them in preparation for Chapter 4, relying on contemporary evidence and available scholarship. It will focus on the four aspects most important to the creation of a successful *mise en scène*: the sets, the props, the blocking of the principal characters, and the blocking of the choir.

#### Sets and Props

From roughly 1805 to 1830 the most important creator of sets at the Opéra was Pierre-Luc-Charles Ciceri (1782–1868). After an accident cut short his career as a singer and violinist, Ciceri began to take lessons in drawing and painting from the architect and set designer François Joseph Belanger in 1802 and entered the services of the Opéra as painter of landscapes in 1805. Around 1816 he was promoted to the position of one of the several *peintres en chef*. Following

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<sup>78</sup> No study has so far examined this area comprehensively; several scholars have remarked, however, that productions of the Opéra during this time lacked the ingenuity and innovation of those at other Parisian theaters and largely continued the traditions that had existed during the previous century. See, for example, Jacobshagen, “Revolution,” 6–7; Bartlet, “Staging French Grand Opera,” 625–30; Marian Smith, “Ballet, Opera and Staging Practices at the Paris Opéra,” in *La realizzazione scenica*, 288; Carlson, “*Hernani*’s Revolt,” 1–3.

the death of Eugenio Degotti in 1824, Ciceri became the head of the *peintres en chef* and remained in that position until 1847.<sup>79</sup>

Ciceri's main achievement in set design was the integration of a Romantic style featuring elements of fantasy and local color, while still maintaining historical authenticity.<sup>80</sup>

Before Ciceri, the scenery of the Opéra (Salle Louvois) and in other theaters still lagged in the old classic rut, where Olympus with its baggage of Cupids, quivers, and arrows played an important role. . . . It was truly Ciceri who first understood that the time of the old antique and classic scenes had passed and who, at the same time, posed the principle that, in a stage setting, the faithfully and carefully executed details must be sacrificed to the mass and the effect.<sup>81</sup>

Even critics of the Opéra, such as Merle, lauded his skill: "The set is entrusted to a man of such great talent that his reputation is above all praise. . . . *Cicéri* is the foremost painter of landscape for the set."<sup>82</sup> Even though Ciceri's role at the Opéra diminished sharply after 1833, he was vital in elevating the importance of the set.<sup>83</sup>

The standard set of the eighteenth century consisted of profiled flats called wings [*chassis*],<sup>84</sup> a large painting at the back of the stage, often called a back scene [*fond de campagne*],<sup>85</sup> and long strips of painted cloth called borders [*bandes d'air*]. The flats, which ran

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<sup>79</sup> Manfred Boetzkes: "Pierre-Luc-Charles Ciceri," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 8 November 2007), <http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>.

<sup>80</sup> Wilberg, "The *Mise en scène* at the Paris Opéra," 190. Ciceri designed sets for over four hundred productions at the Opéra and other theaters in Paris.

<sup>81</sup> Charles Séchan, *Souvenirs d'un homme de théâtre, 1831–1855* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1883), 7–8; translated in Wilberg, "The *Mise en scène* at the Paris Opéra," 194.

<sup>82</sup> "Les décorations sont confiées à un homme d'un si grand talent que sa réputation est au-dessus de tout éloge. . . . *Cicéri* [*sic*] est le premier peintre de paysage pour la décoration." Merle, *De l'Opéra*, 30.

<sup>83</sup> Wilberg, "The *Mise en scène* at the Paris Opéra," 190.

<sup>84</sup> In modern stage terminology, the term wing usually means an off stage area. In the case of older stages, however, the term means an actual piece of scenery, commonly referred to as a flat in today's terminology. These pieces of scenery—some as large as twenty eight feet high and eight feet wide, weighing approximately one hundred ten *livres* [pounds]—were mounted on chariots, little wagons with two wheels that ran on and off stage on either side of the stage. These chariots could move at very high speeds, often posing an immediate threat to the health of the actors during scene changes. For the most thorough English description of the stage of the Opéra see Cecil Thomas Ault, Jr., "Design, Operation and Organization of Stage Machinery at the Paris Opera: 1770–1873" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1983). His description of the chariot system appears on p. 127–56; for wings see p. 17, 21–56. To avoid confusion I will translate the term wing, meaning a piece of scenery, as flat throughout the thesis.

<sup>85</sup> There were a number of ways of creating this back scene; at French stages, the use of a flying back drop was the most common. Ault, "Design, Operation and Organization," 28.

up and down the stage on either side, terminated the stage picture to the right and left of the set, while the back drop, usually with a number of stairs in front of it, terminated the stage picture to the back. The borders hung from the grid or machine area over the stage and terminated the stage picture to the top like a ceiling.<sup>86</sup> The *peintre en chef* would paint each element of the set to represent whatever visual detail the production required. In the eighteenth century, the painted elements gave the impression of a shrinking rectangle that receded towards the central vanishing point on the backdrop, since each flat was aligned parallel with the footlights.<sup>87</sup>

After the turn of the century these conventions persisted: “If old routine is one of the sore spots of the Opéra, it is especially in this field [the set and the machinery] that one feels the effects most fatally.”<sup>88</sup> To enliven the set, designers began to cut out parts of the images depicted on the flats to create a feel of three-dimensionality. Furthermore, stage hands pivoted the flats away from the footlights to open up the stage and further enhance the realism of the set.<sup>89</sup> Natural elements such as mountains or other elevations were created by the use of *practicables*, a type of platform on which actors could stand and move around,<sup>90</sup> while individual flat scenery such as columns, rocks, or other items useful for braking up the playing area were placed directly on stage or carried on by hand.<sup>91</sup>

Marvin Carlson has closely examined the use of props at Parisian theaters and has noted, for example, a predominance of placing furniture downstage right and left, leaving center stage

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 25–29.

<sup>87</sup> Wilberg, “The *Mise en scène* at the Paris Opéra,” 141.

<sup>88</sup> “Si la vieille routine est une des plaies de l’Opéra, c’est sur-tout dans ce service qu’on en ressent les plus funestes effets.” Merle, *De l’Opéra*, 30.

<sup>89</sup> Wilberg, “The *Mise en scène* at the Paris Opéra,” 141–42.

<sup>90</sup> Pougin writes: “A *practicable* is a piece of the set . . . that represents either an uneven terrain, a construction, or any object on which one or more persons can climb, walk, or move.” (“Un *practicable* est un fragment de décor . . . représentant soit un accident de terrain, soit une construction, soit un objet quelconque sur lequel une ou plusieurs personnes peuvent monter, marcher, se mouvoir.”) Pougin, *Dictionnaire*, 615.

<sup>91</sup> Wilberg, “The *Mise en scène* at the Paris Opéra,” 142. Individual items of the set were used very sparingly at the Opéra because they could easily interfere with the complicated mechanisms effecting the scene changes, which up until the production of Rossini’s *Guillaume Tell* (Opéra, 1829) were done *à vue*. Ibid., 186–87.

free for the actors. He furthermore points out that characters did not necessarily interact with the props.<sup>92</sup> A similar use of props seems to have been in place for productions at the Opéra. In Act I of *La Vestale*, for example, the High Priest and Priestess each place a tripod (with burning incense) stage right and stage left, leaving center stage open for the actors (Figure 3.1).<sup>93</sup>

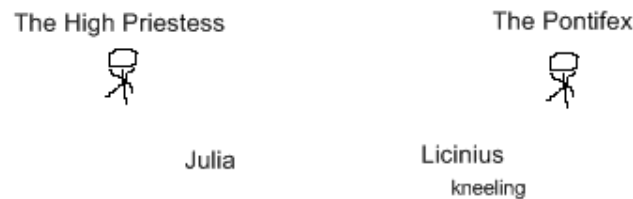



Figure 3.1: Sketch for Act I, Finale of Spontini's *La Vestale*

In the *livrets*, the set is usually described at the beginning of each act, with the length of the descriptions varying from the extremely detailed to the generic. An unusually detailed annotated diagram, for example, illustrates the set of Act I of *La Vestale* (Figure 3.2). It shows a large backdrop (1), several parallel wings (2, 7), and three *praticables* for the temple of Vesta (3), the throne of Licinius (5), and the podium of the consuls (8) respectively. Of the *praticables*, only the podium of the consuls is arranged diagonally. A triumphal arch (4) and marble steps (9, 10, 11) brake up the playing area.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Carlson, “*Hernani’s Revolt*,” 14.

<sup>93</sup> The only other prop used in the production is a chair for Licinius (see Figure 3.2), in which he sits only briefly at the end of Act I. The tripods are represented in the graphic as . “Spontini: *La Vestale*,” 12.

<sup>94</sup> The key to the sketch is as follows: 1 Back Scene, 2 Flats of the Back Scene, 3 Temple of Vesta, 4 Triumphal Arch, 5 Throne of Licinius, 6 Chair, 7 Drapery, 8 Podium of the Consuls, 9 and 10 Four Marble Steps, 11 Three Steps, x actors. (1 Fond de Campagne, 2 Chassis de Campagne, 3 Temple de Vesta, 4 Arc de Triomphe, 5 Trône de Licinius, 6 Chaise curule, 7 Draperie, 8 Estrade pour les consuls, 9 Quatre marches en marbre, 10 Quatre marches, 11 trois marches, x X.) “Spontini: *La Vestale*,” 2. The number 11 is listed in the description but is absent in the illustration. Most likely it is meant to refer to the three steps leading up to the Podium of the Consuls (8).

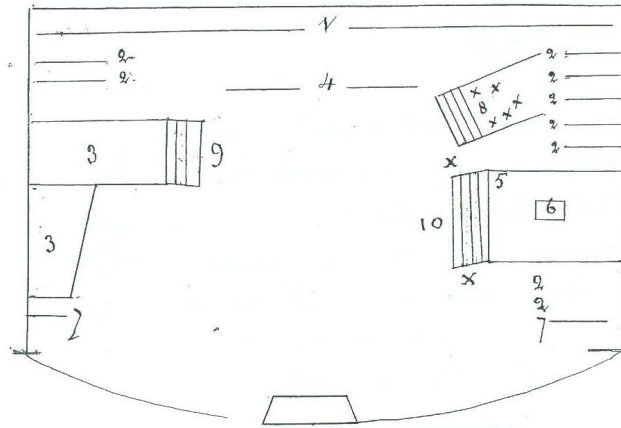


Figure 3.2: Sketch of the Set of Act I in Spontini's *La Vestale*

On the other hand, the illustration for Act II shows only a set of steps leading up to the holy flame (Figure 3.3). The sketch has no accompanying description.<sup>95</sup>

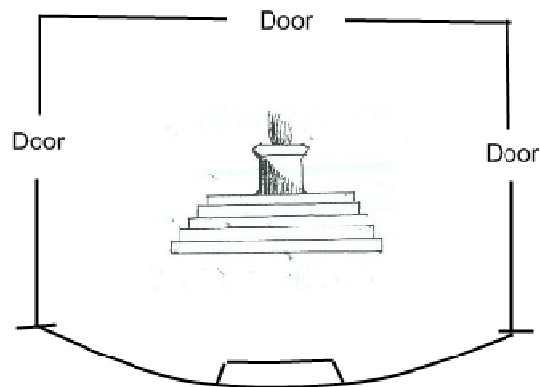


Figure 3.3: Sketch of the Set for Act II of Spontini's *La Vestale*

### Soloists

As late as 1840, soloists were blocked primarily in a line across the front of the stage called the downstage line.<sup>96</sup> Following La Noue's description in his comedy *La coquette corrigée* (Comédie Française, 1756), the soloist's place in the line may be indicated in the *livrets* either by

<sup>95</sup> "Spontini: *La Vestale*," 15. Act II takes place in the Temple of Vesta.

<sup>96</sup> Smith, "Ballet, Opera and Staging Practices," 285. Dene Barnett has argued that the downstage line was not so much a line but a small semicircle formed by the principal characters. Dene Barnett, *The Art of Gesture: The Practice and Principles of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Acting* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1987), 395.

name alone or by name and a number as, for example, in the *livret* of Alexandre Duval's play *La jeunesse de Henri V* (Théâtre-Français, 1806; Figure 3.4).<sup>97</sup>

Scène 7

(Lady Clara entre par la droite de la porte du fond.)

1	2	3	4
William,	Henri,	Rochester,	Lady Clara

Figure 3.4: Excerpt from Act I, Scene 7 of Duval's *Henri V*

Once on stage the actors usually remained in the downstage line except, as Dene Barnett has shown, to enter into a dialogue with another character, to kneel before someone, to obey an order to stand apart, to kill someone, to give or receive an item, or to embrace someone.<sup>98</sup>

The downstage line indicated equality of musical importance of the soloists in the line; when a soloist dominated, he would sometimes move forward, producing a staggered arrangement.<sup>99</sup> In the duet between Julia and Licinius in Act II, Scene 3 of *La Vestale*, for example, Julia is passive since her guarding duty prevents her from moving away from the flame. Licinius pleads with her to leave the temple for him and, as the active character, moves to the front of the stage (Figure 3.5).<sup>100</sup>

Julia.

Licinius.

Figure 3.5: Sketch to Act II, Scene 3 of Spontini's *La Vestale*

<sup>97</sup> Jean-Charles-Julien Luce de Lancival (1764–1810) worked in Paris as poet and playwright. Excerpt from the printed *livret* of Alexandre Duval's *La jeunesse de Henri V* (Théâtre-Français, 1806); reproduced in Carlson, "*Hernani's* Revolt," 11. The *livret* of *Le Siège* also indicates the positions of the characters by number and name.

<sup>98</sup> Barnett, *Art of Gesture*, 426.

<sup>99</sup> Bartlet, "Staging French Grand Opera," 628.

<sup>100</sup> "Spontini; *La Vestale*," 17.

Since the downstage line was the basic formation, a shift of attention to the upstage area needed to be pointed out specifically.<sup>101</sup> In *Tancrède*, for example, the direction for the hero to enter upstage (Act III, Scene 3) is the only prompt for an exit or entry relative to the depth of the stage, suggesting that it was an exceptional event.<sup>102</sup>

In addition to the downstage line, productions of early French operas were characterized by the principle of symmetry. The choir, for example, always stood in symmetrical lines to both sides of the stage and the principal characters—whenever they broke from the downstage line—stood in balanced pairs on opposed sides.<sup>103</sup> During the course of the finale of Act I of *La Vestale*, for example, Julia and Licinius line up downstage, with the High Priestess and the Pontifex in a symmetrical arrangement behind them (see Figure 3.1, above). Only one instruction regarding props appears in the prompt notes for *Tancrède*, where in the final scene the hero is instructed to “attempt to draw his sword” when exclaiming the word “horreur.”<sup>104</sup>

Another important aspect of blocking the principal actors is the display of rank. Barnett argues that important characters frequently occupied stage right, the side that in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century books on civility was accorded to a person of superior rank.<sup>105</sup> Antonia Banducci has further argued that there may be a distinct association between male characters and the King’s side and female characters and the Queen’s side of the stage (the former representing power, the latter a lack of it), but in contrast to Barnett, Banducci sees stage left as the strong

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<sup>101</sup> Marian Smith claims that upstage action became increasingly common around 1840. Smith, “Ballet, Opera and Staging Practices,” 285. On the other hand, in the eighteenth century productions at the Comédie Française it was common for a character who was not participating in the action to go upstage and then return downstage before entering into the dialogue. Barnett, *Art of Gesture*, 419.

<sup>102</sup> Banducci, “Staging a *Tragédie en musique*,” 186.

<sup>103</sup> Smith, “Ballet, Opera and Staging Practices,” 288–89.

<sup>104</sup> “Il veut arracher une épée.” Campa, *Tancrède*, 416.

<sup>105</sup> Barnett, *Art of Gesture*, 387–95. If the characters were instead positioned in a semicircle, the most prestigious position was in the center.



side and stage right as the weak side.<sup>106</sup> In *Tancrède*, for example, Banducci points out that the hero always enters and exits stage left until the magician Isménor in Act IV renders him powerless for the rest of the opera, immobilizing and torturing him, whereupon the defeated hero remains stage right for the rest of the opera. In addition, she observes that characters about to interact with one another entered from and exited on opposite sides of the stage (in the case of a man and woman, the man enters from the King's side and the woman from the Queen's side). If possible, soloists avoided crossing the stage to exit.<sup>107</sup>

*Livrets* of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century rarely indicated directions regarding the emotional aspect of acting, even though this kind of acting was considered to be important, as Nicolas-Étienne Framéry pointed out: "the most essential quality for a *singer* of the Opéra, is to be a good *actor*."<sup>108</sup> In opera, acting was required primarily during sections of recitative<sup>109</sup> and consisted of a series of gestures of the arm or hand (pointing towards or imitating the size of an object) and the face (expressing such sentiments as grief, surprise, terror,

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<sup>106</sup> In order to avoid any confusion created by the different point of views of the actor or audience, the sides of the French stage are labeled *cour* for stage left and *jardin* for stage right. These terms stem from the time when the Opéra was located in the Salle des Machines du Palais des Tuileries (1764–70) where stage right was next to the famous gardens and stage left to the *cour de carrousel*. See, for example, Harel, *Dictionnaire*, 95. Before the Opéra's move to the Tuileries, the sides were labeled according to the location of the boxes of the King and Queen, hence Banducci's reference. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century accounts are either unclear or contradictory in specifying which side (King or Queen) is stage left or stage right. Harel, for example, writes: "The loge of the king, that is to say the right, in the Tuileries is found stage right (*jardin*), and that of the queen stage left (*cour*). (La loge du roi, c'est-à-dire la droite, se trouvant aux Tuileries du côté du *jardin*, et celle de la reine du côté de la *cour* du Carrousel)." Harel, *Dictionnaire*, 95. But because of an ambiguous statement by La Noue ("Nobody ignores that the box of the King is always to the left of the actors;" La Noue, *La coquette corrigée*, foreword), Banducci infers that the box of the King was located stage left and that of the Queen stage right. This location of the boxes is corroborated by French dramatist Luigi Riccoboni, *Réflexions historiques et critiques sur les différens théâtres de l'Europe* (Amsterdam: Aux dépens de la compagnie, 1740), 107. Studies of the French stage have not yet addressed this discrepancy and consequently some confusion remains. Wilberg, for example, uses the terms according to Harel. Wilberg, "The *Mise en scène* at the Paris Opéra," 123. Both Banducci and Barnett use the terms according to La Noue and Riccoboni.

<sup>107</sup> Banducci, "Staging a *Tragédie en musique*," 183–84.

<sup>108</sup> Nicolas-Étienne Framéry, *De l'organisation des spectacles de Paris, ou essai sur leur forme actuelle*. . . . (Paris: Buisson, 1790), 30; translated in Barnett, *Art of Gesture*, 16. The italics are Barnett's. Framéry (1745–1810) was active in Paris as a composer, critic, librettist, and parodist. See, for instance, Mark Darlow, *Nicolas-Étienne Framéry and Lyric Theater in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000).

<sup>109</sup> Barnett, *Art of Gesture*, 15.

anger, and welcome).<sup>110</sup> Both the notes to *Tancrède* and the *livret* of *La Vestale* are exclusively concerned with blocking.

### The Choir<sup>111</sup>

Throughout the eighteenth century the choir divided into two groups, positioned in a row to either side of the stage.<sup>112</sup> In early librettos (1710–14), the rows were identified by the terms *premier rang* (the row stage left) and *second rang* (the row stage right);<sup>113</sup> in later librettos (mid-eighteenth century and onward), the rows were identified by their placement in respect to the boxes of the king and queen.<sup>114</sup> Occasionally, members of the choir filled in the back of the stage in the form of a semicircle. In this formation, the women of the choir stood in line closest to the curtain, followed by the basses; the tenors and *hautes-contres*<sup>115</sup> filled in the back of the stage.<sup>116</sup> Figure 3.6 illustrates such a layout in use at Versailles as late as 1773.<sup>117</sup> The two-group division remained the norm on the Parisian stage through the course of the eighteenth century.

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<sup>110</sup> For a thorough analysis of the range of gestures used during the eighteenth century, see *Ibid.*, 26–84.

<sup>111</sup> To my knowledge, no study has thoroughly examined the staging of the choir in French opera during the first quarter of the nineteenth century; however, a number of scholars have examined the staging of the choir of the eighteenth century. Perhaps the most extensive study is Arnold Jacobshagen, *Der Chor in der französischen Oper des späten Ancien Régime*, *Perspektiven der Opernforschung*, vol. 5 (Berlin: Lang, 1997). It includes a special section commenting on the blocking of the choir (61–72); other studies specifically treating the staging of the choir include Lois Rosow, “Performing a Choral Dialogue by Lully,” *Early Music* 15 (1987): 325–35; Banducci, “Staging a *Tragédie en musique*,” 186–88; Mary Cyr, “The Dramatic Role of the Chorus in French Opera: Evidence for the Use of Gesture, 1670–1770,” in *Opera and the Enlightenment*, ed. Thomas Bauman and Marita Petzoldt McClymonds (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 105–19.

<sup>112</sup> Cyr, “Dramatic Role of the Chorus,” 105.

<sup>113</sup> Rosow, “Choral Dialogue,” 330.

<sup>114</sup> Cyr, “Dramatic Role of the Chorus,” 105. Cyr, referencing Riccoboni (p. 106), identifies King’s side as stage left and Queen’s side as stage right. See also note 106.

<sup>115</sup> *Haute-contre* refers to a naturally high tenor who only occasionally lapsed into falsetto. See Neal Zaslaw, “The Enigma of the *Haute-Contre*,” *The Musical Times* 115 (November 1974): 939–41.

<sup>116</sup> “[The choir] is positioned in a row to the two sides of the stage; the *hautes-contres* and the tenors form a sort of semicircle in the back.” “[Les chœurs] sont placés en haie sur les deux ailes du théâtre; les hautes-contres et les tailles forment une espece de demi-cercle dans le fond.” Louis de Cahusac, “Chœurs,” in *Encyclopédie dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert, 17 vols. (Paris: Briasson, 1751–80), 3:362. French playwright and librettist Louis de Cahusac (1706–59) is particularly well known for his collaboration with Jean-Philippe Rameau, providing the libretto for six of his operas.

<sup>117</sup> Original watercolor painting by J. B. Metoyen (*Plan de la Musique du Roy au grand théâtre de Versailles*); reproduced in Rosow, “Choral Dialogue,” 329. The size of the choir depicted by Metoyen (48 choristers) approximates the size of the average choir used at the Opéra from about 1770 onward, at which time at least fifty choristers were employed every year. Jacobshagen, *Chor*, 50–51.

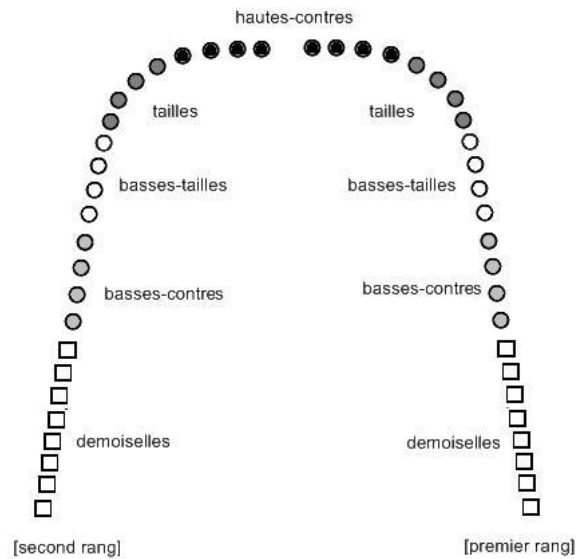


Figure 3.6: Choral Layout at Versailles 1773

As French playwright Pierre Laujon indicates, the choir entered the stage in an orderly procession:

The choir arrived on the stage in an orderly march. The men on one side and the women on the other passed each other as they arrived and then re-entered the wings; then, in order of seniority they came on stage once again, this time to place themselves in line on each side, singing, the men with their arms crossed and the women holding fans, which meant they could make not a single gesture.<sup>118</sup>

A notable exception to Laujon's observation occurs in Act III, Scene 6 of *La Vestale*, where the priests are instructed to enter "in uproar" from the door to the left of the audience.<sup>119</sup> Such a chaotic form of entry for the choir was exceptional and, according to Marian Smith, more common towards the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>120</sup> Once on stage, the choir remained standing in

<sup>118</sup> Pierre Laujon, *Oeuvres choisies de P. Laujon*, 4 vols. (Paris: L. Collin, 1811), 1:177; translated in Rosow, "Choral Dialogue," 329.

<sup>119</sup> "Les prêtres entrent en tumulte par la porte à la gauche du public." "Spontini: *La Vestale*," 26.

<sup>120</sup> Smith, "Ballet, Opera and Staging," 286.

the traditional two rows until the end of an act,<sup>121</sup> a practice that largely continued into the nineteenth century. The choral scenes documented in the *livret* of *La Vestale*, for example, show the choir positioned in two lines along both sides of the stage during Act II, Scene 1 (Figure 3.7). On the other hand, a slight deviation from convention can be seen in Act I, Scene 1 (Figure 3.8), where the choir is positioned to one side of the stage.<sup>122</sup>



Figure 3.7: Sketch for Act II, Scene 1 of Spontini's *La Vestale*

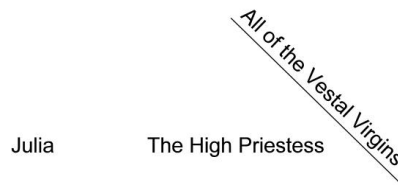


Figure 3.8: Sketch for Act I, Scene 1 of Spontini's *La Vestale*

Similarly, in the most elaborately staged scene of the opera, the finale of Act I, the choristers and extras are not arranged in straight lines. Rather, the people (presumably extras) and warriors (presumably choristers) form a semicircle consisting of two rows in the back, while the vestal virgins (in one line stage right) and the choir of the priests (in one line stage left) form

<sup>121</sup> Jacobshagen, *Chor*, 61–62. One exception is when members of the choir are used as extras, accompanying leading characters on stage; in such a case the choir members do not sing and usually exit before the main characters begin private conversations. Banducci, “Staging a *Tragédie en musique*,” 187–88. *Tancredi* includes one exceptional example of choir members leaving their respective row. In Act I, Scene 3, a group of soldiers moves to the center of the stage and forms a circle around two of the principals to sing a choral number for bass solo and men’s choir. After the last note, the members of the choir are instructed to return to their rows. Banducci, “Staging a *Tragédie en musique*,” 186.

<sup>122</sup> The choir takes the same position stage right (this time in two rows) in Act III, Scene 5.

their own choral groups, being separated from the other singers by two Lictors (stage right) and Licinius and the Consuls (stage left) (Figure 3.9). According to the description accompanying this sketch, each group or section of the choir enters either stage right or stage left, organized in two parallel rows and proceeds across the stage before arriving in its respective position. This positioning shows that with the beginning of the nineteenth century a certain flexibility in placing the choir began to emerge at the Opéra. The choir was still confined to the sides of the stage, but the strict single row formation was no longer the exclusive manner of staging.

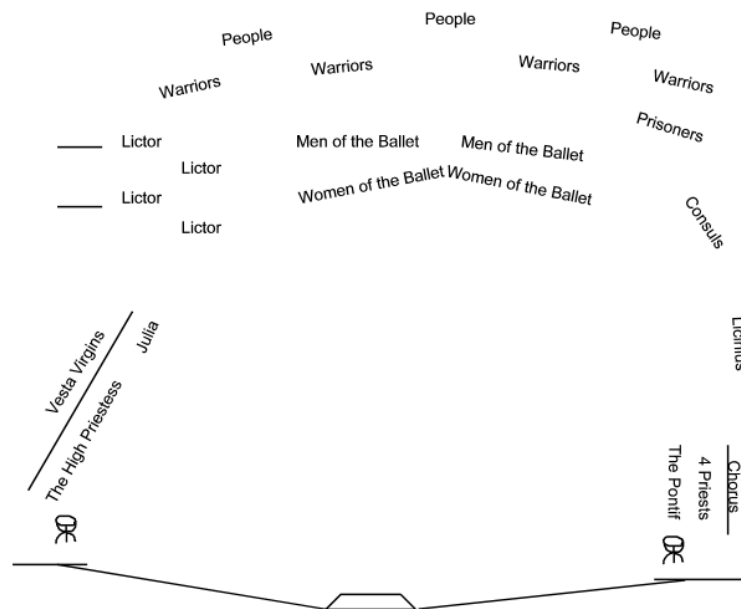


Figure 3.9: Sketch for Act I, Finale of Spontini's *La Vestale*

Beyond entrance, exit, placement, and small movement of the choir during the triumphal march in the finale of Act I, however, the choir in *La Vestale* does not participate in the unfolding action in any way. This practice was common during the eighteenth century, and even though some librettos from the mid-eighteenth century suggest that the choir occasionally interacted with the soloists in the form of a dialogue, it is unknown to what extent this was

portrayed on stage.<sup>123</sup> Pictorial evidence shows that small gestures such as arm movements (raising one hand while the other remains close to the body) or turns of the head to look at the major characters were in use. In addition, the expression of dancers or the gestures of the soloists may have substituted for the missing action in the choir.<sup>124</sup> Whichever is the case, by the middle of the eighteenth century the static nature of the choir became the subject of much criticism. Cahusac writes: “One sometimes hears them [the choristers] say that the *earth crumbles under their feet, that they are perishing*, etc., and during this time they stay calmly in the same place without making the slightest movement.”<sup>125</sup> Jean-Laurent de Béthizy<sup>126</sup> even suggests using the choir only when other characters are present in order to divert the audience’s attention from the static choir towards the more active front of the stage:

The actors who sing the pieces the choir accompanies appear at the front of the stage. They express through their gestures what they are saying; they are animated, and they seem to animate the others, because the spectator, occupied by the action of the main characters, pays no attention to the immobility of those who sing with them.<sup>127</sup>

On the other hand, productions that animated the choir earned rave reviews, as, for example, the first Parisian performance of Christoph Willibald Gluck’s *Alceste* (Opéra, 1776): “The curtain rises. Here I believe myself truly returned to the times of the ancient Greek tragedy. These are no longer the motionless extras, strangers to the action; it is all one animated people expressing wishes for the health of a cherished king.”<sup>128</sup> A year earlier, the libretto of François-

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<sup>123</sup> Jacobshagen, *Chor*, 67.

<sup>124</sup> Cyr, “Dramatic Role of the Chorus,” 107–8. No pictorial evidence exists showing the crossed arms that Laujon mentions. Cyr suggests that it is perhaps an interactive gesture in itself. *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>125</sup> Cahusac, “Chœurs,” 362; translated in Rosow, “Choral Dialogue,” 329.

<sup>126</sup> Jean Laurent de Béthizy (1702–81) was a French composer and theorist.

<sup>127</sup> “Les Acteurs qui chantent ces morceaux que les chœurs accompagnent, paroissent sur le devant du théâtre, ils expriment par leurs gestes ce qu’ils disent, ils sont animés & ils semblent animer les autres, parce que le Spectateur occupé de l’action des principaux personnages, ne fait point d’attention à l’immobilité de ceux qui chantent avec eux.” Jean-Laurent de Béthizy, *Exposition de la théorie et de la pratique de la musique, suivant les nouvelles découvertes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris: F.G. Deschamps, 1764; reprint Geneva: Minkoff, 1972), 299.

<sup>128</sup> “La toile se lève. Ici je me crois véritablement retourné au temps de l’ancienne Tragédie Grecque. Ce ne sont plus d’immobiles Figurans, étrangers à l’action, c’est tout un Peuple animé qui fait des vœux pour la santé d’un Roi chéri.” “Les souper des enthousiastes,” in *Querelle des Gluckistes et des Piccinnistes: Texte des pamphlets avec*

Joseph Gossec's *Sabinus* (Versailles 1773; Opéra 1774), contained editorial remarks about the movement of the choir: "[The] choir [moves] in an imploring gesture towards Mucien. The extras of Mucien's retinue destroy the forest with hatchet strikes. All leave in disorder."<sup>129</sup> While the overall reception of these changes seems to have been positive, a number of critics viewed the animation of the choir as ridiculous, especially in the productions of the Opéra.<sup>130</sup> One anonymous critic wrote: "The choir is used like an entire organ registration & all of the extras gesture like puppets; they can sing indiscriminately in French, Italian, Greek, or Latin; the deafened spectator . . . believes to see nothing but sonorous robots, [who are] clumsy and ridiculous."<sup>131</sup>

Nonetheless, productions of the last quarter of the eighteenth century and those of the early nineteenth century began to seek participation and movement of the choir during the course of a scene to enhance and illustrate the unfolding action. Perhaps another element that added to this change was the introduction of the oil lamp at the Paris Opéra in 1785. In previous centuries, the Opéra used candles that were fastened to the front ramp and the scenery and consequently illuminated only parts of the stage, leaving others, especially the middle, in semidarkness.<sup>132</sup> The oil lamps illuminated the areas formerly hidden, and not only allowed a more flexible positioning of the choir but also made their gestures more visible to the spectators.

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*introduction, commentaires et index par François Lesure*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1781; reprint Geneva: Minkoff, 1984), 1:70.

<sup>129</sup> "Chœurs en attitude de supplians vers Mucien. Les comparses de la suite de Mucien detruisent la forêt a coups de haches. Tous sortent en desordre." Dominique Lauvernier, "François-Joseph Gossec, compositeur dramatique. Orientations pour l'étude de ses opéras et musiques de scène pour tragédies de *Sabinus* à *Athalie*," in *Fêtes et musiques révolutionnaires: Grétry et Gossec*, Etudes sur le XVIIIe siècle, ed. Roland Mortier and Hervé Hasquin (Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1990), 25–26; quoted in Jacobshagen, *Chor*, 68–69.

<sup>130</sup> Jacobshagen, *Chor*, 66.

<sup>131</sup> "Les Chœurs sont le déploiement tout entier d'un jeu d'orgue, & tous les Figurans gesticulant comme des Pantins, peuvent indifféremment chanter du François, de l'Italien, du Grec ou du Latin; le Spectateur assourdi . . . croit ne voir que des automates sonores, gauches & ridicules." "Un Clou chasse l'autre, lettre sur l'opéra d'Iphigénie," in *Querelle des Gluckistes et des Piccinnistes*, 1:66.

<sup>132</sup> Jacobshagen, *Chor*, 72.

#### CHAPTER 4: *LE SIÈGE DE CORINTHE* AND AFTER

April 1827 was a crucial date for the development of the conventions of staging at the Opéra. During this month, the Comité de mises en scène pour l'Académie Royale de Musique met for the first time and in September, Solomé took charge as the newly appointed *régisseur de la scène*. His first major undertaking was the staging of Auber's *La Muette de Portici* (1828), followed two years later by Rossini's first and only original work for the Opéra, *Guillaume Tell* (1829).<sup>133</sup> Solomé's blocking of the principal actors and the choir, his emphasis on movement, interaction, and acting in support of the drama, were an instant success with the French public. As one critic wrote: "All of his [Solomé's] *tableaux* are skillfully composed, his groups are always placed in a most picturesque way; and, through his placement, the extras become important accessories for the general effect."<sup>134</sup> In fact, the whole of the production of *Tell* was said to be "epoch-making in the annals of our Opéra."<sup>135</sup>

Solomé's staging of *Tell*, however, was not entirely new in its approach. Three years earlier, six months before the appointment of the Comité, the premiere of *Le Siège de Corinthe* (Opéra, 9 October 1827) had a similar impact. In the eyes of the French press, it would have been "necessary to go back very far in the annals of the Académie Royale de Musique to find an example of a success as great as the one obtained with *Le Siège de Corinthe*."<sup>136</sup> One critic wrote: "Whenever we have had occasion to mention *Le Siège de Corinthe* we have said that the

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<sup>133</sup> The *livret de mise en scène* of *Guillaume Tell* is reproduced in Rossini, *Tell*, 2:117–81.

<sup>134</sup> "Tous ses tableaux sont habilement composés, ses groupes sont toujours placés de la manière la plus pittoresque; et les figurans, par lui disposés, deviennent des accessoires importants pour l'effet général." Y., *L'Observateur*, 13 August 1829, 156.

<sup>135</sup> "Fera époque dans les annales de notre Opéra." G. Imbert de Laphalègue, "De la musique en France, de Rossini, de *Guillaume Tell*," *Revue de Paris* 5 (August 1829): 266.

<sup>136</sup> "Il faudrait remonter bien haut dans les fastes de l'Académie Royale de Musique pour y trouver l'exemple d'un succès aussi éclatant que celui qu'a obtenu hier *Le Siège de Corinthe*." *L'Etoile*, quoted in Catherine-Marie Heuls, "Le Siège sous l'œil de la presse," in *L'avant-scène Opéra*, vol. 81 (Paris: Editions premières loges, 1985), 80.



work would mark the dawn of a new era for the Académie Royale de Musique.”<sup>137</sup> Especially the staging elicited praise from the critics: “The decorations, costumes, ballets, choir, actors, cleverness of the show, everything [was] perfectly organized.”<sup>138</sup>

Reviews such as these suggest that an air of novelty surrounded the production of *Le Siège*. At least some of the novelty must have been related to aspects of staging, especially concerning the use of choir and actors. But what aspects of the staging were so revolutionary that they allowed the first run of the opera to last from 1826 until 1830? In this chapter, I will answer this question by examining the original staging of *Le Siège*. In addition, I will determine to what extent the *livret* documents a change or continuation of new trends in staging and—by comparing the *livrets* of *Le Siège* and *Tell*—which of Solomé’s most effective designs were already being explored in *Le Siège*.<sup>139</sup>

When in 1824 Rossini signed a contract with the French government, he was expected to compose new operas not only for the Théâtre Italien, of which he became the director, but also for the Opéra. For his debut at the latter, Rossini chose to rework one of his Neapolitan operas, *Maometto II* (1820);<sup>140</sup> the new version, with a libretto adapted by Alexandre Soumet and now under the title *Le Siège de Corinthe*, had its premiere on 9 October 1826. The opera consists of sixteen numbers of which Rossini newly composed four, extensively revised three, and left nine

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<sup>137</sup> *L’Étoile*, 28 March 1827, 4; translated in Richard Osborne, *Gioachino Rossini*, trans. Mary Whitall (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1986), 70.

<sup>138</sup> “Décorations, costumes, ballets, chœur, figurants, intelligence du spectacle, tout s’y trouve parfaitement agencé.” *Le Courrier des théâtres*; quoted in Heuls, “Le Siège sous l’œil de la presse,” in *L’avant-scène Opéra*, 82.

<sup>139</sup> I do not wish to attempt here a complete interpretation of the *livret de mise en scène* of *Guillaume Tell*, nor an analysis of the opera and its implication for the history and development of the genre of French grand opera. For an interpretation of the *livret* and analysis of the importance of Solomé, see Bartlet, “Staging French Grand Opera,” 623–48; also see Anselm Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whitall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 85–121.

<sup>140</sup> Libretto by Cesare Della Valle. Rossini substantially revised *Maometto II* for Venice in 1823, introducing many of the changes formerly thought to have been first introduced in *Le Siège*. For a comparison of the 1820 and 1823 versions of *Maometto II*, see, for example, Philip Gossett, “The Operas of Rossini: Problems of Textual Criticism in Nineteenth Century Opera” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1970), 455–87.

largely untouched.<sup>141</sup> Soumet and Rossini added an act to the two of *Maometto II*, renamed the major characters, and changed the plot from the Turkish invasion of the colony of Negroponte (in northern Greece) to that of the city of Corinth.<sup>142</sup>

Based on the fall of the Greek city of Corinth to the Turks in 1458, *Le Siège* portrays the struggle between the citizens of Corinth, led by Cléomène, and the Turkish invaders, led by Mahomet. Mahomet is in love with Cléomène's daughter Pamyra, whom he met at an earlier time and whom he hopes to marry. Though she returns his love, Pamyra cannot bring herself to betray her country and chooses to marry the Greek general Néoclès, sealing both Corinth's fate and her own. While the Turkish soldiers ravage the city and kill everyone in sight, she commits suicide in front of Mahomet.

#### The Sources of *Le Siège de Corinthe*

The focus of this chapter will be the *livret de mise en scène* of *Le Siège de Corinthe* (translated in Appendix A and transcribed in Appendix B).<sup>143</sup> The *livret* stems from Paliani's collection and is a copy in Paliani's hand of a *mise en scène* originally written by a certain M. Rousseau.<sup>144</sup> Whether Rousseau is the actual author, however, or simply a copyist, cannot be ascertained. Cohen believes that Rousseau might be the original author but finds it hard to prove,

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<sup>141</sup> For an in-depth comparison between the musical structure of *Maometto II* and *Le Siège*, as well as an overview of the material in *Le Siège* borrowed from sources other than *Maometto II*, see Gossett, "The Operas of Rossini," 471–84. The newly composed numbers are the first dance during the Divertissement (No. 8) of Act II, the choral hymn "Divin prophète" (No. 9), the finale of Act II (No. 10), and an aria with chorus for Hiéros, "Quel nuage sanglant" (No. 14) in Act III. Extensively revised are the overture and the opening and finale of Act III (Nos. 11 and 16). Ibid., 472–76. Parenthetical numbers are mine and refer to the numbering given in the orchestral score of *Le Siège* issued by Troupenas. G. Rossini, *Le Siège de Corinthe* (Paris: Troupenas, 1827).

<sup>142</sup> *Le Siège de Corinthe* has one added character, Hiéros, the guardian of the tombs. Spelling of the French characters throughout this chapter is according to the spelling in the original libretto. Alexandre Soumet, *Le Siège de Corinthe: Tragédie lyrique en trois actes: Représentée pour la première fois sur le théâtre de l'Académie Royale de Musique, le 9 Octobre 1826* (Paris: Chez Roullet, 1826). The change of location was not arbitrary but intended to appeal to the sentiment of the French public, which in 1826 sympathized with the Greeks and their war of independence against the Turks (under an actual general Mahomet). Although Rossini rarely participated in political events, he conducted a concert on 3 April 1826 to raise money for the Greek cause. Osborne, *Gioachino Rossini*, 73.

<sup>143</sup> Available in facsimile in Cohen, *Ten Parisian Operatic Premières*, 181–207.

<sup>144</sup> Based on the handwritten note on the front page "copie d'une mise en scène manuscrite de M. Rousseau."

since Rousseau's name cannot readily be linked to the Opéra in 1826.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, two pages (the title page and page 202) of Cohen's reprint, are stamped with the name M. Micheau. Finding no such name in the archives of the Association de la régie théâtrale, Cohen proposes that the name may be a misspelling of the name Charles Fernand Michaud, a *régisseeur* who lived from 1860 to 1927.<sup>146</sup>

According to Cohen, this *livret* describes the *mise en scène* of the premiere of *Le Siège*.<sup>147</sup> This is not entirely accurate, as the cast list in the front of the *livret* does not match that of the original performance. At the first night and the next seven performances, the part of Pamyra was sung by Laure Cinti-Damoreau and not Louise-Zulmé Dabadie, as indicated in the *livret*. The switch occurred at the ninth performance, on 10 November 1826, when Damoreau was too ill to sing. Dabadie, a crowd favorite and possibly more suited to sing the dramatic soprano roles, sang in her place and scored an immediate success, almost tripling the usual revenue for the evening. In subsequent performances both Damoreau and Dabadie shared the role until the end of the first run of the opera in 1830.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Cohen found no entry for M. Rousseau in the *Dossier des régisseurs* file of the Association de la régie théâtrale. Cohen, *Ten Parisian Operatic Premières*, xiii.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>147</sup> Cohen, *Ten Parisian Operatic Premières*, xi.

<sup>148</sup> Jacques Gheusi, "La création et la carrière du *Siège de Corinthe*," in *L'avant-scène Opéra*, 18. Because the *livret* names Dabadie as Pamyra, it seems likely that it was compiled after the switch had occurred, potentially anytime between 10 November 1826 and 1830. Since Solomé entered the services of the Opéra in 1827, it is possible that he helped compile the *livret* or edit the staging of *Le Siège*. Several reasons, however, speak against his involvement. First of all, Solomé himself published manuals of all the productions he helped design and no such publication by him seems to exist of *Le Siège*. Second, upon his appointment by the Académie Royale de Musique, Solomé was busy preparing the staging of *La Muette de Portici*, and it seems unlikely that the staging of an already successful opera such as *Le Siège* would have required his input. Furthermore, no newspaper or periodical account of which I am aware mentions a connection between *Le Siège* and Solomé. Should he have altered the staging, we might expect a newspaper to have announced this fact to the public in order to draw a greater number of people to the production. Thus, we can assume that Solomé was not involved in the production of *Le Siège* or the editing of the *livret*.

While this chapter will focus on the *livret de mise en scène*, it will also draw on pertinent information contained in the original libretto and the orchestral score.<sup>149</sup> The orchestral score was first published by Troupenas in 1827 and is generally considered to be “a mess.”<sup>150</sup> But since it is the earliest and so far only orchestral score with French text, it is, in the absence of more reliable published scores, indispensable.<sup>151</sup> According to Bartlet, the Troupenas score conflates three distinct versions of *Le Siège*;<sup>152</sup> because of this conflation, various textual discrepancies exist between score and libretto. I will not attempt to sort them out in this chapter, but I will draw attention to such discrepancies when they are crucial to the interpretation of the *livret*. In addition, the various numbers of *Le Siège* are inconsistently numbered from one source to another. While the sections in the score are numbered according to musical forms (introduction, scène et trio, récit et air, etc.), those of the *livret* and the libretto are numbered according to the entrance and exit of characters. Table 4.1 shows a synoptic alignment of all three sources. I have attempted to line up the scenes with the corresponding numbers in the score and included a text incipit for orientation. The *livret* contains textual prompts only occasionally; I have included them as cross references. Throughout this chapter, I will refer to the scene numbers as they appear in the *livret*; the corresponding numbers of the libretto and the score can then be derived from Table 4.1. As in Chapter 3, I will divide my discussion into three categories: sets and props, soloists, and choir.

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<sup>149</sup> No critical edition of *Le Siège* has yet been published.

<sup>150</sup> Philip Gossett, *Divas and Scholars: Performing Italian Opera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 18.

<sup>151</sup> Gossett, “The Operas of Rossini,” 479. Some autograph sources do exist for individual numbers. They are summarized in *ibid.*, 477.

<sup>152</sup> Philip Gossett, e-mail message to author, December 16, 2007.

Table 4.1: Division of Scenes in the *Livret*, Libretto, and Troupenas Orchestral Score of *Le Siège de Corinthe*<sup>153</sup>

<i>Livret</i>	Libretto	Troupenas Orchestral Score <sup>153</sup>
		Ouverture (1–39)
<b>Act I, Tableau 1</b>	<b>Act I</b>	<b>Act I</b>
Scene 1: Hiéros, Cléomène, Néoclès, Adraste, Greek Warriors	Scene 1: Hiéros, Cléomène, Néoclès, Adraste, Greek warriors Choir: “Ton ordre, chef des Grecs”	No. 1: Introduction: Hiéros, Cléomène, Néoclès, Choir (39–78)  Choir: “Ta noble voix seigneur”
Scene 2: Hiéros, Cléomène, Néoclès	Scene 2: Hiéros, Cléomène, Néoclès Cléomène: “La Grèce est libre encor”	No. 2: Scene and Trio: Hiéros, Cléomène, Néoclès (78–79) Cléomène: “La Grèce est libre encor”
Scene 3: Pamyra, Cléomène, Néoclès	Scene 3: Pamyra, Cléomène, Néoclès Cléomène: “Approche, Pamyra.”	Pamyra, Cléomène, Néoclès (79–92) Cléomène: “Approche, Pamyra.”
Scene 4: Pamyra, Cléomène, Néoclès, Greek Women and Warriors	Scene 4: Pamyra, Cléomène, Néoclès, Greek Women and Warriors Choir: “Dans les deux camps, un cri de mort s’élève”	Pamyra, Cléomène, Néoclès, Choir (92– 122) Choir: “Dans les deux camps, un cri de mort s’élève”
<b>Change <i>a vista</i>, Tableau 2</b>	<b>Change</b>	
Scene 5: Turkish Warriors, Standard Bearers, Extras, Mahomet, Officers <sup>154</sup>	Scene 5: Extras, Turkish Warriors Choir: “La flamme rapide”  Scene 6: [Previous], Mahomet, Officers Mahomet: “Qu’à ma voix la victoire s’arrête!”	No. 3: March and Chorus  Choir: “La flamme rapide” (123–42)  No. 4: Recitative and Aria Mahomet, Choir (143–60) Mahomet: “Qu’à ma voix la victoire s’arrête!”

(Table 4.1 cont’d.)

<sup>153</sup> The measures in the Troupenas score are not numbered. To facilitate future references, page numbers are given in parentheses for each major section. Changes between overlapping sections occur at the tempo change on the indicated page.

<sup>154</sup> The *livret* does not have a separate entry for Scene 6; Mahomet’s entrance thus falls in Scene 5.

Scene 7: [Previous], Mahomet, Omar	Scene 7: Previous, Omar Omar: “Nous avons triomphé”	No. 5: Scene and Finale Omar, Mahomet (161–64) Omar: “Nous avons triomphé”
Scene 8: [Previous], Cléomène, Guards	Scene 8: Previous, Cléomène, Guards Mahomet: “Chef des Grecs révoltés”	Omar, Mahomet, Cléomène (164–66) Mahomet: “Chef des Grecs révoltés”
Scene 9: [Previous], Pamyra, Greek Women, Ismène	Scene 9: [Previous], Pamyra, Greek Women, Ismène Pamyra: “Arrêtez! Écoutez!”	Omar, Mahomet, Cléomène, Pamyra, Ismène, Choir, (166–206) Pamyra: “Arrêtez! écoutez!”
<b>Act II, Tableau 3</b>	<b>Act II</b>	<b>Act II</b>
Scene 1: Pamyra	Scene 1: Pamyra, Ismène, Greek Women Pamyra: “Que vais-je devenir?”	No. 6: Recitative, Aria, and Chorus Pamyra, Choir (207–32) Pamyra: “Que vais-je devenir?”
Scene 2: Greek Women <sup>155</sup> and Pamyra		
Scene 3: Women, Pamyra, Mahomet	Scene 2: Previous, Mahomet Mahomet: “Rassure-toi . . . mon pouvoir t’environne”	No. 7: Scene, Duet, and Chorus Pamyra, Mahomet (233–52) Mahomet: “Rassure-toi . . . mon pouvoir t’environne”
Scene 4: Women, Pamyra, Mahomet, Omar, Officers	Scene 3: Previous, Turkish warriors, Officers, Extras Choir: “La fête d’hyménée”  <b>Divertissement</b>  Ismène: “L’hymen lui donne”	Pamyra, Mahomet, Omar, Choir (252–64)  Choir: “La fête d’hyménée”  No. 8: Ballade and Chorus Ismène, Choir (265–75) Ismène: “L’hymen lui donne”

(Table 4.1 cont’d.)

<sup>155</sup> The *livret* does not mention Ismène’s presence until Scene 5 (where she “separates herself from the women and descends”). The libretto calls for her presence in Act II, Scene 1, even though it does not include any specific text for her. The orchestral score does not include a vocal part for Ismène until No. 8.

March of the Priests <sup>156</sup>		First Dance (280–98) Second Dance (299–326)  No. 9: Hymn Choir (327–36) Chorus: “Divin prophète entend nos vœux”  Mahomet, Omar, Pamyra (337–41) Mahomet: “Pamyra!” Pamyra: “Cet Autel!” (337)  Omar: “A nous combattre encore un Grec osait prétendre” (337)  No. 10: Finale Pamyra, Mahomet, Néoclès (342–62) Mahomet: “Il est son frère”  Omar, Pamyra, Mahomet, Néoclès, Ismène, Cléomène, Choir (363–416) <sup>157</sup> Omar: “Corinthe nous défie”  Mahomet: “Tu l’entends” (377)
Prompt: Mahomet: “Palmyre!” Pamyra: “Cet Autel!”	Following the Chorus: Mahomet: “Pamyra!” Pamyra: “Cet Autel!”	
Scene 5: [Women], Ismène, Pamyra, Mahomet, Omar, Néoclès, Guards	Scene 4: Previous, Omar, later Néoclès in chains Omar: “A nous combattre encore un Gre osait prétendre”	
Prompt : Mahomet: “Qu’on détache ses fers”	Mahomet: “Son frère!” . . . “Qu’on détache ses fers”	
Scene 6: [Previous], Extras and Choir (Negroes, Greek Women, Warriors, Children)	Scene 5: Previous	
Prompt: Omar: “Les vierges sur les murs / Se mêlent aux soldats” Mahomet: “Demain cherche Corinthe et ne la [retrouve] pas”	Omar: “Corinthe nous défie”  [Scene 6: Previous] <sup>158</sup> Mahomet: “Tu l’entends”	

(Table 4.1 cont’d.)

<sup>156</sup> The *livret* does not indicate whether the march of the priests occurs to music or not. The prominence of the heading implies, however that it did occur to music, most likely the beginning of the first dance (the only section suitable to marching).

<sup>157</sup> Neither the libretto nor the *livret* indicate that Cléomène is on stage during the finale. In the score, he has only one exclamation (“Pamyre!” p. 367).

<sup>158</sup> On p. 37 of the libretto, the running head changes to “Acte II, Scene VI,” even though the body of the text does not include any heading for Scene 6.

<b>Act III, Tableau 4</b>		
Scene 1: Néoclès	Scene 1: Néoclès Néoclès: “Avançon . . . oui, ces murs”	No. 11: Recitative and Prayer Néoclès (416–32) Néoclès: “Avançons . . . oui, ces murs”
	Scene 2: Néoclès, Adraste Adraste: “Ciel! Que vois-je!”	Adraste: “Ciel! Que vois-je!” (423)
	Scene 3: Néoclès Néoclès: “Les destins ont trompé”	Néoclès: “Les destins ont trompé” (426)
Scene 4: Cléomène, Néoclès	Scene 4: Cléomène, Néoclès Néoclès: “Cher Cléomène”	No. 12: Aria Néoclès (433–59) Néoclès: “Grand Dieu!”
	Scene 5: Pamyra, Cléomène, Néoclès  Prompt: Cléomène, Néoclès: “Nous nous reverrons dans les cieux”	No. 13: Scene and Trio Néoclès, Cléomène, Pamyra (460–77) Néoclès: “Cher Cléomène”
[Scene 6:] Hiéros, Adraste, Pamyra, Cléomène, Néoclès, Ismène, Guards, Extras, Men and Women of the Choir	Scene 5: Previous, Pamyra Pamyra: “Elle expire à vos pieds qu’elle embrasse”	[Pamyra: “Elle expire à vos pieds qu’elle embrasse” (463)]
	Scene 6: Previous, Hiéros, Adraste, Ismène, Greek Women, Children, and Warriors  Hiéros: “Je viens de parcourir la belliqueuse enceinte”	No. 14: Recitative, Scene, and Chorus Cléomène, Hiéros, Pamyra, Ismène, Néoclès, Choir (478–520)  Hiéros: “Je viens de parcourir la belliqueuse enceinte”

(Table 4.1 cont’d.)



<p>Prompt: Hiéros: “Guerriers, prosternez tous vos fronts” “Marathon! Marathon!” “Léonidas! Léonidas!”</p>			
<p>Scene 7: Pamyra, Ismène, Women</p> <p>Prompt: Choir: “Palmyre, il n’est plus rien / qui l’attache sur la terre.” Pamyra: “Entourez moi mes sœurs.”</p>	<p>Scene 7: Pamyra, Ismène, Greek Women Pamyra: “L’heure fatale approche”</p>	<p>No. 15: Recitative and Prayer Pamyra, Choir (521–30)<sup>159</sup> Pamyra: “L’heure fatale approche”</p>	
<p>Scene 8: [Previous], Mahomet’s soldier</p>	<p>Scene 8: Previous, Mahomet’s soldiers Choir of the Turks: “Frappons, frappons sans plus attendre”</p>	<p>No. 16:<sup>160</sup> Finale Pamyra, Choir (531–51) Pamyra: “Mais quels accents” Choir: “Frappons, frappons” (535)</p>	
<p>Scene 9: [Previous], Mahomet</p> <p><b>Tableau 5</b> Prompt: Mahomet: “Palmyre!” Choir: “Ciel! Quelle tempête / autour de nous mugit soudain”</p>	<p>Scene 9: Previous, Mahomet Mahomet: “Que Pamyra soit ma conquête”</p>	<p>Mahomet: “Que Pamyra soit ma conquête” (536–37)</p>	

<sup>159</sup> In Scene 15, the score does not include a part for Ismène.

<sup>160</sup> Erroneously printed as No. 15 on page 531 but correctly printed as No. 16 in the index.

## Sets and Props

The sets of *Le Siège* consist of five separate tableaux designed by Ciceri; his designs survive in paintings, engravings, and sketches.<sup>161</sup> All that may be readily discerned from the paintings and sketches is the convention of constructing the sets as a combination of painted flats, backdrop, and borders. While the *livret* does not include the paintings, it does describe each set in some detail.

In comparison to the *livet* of *La Vestale*, that of *Le Siège* mentions a much greater number of props (Table 4.2); it also mentions more props than the libretto. The placement of the props is mostly conventional, that is, symmetrical. Exceptions include the table and chairs in Act I, asymmetrically stage left; and the divan in Act II, asymmetrically stage right. In both cases, the props would traditionally have been balanced with a prop on the opposite side.<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, the altar in Act III, Scene 4 is positioned center stage, taking up part of the playing area normally left open.

Table 4.2: List of Props Mentioned in the *Livret*  
(Items in boldface indicate props mentioned in the *livret* but not in the libretto)

	Props already on Stage	Props Carried on Stage by Actors
Act I, Tableau 1	3 chairs 1 table 1 table cloth 1 geographical map 1 compass	
Act I, Tableau 2, Scene 5		<b>battle flags and trophies</b>

(Table 4.2 cont'd.)

<sup>161</sup> The aquarelles by Auguste Caron are reproduced, for example, in Gheusi, “La creation et la carrier du *Siège de Corinthe*,” in *L’avant-scène*, 14–17 (Tableaux 1, 2, 4, and 5; in black and white) and in Mauro Bucarelli, *Rossini 1792–1992: Mostra storico-documentaria* (Milan: Electa, 1992), 235–37 (Tableaux 1, 2, and 5; in color). For an engraving by Augustine François Lemaître, see, for example, Ivor Guest, “Ciceri,” *Ballet and Opera* 8, no. 7 (1949): 20–28. For Ciceri’s sketches of Tableaux 2 and 5, see Heuls, “Le Siège sous l’œil de la presse,” in *L’avant-scène*, 83.

<sup>162</sup> Since the diagrams in the *livret* are not individually numbered, I have identified them by act and scene throughout this chapter. They can be found in Appendix A and B. The few props that are mentioned in the libretto are also indicated in the *livret*, with one notable exception. The dagger that Cléomène passes to Pamyra in Act I, Scene 4 and with which Pamyra stabs herself in Act III is mentioned only in the libretto. In fact, the *livret* does not mention Pamyra’s suicide at all. Gerhard, *Urbanization*, 78.

Act II, Tableau 3	1 divan 3 platforms	
Scene 4		<b>1 altar</b> gifts
Scene 5		chains
Scene 6		<b>weapons</b> ladders
Act III, Scene 5		standards, weapons, and flags
Tableau 5		weapons

### Soloists

As shown in Chapter 3, the predominant arrangement of soloists during the first quarter of the nineteenth century is the downstage line. This arrangement also dominates the blocking of soloists in the *livret* of *Le Siège*. As can be seen in the diagrams (Appendix A), this formation is required in Act I, Scenes 2, 3, 7, and 9; Act II, Scenes 3, 4, and 5; and Act III, Scenes 4, 5, 7, and 9, that is in 11 out of the 24 scenes. And like the *livret* of *La Vestale*, the *livret* of *Le Siège* also shows deviations from the traditional downstage line.

As in *La Vestale*, characters in *Le Siège* that are inferior in power to the other characters on stage or are rendered passive by the ongoing events do not participate in the downstage line. Just as Julia stands passively behind Licinius in Figure 3.5, the chained Greek general Néoclès stands passively behind his captor Mahomet in Act II, Scene 5. As a captive, he is inferior to Mahomet and consequently cannot participate in the downstage line; instead, Néoclès stands behind the other actors. Once Mahomet cuts his chains and frees him, Néoclès is once again equal in status to the other characters and moves into the downstage line, taking the place of Omar, who has since left the stage. Upon Néoclès's entry into the line, Ismène steps out of the

line and stops slightly behind the others.<sup>163</sup> Thus, a principal character, Néoclès, and a secondary character, Ismène, at one point do not participate in the line.

A further deviation from the downstage line is the triangular formation already seen in *La Vestale*. While in *La Vestale* it occurs two times, in *Le Siège* it occurs three times, perhaps suggesting that the formation has gained relevance. The first two occurrences in *Le Siège* both involve Cléomène, the leader of the Greeks. In the first arrangement, the ensemble of Act I, Scene 8, Cléomène, in the middle of four Turkish soldiers, stands apart from Mahomet and Omar; in the second, the trio of Act I, Scene 4, he stands behind Pamyra and Néoclès. The third occurrence, in Act I, Scene 1, suggests that only major characters participated in the triangle. The *livret* indicates that at the beginning of the scene, Cléomène, Néoclès, and Hiéros, the major characters, are sitting at a table, whileAdraste, a minor character, is standing to the side.

A third formation in *Le Siège*, seen for example in Act III, Scene 5 (see Appendix), has the major characters stand in a large semicircle, a formation not found in the *livret* of *La Vestale*. This scene, the “consecration of the banners,” is perhaps the most remarkable of the entire opera.<sup>164</sup> The Greek warriors and women, having taken refuge in the crypt of the fallen Greek soldiers, are assembled for the very last time. Hiéros, the guardian of the tombs, prepares the soldiers for battle. Standing in the center of the semicircle, the position of greatest importance, he reminds the Greeks of their famous fallen warriors and blesses their weapons and banners. As the men depart, they know that death is imminent for all of them. The formation of the major characters reproduces the semicircle formed by part of the choir, suggesting that in this scene, all Greeks stand as equals, united by the same destiny.

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<sup>163</sup> Except for the beginning of this scene, Ismène is a part of the group of women throughout Act II.

<sup>164</sup> It certainly left a great impression on the Parisian public: “The success of the first performance [of *Le Siège*] was immense; the superb scene of the ‘consecration of the banners,’ aroused an enthusiasm that has been maintained ever since.” Th. de Lajarte, *Bibliothèque musicale de l’Opéra*, 2:124; quoted in translation in J.-G. Prod’Homme, “Rossini and His Works in France,” *The Musical Quarterly* 17 (1931): 124.

Similarly effective formations will later occur in the *livret* of *Tell*. In the finale of Act I, Rodolphe, the captain of Gesler's guard, has come to capture Leuthold, a shepherd who, defending the honor of his daughter, murdered an Austrian soldier. But Rodolphe arrives too late: Tell has just helped Leuthold escape across the river. Figure 4.1 shows the formation at this point. Rodolphe is not participating in the downstage line, standing behind Hedwige, Jemmy, and Melcthal. Through this formation, a visible rift is created between the two opposing forces of the Austrians and the Swiss. Rodolphe is disempowered in this situation, as his repeated orders to identify Leuthold's rescuer are answered with silence.

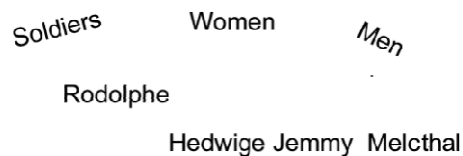


Figure 4.1: Actor Not Participating in the Downstage Line, *Guillaume Tell*, Act I, Scene 10 (Principal Actors and Choir Only)

Rodolphe then forces the Swiss elder Melcthal to speak, threatening him with arrest. The blocking reflects this development, moving Rodolphe into the downstage line and Melcthal out of it and behind it (Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2: Actor Not Participating in the Downstage Line, *Guillaume Tell*, Act I, Scene 10 (Principal Actors Only)

The triangular formation is used in *Tell* twice, and as in *Le Siège*, the formation seems reserved for major characters. First, it occurs in the trio of Act II, Scene 4, where Tell is set back from Walter and Arnold (Figure 4.3).

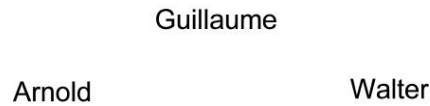


Figure 4.3: Triangular Arrangement in *Guillaume Tell*, Act II, Scene 4

Then, in the finale of Act III, Arnold, Walter, and Tell stand in a triangular formation, while the minor characters, Leuthold and the Fisherman, stand to the sides (Figure 4.4).<sup>165</sup>



Figure 4.4: Triangular Arrangement with Minor Characters in *Guillaume Tell*, Act II, Finale

As in *Le Siège*, the arrangement of the major characters in a large semicircle is used once, at the beginning of Act I, Scene 6 (Figure 4.5). In this scene, Hedwige invites all present to the wedding festivities, launching a sequence of events that ultimately leads to Melcthal's arrest. At the outset, however, none of the characters can foresee the impending disaster; instead, they look forward to a celebration and thus stand united with joy and anticipation. Only Arnold—unable to participate in the joy because of his secret love for Mathilde—and the Fisherman<sup>166</sup> stand apart from the semicircle.

<sup>165</sup> Bartlet, "Staging French Grand Opera," 642.

<sup>166</sup> It is not clear why Solomé chooses to separate the fisherman from the group. A possible explanation may be that he did it to show that the fisherman is not part of the choir, but a character of minor importance.

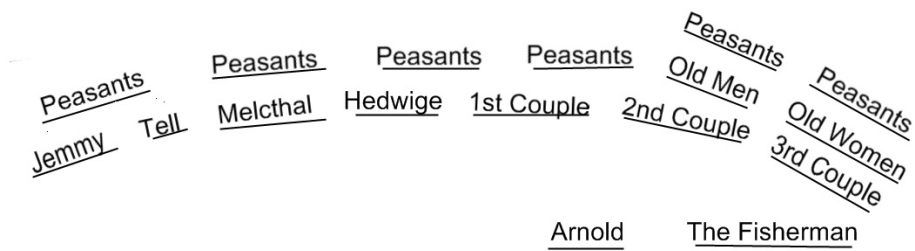


Figure 4.5: Semicircle Arrangement in *Guillaume Tell*, Act I, Scene 6

Although the two characters form a downstage line, the blocking appears to be less concerned with asserting a superior position over the other characters standing in the semicircle. Instead, Arnold's and the Fisherman's position underscores a sense of isolation or exclusion from the rest of the group. The same sense of isolation seems to be present during several moments when characters stand apart from the downstage line in *Le Siège*. In Act II, Scene 5, Néoclès is isolated from both Mahomet and Pamyra because he is a prisoner, in Act I, Scene 8, Cléomène is isolated from the other characters because he is the only Greek on stage. Thus, standing apart from the principal formation, whether a downstage line, a triangle formation, or a semicircle, may suggest isolation rather than hierarchy.

So far, I have shown formations deviating from the traditional downstage line in *Le Siège* and comparable formations in *Tell*. While some of these are new, such as the grouping of the principal characters in a large semicircle, others are a continuation of those already explored in *La Vestale*, but they occur much more frequently. Another progressive aspect shown in the *livret* of *Le Siège* concerns the movement of the principal characters. In Act III, Scene 5 of *Le Siège*, the trio between Pamyra, Cléomène, and Néoclès (Figure 4.6), the actors move around the stage rather than remaining stationary at the front of the stage. At the beginning of the scene, Pamyra, Cléomène, and Néoclès stand in a downstage line, represented by circles with grey fills. During the trio, they move upstage, taking the position of the circles with black fills and then continue in the opposite direction to the line of circles with white fills. The *livret* of *La Vestale* indicates

movement from front to back of the stage only during the triumphal marches, the finale of Act III,<sup>167</sup> and entrances and exits of the choir and the characters, but not during small ensemble scenes such as the duet and trios.

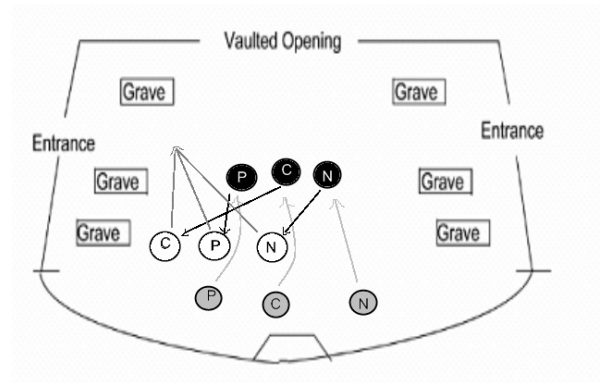


Figure 4.6: Character Movement in Act III, Scene 5 of *Le Siège de Corinthe*

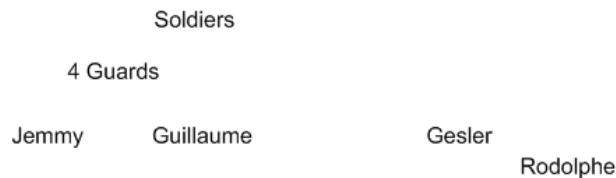
Furthermore, during the final change of position, Cléomène moves from second place in line to first place in line to sing a short solo. Even though this rearranging is logical as it moves Cléomène to a more important position stage right, changing the order of the line during the course of a scene is highly unusual; in *La Vestale*, for example, the characters maintain their position in line throughout the entire scene. The order shifts only during the entry or exit of a character at the beginning of a new scene.

A similar pattern as that in *Le Siège* appears in Act III, Scene 5 of *Guillaume Tell*, the scene leading to the apple shot. At the beginning of the scene, Jemmy, Tell, Gesler, and Rodolphe (the latter slightly in front), stand in a line with four guards and a group of soldiers behind them (Figure 4.7). During the scene, Jemmy attempts to exit, but Gesler and his soldiers quickly move stage right to cut him off (Figure 4.8). At the announcement of the apple shot, the

<sup>167</sup> This finale is the most heavily annotated scene in the entire *livret* of *La Vestale*. While most instructions are reserved for the choir and extras, the *livret* indicates that Licinius first descends from and later ascends to the crypt stage left, in which Julia is to be buried alive.



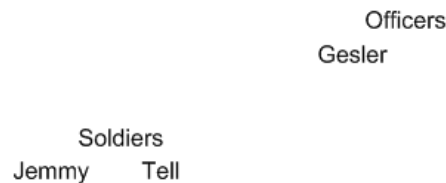
characters move again: Jemmy and Tell are pushed stage right by the soldiers, while Gesler and his officers move upstage to the throne; Rodolphe's position is not specified. No diagram accompanies the description, but I have reflected the approximate new positions in Figure 4.9. The characters continue to move and change positions throughout the remainder of the act.<sup>168</sup>



4.7: Formation at the Beginning of *Guillaume Tell*, Act III, Scene 5 (Partial Diagram)



4.8: Formation in *Guillaume Tell*, Act III, Scene 5 Following Jemmy's Attempted Departure



4.9: Formation in *Guillaume Tell*, Act III, Scene 5 after the Announcement of the Apple Shot

<sup>168</sup> To recount all instructions regarding blocking during the finale of Act III would go beyond the scope of this chapter. Bartlet, however, has closely analyzed not only the movements during this finale but also those of Act II. Bartlet, "Staging French Grand Opera," 636–43.

The detail with which the *livret* of *Tell* annotates Scene 5 far surpasses any of the annotations found in *La Vestale* and even those found in *Le Siège*. It is so far impossible to tell, however, whether the blocking shown is truly innovative or simply the result of more detailed notation.

### The Choir

By far the most progressive aspect of *Le Siège* is the blocking of the choir.<sup>169</sup> According to the libretto, the choir consisted of thirty-nine men and twenty-eight women.<sup>170</sup> The men are divided into two groups: Greek soldiers (sixteen men) and Turkish soldiers (twenty-three men). It is unclear whether this division is maintained throughout the opera or only during scenes where both forces are present.<sup>171</sup> The women are not divided and portray both the Greek women (Act I and III) and the Turkish women (Act II).

I have pointed out in Chapter 3 that through much of the eighteenth century the choir stood in a row to either side of the stage, sometimes with a semicircle in the back. Towards the end of the century and with the beginning of the nineteenth century a certain flexibility emerged in the staging of *La Vestale*, but the conventional formation continued to dominate. A similar trend is seen in *Le Siège*. Though the conventional formation occurs frequently (Act I, Scene 4; Act II, Scene 4; and Act III, Scenes 5 and 9), especially in instances where a large number of additional characters (principals and extras) are on stage, other scenes are marked by greater flexibility in staging.

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<sup>169</sup> Gerhard is the first to have realized the importance of the choir in *Le Siège* as a character in its own right. See especially Chapter 3, “The Emancipation of the Chorus,” in Gerhard, *Urbanization*, 82–85. Gerhard’s focus is the benediction of the flags, Act III, Scene 6, and the finale of Act III, discussed below. His examination is limited to musical aspects and does not consider the staging.

<sup>170</sup> Soumet, *Le Siège de Corinthe*, iv.

<sup>171</sup> The *livret* does not help clarify the division, as it rarely specifies the number of choristers. An exception is Act I, Scene 5, where, according to the annotation, twenty-four (as opposed to the twenty-three mentioned in the libretto) Turkish soldiers are used. The number twenty-four is also confirmed in the diagram accompanying Act I, Scene 8.

One such flexible formation is the equivalent to the position of the choir in Act I, Scene 2 of *La Vestale*, where the choir lines up to one side of the stage only. This formation appears in Act II, Scene 3, where the women, following Mahomet's entrance, line up stage right.<sup>172</sup> Even though the remaining members of the choir will enter during the next scene, the stage picture is temporarily asymmetrical.

The second exception occurs in Act I, Scenes 5–9, during which more and more of Mahomet's soldiers and attendants enter the stage and eventually (Scene 9) line up in four rows in the back and two rows to either side of the stage. The choir and extras arrive at their final position in Scene 9 through a series of steps.<sup>173</sup> In Scene 5, a total of twenty-four warriors and sixteen standard bearers enter the stage and line up in two rows stage right and stage left. Another twenty-four men enter and line up in two straight lines in the back. Mahomet and his officers enter. Mahomet takes the front of the stage, while his officers form a semicircle in front of the men in the back. In Scene 8, the warriors and standard bearers stage right move between the twenty-four men in the back and the officers, to make room for Ismène and the women, who arrive in Scene 9 and take their place stage left.<sup>174</sup> Mahomet's officers still stand in a semicircle in front of the men in the back. Not only does the choir stand in two and four lines rather than the conventional one line and a semicircle, the women and men are also divided in an unconventional manner. Instead of standing closest to the curtain on either side of the stage, the women all stand stage left while the men stand stage right and in the back.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> A somewhat similar formation occurs in Act I, Scene 8, where the choir stands stage left and upstage, leaving stage right open for the women, who are due to arrive in the next scene.

<sup>173</sup> See Appendix A, p. 78–79.

<sup>174</sup> The men positioned stage left in Scene 8 are still on stage in Scene 9, even though the diagram of Scene 9 no longer includes them. Thus Ismène and the women stage right are balanced by the men stage left.

<sup>175</sup> This division of the choir occurs also every time the conventional formation is used in *Le Siège*, i.e., the Greek women always stand stage right and the Turkish soldiers stage left. The only exceptions are Act I, Scene 5, during which Mahomet's soldiers and standard bearers are symmetrically arranged (twenty people stage left and twenty people stage right), and Act III, Scene 5, where the Greek men are positioned stage right and the women stage left. This arrangement makes sense in both cases, since only one of the parties is on stage at the time.

The third exception is shown in the diagrams of Act I, Scene 1 and Act III, Scene 7. It is a semicircle formation similar to the conventional formation; however, in *Le Siège*, the choir in Act III, Scene 7 surrounds Pamyra and Ismène not in a wide circle but in a narrow one. At the end of the scene, the choir draws even closer. Likewise, the soldiers of Act I, Scene 1 surround Cléomène, Hiéros, Néoclès, and Adraste and after the first chorus move closer to “form a circle around the principal characters.”<sup>176</sup> The choir now occupies the center of the stage, a position normally only reserved for the principal characters or, possibly, the members of the ballet.<sup>177</sup> This formation significantly departs from conventional lineup along the sides and back of the stage; in *La Vestale*, for instance, it does not appear at all, while in Act I, Scene 3 of *Tancrède*, only a small group but not the entire choir move to form the circle in the middle of the stage.<sup>178</sup>

According to traditional staging, the choir entered and exited the stage in an orderly procession and remained on stage for the remainder of the act. In *Le Siège* the choir enters four times and exits three times during the course of Act I alone.<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, only two of the specified entrances of the choir occur in the conventional procession.<sup>180</sup> On two occasions the *livret* shows that the choir enters in unorganized fashion: The women of Act I, Scene 4 are instructed in the libretto to enter the stage “in disorder,”<sup>181</sup> and the choir of Act III, Scene 5

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Stage right appears to have a particular connection to the Greek camp, while stage left appears more closely aligned with the Turkish forces. During Act III, all entrances and exits of the Greek characters, following Néoclès’s initial entrance, occur stage right: first the entrances of Cléomène and Pamyra; second, the exit of Néoclès, Cléomène, and Pamyra, which, however, is prevented by Hiéros and the choir entering on the same side. Only when the men depart to fight the Turks do they exit stage left. When Mahomet’s soldiers finally storm on stage, they enter stage left, while the women and Pamyra seek shelter stage right.

<sup>176</sup> No diagram accompanies this description; we thus cannot be sure whether the choir forms a complete circle or a semicircle.

<sup>177</sup> See, for example, the position of the officers in Act I, Scenes 6, 8, and 9. The role of the officers, according to the libretto, should be performed by eight members of the corps de ballet. Soumet, *Le Siège de Corinthe*, vi.

<sup>178</sup> See p. 31, n.121.

<sup>179</sup> In contrast, the women enter during Act II, Scene 2 and remain on stage for the rest of the act.

<sup>180</sup> The conventional entrances are those of the priests in Act II, Scene 4 and of the Turkish warriors in Act I, Scene 5.

<sup>181</sup> “Entrent en désordre sur la scène.” Soumet, *Le Siège de Corinthe*, 12. One further entrance, that of Mahomet’s soldiers in Act III, Scene 8 may have occurred contrary to the conventional procession, however, the

follows Hiéros on stage “with agitation.” Likewise, at the end of Act III, Scene 5, the men exit “in a great turmoil.” These instructions are similar to the editorial remarks in the libretto of Gossec’s *Sabinus* (“all leave in disorder”)<sup>182</sup> and the instructions in the *livret* of *La Vestale* at the end of Act II (“all leave in disorder through the door in the back”).<sup>183</sup> The instructions in *Le Sièg*e are much more frequent however.

Most unconventional is the degree of movement of the choir and its interaction with the soloists in *Le Sièg*e. Gerhard has pointed out that, musically, the choir in Act III, Scene 5 is an equal partner of Hiéros, answering his questions in the style of dramatic recitative.<sup>184</sup> The *livret* indicates that the choir accompanies each response with a specific action. Hiéros first asks the Greeks to kneel and bow their foreheads in order to symbolically seek protection from God in the impending battle; they all follow his command. Hiéros then invokes the memory of the great Greek warriors Marathon and Léonidas, and all respond by waving their flags and weapons with increasing vigor.

The choir and extras in *Le Sièg*e remain active throughout the entire opera. During the finale of Act II, for example, Mahomet’s troops place ladders against the wall of the citadel to begin the attack, while the Greeks “defend themselves vigorously.” This handling of the ladders not only requires the choristers and extras to move, it also directs the audience’s attention upstage, away from the conventional center of the action. The shift of the audience’s attention towards the upstage area is an innovation usually found in operas of the period following the appointment of the Comité. In Act III, Scene 5 of *Guillaume Tell*, for example, a soldier, with all eyes of the other characters upon him, has to walk upstage to pick the apple from one of the trees

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*livret* is not clear. It says: “Mahomet’s soldiers invade the back of the stage.” The word “invade” could refer either to a disorderly entrance or one in an orderly procession.

<sup>182</sup> See Chapter 3, p. 34.

<sup>183</sup> “Tous le monde sort en désordre par la porte du fond.” “Spontini: *La Vestale*,” 19.

<sup>184</sup> Gerhard, *Urbanization*, 83.

positioned in the back. The *livret* of *Guillaume Tell* also instructs the choir to express emotions. During the finale of Act III, the choir and extras are instructed to show displeasure at the announcement of the apple shot, to rejoice after the successful shot, and to express genuine distress at Tell's arrest. Following the arrest, the *livret* indicates that the Swiss attempt to flee the scene but are chased back on stage by the Austrians. Once back in their original position, however, they all remain stationary until the curtain falls.

Such a stage picture of relative calm and order at the end of an act was conventional at the Opéra. The finale of *Le Siège*, however, does not follow this convention at all. The stage picture at the end of the opera is one of horror and chaos, as a group of Mahomet's soldiers pursues and murders the Greeks "with rage," while the Greek women throw themselves on their knees. The extensive movement that would be necessary for the choir and extras to carry out the instructions in the *livret* is very different from the usual stationary role of the choir. Instead, in the last scene of the opera the choir has become a character in its own right.<sup>185</sup> The staging and acting required of the group during this and other scenes of *Le Siège* shows that the Opéra included and amplified earlier tendencies such as departures from the conventional formation of the choir and supported these throughout the production with aspects of acting.

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<sup>185</sup> Gerhard, *Urbanization*, 84. A certain similarity exists between the last tableau of *Le Siège* and the movement of the choir in Gossec's *Sabinus* (see p. 34). It is not clear to what extent the destruction of the forest by the extras is executed on stage, but unlike the Turkish soldiers in *Le Siège*, the extras in *Sabinus* leave the stage at the end of the act.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the Opéra began to update the staging of its productions. The *livrets* and annotated librettos of productions such as Gluck's *Alceste* and Campra's *Tancrède* show that towards the end of the century, the staging of both the choir and actors occasionally departed from the conventional formations and began to focus on aspects of acting. Up to now, little has been known about the development of these changes during the first quarter of the nineteenth century and, more specifically, during the short period immediately preceding the crucial appointment of the Comité and Solomé in 1827. This thesis has begun to shed light on this hitherto neglected subject.

Documenting a production staged before 1827, the *livret* of *Le Siège de Corinthe* shows that the changes introduced in earlier productions persisted. In addition, other changes such as an increase in the number of props, variety in the placement and movement of the actors and the choir, and an even greater emphasis on acting were being explored. These changes in turn point to future developments of enhancing the dramatic effect, as seen in productions following the appointments of the Comité and Solomé. Solomé's staging of *Guillaume Tell*, for example, incorporates all aspects found in *Le Siège* and either uses them more frequently or develops them more extensively.

Studies of other *livrets* are needed, however, if we are to form a more complete picture of the staging practices during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The findings in this thesis are meant to serve as a point of departure for future examination of the periods immediately preceding and following the appointments of the Comité and Solomé. As this study has shown, the *livret* of *La Vestale* already uses some of the effects and formations later amplified in *Le Siège*; their presence prior to *Le Siège* suggests that the Opéra had begun to modify traditional formations as early as 1807. Thus, more *livrets* from this crucial period are needed to fully

evaluate the significance of the early nineteenth century in the history of staging. Short of audio visual recordings, the *livrets de mise en scène* are important primary documents of the original productions and allow a rare glimpse into the work of stage directors and set designers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.



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## APPENDIX A

### TRANSLATION OF THE *LIVRET DE MISE EN SCÈNE* OF ROSSINI'S *LE SIÈGE DE CORINTHE*

#### The Siege of Corinth

#### Grand Opera in Three Acts and Five Tableaux

The Siege of Corinth  
Mise en scène  
Mahomet II  
at the Siege of Corinth  
Grand opera  
In three acts and five tableaux  
Music by Mr. Rossini

Characters	Creators of the Part	Position
Mahomet II	[Prosper]* <sup>186</sup> Dérivis, Sr. Dabadie	First Bass
Cléomène	[Louis]* Nourrit, Sr. Massol	Heroic Tenor
Néoclès	Adolphe Nourrit	First Tenor
Hiéros	Prévost	Second Bass or Low Baritone
Omar	[Ferdinand Prévost]*	
Adraste	[Bonel]*	
Pamyra	Mrs. [Louise-Zulmé]* Dabadie <sup>187</sup>	First Female Singer
Ismène	[Frémont]*	Second Female Singer
Turkish Officers		
Turkish Soldiers		
Greeks		
Greek Women and Children		

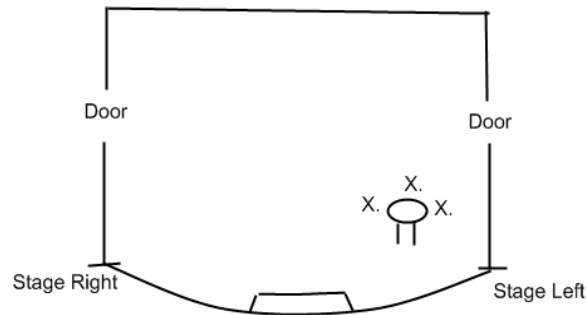
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<sup>186</sup> \* Denotes additional information not found in the *livrets*, but taken from Spire Pitou, ed. *The Paris Opéra: An Encyclopedia of Operas, Ballets, Composers and Performers*, 3 vols. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), 3/2: 1235.

<sup>187</sup> The first eight performances of *Le Siège* were sung by Mrs. Laure Cinti-Damoreau. As Damoreau was ill for the ninth performance on 10 November 1826, the part was sung by Mrs. Louise-Zulmé Dabadie. See p. 38.

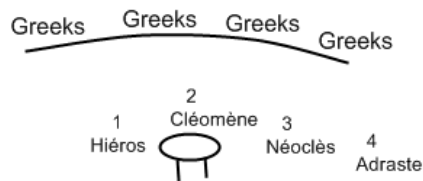
Act I  
Tableau 1

The stage represents a low hall in a Greek palace. Doors on the third *plan*,<sup>188</sup> stage left and stage right.<sup>189</sup> At the proscenium, to the right of the viewer, a small, round, and very low table on which are a geographical map and a compass. Three seats (X) are placed around this table, which is covered by a rich cloth.



Scene 1

At the raising of the curtain, Hiéros, Cléomène, and Néoclès are seated around the table and are examining the geographical map.Adraste is standing to the left of Néoclès. All the Greeks are standing around them.



After the first chorus, the actors stand up and move to the middle of the stage. The Greeks also move [to the middle] of the stage and form a circle around the principal characters. Adraste and the Greek warriors exit to the right of the audience.

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<sup>188</sup> As early as the first half of the seventeenth century, the French stage was divided into areas called *plans* or streets. A street is the open stage between a pair of wings. The number of streets at Parisian theaters was not fixed but depended on the depth of the stage. Ault, "Design, Operation and Organization," 36–42. The stage of the Opéra in the *Salle Le Pelletier* had room for twelve *plans* and thus twenty-four wings. Wilberg, "The *Mise en Scène* at the Paris Opéra," 122.

<sup>189</sup> In the *livret*, one finds the terms *cour* and *jardin*, literally translated as courtyard and garden. Meant is, however, stage right (*jardin*) and stage left (*cour*). See also note 106. I will translate the terms *cour* and *jardin* as stage left and stage right respectively.

### Scene 2

- |        |          |         |
|--------|----------|---------|
| 1.     | 2.       | 3.      |
| Hiéros | Cléomène | Néoclès |

Hiéros exits to the right of the audience.

### Scene 3

Pamyra enters to the left of the audience.

Pamyra, Cléomène, Néoclès

### Scene 4

The Greek women enter to the left of the audience and position themselves in the wings stage right. The Greek warriors enter to the right of the viewer and line up on the right side.



At the end of this scene, Cléomène embraces his daughter, and all exit to the right of the audience. The actors [depart] first, then the women and the warriors.

Change a vista

### Tableau 2

The theater represents a Greek public square. A tall obelisk is placed at the fourth *plan*, a little stage right {left of the audience}<sup>190</sup>

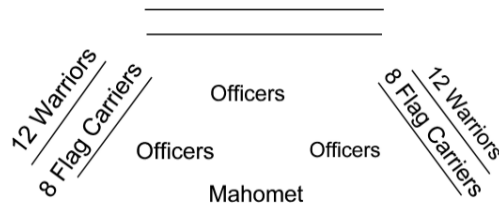
### Scene 5

March of the Muslim warriors. They enter through the fifth *plan* to the right of the audience {twenty-four men}. They are in two rows, come as far as the middle of the stage, [and] descend to the prompter's box; having arrived there, they separate and circle around the stage, they line the wings stage left and stage right. Sixteen men carry the battle flags of Mahomet and the trophies taken from the Greeks, enter through the fifth *plan* stage left, [and] take the same route as the previous ones. Having arrived at the prompter's box, they separate and place themselves stage left and stage right in front of the warriors. Twenty-four men enter through the fifth *plan*, cross the stage, [and] stop, facing backstage. Mahomet enters from the same side, followed by his officers, and takes the middle of the stage.

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<sup>190</sup> Braces denote annotations that appear to be in a different hand.





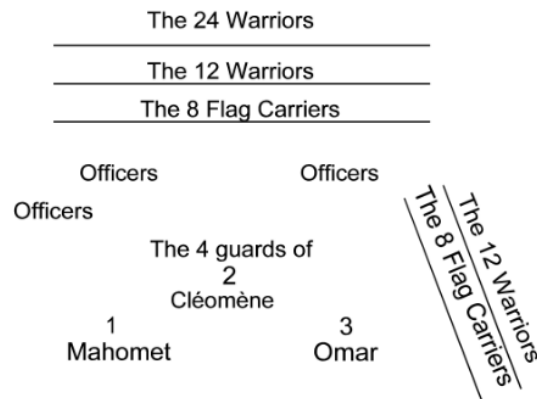
### Scene 7

Omar enters through the fifth *plan* to the right of the audience and has just positioned himself to the left of Mahomet.

Mahomet. Omar.

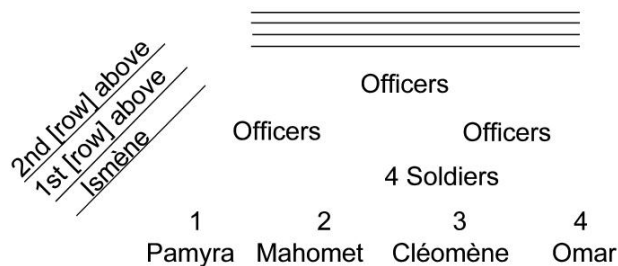
### Scene 8

Cléomène in the middle of four Turkish soldiers, enters through the fifth *plan* to the right of the audience. The warriors and standard bearers positioned to the left of the audience come through the left side, move upstage, and position themselves in front of the twenty-four men in the back.



### Scene 9

Pamyra enters from the fourth *plan* to the left of the audience, followed by all the Greek women. Ismène is at their head. They line up in the wings stage right {left of the audience}. Ismène will separate herself from the women and takes position 1 for this ensemble piece.

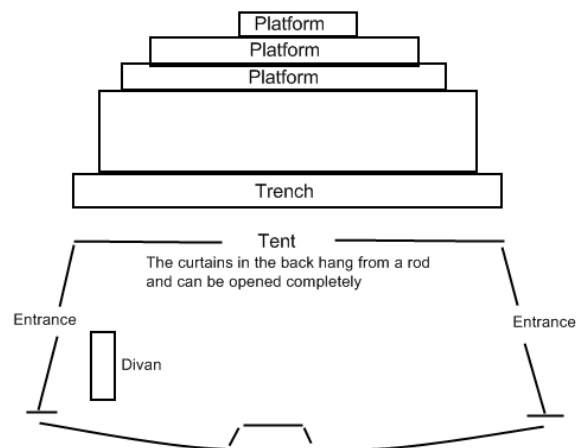


At the end of the act, Mahomet pulls Pamyra away through the first *plan* to the right of the audience. The women as well as Mahomet's officers follow them. The guards in the back go to the left side and follow them. The four guards seize Cléomène and pull him away through the third *plan* to the left of the audience. The guards positioned stage left go in a line from the right side to the left and follow Cléomène and the four guards.

The curtain falls  
End of Act I.

## Act II Tableau 3

The two *plans* are occupied by Mahomet's tent. On the first *plan*, to the left of the audience, a magnificent divan. The back is closed off by two big curtains. On the second *plan*, stage left and stage right, openings for the entrances and the exits. Behind the tent in the distance, as backdrop, the scenery of a countryside. The middle of the stage, the fourth and fifth *plans*, are occupied by the citadel of the Greeks. It is isolated and surrounded by a moat. It is composed of three platforms, which, when loaded, are filled with Greek warriors. For effect, the highest platform is filled with children. The citadel [has] the following appearance:



### Scene 1

Pamyra alone

### Scene 2

The Greek women enter from the left of the audience and line up in a circle around Pamyra.

### Scene 3

Mahomet enters from the right of the audience. At his entrance the women line up to the left of the audience above the divan.



#### Scene 4

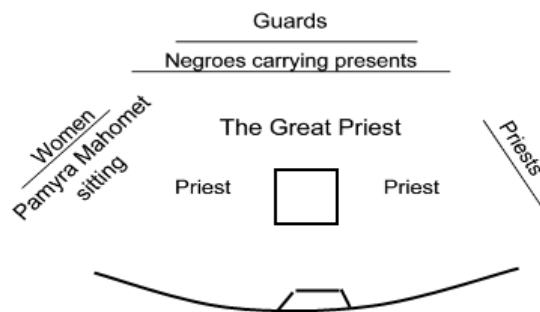
Omar and a few officers enter from the right of the public. The officers position themselves stage left.



At the end of the chorus, Pamyra and Mahomet sit down on the divan to the left of the audience.

March of the priests.

They enter from the right of the audience. Two priests carry an altar that they position in the middle of the stage. The great priest walks behind the altar, followed by other priests, who position themselves stage left. Guards and Negroes carry the presents and fill the back of the theater. Omar leaves during this march.



At the end of the march, Mahomet rises at the words: “Palmyre / cet autel.” A great noise is heard in the wings to the right of the audience.

#### Scene 5

Néoclès in chains enters from the right, followed by guards. Pamyra rises, takes the stage, Ismène separates herself from the women and descends.



At the words: “Qu’on détache ses fers,” Negroes remove Néoclès’s chains. Omar exits during the trio {to the right}.



### Scene 6

Omar returns from the right and reclaims position 4. After the words: “Les vierges sur les murs / se mêlent aux soldats,” the back of the theater and the tent open. The guards and Negroes line up in the wings stage left and stage right. The citadel is exposed. The ramparts are filled with armed men, women, and children.

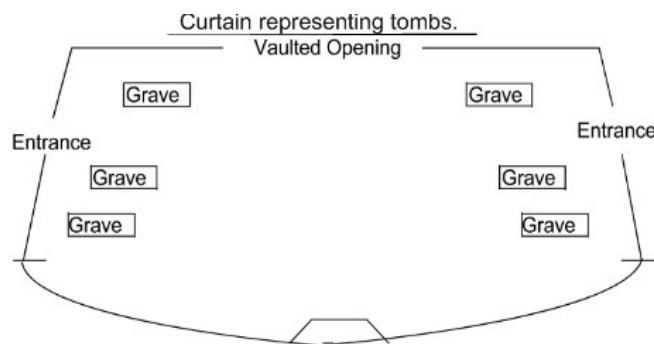
### Double Chorus

At the words: “Demain cherche Corinthe et ne la [retrouve] pas,” but not before, the altar is removed, the priests leave at the end of the chorus. Then all of Mahomet’s troupes enter and place ladders against the walls of the citadel; the attack begins. The Greeks defend themselves vigorously. The curtain falls. The public should see only the beginning of the attack.

End of Act II.

### Act III Tableau 4

The theater represents the Palace of Tombs.



The most remarkable tomb is the one placed on the first *plan*, to the left of the audience.

### Scene 1

At the rise of the curtain, Néoclès enters from the right of the audience.

Néoclès alone.

The prayers of the Greeks can be heard from behind the scenes to the left of the audience.

#### Scene 4

Cléomène enters from the left of the audience.

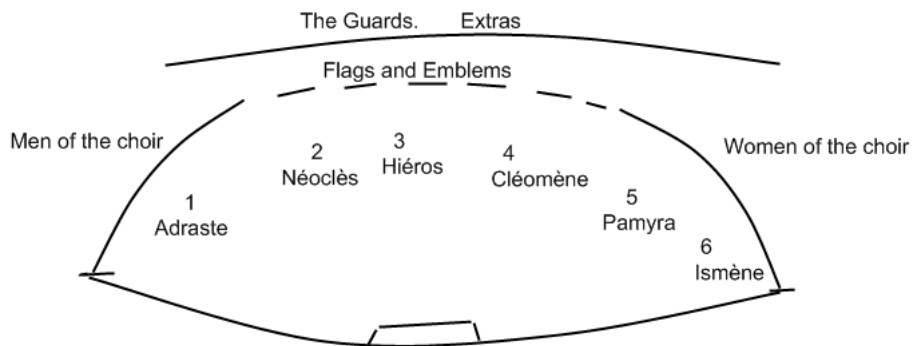
Cléomène, Néoclès

#### Scene 5

Pamyra enters from the left of the audience.

1	2	3
Pamyra	Cléomène	Néoclès

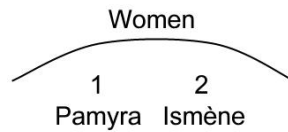
They go up stage during the ritornello of the trio. They return to the tomb on the first *plan* to the left of the public. Cléomène remains next to the tomb during the first solo. At the end of the trio, all three are kneeling. At the words: “Nous nous reverrons dans les cieux,” they return upstage to exit through the right. They are stopped by Hiéros, who enters brusquely through the same side, followed by the Greek warriors and women, who enter with agitation. They carry standards and flags. They all reach the stage. The men of the choirs position themselves to the left of the audience, the women to the right, the extras fill the back.



At the words: “Guerriers, prosternez tous vos fronts,” actors, choristers, and extras drop to their knees. Hiéros alone remains standing. At the words: “Marathon! Marathon!” they wave their weapons and standards. At the words: “Léonidas! Léonidas!” they are still waving the weapons and standards. At the end of the chorus, all men with Hiéros at their head, Cléomène, Néoclès, and Adraste exit, with agitation, to the right of the audience. Pamyra and the women remain on stage.

### Scene 7

Pamyra, in the middle of the stage, is surrounded by all the women.



After the words: “Palmyre, il n’est plus rien / qui l’attache sur la terre / entourez moi mes sœurs,” the women draw closer. Noise of war from outside.

### Scene 8

Mahomet’s soldiers invade the back of the stage. They enter to the right of the audience.

### Scene 9

Mahomet enters to the right of the audience, [and] addresses his soldiers, who occupy the back of the stage; then he moves downstage next to Pamyra. At the entrance of Mahomet’s soldiers, all the women have lined up to the left of the audience, with terror.



### Tableau 5

When Mahomet says: “Palmyre!” a muffled noise can be heard. The flames emerge across the walls, which start to sway and collapse in the back. The soldiers, in great trouble, reach the right of the audience, and with the words: “Ciel! Quelle tempête / autour de nous mugit soudain,” the entire back collapses, allowing one to see the blaze of Corinth. Through the flames and the rubble, the Muslims can be seen pursuing the Greeks and cutting the throats with rage. The women throw themselves on their knees. The entire stage is on fire. The curtain falls on this horrible tableau.

End.

## APPENDIX B

### TRANSCRIPTION OF THE *LIVRET DE MISE EN SCÈNE* OF ROSSINI'S *LE SIÈGE DE CORINTHE*

#### Le Siège de Corinthe

#### Grand Opéra en Trois Actes et Cinq Tableaux

Le Siège de Corinthe.  
Mise en Scène  
Mahomet II.  
Au Siège de Corinthe.  
Grand opéra,  
En trois actes et cinq tableaux.  
Musique  
de  
M. Rossini.

Personnages. Mahomet II.	Créations. Dérivis, père Dabadie	Emplois. 1 <sup>re</sup> Basse
Cléomène.	Nourrit, pere Massol	Fort Ténor
Nioclès. <sup>191</sup>	Adolphe Nourrit	1 <sup>e</sup> Ténor
Hiéros.	Prevost.	2 <sup>e</sup> Basse ou baryton grave
Omar.		
Adraste.		
[Palmyre] <sup>192</sup>	M <sup>me</sup> Dabadie	1 <sup>re</sup> Chanteuse
Ismène.		2 <sup>e</sup> Chanteuse
Officiers turcs. Soldats turcs. Grecs. Femmes et Enfants grecs.		

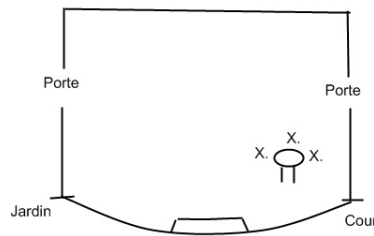
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<sup>191</sup> For this section I have preserved the spelling and capitalization as it appears in the *livret*. Only the names of characters have been standardized throughout the transcription according to their predominant form of spelling in the *livret*.

<sup>192</sup> The part is listed as Pamyra; however, throughout the *livret* it is labeled Palmyre.

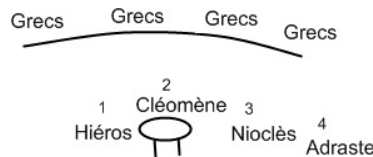
Acte 1<sup>er</sup>  
1<sup>er</sup> Tableau

Le Théâtre représente une Salle basse d'un Palais Grec. Portes au 3<sup>ème</sup> plan, Cour et Jardin. Sur l'avant Scène, à droite du Spectateur, une petite table ronde très basse sur la quelle est une Carte géographique et un compas. Trois Sièges X sont placés au tour de cette table qui est couverte d'un riche tapis.



Scène 1<sup>ère</sup>

Au lever du Rideau Hiéros, Cléomène, et Nioclès sont assis au tour de la table et examinent la carte géographique. Adraste est debout à gauche de Nioclès. Tous les Grecs debout les entourent.



Après le premier chœur les acteurs se lèvent et gagnent le milieu de la Scène. Les Grecs gagnent également la Scène et forment un cercle autour des principaux personnages. Adraste et les Guerriers grecs sortent par la droite du public.

Scène 2<sup>ème</sup>

1.                      2.                      3.  
Hiéros.              Cléomène.              Nioclès.

Hiéros sort par la droite du public.

Scène 3<sup>ème</sup>

Palmyre entre par la gauche du public.

Palmyre. Cléomène. Nioclès.



#### Scène 4<sup>me</sup>

Les femmes Grecques entrent par la gauche du public, et se placent aux ailes du côté jardin.  
Les Guerriers grecs entrent par la droite du Spectateur et se rangent du côté droit [*sic*].



A la fin de cette Scène, Cléomène embrasse sa fille, et tous sortent par la droite du public. Les Acteurs d'abord, puis les femmes et les Guerriers.

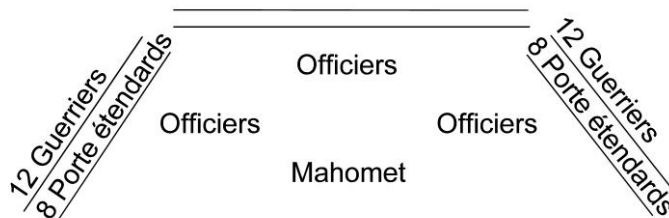
Changement à vue.

#### Deuxième Tableau.

Le Théâtre représente une place publique greque. Un grand obélisque est placé au quatrième plan, un peu vers le côté jardin {gauche du public}.

#### Scène 5<sup>me</sup>

Marche des Guerriers musulmans. Ils entrent par le cinquième plan à droite du public. {24 hommes}. Ils sont sur deux rangs; viennent jusqu'au milieu de la Scène, descendent jusqu'au trou du Souffleur; arrivés là, ils se séparent et en contournant le Théâtre, ils vont garnir les ailes Cour et Jardin. Seize hommes portant les étendards de Mahomet, et les trophées pris aux Grecs, entrent par le cinquième plan, côté Cour, font la même marche que les précédents. Arrivés au trou du Souffleur, ils se séparent et vont se placer Cour et Jardin devant les Guerriers. Vingt quatre hommes entrent par le cinquième plan, traversent le Théâtre font halte et front au fond du Théâtre. Mahomet entre du même Côté, suivi de ses officiers, et prend le milieu du théâtre.



### Scène 7<sup>me</sup>

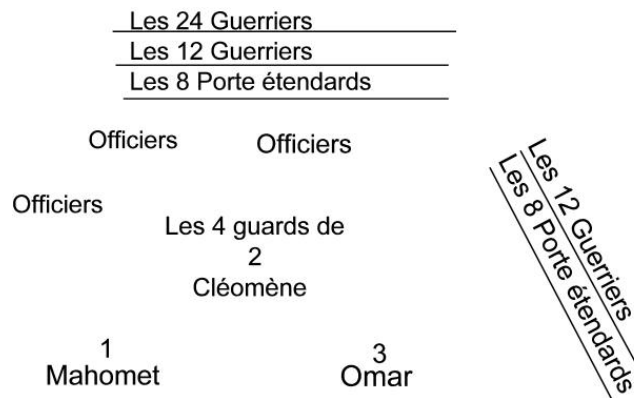
Omar entre par le 5<sup>me</sup> plan à droite du public, et vient se placer à la gauche de Mahomet.

Mahomet. Omar.

### Scène 8<sup>me</sup>

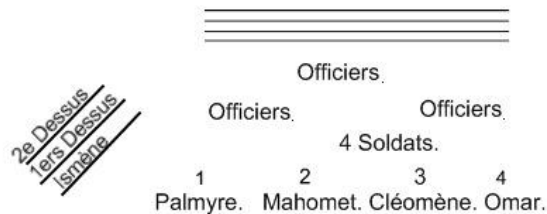
Cléomène au milieu de quatre Soldats turcs, entre par le cinquième plan à droite du public.

Les guerriers et les porte étendards placés à gauche du public, font par le flanc gauche, remontent le Théâtre, et vont se placer devant les vingt quatre hommes du fond.



### Scène 9<sup>me</sup>

Palmyre entre du 4<sup>e</sup> plan à gauche du public, suivi de toutes les femmes grecques. Ismène est à leur tête. Elles se rangent aux ailes côté Jardin {gauche du public}. Ismène se détachera des femmes et prendre [*sic*] le No. 1 pour ce morceau d'ensemble.

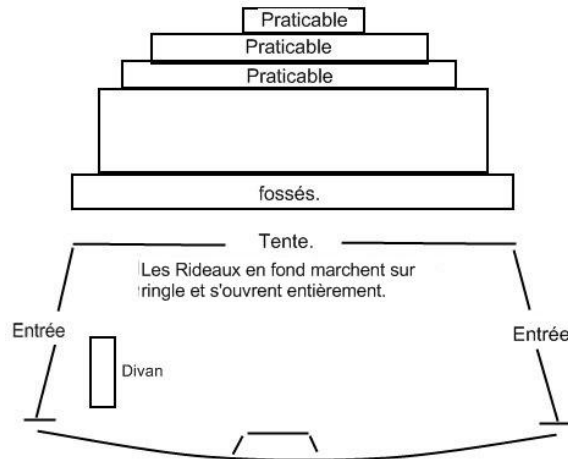


A la fin de l'acte, Mahomet entraîne Palmyre par le premier plan à droite du public. Les femmes les suivent ainsi que les Officiers de Mahomet. Les gardes du fond font par le flanc gauche et les suivent. Les quatre gardes saisissent Cléomène, et l'entraînent par le troisième plan à gauche du public. Les gardes placés côté Cour, font par le flanc droite par file à gauche, et suivent Cléomène et les quatre gardes.

Le rideau baisse  
Fin du 1<sup>er</sup> Acte.

Acte 2<sup>eme</sup>  
Troisième Tableau

Les deux plans sont occupés par la Tente de Mahomet. Au premier plan, à gauche du public, un magnifique Divan. Le fond est fermé par deux grands rideaux. Au second plan, Cour et Jardin, ouvertures pour les entrées et les sorties. Derrière cette tente au lointain, fond d'horizon, Chassis de Campagne. Le milieu du Théâtre, le 4 et 5<sup>e</sup> plans, sont occupés par la Citadelle des Grecs. Elle est isolée et environnée de fossés. Elle se compose de trois remparts praticables qui, au chargement, sont garnis de Guerriers Grecs. Pour l'illusion, le praticable le plus élevé, est garni d'Enfants. Cette citadelle l'aspect suivant:



Scène 1<sup>ere</sup>

Palmyre seule.

Scène 2<sup>eme</sup>

Les femmes grecques entrent par la gauche du public, et se rangent en Cercle autour de Palmyre.

Scène 3<sup>eme</sup>

Mahomet entre par la droite du public, à son entrée les femmes se rangent à gauche du public au dessus du divan.

*Femmes*  
Palmyre      Mahomet

#### Scène 4<sup>me</sup>

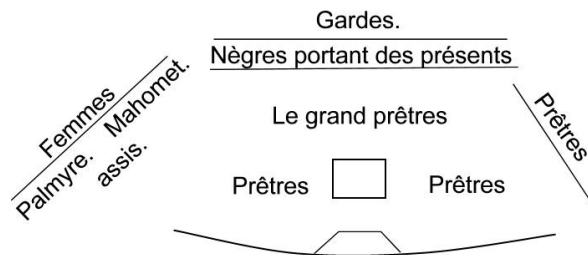
Omar et quelques officiers entrent par la droite du public. Les officiers se placent du côté cour.



A la fin du chœur, Palmyre et Mahomet vont s'asseoir sur le Divan à gauche du public.

#### Marche des Prêtres.

Ils entrent par la droite du public. Deux prêtres portent un autel qu'ils placent au milieu du Théâtre. Le grand prêtre marche derrière l'autel, suivis d'autres prêtres qui vont se placer côté cour. Des gardes et des Nègres portent des présents et vont garnir le fond du Théâtre. Omar sort pendant cette marche.



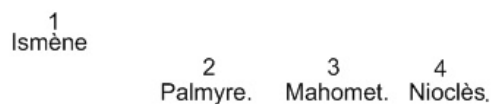
A la fin de la marche, Mahomet se lève sur les mots: "Palmyre cet autel" On entend un grand bruit dans la Coulisse à droite du public.

#### Scène 5<sup>me</sup>

Nioclès enchaîne entre par la droite, suivi de gardes. Palmyre se lève, prend la Scène, Ismène se détache des femmes et descend.



Sur les mots: "Qu'on détache ses fers" Des Nègres ôtent les chaînes de Nioclès. Omar sort pendant le trio {par la droite}.



### Scène 6<sup>eme</sup>

Omar rentre par la droite, et reprend le No. 4. Après les mots: “Les vierges sur les murs / se mêlent aux soldats,” Le fond du Théâtre et la tente s’ouvrent. Les gardes et les nègres se rangent aux ailes Cour et Jardin. La citadelle est à découvert. Les remparts sont garnis d’hommes, de femmes et d’enfants armés.

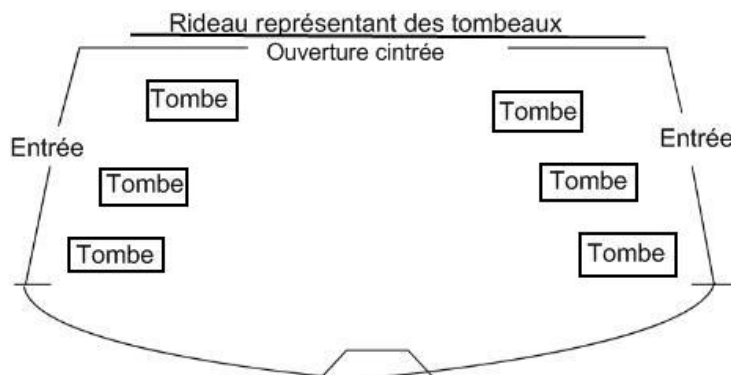
### Double Chœur

Sur les mots: “Demain cherche Corinthe et ne la retrouve pas.” On enlève l’autel, mais pas avant, Les prêtres ne sortent qu’à la fin du Chœur. Alors toutes les troupes de Mahomet entrent, on place des échelles contre les murs de la Citadelle, l’assaut Commence. Les Grecs se défendent avec vigueur. Le Rideau baisse. Le public ne doit voir que le Commencement de l’assaut.

### Fin du 2<sup>eme</sup> acte

### Acte 3<sup>eme</sup> 4<sup>eme</sup> Tableau

Le Théâtre représente le Palais des Tombeaux.



Le Tombeau le plus remarquable est celui placé au premier plan, à gauche du public.

### Scène 1<sup>ere</sup>

Au lever du Rideau, Nioclès entre par la droite du public.

Nioclès seul.

La prière des Grecs se fait entendre dans la Coulisse, à gauche du public.

### Scène 4<sup>eme</sup>

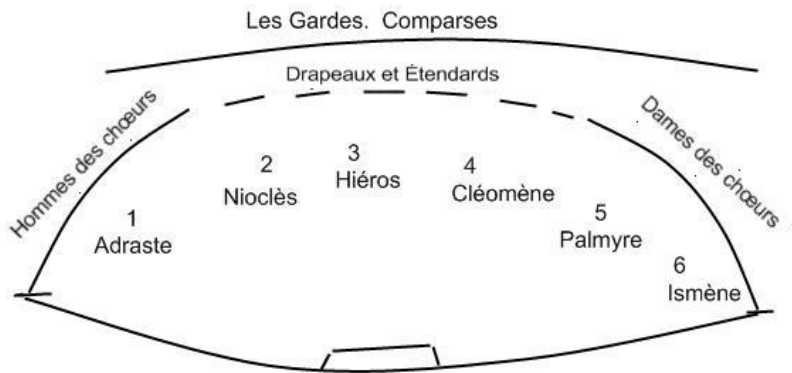
Cléomène, entre par la gauche du public.

Cléomène, Nioclès.  
Scène 5<sup>me</sup>

Palmyre entre par la gauche du public.

1                      2                      3  
Palmyre. Cléomène. Nioclès.

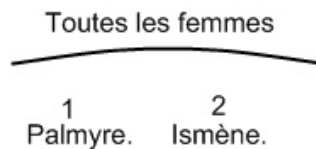
Ils remont [sic] la Scène pendant la ritournelle du Trio. Ils reviennent au tombeau du premier plan à gauche du public. Cléomène reste près du Tombeau pendant le premier solo. A la fin du trio, ils sont à genoux tous les trois. Sur les mots: “Nous nous reverrons dans les cieux” Ils remont pour sortir par la gauche du public. Ils sont arrêtés par Hiéros qui entre vivement par ce côté suivi des Guerriers grecs et des femmes qui entrent tumultueusement. Ils portent les étendards et les drapeaux. Tous gagnent la Scène. Les messieurs des chœurs se placent à gauche du public[,] Les Dames à droite, les comparses garnissent le fond.



Sur les mots: “Guerriers, prosternez tous vos fronts.” Acteurs, Choristes, et Comparses se mettent à genoux. Hiéros seul reste debout. Aux mots: “Marathon! Marathon!” On agite les armes et les Étendards. Aux mots: “Léonidas! Leonidas!” On agite enivre les armes et les étendards. A la fin du chœur, tous les hommes ayant Hiéros à leur tête, Cléomène, Nioclès, et Adraste, sortent tumultueusement par la droite du public. Palmyre et les femmes restent en Scène.

Scène 7<sup>me</sup>

Palmyre, au milieu du théâtre, est entourée de toutes les femmes.



Après les mots: “Palmyre, il n’est plus rien qui l’attache sur la terre / entourez-moi mes sœurs” Les femmes se rapprochent de Palmyre. Bruit de guerre au dehors.

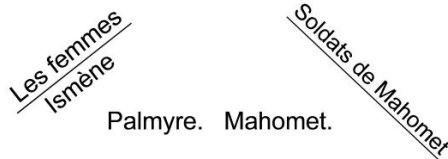
### Scène 8<sup>me</sup>

Les soldats de Mahomet envahissent le fond du Théâtre. Ils entrent par la droite du public.

### Scène 9<sup>me</sup>

Mahomet entre par la droite du public, s'adresse à ses soldats qui occupent le fond du Théâtre, puis il descend près de Palmyre. A l'entrée des soldats de Mahomet, toutes les femmes sont allées se ranger avec terreur à la gauche du public.

### 5<sup>me</sup> Tableau



Lorsque Mahomet dit: “Palmyre!” On entend un bruit sourd. Des flammes se font jour à travers les murs qui s'ébranlent et s'écroulent au fond. Les soldats, dans le plus grand trouble, gagnent la droite du public et sur les mots: “Ciel! Quelle tempête / autour de nous mugit soudain,” Tout le fond s'écroule, et laisse voir l'embrasement de Corinthe. A travers les flammes et les décombres, on voit les musulmans poursuivre les Grecs et les égorger avec rage. Les femmes se jettent à genoux. Tout le Théâtre est en feu. Le Rideau baisse sur cet horrible tableau.

Fin.

## VITA

Tina Huettenrauch was born in Markkleeberg, Germany, where she received her first instruction in music at the Rudolf Hildebrand Schule. She came to the United States in 2000 and graduated from Powell Valley High School in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, in 2001. She then attended Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2005, majoring in music with a concentration in piano performance and graduating *magna cum laude* and with Honors in Music. Her honors thesis “The Extent of Poetic Influences upon the Composition Process: A Comparison of Settings of Goethe’s Poem *Kennst du das Land*,” was supervised by Professor Lynn Raley.

In 2005, Tina entered the doctoral program in musicology in the School of Music at Louisiana State University, where she is working as a graduate teaching assistant in music history. She has presented papers at the 2007 and 2008 meetings of the American Musicological Society-Southern Chapter and currently serves as Student Representative of the chapter. Tina is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society (2005).