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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

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Musical and Spiritual Meaning in the Franciscan Works of Franz Liszt

by

Jorge Luis Modolell

A dissertation presented to
Washington University in St. Louis
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2023
St. Louis, Missouri

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Jorge Luis Modolell

Washington University in St. Louis

May 2023

To my Mother.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Musical and Spiritual Meaning in the Franciscan Works of Franz Liszt

by

Jorge Luis Modolell

Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology

Music

Washington University in St. Louis, 2023

Professor Dolores Pesce, Chair

Liszt's relationship to St. Francis of Assisi was an integral part of the composer's identity. His devotion to the saint, cultivated from an early age, served as a constant source of spiritual guidance that only grew stronger over time. Texts by St. Francis and anecdotes from the saint's life provided the artistic incentive for a number of important works, which form the core of the present study. By examining several of these works together, with full analyses and within a broader cultural framework, this dissertation aims to arrive at a true understanding of the messages Liszt took from this figure with whom he identified, and Franciscan spirituality more broadly.

The dissertation is organized into five sections. By way of introduction, Chapter 1 reexamines Liszt's relationship to Franciscanism, including the issue of the composer's alleged membership in the Third Order of St. Francis, the branch of the Franciscans traditionally associated with lay penitents. Although there is no verifiable evidence that Liszt ever became a Tertiary, this chapter entertains that the title may still have been conferred on him, without a written pronouncement, on account of the composer's stature. Whether or not Liszt formally enjoyed Tertiary status, evidence shows that he viewed himself as a member of the Third Order, asserting his status to individuals in private correspondence.

Each of the central chapters is devoted to one of Liszt's major Franciscan compositions. Chapter 2 examines *Cantico del Sol di San Francesco* (1862; rev. 1877-81), the first modern musical setting of St. Francis's famous *Canticle of Brother Sun*. Relying on close readings of the scores and informed by surviving manuscripts, I argue that Liszt's musical treatment reflects his interpretation of the text, revealing which lines bore greatest significance for the composer. Crucially, the setting omits the poem's final verse, which reminds humankind of the inevitability of death and judgement. Through a grand final climax, Liszt instead foregrounds the poem's penultimate verse and its message about the promise of life everlasting.

Chapters 3 and 4 are respectively devoted to the two *Legends* for piano, *Saint Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, and *Saint Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves* (1862-3). My analysis proceeds from the premise that, in both works, Liszt deliberately employed musical techniques and devices that signal narration, aiming to establish a one-to-one correspondence between events described in the program and musical passages meant to depict them. He also moves beyond simple musical representation, revealing the deeper spiritual meaning of each work. In the case of the first *Legend*, I demonstrate how the work's narrative dimension is a function of Liszt's use of *topics*, the delineation of discrete *musical agents*, and the tension arising from a *story/discourse* dichotomy. It is the interplay between these elements that generates an intelligible, plot-driven musical narrative. Although Liszt relies on similar devices in the second *Legend*, he does so to a different degree. Drawing on Michael Klein's work on Liszt's music, my analysis argues that the second *Legend* employs specific harmonic devices—including a particular third-related progression, and the "arrival six-four chord"—to signify moments of *transcendence* in the narrative. Liszt consistently pairs these exalted moments with overtly virtuosic material, heightening the sense of transcendent breakthrough. Through the use of

recognizable signifiers of struggle and transcendence, as well as mimetic musical devices connoting natural phenomena, Liszt renders intelligible a complex musical narrative. The final chapter of the study presents a summary of findings and conclusions.

This dissertation offers the first in-depth examination of Liszt's Franciscanism in more than fifty years. It also constitutes the first systematic study of three particular compositions by Liszt that share a conceptual connection related to St. Francis and Franciscanism. As such, it contributes to a broader understanding of the composer's identity, the influence of his religious convictions on his music, and his compositional practice at large.

Chapter 1: Liszt's Franciscanism Revisited

As Liszt scholars readily recognize, the composer felt a special affinity towards St. Francis of Assisi, who served as an important source of spiritual guidance throughout Liszt's life. This relationship can be traced back to the composer's early years in his native Raiding. When asked in old age about his childhood influences, Liszt replied that "his mystical tendencies had been founded on his reading of the Bible (especially the New Testament), the lives of some of the saints—*above all St. Francis of Assisi*—and *The Imitation of Christ* [by Thomas à Kempis]"¹ (emphasis mine). But St. Francis did more than play a role in shaping Liszt's spirituality from an early age. Texts by the saint and anecdotes from his life provided the artistic stimulus for a number of Liszt's mature works, which are the subject of the present study. Only by examining a number of these works together, with full analyses and within a broader cultural framework, can we acquire a clearer understanding of what messages Liszt took from this figure with whom he identified.

This study is organized into five sections: the present introductory chapter, three central chapters, and a summary of findings and conclusions. Each of the central chapters is devoted to one of Liszt's major Franciscan compositions: *Cantico del Sol di San Francesco* (1862; rev. 1877-81), and the two *Legends* for piano, *Saint Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, and *Saint Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves* (1862-3).² Relying on close readings of the scores, and

¹ Adrian Williams, ed., *Portrait of Liszt: By Himself and His Contemporaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 3.

² I have not treated another major Franciscan work, the St. Elisabeth oratorio, because it has recently been examined in two dissertations: See Sarah Ann Ruddy, "The Suffering Female Saint in Nineteenth-Century French Oratorio: Massenet's 'Marie-Magdeleine' and Liszt's 'La Légende de Sainte Élisabeth,'" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University in St. Louis, 2009); Paul Allen Munson, "The Oratorios of Franz Liszt" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1996); See also Sarah Ruddy, "Liszt's La Légende de Sainte Élisabeth as Modern Musical Hagiography," in *Liszt et La France: Musique, culture et société dans l'Europe du XIXe Siècle*, ed. Malou Haine et al. (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2012), 469–81.

informed by some surviving manuscripts, I offer full analyses of these works, bringing into focus their narrative dimension and spiritual meaning. For historical contextualization, I consult Liszt's personal correspondence as well as the literary texts and visual artworks that provided him with inspiration.

Although an in-depth study of Liszt's Franciscan compositions has hitherto been lacking, a few scholars have taken initial steps in developing our understanding of individual works. Articles by Dorothea Redeppling³ and Paul Merrick⁴ offer useful introductions to *Cantico del Sol*, addressing the composition's chronology and performance history, as well as issues of form and thematic organization. In her 1996 study of Liszt's piano works, *Morphologie des œuvres pour piano de Liszt: Influence du programme sur l'évolution des formes instrumentales*,⁵ Márta Grabócz engages with the second Franciscan *Legend*—*St. Francis of Paola*. Rather than providing an in-depth analysis, however, she offers a schema of the work's unfolding, relying on semiotic categories she derives for Liszt's works as a whole. And most recently, in 2020, Nicholas Susi has turned to Robert Bailey's concept of the "double-tonic complex" and Schenker's analytical methods to examine the tonal framework of Liszt's first Franciscan *Legend*.⁶ Each of these

³ Dorothea Redeppling, "Die Franziskus-Thematik bei Franz Liszt und sein Cantico del Sol," in "*Laudato Si, mi Signore, per sora nostra Madre Terra*": Zur Ästhetik und Spiritualität des "Sonnengesangs" in Musik, Kunst, Religion, Naturwissenschaften, Literatur, Film und Fotografie. Interdisziplinäres Symposium der Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Frankfurt am Main 6-8 Juni 2001, ed. Ute Jung-Kaiser (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2002), 175–92.

⁴ Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 243–47.

⁵ Márta Grabócz, *Morphologie des œuvres pour piano de Liszt: Influence du programme sur l'évolution des formes instrumentales* (Paris: Kimé, 1996).

⁶ Nicholas Susi, "Writing a Musical Icon: The Double-Tonic Complex in Liszt's Legend No. 1 'St. François d'Assise: La Predication Aux Oiseaux,'" *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 70–71 (2020 2019).

contributions, which have informed the present study, will be addressed in greater detail as part of the literature review section of each subsequent chapter.

By way of introduction, this first chapter reexamines Liszt's relationship to Franciscanism, including the issue of the composer's alleged membership in the Third Order of St. Francis. On this subject, my study builds on the work of pioneering scholars, in particular Fr. Věševlad Gajdoš, OFM, who unearthed much of what we know regarding the Franciscan tradition in Liszt's family and documented ties between the composer and the Franciscan Order. In a 1964 article, Gajdoš sought to debunk the notion that Liszt was a Franciscan Tertiary, i.e. a member of the Third Order—an unverified claim that had earned a firm place in the Liszt literature.⁷ Although unequivocal clarification on this subject will likely remain elusive, this chapter contributes to a better understanding of the issue. Official documentation can only confirm that Liszt was a Franciscan *confrater*—an honorary title that he himself requested, and which likely carried no official duties or responsibilities. Yet, this study entertains the possibility that Tertiary status may also have been conferred on Liszt without a public written pronouncement. A provision in the Rule of 1289, which governed the Third Order Secular for most of the nineteenth century, suggests that personages of high stature may join the Third Order without adhering to formal procedure. Therefore, someone like Liszt may well have enjoyed Tertiary status. Regardless, whatever canonical rank may have been bestowed on Liszt by Franciscans officials—possibly in a non-public manner—it is clear that he wished to be viewed as a Franciscan. Additional evidence presented in this chapter derives from surviving primary sources—particularly, Liszt's correspondence with his lifelong partner and confidant, Princess Carolyne von Sayn Wittgenstein (1819 – 1887). Liszt's letters to the Princess (as well as her own letters to others) allow us to

⁷ V. J. Gajdoš, "War Franz Liszt Franziskaner?," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 6, no. 3/4 (1964): 299–310.

consider the extent to which the composer's own words might have helped to propagate the notion—true or false—that he was a Tertiary.

Liszt met Princess Wittgenstein in 1847, shortly before retiring from the concert stage. Within a year, the two settled in Weimar, where for the next twelve years Liszt served as “Kapellmeister Extraordinaire” at the court of Grand Duke Carl Alexander. The unwedded couple's presence in the small, provincial city sparked controversy given that Carolyne, though estranged from her husband, Prince Nicholas von Wittgenstein, was still legally married to him. In 1860, the Princess was granted a marriage annulment from the Vatican in order to marry Liszt. However, on the eve of the wedding, Church officials called into question the legitimacy of the annulment, preventing the ceremony from taking place.⁸ Following this setback, Liszt and Carolyne abandoned their marriage aspirations yet remained intimate friends for the remainder of their lives. Liszt's voluminous correspondence with Carolyne, comprising volumes 4–7 of La Mara's edition *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, reveals that the composer confided to the Princess his innermost thoughts on all manner of subjects, particularly his Catholic beliefs.⁹ Although Liszt's letters do not necessarily offer conclusive statements on his Tertiary status, they present evidence of the composer's self-perception as a member of the Third Order.

⁸ For a detailed account of this affair see Alan Walker, *Liszt, Carolyne and The Vatican: The Story of a Thwarted Marriage As It Emerges from the Original Church Documents* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1991).

⁹ La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, vols. 4-7 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, (1893-1905).

St. Francis of Assisi

Although Francis of Assisi is one of the best-known saints within the Catholic tradition, details about his life story bear recounting. Francesco Bernardone was born in Assisi in 1181 into a wealthy merchant family. As a teenager, he worked as an apprentice in his father's business, learning how to sell cloth, keep financial records, and control inventory.¹⁰ Outgoing and extravagant, he lavished money on expensive dinners and parties, earning the reputation of a prodigal.¹¹ In his early twenties, he joined a military expedition against the neighboring city of Perugia, which led to his year-long imprisonment. While in captivity, he contracted a number of illnesses that seriously weakened his health, which thereafter always remained fragile.¹² Following his experiences of battle, imprisonment, and illness, Francis gradually retreated from the world and grew closer to God. Francis's decisive turn toward religion occurred when he heard a divine call to "rebuild my church." He interpreted this as God's exhortation to reconstruct the crumbling chapel of San Damiano—a project that he funded by selling his own horse and some of his father's cloth. Later confronted by his angry father, Francis relinquished all his material possessions as well as his inheritance. Turning to those present, he declared: "until now I have called Pietro di Bernardone my father. But, because I have proposed to serve God, I return to him the money on account of which he was so upset, and also the clothing which is his, wanting to say, from now on: 'Our Father who art in heaven,' and not 'my father Pietro di Bernardone.'"¹³ It is this act of drastic

¹⁰ Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: The Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 8.

¹¹ Thompson, 8.

¹² André Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*, trans. Michael F. Cusato (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 12.

¹³ Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: The Life*, 17.

renunciation that likely earned the saint such epithets as “the Madman of Assisi” and “the Poor Man of Assisi” (*Il Poverello*, in Italian).

Following his withdrawal from the world, Francis restored several small churches outside of Assisi and devoted himself to the aid of lepers. Shortly thereafter, a group of likeminded companions, intent on serving the poor and living a life of penance, joined him. By 1209, Francis had received approval from Pope Innocent III for his “form of life,” based on observation of the Holy Gospel, allowing him and his companions to preach penance everywhere. Over time, Francis’s movement developed into three formally recognized religious orders: the Friars Minor, a women’s branch for cloistered nuns, and a “Third Order” for people living in the world.

Towards the end of his life, following a seraphic vision, Francis is said to have received the stigmata—five wounds on his hands, feet and side, resembling those of the crucified Christ.¹⁴ According to Franciscan tradition, the event occurred on September 14, 1224, the feast of the Exultation of the Holy Cross. These wounds inflicted great pain on Francis, who revealed them only to his closest companions under a seal of silence.¹⁵ Francis died in October of 1226 and, two years later, was canonized by Pope Gregory IX. St. Francis is remembered for his love of holy obedience and his willingness to suffer. One of the saint’s most distinctive traits was his deep affinity for living creatures, whom he saw as living the Gospel precept of complete reliance on God spontaneously and naturally.¹⁶ Those who personally knew St. Francis recount his habit of speaking to animals with affection, and their attraction to him.¹⁷ One of the most famous episodes

¹⁴ Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*, 128–29.

¹⁵ Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: The Life*, 150.

¹⁶ Thompson, 67.

¹⁷ On the subject of St. Francis’s relationship to nature and living creatures see Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*, 271–82; Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: The Life*, 67–72.

from St. Francis's life—the so-called Sermon to the Birds—involves the saint preaching to a flock of birds, who rather than fly away, gathered around him to receive his blessing. The story is the subject of numerous medieval paintings and, as we shall see, also served as musical inspiration for Liszt.

Liszt and St. Francis

It is no wonder that the young Liszt gravitated towards *Il poverello* given that his father, Adam Liszt, had once intended to become a Franciscan friar. According to documents unearthed by Fr. Gajdoš in 1936, the eighteen-year-old Adam entered the order as a novice on September 21, 1795 at the monastery of Malacka, near Pressburg (present-day Bratislava).¹⁸ The preserved records read, “a local-born youth, Adam Liszt, from the district of Edelsthal, in the area of Mosoniensi... [was] invested with the clerical habit of our order. ... He took his religious name from St. Matthew the Apostle.”¹⁹ Apparently unsuited for cloistered life, Adam petitioned to be released from the order less than two years after completing the novitiate. On July 29, 1797, his request was finally granted on account of his “inconstant and changeable nature.”²⁰ But the Franciscan tradition in Liszt's family goes back even further, to the first half of the eighteenth century. In the year 1739, a man by the name of Ignatius List was admitted into the Franciscan order at Raab under the name

¹⁸ See V. J. Gajdoš, *František Liszt a Františkani* (Bratislava, 1936). See also Émile Haraszti, “Deux Franciscains: Adam et Franz Liszt,” *La Revue Musicale* (May 1936).

¹⁹ Cited in Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 39.

²⁰ Adam Liszt's case appears to have been the norm, not the exception. According to research conducted by Ladislav Kačic, more than half of all Franciscan novices during the 18th century left the order either voluntarily or involuntarily. See Ladislav Kačic, “Franz Liszt und das Franziskanertum,” in *Franz Liszt und seine Bedeutung in der Europäischen Musikkultur*, ed. Markéta Stefková (Bratislava: Slovenská Akadémia Vied, 2012), 26.

“Father Antonius.” Baptismal records kept at the city of Ödenburg (Sopron) where he was born, reveal that he was the cousin of Liszt’s grandfather, Georg Liszt.²¹

Adam Liszt retained lifelong ties to the Franciscans and on more than one occasion visited the monastery at Malacka with his son, whom he baptized Franciscus.²² As Williams puts it, these visits “made a powerful impression on the mystically-inclined, deeply religious boy, who was already well acquainted with the life of St. Francis, would himself one day be a member of the Franciscan order,²³ and would on at least one occasion express the wish—not to be granted—that after his death his remains might repose in this very place [Malacka].”²⁴

Of the Franciscan friars that he met in his youth, Liszt forged a special friendship with Father Stanislaus Albach (1795-1853), whom he probably met for the first time in 1823.²⁵ A renowned preacher and amateur composer, Albach authored several books on topics as varied as theology, mathematics, geography and botany. At the peak of his fame, Liszt visited Albach at the Eisenstadt monastery on at least three documented instances, in 1840, 1846 and 1848,²⁶ and dedicated three compositions to him.²⁷ On his many travels to Pressburg, Eisenstadt, and Budapest, Liszt took the opportunity to build relationships with the local Franciscan monasteries and renew

²¹ Gajdoš, “War Franz Liszt Franziskaner?,” 299.

²² Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 56.

²³ Whether Liszt *actually* joined the Franciscan order in any capacity has been the subject of some controversy and will be addressed later in this chapter.

²⁴ Williams, *Portrait of Liszt*, 9.

²⁵ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 68.

²⁶ Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years*, 68.

²⁷ The works dedicated to Father Albach are the *Missa quattuor vocum ad aequales* (LW J5), *Ave Maria* I (LW J1) and *Pater Noster* II (LW J3). All three of these compositions are scored for four-part male chorus, which, according to Kačic, was the standard ensemble used in Franciscan music of the late 18th and 19th centuries. See Kačic, “Franz Liszt und das Franziskanertum,” 35.

acquaintances with Franciscans he had known since childhood. These strong connections, maintained across the years through correspondence with individual friars, and monetary donations to their monasteries, ultimately led to Liszt's installation as a Franciscan *confrater* in 1857—an event that will be addressed in detail in the pages to follow.

Following a series of personal crises—including his resignation as Kapellmeister of the Weimar court, his thwarted marriage to Princess Wittgenstein, and the deaths of his son Daniel in 1859 and his daughter Blandine in 1862—Liszt relocated to Rome, where, for a time, he lived in relative isolation at the monastery of the Madonna del Rosario and turned his attention to sacred music. During his time living in and around Rome in the 1860s, the composer received the four Minor Orders of the Catholic Church²⁸ and began to write his Franciscan compositions, which form the core of the present study. Table 1.1 presents a list of these works inspired by St. Francis of Assisi and other saints within the Franciscan tradition.²⁹ Among these saints is Francis of Paola, founder of the Order of Minims and Liszt's patron saint. Although not technically a Franciscan, he not only is named in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, but also spent a year living in a friary of the Franciscan Order. Indeed, his Order of Minims originally bore the name of “The Hermits of St. Francis of Assisi.”³⁰ Evidence suggests that Liszt attached special significance to his Franciscan works, some of which are thematically interrelated. In 1881, for example, he referred to his setting

²⁸ See David Butler Cannata, “Liszt & Minor Orders,” *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 61–62 (2010): 190–231.

²⁹ As mentioned above, another important work by Liszt that relates to Franciscanism is the oratorio *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth* (LW 14), based on the life of St. Elisabeth of Hungary (1207–1231), patron saint of Franciscan Tertiaries. Whether she officially belonged to the order is the subject of debate, however, given that her death predated the order's papal recognition. See Alison More, “Institutionalizing Penitential Life in Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Third Orders, Rules, and Canonical Legitimacy,” *Church History* 83, no. 2 (2014): 305.

³⁰ See Gino J. Simi and Mario M. Segreti, *Saint Francis of Paola: God's Miracle Worker Supreme, 1416–1507* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, 1977).

of St. Francis's *Canticle of the Sun* as "one of [his] best works."³¹ Liszt also chose one of his Franciscan compositions—*St. Francis Preaching to the Birds* (LW A219/1)—to play for Pope Pius IX when the pontiff paid him a visit at the Madonna del Rosario.³²

The rekindling of Liszt's Franciscanism in the 1860s coincided with a renewed interest in the life of the saint, swept across Europe and continued well into the twentieth century.³³ Various factors contributed to this phenomenon, including the medievalist and antimodernist movements. These schools of thought emerged as a reaction to the growing industrial economy of the 19th century, appealing to a desire for simplicity, self-reliance, and closeness to nature.³⁴ Those who subscribed to these ideas viewed the Middle Ages as a time of childlike innocence, fresher and purer than the jaded 19th century.³⁵ Peasants, saints and mystics came to be regarded as the embodiment of simplicity (both material and spiritual), imagination, moral strength, and self-control. Thus St. Francis of Assisi, who epitomized the medieval ideal, became a figure of admiration.³⁶ Additionally, Francis's association with nature, which set him apart from other saints, undoubtedly resonated with nineteenth-century sensibilities and those who resisted urban growth and the alienation wrought by modernity. As a result, the latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed the publication of a significant body of literature about St. Francis. We know

³¹ La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, vol. 7 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1900), 327.

³² Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 474. It is interesting to note that Pope Pius IX was himself a Franciscan Tertiary, having joined the order in 1821. See Agostino Gamelli, *The Franciscan Message to the World* (London: Burns & Oates, 1935), 200.

³³ See Marco Beghelli, "Liszt and Franciscan Fashion at the End of the Nineteenth Century," in *Liszt and the Birth of Modern Europe: Music as a Mirror of Religious, Political, Cultural, and Aesthetic Transformations*, ed. Michael Saffle and Rossana Dalmonte (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 2003), 47–60.

³⁴ Patricia Appelbaum, "St. Francis in the Nineteenth Century," *Church History* 78, no. 4 (2009): 793–94.

³⁵ Appelbaum, 794.

³⁶ Appelbaum, 794.

that many of these volumes were part of Liszt's personal library and, in most cases, we are certain that he read them—either because he mentioned them in his correspondence or because the surviving volumes contain markings in Liszt's hand. At the time of his death, Liszt owned at least thirteen books on Franciscan subjects, which are listed in Table 1.2. The composer used stories and anecdotes from three of these volumes for the prefaces to his two Franciscan piano *Legends* and *Cantico del Sol di San Francesco*.

All of Liszt's Franciscan books, along with nearly one hundred other volumes from his library, ended up in the hands of Franciscan friars following the composer's death. As executor of Liszt's estate, Princess Wittgenstein decided to donate most of Liszt's books on religious subjects to the Pest Monastery, where they remained for over 120 years. These books—totaling 100 works in 141 volumes—have since been transferred to the Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Research Center in Budapest and made available to researchers.³⁷

³⁷ For a complete inventory of Liszt's Budapest library, including his Franciscan books see Mária Eckhardt, *Liszt Ferenc Hagyatéka a Budapesti Zeneművészeti Főiskolán = Franz Liszt's Estate at the Budapest Academy of Music*. (Budapest: Liszt Ferenc zeneművészeti főiskola, 1986). For his Weimar library see Mária P. Eckhardt and Evelyn Liepsch, *Franz Liszts Weimarer Bibliothek* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1999).

Table 1.1: Franz Liszt's Franciscan compositions

Title	LW	Composed/Published	Instrumentation
<i>Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth</i>	I4	1857-62 / 1867	Solo voices, chorus, orchestra, organ
<i>An den heiligen Franziskus von Paula, Gebet</i>	J13	c.1860 / 1875	Solo male voices, male chorus, org/hmn, 3 trbn + timp ad lib
1st version, <i>Cantico di San Francesco</i>	I8	1862 / [unpublished]	Baritone, male chorus, orch, organ/harmonium
<i>Alleluia</i>	A216	1862 / 1865	Piano [Based on a theme from <i>Cantico del sol</i>]
<i>Alleluia del Cantico del Sol</i>	F2	1862-3 / 1867	Organ + trombone ad lib
<i>Deux légendes:</i> 1. <i>St François d'Assise</i> 2. <i>St François de Paule</i>	A219	1862-3 / 1865-6	Piano solo
<i>Deux légendes</i>	G27	1863 / EMB, 1984	Orchestra
<i>Mihi autem adhaerere</i>	J23	1868 / 1869	Male voices, organ
2nd version, <i>Cantico del Sol di San Francesco d'Assisi</i>	I8	1877-82 / 1884	Baritone, male chorus, orchestra, organ
<i>Preludio per il Cantico del Sol di San Francesco</i>	E35	1880 / EMB iii; UE vi	Organ solo
<i>Preludio per il Cantico del Sol di S. Francesco</i>	A301	(?)1880 / NLA i/17	Piano solo
<i>Cantico di San Francesco</i>	A307	1881 / NLA i/17	Piano solo
<i>Cantico del Sol di S. Francesco</i>	S59	1881 / lost	Organ solo

EMB = Editio Musica Budapest; NLA = Neue Liszt Ausgabe; UE = Sämtliche Orgelwerke ed. Haselböck
 LW = M. Eckhardt & R. Charnin Mueller Catalogue, *New Grove* (2000)

Table 1.2: Franciscan books owned [and/or read] by Liszt

Bibliographic Information	Remarks
Cristofani, Antonio. <i>Delle storie d'Assisi</i> . Assisi: Domenico Sensi, 1866.	
Cristofani, Antonio. <i>Vita breve del patriarca S. Francesco seguita dalla illustrazione dei monumenti d'arte in Asisi</i> [sic]. Assisi: Sgariglia, 1856.	Bears dedication on the bidding [illegible]
<i>Fioretti di S. Francesco, testi di lingua secondo la lezione addottata dal P. A. Cesari e con brevi note filologiche di P. Fraticelle</i> . Florence, 1854.	
<i>Fioretti ou petites fleurs de Saint François d'Assise, avec la vie du frère Junipère et du bienheureux frère Égide [...] Traduite de l'italien, sous la direction de M. Ch. Sainte-Foi</i> . Paris-Tournai: Casterman, 1860.	Quoted in the preface to 1 st Franciscan Legend
Hase, Karl. <i>Franz von Assisi: Ein Heiligenbild</i> . Leipzig, 1856.	
Miscimarra, Giuseppe. <i>Vita di S. Francesco di Paola fondatore dell'Ordine de' Minimi</i> . Naples: A. Festa, 1856.	Quoted in the preface to 2 nd Franciscan Legend
Morin, Frédéric. <i>Saint François d'Assise et les Franciscains (1182-1226)</i> . Paris: L. Hachette, 1853.	Not part of Liszt's estate at the time of his death. Mentioned in 1853 letter
<i>Œuvres de Saint François d'Assise fondateur de l'ordre des frères mineurs [...] Traduites par M. Berthaumer Curé de Levet du Tiers-Ordre de Saint-François</i> . Paris: Veuve Poussièlgue-Rusand, 1863.	Contains Liszt's (?) markings in the preface. Two copies: one in Budapest, one in Weimar
Ozanam, Antoine Frédéric. <i>Les poètes Franciscaines en Italie au trezième siècle</i> . Paris: Lecoffre, 1852.	Quoted in the preface to <i>Cantico del Sol di S. Francesco</i>
Pallard, Louis. <i>Recueil de tiers-ordres, archiconfréries, confréries, scapulaires, [...] et autres faveurs spirituelles</i> . Lyon: Périsse Frères, 1863.	
Ségur, Anatole de. <i>Le poème de Saint François</i> . Paris: Veuve Poussièlgue et Fils, 1866.	Bears a dedication from the author. Contains some markings by Liszt (?)
Stolz, Alban. <i>Die Heilige Elisabeth: Ein Buch für Christen</i> . Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder'sche Verlagshandlung, 1874.	The title page contains quotation from Matthew 7:7 in Liszt's hand
<i>Vie des vingt trois martyrs du Japon des frères mineurs de Saint François</i> . Rome: Imprimerie Monaldi, 1862.	

The nineteenth century's newfound fascination with Saint Francis of Assisi, evident in art, literature, and music, amounted to what Marco Beghelli calls a "Franciscan fashion."³⁸ Once a little-known town in the Umbria region, Assisi became as popular a pilgrimage destination as Wagner's Bayreuth. Thus, it is somewhat surprising that Liszt—surely one of the most well-travelled composers of his time—made the trip to Assisi only once in his lifetime, while on his way elsewhere.³⁹ At the time when Liszt lived in Rome, one could make the trip in a single day. Viewing the matter from a somewhat cynical perspective, Beghelli casts doubt on the extent of Liszt's devotion to his spiritual patron and his frustrated desire, expressed years later, to visit Assisi again: "I wish I could ... go on another pilgrimage to St. Francis's grave in Assisi, the sublime lunatic, who was crazy for the Cross of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer!... But I am retained here and in the *Villa d'Este* for the next months."⁴⁰ While Liszt may well have been making an excuse, he had continual obligations to various people, no matter where he was, with Princess Wittgenstein looming large. For Beghelli, Liszt's Franciscanism "seems to have been interpreted and accepted mainly as a fashion and fetishistically, rather than sincerely and in terms of [its] spiritual significance."⁴¹ The fact that Liszt never took the Franciscan vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Beghelli argues, is further evidence that Liszt's Franciscanism was concentrated mainly

³⁸ Beghelli, "Liszt and Franciscan Fashion at the End of the Nineteenth Century," 47.

³⁹ Liszt made the trip to Assisi on July 5(?) 1868 with Fr. Antonio Solfanelli, the priest who had prepared him to take the Minor Orders. After a long illness, Solfanelli asked Liszt to accompany him on a journey of convalescence to Grottammare, which included stops at sanctuaries frequented by pilgrims, such as Cascia, Loreto, and Assisi. See Beghelli, 50. Liszt gives a detailed account of his visit to Assisi in a letter to Princess Wittgenstein cited in Franz Liszt, *Franz Liszt: Selected Letters*, ed. Adrian Williams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 681–83.

⁴⁰ "Que je voudrais ... refaire un pèlerinage au tombeau de St-François d'Assise, le sublime insensé de la croix de Jésus-Christ, notre Rédempteur! ... Mais je suis retenu ici et à la Villa d'Este pendant les mois prochains." [Liszt to Nadine Helbig, 30 August 1880]. Cited in Marco Beghelli, "Nuove Lettere per Madame Helbig," *Quaderni Dell'Istituto Liszt* 1 (1998): 47.

⁴¹ Beghelli, "Liszt and Franciscan Fashion at the End of the Nineteenth Century," 50.

in appearances. Although I consider the possibility of a performative aspect to Liszt's Franciscan devotion later in this chapter, it is important to remember that Liszt was first and foremost a musician and never did he purport to lead the life of a friar or a full-fledged cleric. He made this clear in an 1865 letter to Prince Constantin von Hohenzollern-Hechingen, shortly after receiving the Minor Orders:

I have no intention of becoming a monk, in the strict sense of the word; I lack the vocation for this. So, it is enough for me to belong to the Church hierarchy in the rank that is given to me by the Lower Orders. So, I do not wear the cowl, but the priest's cassock. And as far as this subject is concerned, Your Highness will forgive my slight vanity in telling You that people praise me for wearing my cassock as if I had always worn it.⁴²

As will become evident in the pages to follow, however, Liszt's Franciscan fervor was deep-seated.

⁴² "Je n'entends nullement devenir moine, dans le sens rigoureux du mot. La vocation me manque à cet effet, et il me suffit d'appartenir à la hiérarchie de l'Église au degré que les ordres mineurs m'assignent. Ce n'est donc pas le froc, mais la soutane que j'ai revêtue. Et à ce sujet, Votre Altesse me passera cette légère vanité de lui raconteur qu'on me fait le compliment de dire que je porte ma soutane comme si je l'avais toujours portée" [Liszt to Prince Constantin von Hohenzollern-Hechingen, 11 May 1865] La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1893), 81.

The Controversy over Liszt's Franciscan Status

In the fall of 1856, Liszt travelled to Pest to conduct his *Gran Mass*, commissioned by the Primate of Hungary, Cardinal János Scitovszky, for the consecration of the Esztergom basilica.⁴³ While in Pest, Liszt visited the local Franciscan monastery⁴⁴ with a special request. Fr. Gajdoš uncovered a chronicle published by the friars, *Novum protocollum conventus Pestiensis*, which reveals how, on this occasion, Liszt decided to consolidate his ties to the order by petitioning to be named a *confrater*—that is, an honorary member of their monastery likely entitled to certain privileges but not required to take on corresponding responsibilities (like living in the monastery or taking religious vows):

The Basilica of Esztergom was consecrated. At this ceremony, a composition by the most celebrated musical master Franz Liszt attracted a large audience in the sanctuary. Liszt, who very kindly visited the monastery on the 8th of September, wished to be adopted as a *confrater* by the same.⁴⁵

A few days later, Liszt shared the news with Princess Wittgenstein, describing the sentimental meaning of his return to the monastery:

I have nothing particularly interesting to tell you about these last three days, except that I will be admitted as a *confrater* by the Franciscans, who will send my diploma to Weimar. I dined with them yesterday, at the same table where I sat in 1823, 40 and 46. My

⁴³ For a detailed account of this visit to Hungary [and others] see Dezső Legány, “Liszt in Hungary, 1848-1867,” in *New Light on Liszt and His Music: Essays in Honor of Alan Walker's 65th Birthday*, ed. Michael Saffle and James Deaville, Franz Liszt Studies (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1997), 3–15.

⁴⁴ It is to this monastery—“the Franciscans of Pest”—that Princess Wittgenstein donated Liszt's books on religious subjects following the composer's death. See page 11 of the present chapter.

⁴⁵ “Basilica Strigoniensis consecrata est. Sacrum in hoc festo celebre fecit compositio domini celebratissimi musices magistri Francisci Liszt. Liszt octava septembris conventum perhumaniter invisens ab eodem confratrem assumi desideravit.” *Novum Protocollum Conventus Pestiensis*, n.d., 268. Cited in Gajdoš, “War Franz Liszt Franziskaner?,” 304. To my knowledge, passages from this source are invariably cited in the literature in the original Latin without translation. They appear here in English for the first time. Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin translations are by Marleigh Anderson.

old attachment to this monastery has not diminished over the years,
and the Franciscans have welcomed me as one of their own.⁴⁶

Once the Franciscan officials made a decision on the matter, they sent Liszt a document testifying that he had been accepted as a *confrater*, which reached the composer at the beginning of February 1857.⁴⁷ The official ceremony of induction, however, had to wait until Liszt's return to Hungary, more than a year later. The entire process thus mirrored the common monastic protocol: Liszt (and others) might even have perceived it as equivalent to initial acceptance, "novitiate year," and a formal admission ceremony.⁴⁸

Finally, on April 11, 1858, the Franciscan friars of Pest welcomed Liszt as a *confrater* of their monastery at a solemn ceremony attended by various church and state dignitaries and presented him with a diploma signed by the Minister Provincial, Brother Eugenius Koppán (see figure 1.1).⁴⁹ The monastery's chronicle gives only a brief account of the event: "On April 11, Franz Liszt was installed as a Franciscan *confrater* in the presence of the illustrious Baron Antal Augusz."⁵⁰ But it is Liszt's own recollection that provides the most detailed account of the ceremony. The composer's vivid letter to Princess Wittgenstein, dated April 13, 1858, is worth quoting at length:

⁴⁶ "Je n'ai rien de particulièrement intéressant à vous conter de ces trois dernier jours, si ce n'est que je vais être admis comme "confrater" par les Franciscaines, qui m'enverront mon diplôme à Weymar. J'ai dine hier chez eux, à la même table où je me trouvais en 1823, 40 et 46. Mon ancien attachement pour ce couvent n'a pas diminué avec les années, et les Franciscaines m'ont accueilli comme un de leurs." [Liszt to Princess Wittgenstein, 12 September 1856]. La Mara, *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, 1900, 4:334. Translation mine.

⁴⁷ Legány, "Liszt in Hungary, 1848-1867," 8.

⁴⁸ I want to thank Dr. Craig Monson for bringing this point to my attention.

⁴⁹ Liszt's confrater diploma is reproduced as item 425 in Ernst Burger, *A Chronicle of His Life in Pictures and Documents* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 209.

⁵⁰ "11 Aprilis Franciscus Liszt in confratrem seraphicum installatur in praesentia illustrissimi domini baronis Antonii Augusz." *Novum Protocolum Conventus Pestiensis*, 312. Cited in Gajdoš, "War Franz Liszt Franziskaner?," 305.

At noon, I went to the Franciscan monastery. The Father Guardian⁵¹ said a low mass for my intention, during which a male choir sang several pieces from a very simple mass quite well, with organ accompaniment. The Franciscan Church is one of the prettiest and most spacious in Pest. There, Albach has a small monument with a medallion which is kept near his room on the ground floor. I sat on a bench near the high altar and prayed for you and Magnolette. At half past twelve we met in the dining hall. I had Augusz on my right, and Karátsony on my left. Next to Augusz, Canon Danielik, who has just published a biography, which is said to be very well written, of Christopher Columbus and is considered one of the most important clerical heads in Hungary. [...] The volume with the engravings about St. Elisabeth that you know, is also by him. [...] Beside Danielik sat Santöffy, the parish priest of the *Stadtpfarrkirche*, and among the number of guests were several dignitaries. With the approximately 12 Franciscans that were present, we were about forty people at the table. My bust and my portrait had been placed in the refectory. Before dinner, one of the brothers read aloud the Latin speech for me, which I've described to you as a little masterpiece. Canon Haas, director of schools, is the author, because the Franciscans are not quite as skilled [as he] when it comes to writing. It will appear in Latin and German in a religious newspaper: *Der katholische Christ*, which you will receive. During dinner, Fr. Guardian toasted me in Latin, and a few others toasted Augusz, Karátsony, etc. who answered in Hungarian. Around 4 o'clock we broke up, and since I was due to leave in the evening, they will send me the confrater's diploma and the speech here, which still needs to be translated. The diploma is dated June 20, 57 [*sic*]. Count Georges Károly ... was also appointed confrater a few years ago. Augusz and Karátsony will receive their diplomas in some time. I find myself, as you can see, in very good and safe company. Concerned about finances as I have been for the past month, I contented myself with asking Augusz to give 200 florins to the Father Guardian on my behalf, which should be more than enough.⁵²

⁵¹ The "Pater Guardian," or head of the monastery, was at the time Gaudentius Dosztál (1828 – 1895).

⁵² "À midi, je me suis rendu à ce couvent des Franciscains. Le P. Guardian a dit une messe basse en mon intention, durant laquelle un chœur d'hommes a très bien chanté plusieurs morceaux d'une messe fort simple, avec accompagnement d'orgue. L'église des Franciscains est une des plus jolies et espacées de Pesth. Albach y a un petit monument avec le médaillon qui se trouve dans ma chambre au rez-de-chaussée. J'ai pris place sur un banc près du maître autel, et prié pour vous et Magnolette. À midi et ½ on s'est réuni dans le réfectoire. J'avais à ma droite Augusz, et à ma gauche Karátsony. À côté d'Augusz, le chanoine Danielik, qui vient de publier une biographie qu'on dit fort sérieusement écrite, de Christophe Colomb et passe pour une des meilleures têtes du clergé de Hongrie. [...] Le volume avec les gravures sur Ste. Élisabeth que vous connaissez, est aussi de lui. [...] À côté de Danielik s'est placé Santöffy, le curé de la Stadtpfarrkirche, et dans le nombre des invités se trouvaient plusieurs *Honorationen*. Avec les 12 Franciscains à peu près qui étaient présents, on était une quarantaine de personnes à table. Mon buste et mon portrait avaient été placés dans le réfectoire. Avant le dîner, un des frères me lut à haute voix l'allocution latine, dont je vous ai parlé comme d'un petit chef-d'œuvre en ce genre. C'est le chanoine Haas, directeur des écoles, qui en est l'auteur,

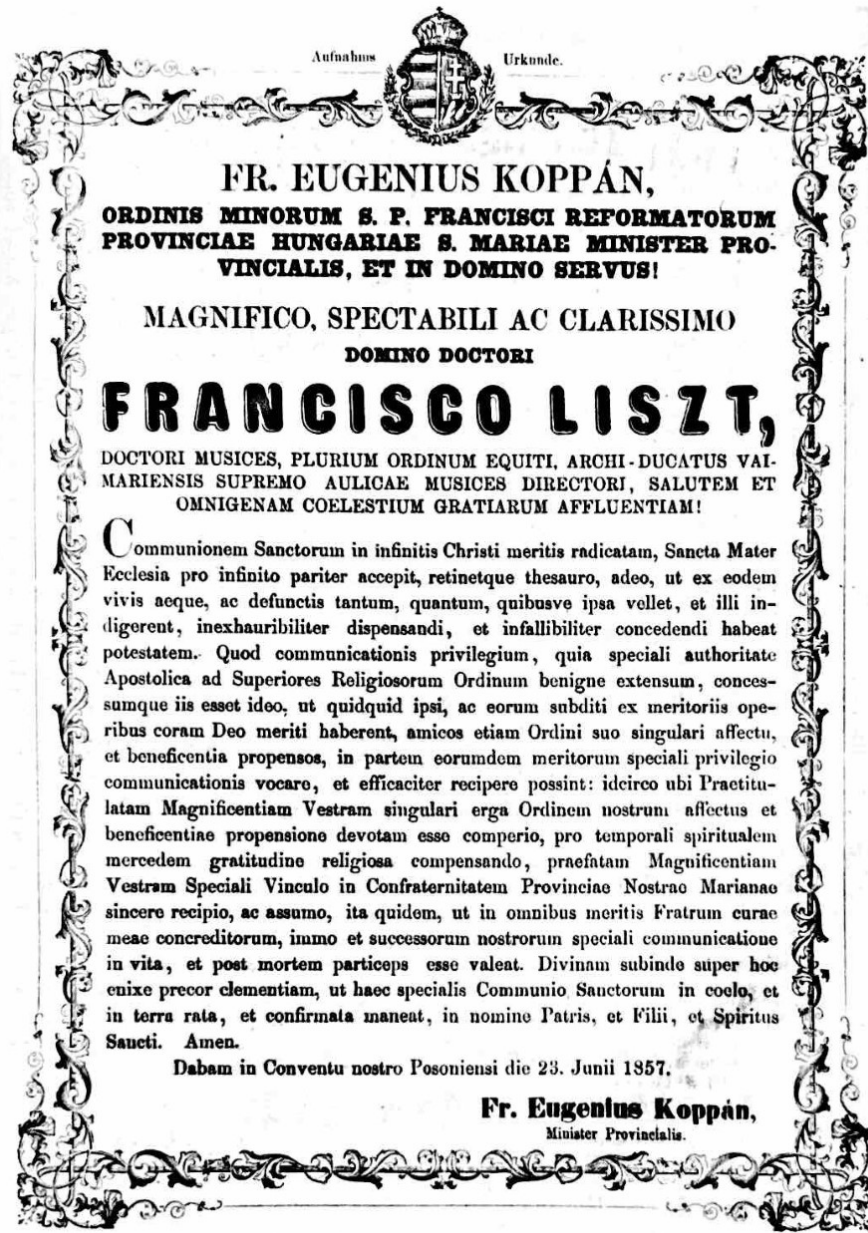


Figure 1.1: Franz Liszt's *Confrater* Diploma, dated 23 June 1857.

car les Franciscains ne sont pas de cette force en fait de rédaction. Elle paraîtra en latin et en allemand dans un journal religieux: *Der katholische Christ*, que vous recevrez. Dans le courant du dîner, le P. Guardian m'a porté un toast en latin, et quelques autres à Augusz, Karátsony, etc. qui y ont répondu en hongrois. Vers 4 heures on s'est séparé, et comme je devais partir dans la soirée, on m'enverra ici le diplôme de confrater et l'allocation, qu'il faut encore traduire. Le diplôme est daté du 20 juin 57. Le Cte Georges Károlyy ... a été également nommé *confrater*, il y a quelques années. Augusz et Karátsony recevront leur diplôme d'ici à quelque temps. Je me trouve, comme vous voyez, en très bonne et sûre compagnie. Préoccupé d'économies comme je le suis depuis un mois, je me suis contenté de faire remettre par Augusz 200 fl. au P. Guardian, ce qui du reste suffit largement." [Liszt to Princess Wittgenstein, 13 April 1858]. La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, 1900, 4:429. Translation mine.

Liszt's installation as a Franciscan *confrater* is an event that the European press reported on. On February 15th, 1857, for example, the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* announced that: "the great pianist and composer F. Liszt has requested and obtained in Pest admission into the order of St. Francis. One cannot say which part of the order the illustrious musician has entered. It is likely that it was only the Third Order."⁵³ Reports such as this ultimately led to the widely held belief that Liszt was in fact a member of the Third Order of St. Francis. Even the composer's own mother appears to have believed this to be the case based on newspaper reports. Writing in 1858, Anna Liszt voiced to her son her disappointment at the thought of his becoming a Franciscan cleric:

I must honestly tell you I was not thrilled when I heard what I was told, long before you wrote to me, from people who read foreign newspapers. I thought to myself, what have you got to do with the Franciscans that is not going to make people talk [?] ... I thought, in what way should this serve your way of life, which has always been noble, Christian, and full of good deeds, and still is [?] In your position you can make yourself more useful to God and the world, and have not failed to do so, than all those religious people. ... I do hope you will not let yourself be vested [in the habit].⁵⁴

Newspaper reporter's unfamiliarity with the Franciscan hierarchy and its various entry points may have prompted these claims. Whatever the case, the notion that Liszt was a member of the Third Order has become widespread. Indeed, one encounters the claim that Liszt was a Franciscan Tertiary in a number of presumably authoritative sources—some of which were printed

⁵³ "Le grand pianiste et compositeur F. Liszt a demandé et obtenu à Pest son admission dans l'ordre de Saint-François. On ne dit pas dans quelle partie de l'ordre l'illustre musicien est entré. Il est vraisemblable qu'il ne s'agit que du tiers ordre." *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, 53.

⁵⁴ "Ich muß dir aufrichtig sagen ich war nicht enchanter als ich von dem hörte welches mir längst vorher als du mir schriebst, von Leuten gesagt wurde die fremde Zeitungen lesen. Ich dachte bei mir selbst was hast du denn mit die Franciskains zu thun, das macht weder viel reden die Leute ... aber im Grunde dachte ich doch zu was soll das dienen dein Lebens-Wandel war von jeher noble, christlich, voll guter Werke bezeichnet, und ist es noch. In deinen Stande hast du dich können nützlicher vor Gott und der Welt machen und hast es auch nicht unterlassen, als alle die religiös. – Ich hoffe doch nicht daß du dich noch einkleiden wirst lassen." [Anna Liszt to Liszt, 25 May 1858]. Klára Hamburger, ed., *Franz Liszt: Briefwechsel Mit Seiner Mutter* (Eisenstadt: Burgenländische Landesregierung, 2000), 474–75. Translation mine.

during the composer's lifetime. Lina Ramann, who personally knew Liszt and authored one of the first biographies of the composer, writes: "then – in 1856 – his admission as a Tertiary into the Franciscan order founded by Francis of Assisi comes across as a continuation of the symbolic commitment to the idea of Christian love, which had been alive in him since childhood."⁵⁵ Julius Kapp, another early biographer, equates *confrater* status with membership in the Third Order: "[Liszt] was then appointed (on September 8, 1856) a *confrater*, a Tertiary of the Franciscan order, an honor that made him proud and happy."⁵⁶ Most recently, in a 2004 edition of the Franciscan piano *Legends*, Mária Eckhardt, a leading Liszt scholar, writes in the preface: "In 1856, after making several visits to the Franciscans in Pest, [Liszt] applied for admission to the order as a tertiary member."⁵⁷ Even in the Franciscan literature one can find mention of Liszt's Tertiary status. In what is often considered the standard textbook on the history of the Franciscan order, Heribert Holzapfel, OFM, includes "Franz von Liszt" on his list of prominent Tertiaries.⁵⁸ Although Gajdoš argued strongly that Liszt could not have been a Tertiary, Nicolas Dufetel has recently warned that the matter still needs *definitive* clarification. In his words, "we must remain cautious on this point, since the provincial subtleties of the Franciscan system are numerous and the term "confrater" *could* refer to tertiaries."⁵⁹ While unequivocal clarification may remain

⁵⁵ "Stellt sich dann – 1856 – seine Aufnahme als Tertiärer in den von Franz von Assisi gestifteten Franziskanerorden als eine konsequent fortlaufende Linie der auch symbolischen Betätigung der Idee Christlicher Liebe dar, die ihm schon als Knabe lebendig gewesen." Lina Ramann, *Franz Liszt Als Künstler Und Mensch*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1880-94), 126.

⁵⁶ "[Liszt] wurde darauf (am 8. September 1856) zum Konfrater, zum Tertiärer des Franziskanerordens ernannt, eine Auszeichnung, die ihn stolz und glücklich machte." Julius Kapp, *Franz Liszt* (Berlin, 1922), 175.

⁵⁷ Mária Eckhardt, preface to *Zwei Legenden*, by Franz Liszt, ed. Ernst Günter Heinemann (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2004), V.

⁵⁸ Holzapfel, *History of the Franciscan Order*, 446.

⁵⁹ "Il faut pourtant rester prudent sur ce point, les subtilités provinciales du système franciscain étant nombreuses et le terme "confrater" pouvant renvoyer aux tertiaires." Nicolas Dufetel, "Franz Liszt, franciscain 'du berceau jusqu'à la tombe,'" *Etudes franciscaines* II, no. 2 (2009): 304.

elusive, it is worth entertaining a number of possibilities that may shed light on this largely misunderstood issue. But before continuing on this point, it is useful to introduce some basic Franciscan terminology.

There are three separate orders founded by St. Francis of Assisi. The first is the “Order of Friars Minor,” which consists of monks who wear the brown habit, live in a monastery, and take vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. The initials OFM are added after their name to indicate membership in the Order.⁶⁰ The second is the “Order of Saint Clare,” which pertains to cloistered nuns, who also live under religious vows.⁶¹ Finally, the “Third Order” is the branch traditionally associated with lay penitents who seek to emulate St. Francis’s spirit by performing works of charity and social service. The Third Order is further subdivided into the Third Order Regular and the Third Order Secular—a distinction that Liszt scholars have failed to recognize.⁶² Today, the former pertains to vowed religious who live in community, and traditionally wear the habit. The latter, on the other hand, pertains to lay men and women who live in the world, do not take vows and do not wear the habit. While both are Third Order and can be referred to as Tertiaries, the two are fundamentally different. Secular Tertiaries and Regular Tertiaries add the initials OFS and TOR respectively after their name to indicate their Order affiliation. Following a 1978 reform, the Third Order Secular is referred to as the “Secular Franciscan Order.”⁶³ Since its founding by St.

⁶⁰ The First Order is divided into three sub-branches: The Friars Minor (O.F.M.), the Friars Minor Conventual (O.F.M. Conv.), and the Friars Minor Capuchin (O.F.M. Cap.). See Dominic V. Monti, “The Friars Minor: An Order in the Church?,” *Franciscan Studies* 61 (2003): 235–52.

⁶¹ See Jean François Godet-Calogeras, “Francis and Clare and the Emergence of the Second Order,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Francis of Assisi*, ed. Michael J. P. Robson, Cambridge Companions to Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 115–26.

⁶² This important distinction was brought to my attention by Dr. Jay M. Hammond.

⁶³ See Ingrid Peterson, “The Third Order of Francis,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Francis of Assisi*, ed. Michael J. P. Robson, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 193–207.

Francis in the thirteenth century and subsequent approval by Pope Nicholas IV in 1289, the Third Order has counted among its members such figures as St. Elisabeth of Hungary, Dante, Michelangelo, and Palestrina.⁶⁴ The relevant question here is whether Liszt was a Secular Tertiary—not a Regular one.

To assess whether Liszt may have joined the Third Order, it is helpful to examine what that process would have entailed in Liszt's day. An 1868 book by Mgr. Louis G. A. de Ségur, titled *Le Tiers-Ordre de St. François*, provides some useful information and detailed instructions for aspiring Tertiaries. The manual describes the various stages of the process:

Believers touched by the grace of Our Lord, who feel compelled to enter the Third Order must... seek out a Franciscan Friar Minor... and request from him the holy habit. ... One then is welcome to begin the novitiate, which must last a year. After a year has passed, if one has observed *The Rule* well, and one has done everything possible to respond to the great grace of the vocation of the Third Order, one is admitted into *Profession*.⁶⁵ After *Profession*, one belongs to the Franciscan Third Order for the entirety of one's life and must not leave, except to ascend even higher, and become a true ecclesiastic.⁶⁶

The *Rule* refers to the bull *Supra montem*, issued in 1289 by Nicholas IV, the first Friar Minor to be elected pope.⁶⁷ The decree gave papal approval to the Third Order and provided the general

⁶⁴ Heribert Holzapfel, *History of the Franciscan Order*, trans. Antonine Tibesar and Gervase Brinkmann (Pro Manuscripto, 1942), 445–46.

⁶⁵ The final stage of the induction process into the Third Order, *Profession* is the solemn act by which the candidate renews his baptismal promises and publicly affirms his personal commitment to live the Gospel in the world according to the example of Francis and following the Rule of the SFO.

⁶⁶ “Si un fidèle, touché de la grâce de Notre-Seigneur, se sent attiré à entrer dans le Tiers-Ordre, il faut... trouver un Père franciscain de l'Observance ... et on lui demande le saint habit. ... On est reçu à commencer ainsi son noviciat, qui doit durer un an. Après l'année révolue, si l'on a bien observé la Règle et si l'on a fait son possible pour répondre à la grande grâce de la vocation du Tiers-Ordre, on est admis à faire profession. Après la profession, on appartient au Tiers-Ordre franciscain pour tout sa vie et l'on ne doit point sortir, si ce n'est pour monter plus haut encore, et se faire Religieux proprement dit.” de Ségur, *Le Tiers-Ordre de Saint François*, 45–46.

⁶⁷ Ingrid Peterson, “The Third Order Tradition of Evangelical Life: A Prophetic Witness to the Whole of the Gospel,” *Franciscan Studies* 64 (2006): 447–48.

legislation for Franciscan penitents. The *Rule*—consisting of twenty chapters outlining the guidelines and prescriptions that Tertiaries must abide by—remained in effect for most of Liszt’s lifetime.⁶⁸ Among other restrictions, it prohibited Tertiaries from attending “immodest banquets and/or spectacles,” and required them to say the seven canonical hours every day, and abstain from eating meat on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.⁶⁹ These restrictions as well as the formal process of initiation (novitiate & profession) would technically have applied to Liszt. However, it is possible that an exception may have been made in Liszt’s case on account of his stature. Indeed, the *Rule* of 1289 contains a provision allowing for certain exceptions with regards to the initiation process.⁷⁰ The relevant passage from the document reads as follows:

A year after all these things had been done, he may, on the advice of some discreet brothers, if he shall appear fit to them, be received in this manner ... After having been made, let this promise be set down in writing there by a notary public. Let no one be received by these ministers in any other manner unless it should appear otherwise to them after having discussed with solicitous consideration *the condition and dignity of the person* (emphasis mine).⁷¹

Thus it is possible that Liszt may have been received into the Third Order Secular without a public written pronouncement or his having to follow formal procedures. Simply put, the language of the *Supra montem* allows for conferral of Tertiary status in consideration of “the condition and dignity of the person.” Liszt’s artistic status certainly could have warranted such an exception.

⁶⁸ In 1883, Pope Leo XIII, himself a Tertiary, promulgated a new rule for the Third Order Secular aimed at loosening the requirements for membership. The *Misericors dei filius* eliminated many of the difficult demands of the original 1289 rule to make it easier to follow. It simply required that secular Tertiaries wear a small, concealed scapular, observe the commandments, avoid extremes of extravagance and style, be temperate in food and dress, and fast two days a year. See Peterson, “The Third Order of Francis,” 202–3.

⁶⁹ See chapters IV, V, and VIII in Francisco Gaude, ed., *Bullarum Diplomatum et Privilegiorum Sanctorum Romanorum Pontificum*, IV (Taurinensis Editio, 1859), 90–95.

⁷⁰ I want to thank Dr. Dolores Pesce for sharing this crucial information with me.

⁷¹ Margaret Carney, Jean François Godet-Calogeras, and Suzanne M. Kush, eds., *History of the Third Order Regular Rule: A Source Book* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, Saint Bonaventure University, 2008), 75.

Whether or not Liszt formally enjoyed secular Tertiary status, he did in fact view himself as a member of the Third Order and asserted his status to individuals in private correspondence. At least two documents, one of which this study brings to light for the first time, confirm this. The first is a published letter, hitherto overlooked with regard to this question, dated June/July 1866 and addressed to a “Mr. Le Chavalier Rodolphe de Gournay.” Although the recipient’s name appears to have been lost to history, we can surmise it is someone Liszt had known since his youth, as well as a devout Catholic. The letter reads as follows:

The affection that I vowed to you in my youth, some forty years ago, has not faded away; and if fate were to ever bring us together, I would be glad to give you proof of it. In the meantime, I congratulate you on having found peace and happiness in family life, and above all on having remained faithful to the Catholic faith. *Pono unum est necessarium*. Praise be to God for granting us this unique and supreme necessity.

You assume that I have already been ordained a priest. This is not so—I have received only the minor orders, last summer. ...

Here is the photograph you asked me for. To the signature I add a title which is dear to me, and which I took at the Franciscan monastery in Pest in 1856 – after the first performance of the *Gran Mass*: that of Tertiary of the Order of St. Francis.⁷²

The reference to the first performance of the *Gran Mass* in 1856 confirms that Liszt is referring to his installation as a *confrater*. If we are to take Liszt at his word, then the Franciscans of Pest granted Liszt secular Tertiary status at the same time that they named him a *confrater*. This might also suggest the terms *confrater* and Tertiary to be synonymous, perhaps both referring to

⁷² “L’affection que je vous ai vouée dans ma jeunesse, il y a une quarantaine d’années, ne s’est pas effacée; et si jamais le sort nous rapproche, je serai heureux de vous en donner des preuves. En attendant, je vous félicite d’avoir trouvé paix et douceur dans la vie de famille, et surtout d’être resté fidèle à la foi catholique. *Pono unum est necessarium*. Bénissons Dieu de nous accorder cet unique et suprême nécessaire. Vous présumez que je suis déjà ordonné prêtre. Il n’en est pas ainsi, et je n’ai reçu que les ordres mineurs, l’été dernier. ...Voici la photographie que vous me demandez. A la signature j’ajoute un titre qui m’est cher, et que j’ai pris au couvent des Franciscains à Pest en 1856 – après la première exécution de la *Messe de Gran*: celui de Tertian [sic] de l’ordre de St. François.” La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt’s Briefe*, vol. 8 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1905), 183. Translation mine.

the “Confraternity of Franciscan Penitents,” which exists canonically as the Third Order Regular and the Third Order Secular.

The other document attesting to Liszt’s self-perception as a Franciscan Tertiary has only recently come to light. It is a copy of Anatole de Ségur’s *Le poème de Saint-François* (1866), which resurfaced in 2021 at a Parisian bookstore specializing in antique books and rare first editions.⁷³ Provenance information listed on the bookstore’s website indicates that the book once belonged to the poet Armand Godoy (1880 – 1964), though it is unclear how he acquired it. Importantly, the book bears an inscription in Liszt’s hand, which reads: “To the Countess de Fleury – as a token of respect from a poor Franciscan Tertiary.”⁷⁴ (see figure 1.2)

⁷³ The bookstore, called *Librairie Le Feu Follets*, is located at 35 rue Henri Barbusse, 75005 Paris. www.edition-originale.com

⁷⁴ “*Madame la Comtesse de Fleury – respectueux hommage d’un pauvre franciscain du tiers ordre.*”

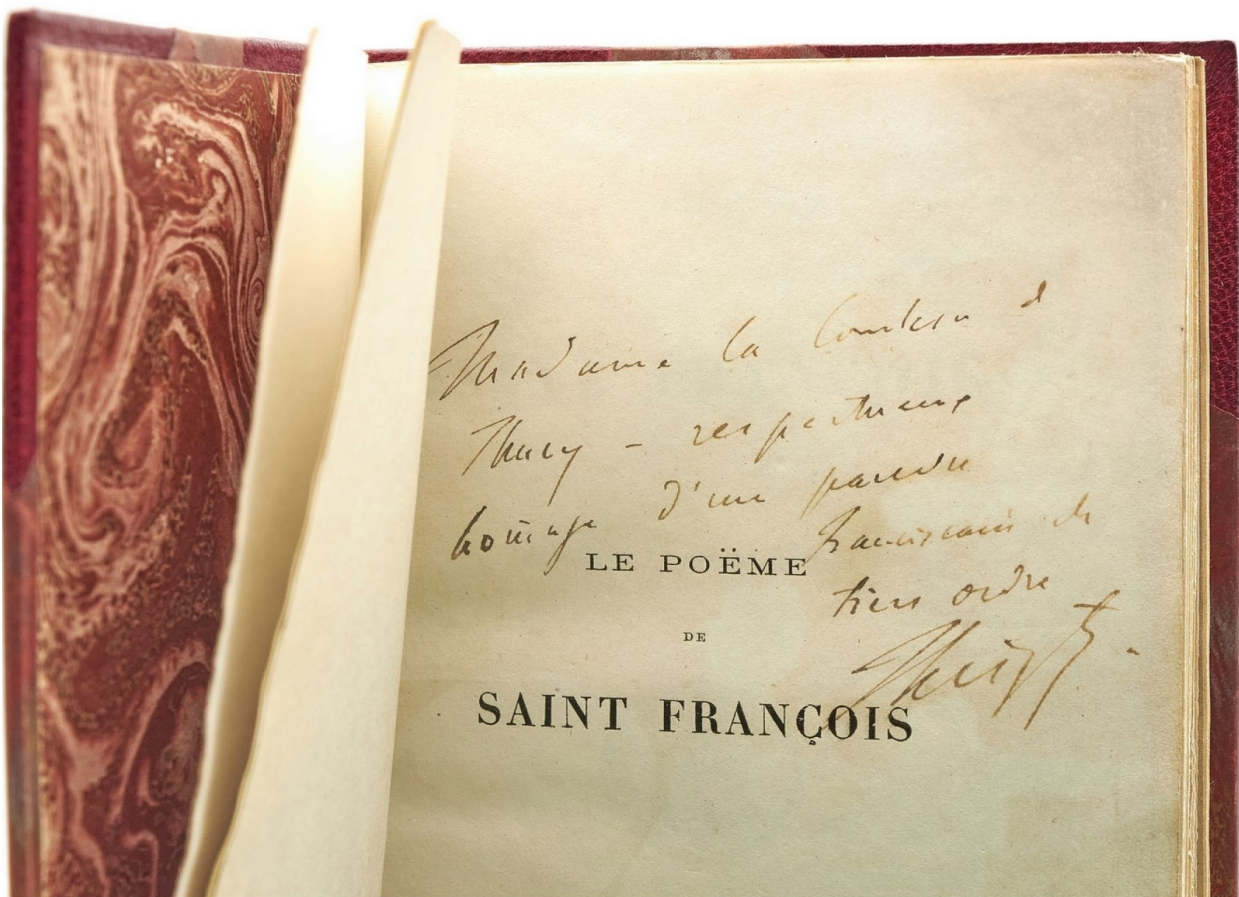


Figure 1.2: *Le poème de Saint François*, with dedication to “Countess de Fleury” in Liszt’s hand (reproduced with permission)

The Countess de Fleury was, in fact, the Duchess de Fleury, but when Liszt first met her in 1831, she was the Countess Adèle de la Prunarède.⁷⁵ At that time, the two entertained a juvenile love affair. Given the book’s publication in 1866, Liszt and the Duchess must have been in touch around that time or later. These two sources confirm that—whatever status may have been bestowed on Liszt by the Franciscans of Pest, possibly in a non-public manner—he wanted to be viewed as a Franciscan.

⁷⁵ Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 149.

Given the absence of any official documentation confirming Liszt's membership in the Third Order, we might entertain another possibility—namely, that Liszt *did not* enjoy Tertiary status yet fashioned himself as a member of the Third Order. Such a scenario may not be too far-fetched. Let us recall that, at one point, Liszt told Ramann: “my biography is more to be *invented* than to be written after the fact” [emphasis mine].⁷⁶ According to Alexander Rehding, it is possible that “while Liszt wanted to distinguish between the truth and fiction, he was happy for the public to live in a state suspended in between.”⁷⁷ The fact that he never sought to put the various myths about his life to rest by writing an autobiography gives some credence to this theory. We might also take into account the psychological impetus behind Liszt's actions. For Liszt, membership in the Third Order would have elevated his status, drawing him spiritually and symbolically closer to prominent Tertiaries he idolized—particularly Dante.⁷⁸ Liszt's admiration for the legendary Florentine poet was great, and he paid homage to him in two major compositions.⁷⁹ According to Adrian Williams, “had Liszt in the latter period of his life been asked which three great men of the past he most revered, he might well have named St. Francis, Dante, and Beethoven.”⁸⁰ The composer is known to have read the *Divina Commedia* over and over throughout his life, both for

⁷⁶ “Meine Biographie ist mehr zu erfinden denn nachzuschreiben.” Lina Ramann, *Lisztiana: Erinnerungen an Franz Liszt in Tagebuchblättern, Briefen und Dokumenten aus den Jahren 1873-1886/87*, ed. Arthur Seidl and Friedrich Schnapp (Mainz: Schott, 1983), 407.

⁷⁷ Alexander Rehding, “Inventing Liszt's Life: Early Biography and Autobiography,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*, ed. Kenneth Hamilton, Cambridge Companions to Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 17.

⁷⁸ Dante's Franciscanism is well documented. The poet's relationship with St. Francis goes beyond his alleged membership into the Third Order. He also appears in many crowd scenes in paintings in Franciscan churches and was buried in the church of St. Francis in Ravenna. Additionally, his daughter became a Franciscan nun. See Ronald Herzman, “Dante and Francis,” *Franciscan Studies* 42 (1982): 101. See also Nick Havely, *Dante and the Franciscans: Poverty and the Papacy in the “Commedia”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁷⁹ The two works inspired by Dante's masterpiece are *Eine Symphonie zu Dantes Divina Commedia* (LW C20) and *Après une lecture du Dante, fantasia quasi sonata* (LW A55).

⁸⁰ See footnote 38 in Williams, ed. & Liszt, *Franz Liszt: Selected letters*, 590.

its literary virtue and the spiritual solace it afforded him. August Göllerich, one of Liszt's pupils in the 1880s, recalls that hearing passages from the *Divina Commedia* gave Liszt "one last joy" shortly before his death. "This book has accompanied me on all my travels," Liszt remarked; "it counts among the profoundest achievements of the human mind."⁸¹ It is probably no coincidence that, on at least three documented instances, when Liszt makes mention of St. Francis, he also brings up Dante, suggesting a mental association between the two: "The sublime *poverello di Dio*, St. Francis, the ardent lover of poverty, as Dante so admirably glorified!"⁸² Interestingly, Dante is believed to have asked that his body be dressed in the Franciscan habit at the time of his death.⁸³ It is difficult to know whether Liszt knew this, but he made the very same request himself—a request that might have arisen, at least in part, out of a conscious desire to emulate Dante, as a testament both to his immense admiration for the poet, and his devotion to St. Francis.

Specifically, more than seven years after his installation as *confrater*, when Liszt returned to Hungary in August of 1865 to give the world premiere of his *St. Elisabeth* oratorio,⁸⁴ he visited the Pest monastery again and had himself measured for a Franciscan habit. Thanks to the report in

⁸¹ These recollections are recounted in Williams, *Portrait of Liszt*, 95–96.

⁸² "Le sublime *poverello di Dio*, St François, l'ardent amant de la pauvreté, comme l'a si admirablement glorifié Dante." [Liszt to Princess Wittgenstein, 18 March 1882]. La Mara, 7:377. These three instances are: "The revision and extra ornamentation of my *Cantico di San Francesco* have been keeping me busy for several weeks. ... Why should music not add its note to the glorification of the Saint whom the Church has canonized, and Dante exalted?" [Liszt to Princess Wittgenstein, Friday, November or December 1881] Williams, *Selected Letters*, p. 870; "More than fifteen years ago in Budapest, I asked that, on my deathbed, my body be dressed in the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi. ... The sublime *poverello di Dio*, St. Francis, the ardent lover of poverty, as Dante so admirably glorified – also remains the almost extravagant and intoxicated apostle of the divine madness of the Cross, of the *gran Perdono*." [Liszt to Princess Wittgenstein, 18 March 1882]. La Mara, *Briefe* VII, p. 377; "Every year a mass is celebrated with the 'Memento vivorum Carolinae' in our poor old chapel in Weimar. This time, I chose the feast of the stigmata of St. Francis, the sublime poet of the *Cantico del sol* and ardent apostle of the *gran perdono*. In his *Paradiso*, Dante seraphically glorified the divine madman St. Francis!" [Liszt to Princess Wittgenstein, 21 September 1885] Williams, *Selected Letters*, p. 929. When Liszt speaks of Dante's "glorification" of St. Francis, he is referring to the literary depiction of the saint, who appears in Canto 11 of the *Paradiso* in the *Divina Commedia*.

⁸³ Corrado Ricci, *L'ultimo rifugio di Dante* (Milan: Hoepli, 1891), 158.

⁸⁴ Legány, "Liszt in Hungary, 1848-1867," 9–10.

the *Novum protocollum conventus Pestiensis*, unearthed by Gajdoš, we learn that Liszt expressed a desire to be buried in this garment:

The respected and magnificent master Franz Liszt, awaited with the highest delight, most celebrated for the art of music, closest supporter of our order, and for these reasons decorated with a diploma of our brotherhood, was present in Pest at the beginning of the month of August to celebrate the anniversary of the Pest Conservatory of Music. This dear man, filled with piety toward our order, sought for the habit of the religion to be given to him by the monastery, which he expressed the desire to wear as a garment to his eternal resting place.⁸⁵

Eight years later, in a letter dated March 6th 1873, he expressed this wish to Princess Carolyne.

Significantly, Liszt mentions the Third Order:

Yesterday evening I received your latest letter, and at once reply to your question of my will. I am expressing in it my desire to be clothed, in my coffin, in the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis. It is my last homage to the great Saint, who carried out his apostolate in “mad devotion” of the Cross – and finished by obtaining from the Pope the “gran perdono,” solemnized by the Church. Those who may be with me at the moment of my death I shall enjoin to cover my sorry remains in this vestment of Saint Francis. I shall also ask that I be spared the honors of an ostentatious funeral. If possible, let me be taken to my last resting-place in the obscurity of evening – two or three hired men will suffice to carry me. I should not like to trouble others to follow me to the cemetery – where I shall no longer be able to serve them!⁸⁶

⁸⁵“Summa laetitia expectatus reverendus ac magnificus dominus Franciscus Liszt, artis musices celebratissimus, ordinis nostri intimus cultor, eapropter confraternitatis diplomate decoratus comparuit Pestiniensis anniversarium. Pietate erga ordinem nostrum repletus hic vir pretorius habitum religionis a conventu sibi dari petiit, quem proposuit ut vestem nuptialem ad domum aeternitatis secum fere velle.” *Novum protocollum conventus Pestiensis*, 374. Gajdoš, “War Franz Liszt Franziskaner?,” 307.

⁸⁶ “Hier soir j’ai reçu votre dernière lettre et répons tout de suite à la question de mon testament. J’y exprime mon désir d’être revêtu dans mon cercueil de l’habit de l’ordre tertiaire de St François. C’est mon dernier hommage au grand Saint, qui poursuivit son apostolat en “insensé” de la Croix – et finit par obtenir du Pape un jour le *gran perdono*, solennisé par l’Église. Au moment de ma mort, je recommanderai à celui qui se trouvera près de moi, de prendre soin de recouvrir ma triste dépouille de ce vêtement de St François. Je demanderai aussi de faire en sorte qu’on m’épargne les honneurs d’un enterrement fastueux. Si possible, qu’on me conduise obscurément le soir à ma dernière demeure – 2 ou 3 hommes payés pour cela su’ront à me porter. Je ne voudrais pas déranger d’autres à me suivre au cimetière – où je ne puis plus les servir en rien!” [Liszt to Princess Wittgenstein, 6 March 1873]. La Mara, *Franz Liszt’s Briefe*, 1900, 7:10.

Nine years later, in 1882, the idea was still on his mind when the Princess brought up the subject. Once again, he mentions the Third Order of St. Francis, referring to its habit:

Thank you for reminding me of my old desire to be buried without any fuss or funeral service other than a low mass – hence, without music. More than fifteen years ago in Budapest, I asked that, on my deathbed, my body be dressed in the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi. I also had this garment tailored to my measure at the Franciscan monastery in Budapest. If it got lost, re-cutting a new one in the same manner – wherever I die – should not be difficult. Soon I shall indicate in writing my testamentary wishes. The sublime *poverello di Dio*, St. Francis, the ardent lover of poverty, as Dante so admirably glorified – also remains the almost extravagant and intoxicated apostle of the divine madness of the Cross, of the *gran Perdono*.⁸⁷

Liszt's untimely death in Bayreuth in 1886, while attending the Wagner festival, made it impossible for his wishes to be carried out, but his choice of words in these two letters is noteworthy. Since there is only one type of habit—whether for a Tertiary or for a Friar Minor,—referring to the garment simply as a Franciscan habit would have been sufficient. But by describing it specifically as “the habit of the Third Order,” and making this distinction in both letters, Liszt implies his affiliation to the Third Order. Such language may well have led the Princess to believe that Liszt was a Franciscan Tertiary. In 1885, when Liszt's health began to falter, Princess Carolyne wrote to the theologian Ignaz von Döllinger: “If some misfortune were to befall him, I should like to remind you that in Pest *he belongs to the Third Order of the Franciscans* and that he has often expressed the wish to be buried there in the habit of the

⁸⁷ “Je vous remercie de me rappeler mon ancien désir, d’être enseveli sans fracas quelconque, ni autre service funèbre qu’une messe basse – par conséquent, sans musique. Il y a plus d’une quinzaine d’années, j’avais demandé à Budapest que sur mon lit de mort on revête mon corps de l’habit du tiers ordre de St François d’Assise. J’avais aussi fait tailler alors cet habit à ma mesure, au couvent des Franciscains à Budapest. S’il s’est perdu, en retailler un nouveau de même façon – à n’importe quel endroit où je mourrai – ne sera pas difficile. Prochainement j’indiquerai là-dessus par écrit ma disposition testamentaire. Le sublime *poverello di Dio*, St François, l’ardent amant de la pauvreté, comme l’a si admirablement glorifié Dante – reste aussi l’apôtre presque insensé et enivré de la divine folie de la Croix, du *gran Perdono*.” [Liszt to Princess Wittgenstein, 18 March 1882]. La Mara, 7:377.

Franciscan order. [. . .] His wish is to be buried at five in the morning like a poor Franciscan – without pomp and ceremony. I could never forgive myself if this beautiful wish, expressed in the form of his last will and testament, were not to be fulfilled.”⁸⁸ After Liszt’s death, the Princess did everything in her power to have the composer’s body exhumed and transferred to the Pest Monastery. Her efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, but her correspondence with the archivist Johan Batka reveals that one of her chief concerns during this time was proving Liszt’s membership in the Third Order.⁸⁹ She believed that only by producing the right documentation would Liszt’s remains be allowed to be clothed in the habit. To this end, she searched in vain for the *confrater* diploma, which she believed testified to Liszt’s Tertiary status.⁹⁰ According to Gajdoš, however, the Princess need not have bothered to produce any documentation since the Franciscans would have allowed Liszt to be buried in the habit on account of his *confrater* status.⁹¹ It should be noted, however, that Gajdoš offers this information without supporting evidence.⁹²

Following from Gajdos’s belief that Liszt’s *confrater* status only may have entitled him to be buried in the Franciscan habit, another fact is of note. Although being buried in the habit is an

⁸⁸ [Princess Wittgenstein to Ignaz von Döllinger, 19 October 1885]. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München. Cited in Oliver Hilmes, *Franz Liszt: Musician, Celebrity, Superstar*, trans. Stewart Spencer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 311.

⁸⁹ Gajdoš makes reference to these letters (p. 306), which are cited in Dobroslav Orel, *Liszt a Bratislava na základě nevydané korespondence Fr. Liszta a knežny C. Wittgensteinové* (Bratislava: Filozofická Fakulta University Komenského, 1925), 62-69.

⁹⁰ “Ganz vergeblich suchte die Fürstin von Wittgenstein mit Hilfe des schon erwähnten Batka ein solches Dokument. Sie selbst glaubte nämlich irrtümlich, daß sie ein solches Diplom irgendwo in einem Schrank habe.” [The Princess von Wittgenstein searched in vain for such a document with the help of the already mentioned Batka. She herself mistakenly believed that she had such a diploma in a closet somewhere.] Gajdoš, “War Franz Liszt Franziskaner?,” 306.

⁹¹ Gajdoš, 306.

⁹² “Der Hauptirrtum der Fürstin bestand darin, daß sie glaubte, nur das Tertiariertum erlaube es, im Franziskanerhabit begraben zu werden. Dazu genügte auch das Konfraternum.” [The princess’s principal error was that she believed that only tertiary status allowed one to be buried in the Franciscan habit. *Confrater* status was sufficient for this.] Gajdoš, 306.

honor generally granted to Friar Minors and Tertiaries,⁹³ there is a long tradition, dating back to at least the fifteenth century, of prominent figures with no official ties to the Franciscan Order requesting to be buried in the habit and having their wishes granted.⁹⁴ Such burials brought prestige to the individual but also to the institution, which in turn gained its own prestige by association with a person of renown. This was surely a motivating factor for particular monasteries to allow such privileges. Liszt would certainly could have been granted this allowance because of his prominence, let alone because of his *confrater* status.

Another possible understanding of Liszt's embrace of Franciscanism in the time under consideration is that his highly-publicized installation as a *confrater*/Tertiary might have served to demonstrate his religious commitment in the face of skepticism about his religiosity. Particularly after Liszt received the Minor Orders of the Church, critics were quick to question the composer's religious sincerity. Skeptics could not reconcile the image of the worldly virtuoso with that of the ascetic cleric. The German historian Ferdinand Gregorovius, for instance, remarked that "Liszt demonstrates a quite fanatical Catholicism."⁹⁵ As Oliver Hilmes has pointed out, there is a subtle distinction between *being* a fanatical Catholic and *demonstrating* that quality.⁹⁶ Gregorovius's backhanded observation, in other words, implied that Liszt's outward displays of devotion were not heartfelt. Even Hans von Bülow—one of the composer's closest allies—noted a certain

⁹³ According to Gajdoš, Franciscan *confraters* may also be buried in the habit, but he provides no evidence to support this claim. Despite a diligent search, I have not been able to locate any documents outlining the full privileges associated with *confrater* status in the nineteenth century. See Gajdoš, "War Franz Liszt Franziskaner?," 306.

⁹⁴ The practice by prominent citizens of requesting to be dressed for burial in the Franciscan habit is discussed in Philippa Jackson, "Pomp or Piety? The Funeral of Pandolfo Petrucci," *Renaissance Studies* 20, no. 2 (2006): 243–44.

⁹⁵ [Diary entry of 27 March 1864]. Ferdinand Gregorovius, *Römische Tagebücher*, ed. Friedrich Althaus, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, 1893), 177. Cited in Hilmes, *Franz Liszt*, 196.

⁹⁶ Hilmes, *Franz Liszt*, 196.

theatrical element in Liszt's religiosity, writing: "My father-in-law strikes me as being outwardly too much of an *abbé* and inwardly too little of one."⁹⁷

With all this in mind, we acknowledge Liszt undeniably had strong ties to the Franciscans going back to his childhood, and the evidence suggests that the friars welcomed him into their brotherhood with enthusiasm. Yet, he was deeply conscious of public opinion. For example, scholars generally recognize that the composer's momentous decision to retire from the concert stage in 1848 and relocate to Weimar was part of a very deliberate strategy to rebrand himself in the face of growing anti-virtuoso sentiments. As David Trippett puts it, "Liszt's liquidation of his performer's 'self' testified to his desire to *manage his public identity strategically*, to narrate his own story in a self-styled *Künstlerroman*, and thus to both publicize and legitimize his new identity as a composer and ex-virtuoso."⁹⁸ Liszt also understood the importance of publicity from the earliest stages of his career. As Dana Gooley has demonstrated, Liszt went to great lengths as a traveling virtuoso to maximize attendance at his concerts and took calculated steps to ensure that these received ample coverage in the press.⁹⁹ Liszt may have realized that news about his joining the Franciscan Order in any capacity would generate considerable press coverage, the value of which never eluded the composer. Indeed, it is quite telling that when mentioning the matter to Princess Wittgenstein in 1858, he wrote with feigned indifference: "I do not know whether the

⁹⁷ [Hans von Bülow to Richard Pohl, 23 June 1869]. Hans von Bülow, *Briefe Und Schriften*, ed. Marie von Bülow, vol. iv (Leipzig, 1895), 303. Cited in Hilmes, *Franz Liszt*, 196.

⁹⁸ David Trippett, "Après Une Lecture de Liszt: Virtuosity and Werktreue in the 'Dante' Sonata," *19th-Century Music* 32, no. 1 (2008): 54.

⁹⁹ See Dana Gooley, "Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso as Strategist," in *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 145–61.

newspapers will concern themselves with this event, but that is of no interest to me.”¹⁰⁰ Everything that we know about Liszt would suggest that he in fact cared very much.

In order to arrive at a better understanding of Liszt’s psychology and the reasons why he might have styled himself as a Franciscan Tertiary, it is instructive to consider Liszt’s perpetuation of another intriguing personal myth. One of the most often retold episodes from Liszt’s life involves the so-called *Weihekuss*—the “kiss of consecration,” which Beethoven is supposed to have bestowed on the eleven-year-old Liszt in recognition of his genius. One version of the story, as recalled by Liszt’s pupil Amy Fay, goes as follows:

In the year 1822, when scarcely eleven years of age, Liszt gave his first concert in Vienna, and on the occasion of his second concert the great event of his life happened to him, for he received the kiss of Beethoven (then 53) at the close of the performance. ... [Liszt’s] success was electric, and the public gave vent to its enthusiasm without restraint. Beethoven himself could not restrain his admiration, and ascending the platform, he repeatedly kissed the glorious boy, amid the frantic cheers of the assembled multitude.¹⁰¹

The anecdote, in one version or another,¹⁰² turns up in all the major biographies of the composer.¹⁰³

In old age, Liszt reportedly shared the story with his pupil Ilka Horowitz-Barnay, telling her: “This event in my life has remained my greatest pride – the palladium of my whole career as an artist. I

¹⁰⁰ “Je ne sais si les journaux se mêleront de cet incident, mais cela m’est parfaitement indifférent.” [Liszt to Princess Wittgenstein, 10 April 1858]. La Mara, *Franz Liszt’s Briefe*, 1900, 4:428.

¹⁰¹ Amy Fay, “From Beethoven to Liszt,” *Etude* 16, no. 7 (1908): 426; Reprinted in Margaret William McCarthy, *America’s Notable Woman of Music* (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 1995), 171–72.

¹⁰² In one version of the story, the events take place not at a concert but at Beethoven’s home. See Michael Saffle, “Lingering Legends: Liszt after Walker,” in *Musical Biography: Towards New Paradigms*, ed. Jolanta T. Pekacz (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 103–4.

¹⁰³ The earliest mention of the story is Joseph d’Ortigue, “Frantz Listz [sic],” *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, June 14, 1835; Cited in Pierre-Antoine Huré and Claude Knepper, *Liszt et son temps* (Paris: Hachette, 1987), 87.

tell it but very seldom and – only to good friends!”¹⁰⁴ However, Allan Keiler has credibly argued that the story is likely a fabrication.¹⁰⁵ For one, Beethoven’s deafness would have been quite advanced by then, and it is unlikely he would have attended a public performance.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, had Beethoven actually been present at the concert, this fact would not have gone unmentioned by Beethoven’s friend August Kanne, who wrote a review of the concert for the *Weiner allgemeine Musikzeitung*.¹⁰⁷ In short, Keiler concludes that “the entire narrative that Beethoven attended Liszt’s final concert in Vienna, and at the end bestowed on the boy the *Weihekuss*, is a fiction of Liszt’s biographers, one that was held on to and encouraged by Liszt himself.”¹⁰⁸ To ascertain the accuracy of the anecdote, Lina Ramann asked Liszt directly whether he had indeed received Beethoven’s kiss. “‘Of course, I received it,’ he replied and raised his head proudly in the recollection of that moment.”¹⁰⁹ What matters here, Gooley points out, is that “Liszt was willing to bend the truth... in order to sustain the mythology of a special connection to the master.”¹¹⁰ We might argue that Liszt had a similar personal investment in his relationship to the Franciscans. He

¹⁰⁴ Horowitz-Barnay’s retelling of the story appeared in Vienna’s *Neue Freie Presse* on 7 July 1898. An English translation can be found in Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, 83–84.

¹⁰⁵ Beethoven’s Conversation Books show that Liszt and his father did go to Beethoven’s house to invite him to the concert, but the composer failed to attend the performance. This must have been a crushing disappointment for the young Liszt. A rejection so intensely felt, Keiler theorizes, is “the usual breeding ground for unconscious transformation and denial.” Thus, in Liszt’s imagination, the rejection came to be denied, and the events surrounding the fateful concert came to be idealized. See Allan Keiler, “Liszt as Romantic Hero: Imposturing and the False Self,” *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 67 (2016): 77.

¹⁰⁶ Saffle, “Lingering Legends: Liszt after Walker,” 103.

¹⁰⁷ Allan Keiler, “Liszt and Beethoven: The Creation of a Personal Myth,” *19th-Century Music* 12, no. 2 (1988): 125.

¹⁰⁸ Keiler, “Liszt and Beethoven,” 124.

¹⁰⁹ Lina Ramann, “Der Knabe Franz Liszt Und Beethoven,” *Neue Zeitschrift Für Musik*, no. 43 (October 28, 1891): 503; Quoted in Allan Keiler, “Liszt Research and Walker’s ‘Liszt,’” *The Musical Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (1984): 393.

¹¹⁰ Gooley, “Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso as Strategist,” 155.

likely did not set out to falsely present himself as a Franciscan Tertiary. However, once press reports about his membership in the Third Order began to circulate, perhaps he simply let them stand.

Liszt's efforts to publicize his ties to the Franciscans—such as requesting to be named a *confrater* and publishing explicitly Franciscan compositions—appear to have succeeded. Indeed, Liszt's Franciscan identity became so much a part of the public's imagination that at least two contemporary works of art depicted the composer as a Franciscan friar. The first example is a bronze medallion from around 1860, which shows a profile view of the composer wearing the cowl of a Franciscan monk (see figure 1.3). While Ernst Burger, who includes it as item 475 in his iconographic study,¹¹¹ was unable to identify the sculptor, Dorothea Redepenning attributes it to Ernst Friedrich August Rietschel (1804-1861) or one of his pupils.¹¹² Rietschel sculpted the famous Goethe and Schiller Memorial¹¹³ unveiled in 1857 in front of the Weimar Court Theater.¹¹⁴ The second is a more interesting example, for it is a *clandestine portrait*—that is, a depiction of a historical or archetypal character bearing the likeness of Liszt. As Pauline Pocknell argues, such clandestine portraits conjured up subliminal associations in contemporary imaginations, enriching the works' message with added layers of meaning.¹¹⁵ Significantly, “their grafting of Liszt's features onto legends, characters, or archetypes reveal their artists' own ideology, as well as their

¹¹¹ Burger, *A Chronicle of His Life in Pictures and Documents*, 238.

¹¹² See Redepenning, “Die Franziskus-Thematik Bei Franz Liszt Und Sein Cantico Del Sol,” 190.

¹¹³ See item 418 in Burger, *A Chronicle of His Life in Pictures and Documents*, 206.

¹¹⁴ Upon comparison with another depiction of Liszt's profile by the same artist, the similarities in style become evident. See item 400 in Burger, 197.

¹¹⁵ Pauline Pocknell, “Clandestine Portraits: Liszt in the Art of His Age,” in *New Light on Liszt and His Music: Essays in Honor of Alan Walker's 65th Birthday*, ed. Michael Saffle and James Deaville, Franz Liszt Studies (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1997), 124.

conceptions of the composer's moral make-up.”¹¹⁶ Pocknell identifies the portrait in question as an untitled allegorical altarpiece by the Hungarian-born Nazarene painter Ferenc Szoldatits (1820-1916), likely dating from the early 1860s. Its whereabouts today are unknown, but a description by its last owner¹¹⁷ survives:

In the middle of the painting the Holy Virgin sat enthroned, holding in her lap the Christ child, whose hand was raised in blessing. On the left a holy man, kneeling at her feet, clothed in brown friar's vestments; on the right, with her lightly billowing blond hair held by a princely crown, stood a young woman wearing a white robe beneath a purple mantle. Her beautiful blue eyes gazed solicitously at the group before her.

The artist himself confirms that the man and woman in the painting are Liszt and Princess Wittgenstein depicted respectively as St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare (c. 1193-1253), founder of the Second Franciscan Order:

The one wearing the crown is Princess Wittgenstein, the man in the monastic garb of Saint Francis is Liszt. Saint Clare [Sayn-Wittgenstein, depicted as blonde, although she was brunette] protects him like his patron saint. Her left hand stretches towards the Virgin's throne, she looks pleadingly at the infant Jesus who smiles and extends his hand in blessing towards the Master.¹¹⁸

Szoldatits reportedly confirmed that Liszt and the Princess not only commissioned the altarpiece but also sat for it. Perhaps displeased with how the artist depicted them, however, the couple refused to take possession of the work, so it remained unfinished.¹¹⁹ It is unclear whether Liszt instructed Szoldatits to depict him as a Franciscan friar or if the artist took the initiative on his

¹¹⁶ Pocknell, 124.

¹¹⁷ The painting's last owner was Polyxena Hampel-Pulszky (1857 – 1921), Liszt's former hostess, friend, and whist partner in Budapest, whose father Ferenc Pulszky (1814 – 1897) was head of the National Museum.

¹¹⁸ Szoldatits's words quoted in Pocknell, "Clandestine Portraits," 138.

¹¹⁹ Pocknell, 138.

own. Both possibilities are rich with interesting implications. If Szoldatits was moved to depict Liszt as none other than St. Francis himself, then this confirms that Liszt's Franciscan identity was known to the artist and that he considered it important enough to make it a central element of his depiction. On the other hand, if Liszt gave the artist directions on how he wanted to be depicted, then this is evidence that Liszt indeed viewed himself as a Franciscan Tertiary, going so far as to commission graphic documentation of this fact.

But Liszt's Franciscanism was about more than appearances. In many ways, his spirituality informed the way he lived the latter part of his life. As Alan Walker explains:

[Liszt] had always lent his name and his fame to charitable causes, often in a fanfare of publicity, but in his old age he began to do much good by stealth. Janka Wohl, a Hungarian student, never forgot how she came upon him unexpectedly in his Budapest apartment one afternoon, putting a pile of banknotes into envelopes. It transpired that for years he had made a habit of answering personally the scores of begging letters which with he was beleaguered.¹²⁰

Another similar account comes down to us from Carl Lachmund, Liszt's pupil during the 1880s. One evening, Lachmund witnessed Liszt giving an envelope to a young Polish girl who had shown up at the composer's residence. Lachmund later discovered that this was a routine visit, and that the girl's mother was suffering from tuberculosis and struggling to make ends meet. Liszt had meanwhile been supporting them.¹²¹ Liszt's charitable nature was a crucial part of his Christian identity. Conceivably, his Franciscan devotion was also a motivating factor in his concern for others.

¹²⁰ Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years*, 8.

¹²¹ Carl Lachmund, *Living with Liszt: From the Diary of Carl Lachmund, an American Pupil of Liszt, 1882-1884*, ed. Alan Walker (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1995), 227.



**Figure 1.3: Liszt as a Franciscan monk, c. 1860.
Bronze medallion by Ernst Friedrich August Rietschel**

Even Liszt's dietary habits during his Roman period reflect a certain Franciscan austerity.

A letter by his pupil Nadine Helbig paints a fascinating picture:

[Liszt] observed rigorous periods of fast. For the rest, he ate in a simple and moderate way. ...The breakfasts I had the privilege to share with him were spartan, or rather Franciscan. He taught me to eat raw fennel and red turnips, his favorite food. During those frugal meals, he liked to talk about his beloved St. Francis of Assisi, the *poverello di Cristo*, and taught me the true, ideal Franciscanism by reading, or telling me some of the delightful *Fioretti di San Francesco d'Assisi*.¹²²

St. Francis considered poverty indispensable to fulfilling his devotion. According to Franciscan ideology, to accept money is to cast doubt on the sufficiency of the Kingdom of Heaven.¹²³ While Liszt did work to earn money and even complained when his publishers did not pay him, he was never overly concerned with amassing wealth or material things. Indeed, instances of Liszt's repudiation of money are numerous. He famously never charged for piano lessons, despite the fact that many would have paid large sums to study with the foremost pianist of the day. When he was named president of the Budapest Royal Academy of Music, which today bears his name, he refused to take a salary.¹²⁴ Similarly, after officially retiring from the concert stage in 1848, he never again played to earn a fee, but only to support charity causes.¹²⁵ And in his old age,

¹²² "Er beobachtete das Fasten sehr streng, auch war er sonst mäßig und einfach im Essen ... Desto spartanischer oder vielmehr franziskanischer waren die Frühstücke, die ich das Glück hatte, mit ihm zu teilen. Er lehrte mich rohe Finocchi essen wie auch rote Rüben, sein eigentliches Lieblingsgericht. Bei diesen frugalen Mahlzeiten sprach er gem von seinem geliebten heiligen Frank von Assisi, dem *poverello di Cristo*, und weihte mich ein in das wahre, ideale Franziskanertum, indem er mir entzückenden *Fioretti di San Francesco d'Assisi* vorlas oder erzählte." Nadine Helbig, "Franz Liszt in Rom. Aufzeichnungen," *Deutsche Revue* 33, no. 1 (January 1907): 74.

¹²³ Donald P. St. John, "The Symbolic Spirituality of St. Francis," *Franciscan Studies* 39 (1979): 198–99.

¹²⁴ Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years*, 292.

¹²⁵ Walker, 9.

the composer turned down the sum of two million marks, which an American impresario had offered him to tour the United States.¹²⁶

Liszt's Franciscan-like austerity intensified in his old age. Whenever his friend Dr. Carl Gille came to stay with him at his Weimar home, Liszt insisted on giving up his bedroom and sleeping on a hard couch in the adjoining room. Similarly, while staying at hotels, he always requested a modest room for himself and a more comfortable one for his valet, Spiridon Knezevic (all at his expense).¹²⁷ One of the best accounts of the simplicity of Liszt's lifestyle in his later years comes from August Stradal, who studied with the composer from 1884 to 1886:

Particularly striking is the extreme modesty of his personal needs. He is content with everything: his various domiciles are quite unassuming, in no way luxuriously appointed; one sees in his room only the bare essentials. He always travels by second class, never orders a cab for himself, and chooses very simple hotel rooms. ... He does not even own a fur coat for traveling in winter, and even when the weather is very cold, he goes around in his ordinary coat. His diet is almost spartan. In Weimar and Pest (in Rome he always dined with Princess Wittgenstein) he was content to eat canned meat; he drinks only a light Château Paluggyai wine, and never smokes any other cigar than a cheap Virginia. If anyone presents him with a box of fine cigars, he gives them away to his guests and pupils. He owns no jewelry, or if he has any he never wears it.¹²⁸

That St. Francis played into Liszt's spirituality comes through even in the language of his "last will and testament," which he drafted in 1860. As Pesce has pointed out, the opening lines are clearly intended to evoke St. Francis: "I am writing on 14 September, when the Church celebrates the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The name of the feast also reveals the fervent and

¹²⁶ Liszt's exact response was: "What, at the age of seventy-four, am I expected to do with two million marks? Am I supposed to play 'Erlkönig' three hundred times in America?" Walker, 9–10.

¹²⁷ Margit Prahács, ed., *Franz Liszt: Briefe Aus Ungarischen Sammlungen, 1835-86* (Budapest: Kassel, 1966), 219.

¹²⁸ August Stradal, *Erinnerungen an Franz Liszt* (Leipzig: Paul Haupt, 1929), 168–69. Cited in Burger, *A Chronicle of His Life in Pictures and Documents*, 292.

mysterious sentiment which has pierced my entire life like a holy stigmata. Yes, ‘Jesus Christ crucified,’ ‘the madness and the exaltation of the Cross,’ that is my true vocation.” Although Liszt does not mention Francis’s name, the reference is clear. The poor man of Assisi, it will be recalled, was deemed a “madman” for relinquishing his wealth and belongings, and in 1224 received the stigmata on the Feast of the Exultation of the Holy Cross.¹²⁹ Written during the period when the composer’s Franciscan devotion intensified, this document bears witness to the saint transcending his role as Liszt’s spiritual patron and emerging as a figure of personal identification for the composer.

Conclusion

Liszt’s relationship to St. Francis of Assisi was an integral part of the composer’s identity. His devotion to the saint, cultivated from an early age, served as a constant source of spiritual guidance that only grew stronger over time. Texts by St. Francis and anecdotes from the saint’s life provided the artistic incentive for a number of important works, which will be examined in the pages to follow. It mattered to Liszt that the public know about his Franciscan connection. To this end, he requested to be named a Franciscan *confrater* and composed Franciscan-themed works, including the first modern setting of St. Francis’s famous *Canticle of the Sun*. Although there is no verifiable evidence that Liszt ever joined the Third Order, the title may well have been conferred on him in private, without a written pronouncement. A provision in the Rule of 1289, which was still in effect in Liszt’s day, would have allowed such an exception to be made for someone of Liszt’s stature. This possibility does not preclude another: that Liszt’s fashioned himself as a

¹²⁹ Pesce, *Liszt’s Final Decade*, 114. Liszt’s entire Last Will and Testament is reproduced in Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years*, 557–63.

Franciscan Tertiary, indicating his affiliation to the Order in his private correspondence. Whatever the case, Liszt certainly wanted to be viewed as a Franciscan. The critical consideration of the issues raised in this chapter enriches our knowledge of the composer's complex identity and provides the basis for understanding how Liszt's Franciscan fervor may have informed the way he crafted his public and private personae.

Chapter 2: Liszt and St. Francis's *Canticle of Brother Sun*

In the early 1860s, once settled in Rome, Liszt began work on the first of his Franciscan compositions—a musical setting of St. Francis's famous *Canticle of Brother Sun*. At roughly 15 minutes in length, *Cantico del Sol* is Liszt's longest work for a solo male voice and one to which the composer clearly attached special significance.¹ As he expressed in an 1881 letter to Princess Carolyne, Liszt wished to contribute to the glorification of St. Francis of Assisi, offering a musical counterpart to the many masterpieces of visual art that paid tribute to the saint:

Painting has given the world several masterpieces depicting St. Francis of Assisi, 'il gran matto di Dio.' The illustrious Gladstone invited me, when I am next in London, to see the one he owns – by Murillo or some other famous Spanish painter. In Antwerp last May I saw once again the superb painting of St. Francis by Rubens. Why should music not add its note to the glorification of the Saint whom the Church has canonized, and Dante exalted? I have tried to fill this gap—without flattering myself that I have succeeded as I should wish!²

Liszt's mention of his "filling a gap" further suggests that he viewed his *Cantico* as the first musical homage ever offered to St. Francis. As this chapter will demonstrate, Liszt's setting of the *Canticle* reflects his interpretation of the text, revealing which lines bore greatest significance for the composer. The work unfolds as a joyful praise to God, bringing to life vivid imagery of the elements of creation. Crucially, the setting omits the poem's final verse, which reminds humankind

¹ Dolores Pesce, "Liszt's Sacred Choral Music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*, ed. Kenneth Hamilton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 234.

² "La peinture a produit plusieurs chefs-d'œuvre de St. François d'Assise, 'il gran matto di Dio.' L'illustre Gladstone m'invité à voir à Londres celui qu'il possède de Murillo, ou quelque autre fameux peintre espagnole. A Anvers, j'ai revue n Mai dernier le superbe tableau du St. François de Rubens. Pourquoi la musique n'ajouterait-elle pas sa note à la glorification du Saint que l'Église a canonisé, et Dante exalté? J'ai essayé de combler ce vide – sans me flatter d'y réussir comme je le souhaiterais!" La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, vol. 7 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1900), 330–31; English translation from *Franz Liszt: Selected Letters*, ed. Adrian Williams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 870.

of the inevitability of death and judgement. Through a grand final climax, Liszt instead foregrounds the poem's penultimate verse and its message about the promise of life everlasting. It is these lines that resonated most deeply with the composer, as their musical treatment bears out.

The Genesis of St. Francis's *Canticle*

St. Francis's *Canticle of the Brother Sun* is generally considered the first major poem in the Italian language and is only one of three texts by the saint written in the vernacular, specifically the Umbrian dialect.³ An authoritative translation of the original Umbrian follows, with the subject of each verse given in boldface (emphasis mine).

Canticle of Brother Sun

1. Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and all blessing.
To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no human is worthy to mention Your name.
2. Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures, 5
especially **Sir Brother Sun**,
Who is the day and through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor;
and bears a likeness of You, Most High.
3. Praised be You, my Lord, through **Sister Moon** and the stars, 10
in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.
4. Praised be You, my Lord, through **Brother Wind**,
and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,
through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.
5. Praised be You, my Lord, through **Sister Water**, 15
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

³ For St. Francis's unaltered text in the Umbrian dialect see Carlo Paolazzi, ed., *Francisci Assisiensis Scripta*, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, t. 36 (Grottaferrata, Roma: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventura ad Claras Aquas, 2009), 121–23. The text is reproduced in Appendix A.

6. Praised be You, my Lord, through **Brother Fire**,
through whom You light the night,
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.
7. Praised be You, my Lord, through our **Sister Mother Earth**, 20
who sustains and governs us,
and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.
8. Praised be You, my Lord, through **those who give pardon for Your love**,
and bear infirmity and tribulation. 25
Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.
9. Praised be You, my Lord, through our **Sister Bodily Death**,
from whom no one living can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, 30
for the second death shall do them no harm.
10. Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks
and serve Him with great humility.⁴

As Liszt himself acknowledges in an 1862 letter, his setting of the *Canticle* was influenced by Antoine Ozanam's book *Les poètes Franciscaines en Italie au treizième siècle*.⁵ Indeed, when Liszt published the piece in 1884, he used a lengthy passage from Ozanam's book detailing the genesis of the poem as part of the preface to the composition (see Appendix B). These historical facts pertaining to the origins of the *Canticle* bear recounting, together with their romanticized retelling in Ozanam's text.

⁴ Translation from Regis J. Armstrong, Wayne J. A. Hellmann, and William J. Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1 (New York, London, Manila: New City Press, 1999), 113–14.

⁵ Antoine Frédéric Ozanam, *Les poètes Franciscaines en Italie au treizième siècle* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1852). The letter in question is quoted on pages 56 – 57 of the present chapter.

St. Francis of Assisi composed his *Canticle of Brother Sun* in 1225, a year before his death. By this point, the saint was in very poor health, nearly blind, and enduring the pain of the stigmata—wounds resembling those of the crucified Christ. His excessively austere way of life, as well as his refusal to have his illnesses treated made his situation truly dire. Yet, it is in this state of extreme discomfort that St. Francis received the inspiration to compose his *Canticle* as a means to praise God the Creator for his generous love. Those who were with him at the time recount that one night, “as he was reflecting on all the troubles he was enduring,” he received assurance of his salvation.⁶ The next morning, he said to his followers:

I must rejoice greatly in my illnesses and troubles and be consoled in the Lord, giving thanks always to God the Father, to his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit for such a great grace and Blessing. In His mercy He has given me, His unworthy little servant still living in the flesh, the promise of His kingdom.

Therefore, for His praise, for our consolation and for the edification of our neighbor, I want to write a new *Praise of the Lord* for His creatures, which we use every day, and without which we cannot live. Through them the human race greatly offends the Creator, and every day we are ungrateful for such great graces because we do not praise, as we should, our Creator and the Giver of all good.

Sitting down, he began to meditate and then said: “Most High, all powerful good Lord...”⁷

He then proceeded to dictate the first version of *The Canticle*, which consisted only of verses 1 through 7. Verse 10, scholars tend to agree, was probably written shortly thereafter to be sung as a refrain after each verse.⁸ It bears stressing that St. Francis

⁶ Brian Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His “Canticle of Brother Sun” Reassessed* (Springer, 2013), 36.

⁷ Regis J. Armstrong, Wayne J. A. Hellmann, and William J. Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 2 (New York, London, Manila: New City Press, 1999), 185–86.

⁸ See Armstrong, Hellmann, and Short, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 1999, 1:113; Jay M. Hammond, “The Canticle of Creatures,” in *The Writings of Francis of Assisi: Letters and Prayers*, ed. Michael W. Blastic, Jay M.

composed the *Canticle* immediately after being promised the kingdom. In other words, upon learning of his salvation, Francis's spontaneous response is to praise the benevolent creator for His goodness, manifest through creation. In Ozanam's retelling of these events (see Appendix B), St. Francis is described as having "an ecstasy" and "improvising" the *Canticle*—an image that surely appealed to Liszt, a life-long improviser who subscribed to the Romantic notion of the "divinely inspired artist."⁹

About a year later, while convalescing at the palace of the bishop of Assisi, St. Francis learned of a major dispute between the bishop and the *podestà*—the chief magistrate of the city. The exact cause of the disagreement is unclear, but the situation was serious enough that the bishop excommunicated the *podestà*, who in turn banned all trading with the bishop. Distressed by the situation, St. Francis proceeded to add an additional verse to his *Canticle* (verse 8), which read:

*Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.*

He then convened a meeting between the bishop and the *podestà* and asked two brothers to be present and sing the new version of *The Canticle* to them. According to the surviving documents, St. Francis said: "I trust in the Lord that he will humble their hearts and they will make peace with each other and return to their earlier friendship and love."¹⁰ Since both the bishop and the *podestà* held Francis in high regard, it is likely that they listened

Hammond, and Wayne J. A. Hellmann, vol. 1, *Studies in Early Franciscan Sources* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2011), 231.

⁹ Imre Kovács, "On the XIXth-Century Reception History of Saint Francis: Liszt's Cantico Del Sol Di San Francesco d'Assisi," in *Franz Liszt: Un musicien dans la société*, ed. Cornelia Szabó-Knotik, Laurence Le Diagon-Jacquin, and Michael Saffle (Paris: Hermann, 2013), 128.

¹⁰ Armstrong, Hellmann, and Short, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 1999, 2:187.

to his plea for peace and came to a reconciliation.¹¹ In Ozanam's romanticized account, at the chanting of the *Canticle*, "to which God seemed to lend a secret virtue, the adversaries embraced each other in their penitence, and asked pardon" (see Appendix B).

Sometime later, when it became evident to St. Francis that he was dying, he asked the doctor for his prognosis, adding: "I am not a coward who fears death. With the Lord's help, by His mercy and grace, I am so united and joined with my Lord that I am equally as happy to die as I am to live."¹² The doctor told St. Francis he expected him to die at the end of September or precisely on October 3rd, and so the saint stretched out his arms and exclaimed: "Welcome, my Sister Death!" This was the moment, only days before his demise, when Francis added the final full verse (verse 9) to *The Canticle of Brother Sun*. An unnamed brother who witnessed the saint's final days offers the following account:

Although racked with sickness, blessed Francis praised God with great fervor of spirit and joy of body and soul, and told him [an unnamed brother]: "If I am to die soon, call Brother Angelo and Brother Leo that they may sing to me about Sister Death." Those brothers came to him and, with many tears, sang the "Canticle of Brother Sun" and the other creatures of the Lord, which the saint himself had composed for the praise of the Lord and the consolation of his own soul and that of others. Before the last stanza [the 2-line verse 10] he added one about Sister Death [verse 9]:

*Praised be You, my Lord, through our **Sister Bodily Death**,
from whom no one living can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.*¹³

¹¹ Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His "Canticle of Brother Sun" Reassessed*, 38.

¹² Armstrong, Hellmann, and Short, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 1999, 2:203–4.

¹³ Armstrong, Hellmann, and Short, 2:121.

The *Canticle*'s Meaning

As Jay M. Hammond points out, St. Francis's *Canticle of Brother Sun* describes God's creation in the most inclusive possible terms, omitting nothing. The heavenly orbs described in verses 2 and 3—the sun, moon, and stars—represent everything that was known to exist in the firmament. Because the rhythm of these celestial bodies determines day and night and all seasons, they “create” time itself.¹⁴ Similarly, the four terrestrial elements evoked in verses 4 through 7—earth, wind, water and fire—constitute everything that exists on earth, and their harmony “creates” all physical space. In Hammond's words, “Francis' vision of the new creation involves all time and all space which ultimately point to God as their eternal and infinite Creator. This imagery conveys Francis's new understanding of God and creation as inextricably intertwined in a grand interconnected reality on every level of existence.”¹⁵ Significantly, the *four* elements of earth plus the *three* orbs of the heavens add up to *seven*, “the number of perfection,” associated with the days of creation in Genesis.¹⁶

Proper understanding of the *Canticle*'s meaning hinges on the interpretation of the preposition “*per*,” used in combination with the passive subjunctive “*Laudato sia*” (*Praised be You*).¹⁷ This unique construction occurs eight times in the poem. In the Umbrian dialect, the preposition *per* can mean “for,” “by,” or “through”—which introduces the dilemma: is God being praised for, by, or through His creation? As Edward Armstrong puts it:

¹⁴ Hammond, “The Canticle of Creatures,” 232.

¹⁵ Hammond, 232.

¹⁶ Hammond, 232.

¹⁷ See Susanna Peters Coy, “The Problem of ‘Per’ in the Cantico di frate Sole of Saint Francis,” *MLN* 91, no. 1 (1976): 1–11.

Unfortunately, there is ambiguity in the wording of the Canticum so that it is not entirely clear whether its theme is thanksgiving for all the wonderful works of Creation or whether these works are called upon to praise the creator.¹⁸

A common interpretation views *per* as causal, meaning “for.”¹⁹ In this reading, God is being praised for the elements of His creation and the benefits that these afford humankind.²⁰ Interpreting *per* as “by,” on the other hand, suggests that it is the creatures themselves that give praise to God.²¹ This study adopts the translation used by the editors and translators of *Francis of Assisi: The Early Documents* in their authoritative writings.²² They interpret *per* as “through,” which suggests that the creatures praise God simply by being and doing what He intended them to do. In Hammond’s words, “all creation exists as symbols of the Creator, and their very existence *is* God’s praise.”²³ Adding another layer of nuance, Giovanni Pozzi argues that the construction “*Laudato sia*” combined with “*per*” creates a “theological passive” so that “the one giving praise is the very God who is being praised.”²⁴ Since the first verse states “that no man is worthy of speaking [God’s] name,” then God is the agent of the praise through, in, by, and with creation. Hammond concurs, adding:

¹⁸ Edward Allworthy Armstrong, *Saint Francis: Nature Mystic: The Derivation and Significance of the Nature Stories in the Franciscan Legend* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1973), 229.

¹⁹ Both Susanna Peters Coy and Jay M. Hammond refer to this interpretation, of *per* as “for,” as the *traditional* interpretation. See Coy, “The Problem of ‘Per’ in the Cantico Di Frate Sole of Saint Francis,” 1; Jay M. Hammond, “The Canticum of Creatures,” in *The Writings of Francis of Assisi: Letters and Prayers*, ed. Michael W. Blastic, Jay M. Hammond, and Wayne J. A. Hellmann, vol. 1, *Studies in Early Franciscan Sources* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2011), 234, n112.

²⁰ Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His “Canticum of Brother Sun” Reassessed*, 46.

²¹ Moloney, 48.

²² Armstrong, Hellmann, and Short, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 1999, 2:113–14.

²³ Hammond, “The Canticum of Creatures,” 234, n113.

²⁴ Giovanni Pozzi, “Canticum of Brother Sun: From Grammar to Prayer,” *Greyfriars Review* 4, no. 1 (1992): 12–14.

In the deepest sense only God's self-communication can give authentic praise to the ineffable mystery of the divine reality freely extended to creation by God's creative act. God's self-expressive praise of God through creatures exemplifies the central and climactic insight of Francis's mysticism. Such an insight glimpses the ineffable beauty of God's self-communicative presence transforming everything in the new creation into participatory praise of God.²⁵

The *Canticle's* Form & Structure

As discussed previously, the composition of St. Francis's *Canticle* took place in three stages (first verses 1–7 plus 10, then verse 8, and finally verse 9) which, some scholars argue, make it impossible for the poem to preserve or demonstrate structural and thematic unity. Indeed, although the *Canticle* is cast in strophic form, with shared opening words for each verse, its lines are of varying length, and there is no regular rhyme scheme. These traits, therefore, would seem to feed into the spontaneity narrative presented in early biographies—the idea that Francis conceived of the poem in his head and was able to effortlessly dictate it in its finished state. However, closer examination reveals various organizing principles at work, which create both structural and thematic unity and suggest that considerable previous thought likely went into the *Canticle's* preparation, or possibly its subsequent polishing/revision.²⁶

Susanna Peters Coy has suggested viewing the poem as divided into three sections of 11 lines each.²⁷ The first section (verses 1–3) comprises the lines dealing with God and the firmament

²⁵ Hammond, "The Canticle of Creatures," 235.

²⁶ Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His "Canticle of Brother Sun" Reassessed*, 59.

²⁷ Susanna Peters Coy, "Poetic Unity in 'Cantico de Frate Sole' of St. Francis," *Italian Quarterly* 19 (1976): 23–43.

(sun, moon, stars); the second section (verses 4–7) comprises the lines dealing with the elements and/or things of the Earth (wind, water, fire, earth itself); and the third section (version 8–10) those dealing with humanity and/or the human condition (forgiveness, acceptance of death, belief in the reward of the afterlife). This interpretation imputes both structural and thematic unity despite the poem’s composition in three stages. However, Coy offers no convincing explanation for how this neat division into sections of 11 lines each could have arisen, given the chronology of the poem’s composition. An alternative three-part-structure interpretation proposed by Moloney views lines 1–4 as an opening, and the final two lines as a conclusion, both of which frame a longer central section that moves from the firmament, to earth and the elements, and finally to death and judgement.²⁸ Indeed, lines 1–4 (verse 1) and 32–33 (verse 10) can be seen as structurally separate from the rest of the poem because they deviate from the “*Laudato-sia*”-formula with which every other verse begins (verse 1 avoids the formula altogether, while verse 10 switches to the imperative mood). This lends a logical basis to Moloney’s reading, but again, all such interpretations are difficult to reconcile with the fact that St. Francis wrote the poem in separate stages, separated in time. Indeed, some might argue that these structural features that seem to hold the *Canticle* together are evidence that the poem could only have been composed in one session, and not three. Although it is impossible to say definitively that Francis did indeed compose the entire *Canticle* in a single attempt, we can at the very least recognize the poem as having a perceptible level of structural integrity. With an understanding of the *Canticle*’s genesis and its structural complexities, we can now examine the musical setting by Liszt and attempt to decipher how he understood the poem and chose to represent it in music.

²⁸ Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His “Canticle of Brother Sun” Reassessed*, 60.

Liszt and his *Cantico di San Francesco*

As Paul Merrick points out, Liszt's correspondence with Princess Marie von Sayn-Wittgenstein reveals that St. Francis's *Canticle of the Sun* had been on the composer's mind since at least 1853.²⁹

On July 19 of that year, he wrote to the Princess:

At Mayence I bought two charming little volumes which are a part of the Railroad Library... *Joan of Arc*, by Michelet, and *Saint Francis and the Franciscans* by F. Morin.³⁰ The latter volume delights me. The dream, the parables, the prayers, the teachings of the Saint all strike me as tender and impressive. Although you already know his famous Canticle, I wish to write it to you just as I found it in my little book ... [here Liszt quotes verses 1–3 and 5–7 of the *Canticle*, taken from Morin's book]

The Franciscan's Chronicle says that St Francis "rejoiced heartily when he saw his Canticle sung with grace and fervor; after hearing it, his spirit ascended wondrously up to God" – At the moment when the fight was the liveliest, he added the following strophe [verse 8]:

*Praise be to you, my Lord, [for] those who forgive for
love of you, bearing illness and tribulation!
Blessed are those who bear them in peace,
For by you, most high, will they be crowned!*

At the moment of leaving for France, he made an admirable short speech to his brethren, of which I will only quote these lines to you: "No matter where we may be, we always have our cell with us. This cell is our brother the body; and the soul is the hermit, who dwells therein to think upon God and to pray to Him; thus if the soul of him who is religious rests not at peace within the cell of the body, the outward cell serves him little" – and further: "Our mission is to cure the injured, and to console the afflicted; to lead back those who have strayed; and, mark you, many are those who appear to be in the ranks

²⁹ Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 243.

³⁰ The Railroad Library (*La Bibliothèque des chemins de cher*) is a collection of about 500 volumes published in 1853 by the Parisian firm L. Hachette et Cie. Intended specifically for travelers, these books would have been sold at major railroad stations in 19th century France. They consisted of traveler's guides, as well as volumes on miscellaneous subjects like history and foreign literature.

of the Demon, who one day will be among the followers of Jesus Christ!”³¹

Although Morin’s book reproduces an incomplete version of the *Canticum* without verses 4, 9 and 10,³² Liszt of course did have access to the full poem through Ozanam’s aforementioned book, from which he quotes in the preface to his *Canticum del Sol*.³³

By 1862, Liszt expressed to Grand Duke Carl Alexander his intention to compose a musical work based on St. Francis’s poem. Without giving specific reasons, he also shared with his former employer his plan to omit the 9th verse, addressed to “Sister Death:”

Have you retained a memory, Monseigneur, of the *Canticum di San Francesco*? I have taken it into my head to set it to music, after rereading Ozanam’s work on the Franciscan poets in 13th-century Italy—a book of excellent and delightful judgement in which I have found some interesting details relating to this *Canticum*. Probably Herr Hase, with his so justly appreciated talent, will have recorded them in his life of St. Francis. ... It is with [the 8th] verse that I am ending my setting of the *Canticum di San Francesco*. I am therefore omitting the verses and commentaries subsequently added to it and shall recall only that on 4 October 1226 St. Francis breathed his last,

³¹ "J'ai acheté à Mayence deux charmant petits volumes faisant partie de la Bibliothèque des chemins de fer (publiés à Paris) – *Jeanne d'Arc* de Michelet, et *St François d'Assise et les Franciscains* par F. Morin. Ce dernier volume m'enchant. Les songes, les paraboles, les prières, les instructions, les tribulations du saint me pénètrent d'onction et d'attendrissement. Quoique vous connaissiez déjà son fameux Cantique je veux vous l'écrire tel que je l'ai trouvé dans mon petit livre. ... St François dit la *Chronique des mineurs* 's'esjouissoit fort quand il voyait chanter ce Cantique avec grâce et ferveur; car l'oyant il enlevait merveilleusement son esprit en Dieu'—Au moment où la querelle était la plus vive, il ajouta la strophe suivante: '*Soyez béni, mon Dieu, pour ceux qui pardonnent au nom de votre amour et qui supportent les misères et les tribulations! Bien heureux ceux qui savent vivre en paix! le ciel les couronnera!*' Au moment de partir pour la France il adressa à ses frères une admirable allocution dont je vous citerai seulement ces lignes : 'En quelque lieu que nous soyons nous avons toujours avec nous notre cellule. Cette cellule c'est notre frère le corps, et l'âme est l'ermite qui y demeure pour contempler Dieu et le prier; que si l'âme d'un religieux ne demeure pas en paix dans la cellule du corps, les cellules extérieures lui serviront de eu'—et plus loin: 'Notre mission est de guérir les blessés, de consoler les affligés; de reconduire ceux qui s'égarent, et, sachez-le, plusieurs paraissent être les membres du Démon qui servent toujours les membres de J. Christ!'" [Liszt to Marie zu Sayn-Wittgenstein, 19 July 1853]. Franz Liszt, *Lettres de Franz Liszt à La Princesse Marie de Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Née de Sayn-Wittgenstein*, ed. Pauline Pocknell, Malou Haine, and Nicolas Dufetel, MusicologieS (Paris: Vrin, 2010), 94.

³² See Frédéric Morin, *Saint François d'Assise et les Franciscains (1182-1226)* (Paris: L. Hachette, 1853), 38–39.

³³ Antoine Frédéric Ozanam, *Les poètes Franciscaines en Italie au treizième siècle* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1852), 66–67.

after having his *Cantico del Sol* sung to him once more. Could one not say that it was the ‘mehr Licht!’ that in his last moments was asked for by Goethe?³⁴

The chapter returns, in the pages to follow, to the potential reasons Liszt might have omitted the Death stanza. Meanwhile, Liszt’s reference to Goethe’s famous last words—“*more light!*”—is noteworthy. Some nineteenth-century writers have interpreted this final utterance as signifying that the great thinker was devoted to the pursuit of knowledge (enlightenment) until his dying breath. As Goethe’s English biographer, George Henry Lewes, put it in 1864, “and he whose eternal longings had been for more Light, gave a parting cry for it, as he was passing under the shadow of death.”³⁵ However, the words also lend themselves to a Christian interpretation that perhaps Liszt favored. Goethe’s words could be viewed as a plea for the *divine* Light to comfort him when facing death. Liszt evidently believed that St. Francis, in much the same way, asked for the *Canticle* to be sung to him in his final hours to lift him from his suffering to thoughts of his salvation.

³⁴ "Avez-vous gardé souvenir, Monseigneur, du *Cantique de Saint François*? Je me suis aussi avisé de le composer, et à cette occasion, en réalisant l’ouvrage d’Ozanam sur les poètes franciscaines en Italie, au 13^{me} siècle—livre d’un sens excellent et délectable—j’y ai trouvé quelques détails intéressants relatifs à ce Cantique. Probablement M. Hase les aura consignés, avec son talent si justement apprécié, dans son histoire de Saint François. ... C’est avec ce verset, que se termine ma composition du *Cantique de Saint François*. J’ometts donc les versets et commentaires qui s’y sont subséquemment ajoutés et rappellerai seulement que le 4 Octobre 1226, Saint François rendit le dernier soupir, après s’être fait chanter encore une fois son Cantique du Soleil. Ne pourrait-on dire que c’était le ‘mehr Licht!’ qu’a sa dernière heure invoquait Goethe?" [Liszt to Grand Duke Carl Alexander, 1 November 1862] Franz Liszt and La Mara, *Briefwechsel Zwischen Franz Liszt Und Carl Alexander, Grossherzog von Sachsen* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1909), 116–18; English translation from Franz Liszt, *Franz Liszt: Selected Letters*, ed. Adrian Williams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 590–91.

The works referenced in the letter are Antoine Frédéric Ozanam, *Les poètes Franciscaines en Italie au treizième siècle* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1852), and Karl Hase, *Franz von Assisi: Ein Heiligenbild* (Leipzig, 1856).

In this letter to the Duke, Liszt quotes a lengthy portion of Ozanam’s book detailing the *Canticle*’s genesis, which he eventually used as the preface for his musical setting of the poem.

³⁵ George Henry Lewes, *The Life of Goethe*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1864), 330.

Liszt's *Cantico di San Francesco* went through multiple versions for increasingly larger forces, perhaps suggesting the composer's interest in giving the piece serious public exposure. He finished the first version of the work in the spring of 1862. The work is scored for solo baritone, *ad lib* men's chorus, and piano and/or organ. After its premiere in Rome shortly after it was composed, Liszt states in an 1877 letter to Princess Carolyne that the work remained unperformed and apparently abandoned until that year:

In a fortnight, there will be a concert at the Jena church. I will ask my godson Franz v. Milde, a very agreeable baritone from a good school, to sing my *Cantico di S. Francesco*, written in Rome in 62, Via Felice. Mr. Capponi sang it very well once at Palazzo Altieri, at one of the concerts for the revival of classical music conducted by Giuseppe Mililotti. Since then, this *Cantico* has remained on my desk amidst all my papers. In Jena it will find a sympathetic listener – the Church Council [member] Hase, author of the beautiful study on St. Francis. Count d'Arnim lent it to me, and I reread it in Assisi, as well as Ozanam's volume on the Franciscan poets.³⁶

Liszt revisited his *Cantico* in the summer of 1881 and the work seems to have occupied him for the remainder of that year. After a series of revisions, a letter from August 1881 to Princess Carolyne shows that he set his mind on finally having the work published:

My devotion to St Francis of Assisi, God's great madman, and to St. Dismas, the penitent thief, remain most sincere! I shall shortly be publishing my *Cantico del Sol di San Francesco*. To simplify them, and adorn them religiously, I have just done some more work on 'Messer il frate sol, suor luna, suor acqua, frate vento et frate fuoco.' How happy the world would be if we were living in it as in a

³⁶ "Dans une quinzaine de jours, il y aura un concert a l'église d'Iéna. Je prierai mon filleul Franz v. Milde, très agréable baryton de bonne école, d'y chanter mon *Cantico di S. Francesco*, écrit à Rome en 62, Via Felice. Alors, Mr. Capponi l'a très bien chanté une fois au Palazzo Altieri, à un des concerts pour la renaissance de la musique classique, dirigés par Giuseppe Mililotti. Depuis, ce *Cantico* est resté dans mes paperasses. Il trouvera à Iéna un auditeur sympathique – le *Kirchenrath* Hase, auteur de la belle étude sur St. François. Le Cte. d'Arnim me l'ayant prêtée, je l'ai relue à Assise, ainsi que le volume d'Ozanam sur les poètes Franciscains." [Liszt to Princess Carolyne, 15 June 1877] La Mara, *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, 7:194–95. Translation mine.

monastery, in loving communion with St Francis – under the sweet and gentle yoke of Our Lord Jesus Christ!³⁷

In September of 1881, Liszt confided in the Princess again and excitedly referred to his *Cantico* as one of his finest compositions—a rare documented instance of the composer bestowing such high praise on one of his own works:³⁸

This last fortnight I have been working enthusiastically at my *Cantico di S. Francesco*. Such as it now finally is, improved, expanded, ornamented, harmonized, and finished in full score, I consider it one of my best works. I shall have it performed again at some *Musikfest* next year—despite the antipathy of the critics, and of the public influenced by them, to religious works outside the conventional forms. I am going to write the arrangement for piano and organ of the new definitive version of the *Cantico di San Francesco*.³⁹

That the *Cantico* occupied a special place in Liszt's heart is also borne out by how fastidious he was regarding the image of St. Francis that was to appear on the title page of the published score. As we gather from the composer's correspondence, Princess Carolyne initially suggested a statue by Giovanni Dupré (1817 – 1882), which shows the saint in prayerful introspection, his head lowered, and arms folded across his chest. As Imre Kovács has proposed,

³⁷ “Mes dévotions à St. François d’Assise, le grand insensé de Dieu, et à St. Dimas, le bon larron, restent bien sincères! Prochainement je publierai mon *Cantico del sol* de St. François – je viens encore de retravailler, pour les simplifier, et les orner religieusement ‘*Messer il frate sol, suor luna, suor acqua, frate vento et frate fuoco*.’ Que le monde serait heureux, si nous y vivions comme dans un couvent, d’amoureuse communion avec St. François – sous le doux et léger joug de N. S. Jésus-Christ!” [Liszt to Princess Carolyne, 4 August 1881]. La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, 7:324; English translation from Williams, ed., *Selected Letters*, 868.

³⁸ It should be noted, however, that Liszt did speak with pride about a number of the works he composed later in life, including his *Historische ungarische Bildnisse*, Hungarian Rhapsodies nos.18 and 19, *Csárdás obstiné*, and *Marcia funèbre*. See Dolores Pesce, *Liszt's Final Decade* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 105–6, 164.

³⁹ “J’ai passionnément travaillé pendant une quinzaine au *Cantico di S. Francesco*. Tel que le voilà enfin amélioré, agrandi, ornementé, harmonié et achevé en partition – je le considère comme une de mes meilleures œuvres. Je le ferai réexécuter à quelque *Musikfest* l’année prochaine – malgré l’antipathie de la critique et du public, influencé par elle, contre les compositions religieuses en dehors des formes conventionnelles. Je vais écrire l’arrangement de piano et orgue de la nouvelle version définitive du *cantique de St. François*.” [Liszt to Princess Carolyne, 6 September 1881]. La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, 7:327.

the Princess probably suggested Dupré's statue because she thought a sculptural monument would be a fitting counterpart to Liszt's musical monument.⁴⁰ Liszt disagreed, however, remarking that the statue's contemplative pose failed to capture the saint's essential spirituality:

Thank you for the photograph of Duprez's [sic] St. Francis at Assisi; I was going to ask you for it. Quite possibly the statue is a beautiful and admirable work. As far as I am concerned, however, the chief characteristic of the *gran poverello di Dio* is not brought out. Duprez has made of it a companion piece to Houdon's most admirable statue of St. Bruno, in Santa Maria degli Angeli. 'It would speak, were this not against the Rule of the Order,' runs a well-known witticism. Well, St. Francis spoke and even sang—his Rule does not impose silence, nor total confinement within the cloister. He has in common with St. Bruno only saintliness. In my opinion, he must be portrayed on his knees, arms out-stretched, lovingly asking for the divine stigmata—which Our Lord Jesus Christ granted him. In the antechamber of my flat in the Villa d'Este there is a photograph of St Francis of Assisi, given to me last year by Cardinal de Falloux. It is framed in wood—kindly send it to me. It will perhaps serve as a vignette to my *Cantico*.⁴¹

Cardinal Hohenlohe, who had access to Liszt's apartments at the Villa d'Este, eventually located the photograph in question and sent it to Liszt, who once again, rejected it on similar grounds: "It will hardly serve as the title picture of my *Cantico del Sol*—neither the gesture nor the accessories,

⁴⁰ Kovács, "On the XIXth-Century Reception History of Saint Francis: Liszt's *Cantico Del Sol Di San Francesco d'Assisi*," 137.

⁴¹ "Merci de la photographie su St. François à Assise de Duprez; j'allais vous la demander. Possible que la statue soit une belle œuvre de sculpture qu'on puisse admirer. Pour moi, le caractère principal du *gran poverello di Dio* me semble manqué. Duprez en a fait un compagnon de la statue très admirable de St. Bruno, à Ste. Marie des Agnes, de Houdon. 'Elle parlerait, si ce n'était contre le règle de l'ordre,' dit un mot spirituel fort connu. Or, St. François parlait et même chantait – sa règle n'impose pas le silence, ni la claustration absolue. Il n'a de commun avec St. Bruno que la sainteté. A mon sens, son image doit être représentée à genoux, les bras étendus, implorant amoureusement les divins stigmates – que N. S. Jésus-Christ lui accorda. Dans l'antichambre de mon appartement à la Villa d'Este, se trouve une photographie de St. François d'Assise, que le Cl de Falloux me donna l'an dernier. Elle est encadrée en bois – veuillez me l'envoyer. Peut-être servira-t-elle de vignette à mon *Cantico*." [Liszt to Princess Carolyne, 3 November 1882]. La Mara, *Franz Liszt's Briefe*, 7:360–61; English translation from Williams, ed., *Selected Letters*, 887.

the crown of thorns and the skull, suit the *Cantico*.”⁴² Based on the description given in the previous letter, Liszt seems to have had in mind a particular kind of iconography—namely, the stigmatization of St. Francis famously depicted by artists such as Giotto (1267 – 1337) in the Middle Ages, and Bartolomé Murillo (1617 – 1682) in the Baroque period (see figures 2.1 & 2.2).⁴³ Yet, Liszt never got his wish and was apparently dissatisfied with the reproduction of yet another statue of St. Francis that ended up on the title page of his *Cantico*:

For the title page of the St. Francis *Cantico*, the picture by Alonso Cano will do. ... Beautiful though it may be, *it does not express my own idea of the Saint* [emphasis mine]. I believe I have already told you this. I did not imagine the *gran poverello di Dio* as a St. Antony the Hermit or a St. Bruno, for his saintliness frequents a different tonality from theirs. If I could paint, I would represent him not with clasped hands but with arms outstretched in an ecstasy of love, imploring the *gran perdono di Dio* for the sinful world, and the stigmata for himself!⁴⁴

The selected image appears to have been supplied by Princess Marie zu Sayn-Wittgenstein. In a letter to her, dated 11 January 1883, Liszt expressed both his gratitude and his discontent: “Thank you for the picture of Alonso Cano’s beautiful statue of the ‘*gran poverello di Dio*’—St. Francis of Assisi. It will adorn the edition of my *Cantico del Sol*; however, my idea of St. Francis is different. I would not want his face to be so austere (like St. Francis of Paola or St. Bruno) nor his

⁴² “Elle ne pourra guère servir au titre de mon *Cantico del Sol* – ni le geste ni les accessoires: la couronne d’épines et la tête de mort ne conviennent au *Cantico*.” [Liszt to Princess Carolyne, 28 December 1882]. La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt’s Briefe*, 7:367; English translation from Williams, ed., *Selected Letters*, 892.

⁴³ Kovács, “On the XIXth-Century Reception History of Saint Francis: Liszt’s *Cantico Del Sol Di San Francesco d’Assisi*,” 138.

⁴⁴ “Pour le titre du *Cantico* de St. François, l’image d’Alonso Cano servira. ... Si belle qu’elle soit, mon idée du Saint n’y est pas exprimée. Je crois vous avoir déjà dit que je ne me figurais pas le *gran poverello di Dio* en St. Antoine l’Ermite, ou St. Bruno, sa sainteté hantant une autre tonalité que la leur. Si je savais peindre, je le représenterais non les mains jointes – mais le bras étendus dans un transport d’amour, implorant le *gran perdono di Dio* pour le monde pécheur, et les stigmates pour lui-même!” [Liszt to Princess Carolyne, 14 January 1883]. La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt’s Briefe*, 7:371; English translation from Williams, ed., *Selected Letters*, 895.

hands clasped, but rather stretched out, imploring the stigmata and the ‘*gran perdono*’!”⁴⁵ Modern experts attribute the statue not to Alonso Cano (1601 – 1667), as was believed in Liszt’s day, but to one of his pupils named Pedro de Mena (1628 – 1688).⁴⁶ It shows the saint standing firmly, hands clasped, with an expression of mystic ecstasy on his face (see figure 2.3 and the title page reproduced as figure 2.4). As Kovács explains, this particular pose depicts a Franciscan legend that circulated in the seventeenth century and inspired numerous artistic representations of the saint. According to this legend, when Pope Nicholas V and his entourage searched the crypt of St. Francis’s Basilica for the tomb of the saint, the light of a torch fell on the miraculously preserved body standing in his tomb.⁴⁷ It is this image that Pedro de Mena had in mind when sculpting his St. Francis statue. However, it is doubtful that Liszt would have been familiar with this legend, much less understood the significance of the iconographic type ultimately chosen for the *Cantico*’s title page.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ “Merci de l’image de la belle statue d’Alonso Cano du ‘*gran poverello di Dio*’—St François d’Assise. Elle ornera l’édition de mon *Cantico del Sol*; cependant mon sentiment de St François est autre. Je ne lui voudrais pas le visage trop austère (comme St François de Paule ou St Bruno) ni les mains jointes, mais étendues, implorant les stigmates et le ‘*gran*’ *perdono*’!” [Liszt to Marie zu Sayn-Wittgenstein, 11 January 1883]. Liszt, *Lettres de Franz Liszt à La Princesse Marie de Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Née de Sayn-Wittgenstein*, 360–61. Translation mine.

⁴⁶ Janet A. Anderson, *Pedro De Mena, Seventeenth-Century Spanish Sculptor* (Lanham, MD: Edwin Mellen, 1998).

⁴⁷ Kovács, “On the XIXth-Century Reception History of Saint Francis: Liszt’s Cantico Del Sol Di San Francesco d’Assisi,” 139.

⁴⁸ Kovács, 140.



**Figure 2.1: Giotto, *St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, 1295-1300.
Louvre Museum, Paris**



**Figure 2.2: Bartolomé Esteban de Murillo, *St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, c. 1680.
Museum of Fine Arts of Seville**



Figure 2.3: Pedro de Mena, *St. Francis of Assisi in His Tomb*, 1663-1664.
Toledo, Sacristy of the Cathedral



Figure 2.4: F. Liszt, Cantico del Sol, first edition title page. C. F. Kahnt, Leipzig (1884)

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Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Research Centre, Budapest.

With an image for the title page chosen and the final revisions in place, Liszt finally submitted his *Cantico* for publication in December of 1881.⁴⁹ In its definitive version, the work received a performance three years later, on December 21st 1884, at a festival concert commemorating the 27th anniversary of the Preßburger Liedertafel.⁵⁰ The soloist was a man by the name of Alexius Hodoly—a physician by profession, but also a talented baritone who played an active role in the city’s cultural scene. Though apparently ill on the day of the performance, he still received high praise from the local press:

Dr. Alexius v. Hodoly earned universal acclaim with his solo in Liszt's *Hymn to the Sun* of St. Francis; and in fact Mr. Hodoly received this recognition because, despite the stubborn hoarseness with which he visibly struggled even during the performance, he did not refuse to participate—indeed, he conquered all of the vocal challenges.⁵¹

Though Liszt did not attend the concert, he was actively involved in the preparations via correspondence. This was to be the last performance of the *Cantico* during Liszt’s lifetime.

⁴⁹ “La révision et les élargissements d’ornementation de mon *cantique de St. François* m’occupent depuis plusieurs semaines. Ce cantique a été composé et chanté à Rome en 62 – récemment à Fribourg et à Iéna. Après 2 ou 3 copies précédentes, je livrerai ce soir la finale pour l’impression.” [The revision and extra ornamentation of my *Cantico di San Francesco* have been keeping me busy for several weeks. This canticle was composed and sung at Rome in '62—and recently in Freiburg and Jena. After 2 or 3 previous versions, I shall this evening hand over the final one for printing.] [Liszt to Princess Carolyne, (?) December 1881]. La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt’s Briefe*, 7:330–331. English translation from Williams, ed. Liszt, *Selected Letters*, 870.

⁵⁰ Mária P. Eckhardt and Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (Budapest), *Franz Liszt’s Music Manuscripts in the National Széchényi Library, Budapest* (Budapest: Akad. Kiadó, 1986), 189.

⁵¹ “Herr Dr. Alexius v. Hodoly erntete mit seinem Solo in dem Sonnenhymnus des heilige Franziskus von Liszt allgemeinen Beifall; und in der That verdiente Herr v. Hodoly diese Anerkennung, da er trotz hartnäckiger Heiserkeit, mit der er auch während des Vortrages sichtlich zu kämpfen hatte, feint Mitwirkung nicht versagte, ja alle stimmliches Hindernisse siegreich bekämpfte.” *Preßburger Zeitung*, 22 December 1884. Translation mine.

Versions and Sources

Between 1862 and 1881, Liszt returned to *Cantico del Sol* time and again, creating arrangements for different performing forces and composing stand-alone works based on *Cantico*'s thematic material (see table 2.1). In addition to the unpublished setting of 1862 and its revised version of 1881, the composer also wrote an arrangement for bass trombone with piano or organ accompaniment, an instrumental prelude for piano or organ titled *Preludio per il Cantico del Sol di San Francesco*, and a *Hosanna* for organ and bass trombone (also called *Alleluia del Cantico del Sol*) dedicated to Eduard Grosse, a trombonist in the Weimar court orchestra.⁵² To this list we must also add a *Cantico* arrangement for solo piano published posthumously (1987), an organ version now lost, and an *Alleluia* for solo piano, based on themes from the *Cantico*.

⁵² The arrangement for bass trombone with organ/piano accompaniment remained unpublished until 2016, when it was brought to light by the Liszt Society (UK). See Wataru Fukuda and Leslie Howard, eds., *Liszt Society Publications, Volume 13: The Complete Music for Trombone, with Piano or Organ: Cantico di San Francesco* (Edinburgh: The Hardy Press, 2016).

Table 2.1: Versions of *Cantico del Sol* and related works (in chronological order).

Title	LW	Composed/Published	Instrumentation
1st version, <i>Cantico di San Francesco</i>	I8	1862 / [unpublished]	Baritone, men's chorus, orch, organ/harmonium
<i>Alleluia</i>	A216	1862 / 1865	Piano solo
<i>Alleluia del Cantico del Sol</i>	F2	1862-3 / 1867	Organ + trombone ad lib
2nd version, <i>Cantico del Sol di San Francesco d'Assisi</i>	I8	1877-82 / 1884	Baritone, men's chorus, orchestra, organ
<i>Prehudio per il Cantico del Sol di San Francesco</i>	E35	1880 / EMB iii; UE vi	Organ solo
<i>Prehudio per il Cantico del Sol di S. Francesco</i>	A301	(?)1880 / NLA i/17	Piano solo
<i>Cantico di San Francesco</i>	A307	1881 / NLA i/17	Piano solo
<i>Cantico del Sol di S. Francesco</i>	S59	1881 / lost	Organ solo

EMB = Editio Musica Budapest; NLA = Neue Liszt Ausgabe; UE = Sämtliche Orgelwerke ed. Haselböck
 LW = M. Eckhardt & R. Charnin Mueller Catalogue, *New Grove* (2000)

All autograph manuscripts of the *Cantico* proper—which I have consulted for this study—are housed at the Goethe and Schiller Archives in Weimar, where they are freely accessible to researchers through the archive's online portal.⁵³ Libraries in Hungary and the United States, on the other hand, house the manuscripts of the other *Cantico*-related compositions. These surviving sources help answer questions about the work's history and enrich our understanding of Liszt's compositional process. The sources, in chronological order, are as follows:

⁵³ See <https://www.klassik-stiftung.de/goethe-und-schiller-archiv/das-archiv/>

- 1) Autograph of unpublished 1862 version of *Cantico del Sol*. Includes various red crayon markings by Liszt, and a paste-over on folio 9. Scored for baritone + piano/organ/harmonium.
- 2) Copyist's proof of unpublished 1862 version of the *Cantico* in Pietro Cavallini's hand with red crayon markings by Liszt and paste-overs on folios 9 and 22. On the first page, it includes instructions in French, in Liszt's hand, indicating the four ways the work can be accompanied: "by the piano alone, by the organ alone, by the piano and harmonium together, or by full orchestra with parts published separately." The phrase "*Festii Ordinis Sancti Francisci*," in Liszt's hand, is also inscribed on this first folio.
- 3) Autograph of *Alleluia del Cantico del Sol* for trombone and organ, written in 1862-3 and published in 1867. Unavailable for viewing online.
- 4) Copyist's proof of item 3 above, *Alleluia del Cantico del Sol*. Contains no markings or corrections by Liszt.
- 5) Autograph of *Preludio per il Cantico del Sol di San Francesco* for piano or organ, written in 1880. Contains Liszt's marking in red and blue crayon as well as some fingerings. The full manuscript is freely accessible online through the Piermont Morgan Library's website (New York City).⁵⁴
- 6) Autograph of 1881 revised version of *Cantico* scored for baritone, full orchestra + organ. Contains substantial marking and corrections in red and blue crayon.
- 7) Copyist's proof of 1881 revised version of *Cantico* scored for baritone, full orchestra + organ. Contains various markings and corrections in red and blue crayon by Liszt, a paste-overs on folio 34, and 3 full-page inserts by Liszt (folios 65, 66 and 75). Includes the entire

⁵⁴ See <https://www.themorgan.org/music/manuscript/115175>

preface + the *Canticle*'s text, in French, written by the copyist. After the preface, the *Canticle*'s text is written in German in different handwriting.

- 8) Autograph of *Cantico* version for piano solo (1881), which remained unpublished until 1983. Contains some corrections in red crayon. The *Canticle*'s text, in Liszt's hand, is overlaid throughout the score. The phrase *Benedicti dominus*, in Liszt's hand, is inscribed at the end of the work.

Table 2.2: F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol* & related works – Manuscript sources

Title	LW	Location	Archival Call #	Autograph	Proof
<i>Cantico di San Francesco</i> (1 st version)	I8	D-WRgs	GSA 60 / R 4	✓	
<i>Cantico di San Francesco</i> (1 st version)	I8	D-WRgs	GSA 60 / R 4a		✓
<i>Cantico del Sol di San Francesco d'Assisi</i> (rev.)	I8	D-WRgs	GSA 60 / B 31	✓	
<i>Cantico del Sol di San Francesco d'Assisi</i> (rev.)	I8	D-WRgs	GSA 60 / Dep. H 4		✓
<i>Alleluia del Cantico del Sol</i>	F2	H-BI	Ms. mus. L. 1	✓	
<i>Alleluia del Cantico del Sol</i>	F2	D-WRgs	GSA 60 / Y 3		✓
<i>Preludio per il Cantico del Sol di S. Francesco</i>	A301	US-NYpm	Cary 0184	✓	
<i>Cantico di San Francesco</i> , piano version	A307	D-WRgs	GSA 60 / U 51	✓	

D-WRgs = Stiftung Weimarer Klassik, Goethe – und – Schiller – Archiv, Weimar.

H-BI = Franz Liszt Memorial Museum and Research Centre, Budapest.

US-NYpm = Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

ANALYSIS

Liszt sets St. Francis's *Canticle of the Sun* in a modern Italian version, which is presented in full below. Both French and German translations also appear in the preface of the published score, but Liszt offers only German in the text underlay as an alternative language in which to sing the work.⁵⁵ Although we know the French translation to come from Ozanam, the origin of both the Italian and German versions is unknown.⁵⁶

1. Altissimo onnipotente buon Signore,
Tue son le laude, la gloria, l'onore, ed ogni benedizione
A Te solo si confanno,
E nullo uomo è degno di nominar Te.
2. Laudato sia Dio mio buon Signore con tutte le tue creature,
Laudato sia per **Messer lo frate sole**,
Il quale giorna e illumina noi per lui,
Ed ello è bello e radiante con grande splendore,
Di Te, Signore, porta significazione.
3. Laudato sia mio Signore per **suor luna** e per le stelle
le quali in cielo hai formate clare e belle.
4. Laudato sia mio Signore per **frate vento**
E per l'aere e nuvolo e sereno ed ogni tempo,
Per li quali dai a tutte creature sostentamento.
5. Laudato sia mio Signore per **suor acqua**,
La quale e molto utile ed umile e preziosa e casta.
6. Laudato sia mio Signore per **frate fuoco**,
Per lo quale Tu illumini la notte,
Ed ello è bello e giocondo e robustissimo e forte.

⁵⁵ The German translation of the *Canticle* used by Liszt is reproduced within Appendix A. In his manuscripts, Liszt underlay the music with Italian on top and German below, but the score published by the Leipzig firm Breitkopf & Härtel puts the German on top, and the Italian below.

⁵⁶ Only one volume in Liszt's personal library—Hases's *Franz von Assisi: Ein Heiligenbild* (1856)—appears to have contained versions of the *Canticle*'s text in both German and Italian. However, these versions differ from those used for the *Cantico*.

7. Laudato sia mio Signore per nostra **madre terra**,
La quale ne sostiene e governa,
E produce diversi frutti e coloriti fiori ed erbe.
8. Laudato sia mio Signore, per **quelli che perdonano per tuo amore**,
E sostengono infirmitade e tribolazione.
Beati quelli che sostengarranno in pace,
Che da Te altissimo saranno incoronati.
9. Laudato sia Dio mio Signore per **suor nostra la morte corporale**,
Dalla quale nullo uomo vivente può scampare.
Guai a quelli che muoiono in peccato mortale;
Beati quelli che si trovano nelle tue santissime volontà,
Che la morte seconda non li porrà far male.
10. Laudate e benedite mio Signor e ringraziate:
E servile a lui con grande umiltade.⁵⁷

One of the principal themes in the *Cantico del Sol* (referred to as refrain A below) derives from the German chorale repertoire. Liszt himself reveals this information in an 1863 letter to the Weimar court organist Alexander Wilhelm Gottschalg:

I have been thinking of [you] very particularly these last few days, whilst I was composing St. Francis's Hymn of Praise (*Cantico di San Francesco*). The song is a development, an offspring as it were, a blossom of the Chorale “in dulci jubilo,” for which of course I had to employ organ. But how could I be writing an organ work without immediately flying to Tieffurt in imagination?⁵⁸ —And lo, at the entrance to the church our excellent Grosse met me with his trombone, and I recollected an old promise—namely, to compose a “piece” for his use on Sundays. I immediately set to work at it, and out of my “Cantico” has now arisen a *Concertante* piece for

⁵⁷ Text taken from the [unpaginated] preface to Franz Liszt, *Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke Herausgegeben von der Franz Liszt-Stiftung: Kirchliche Und Geistliche Gesangswerke*, ed. Philipp Wolfrum, vol. V (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1936).

⁵⁸ Tieffurt refers to the district of the city of Weimar where Gottschalg worked as organist and cantor from 1847 until his death in 1870. It is here that Liszt and Gottschalg first met. When writing for the organ, Liszt always consulted Gottschalg on questions about the instrument. See Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 158–59.

trombone and organ. I will send you the piece as an Easter egg by the middle of April.⁵⁹

The *Concertante* piece, of course, refers to the related work mentioned above, *Hosannah* for trombone and organ, which Liszt dedicated to his friend, the distinguished trombonist Eduard Grosse.⁶⁰ The suggestion that Grosse might “use” this work on Sundays indicates its suitability as a liturgical piece, perhaps to be played as a processional or recessional number. The resemblance between the Christmas carol *In dulci jubilo* and the A refrain of Liszt’s *Cantico* is readily evident on the page (see figure 2.5). Both melodies share the same tonality, meter, melodic contour and rhythmic pattern. One need only leave out the first two notes of *In dulci jubilo* for both melodies to match up almost exactly. The crucial difference lies in Liszt’s decision to repeat the C on the third beat of the second measure, thereby shifting the metric stress and causing the D—an unaccented neighboring tone in the chorale tune—to occur on the downbeat. This small change causes the two melodies not to sound quite so similar. On the other hand, the Lutheran melody *Heilig ist Gott der Vater* matches every pitch of Liszt’s melody including the repeated C and the metrically stressed D, suggesting that Liszt’s *Cantico* theme may actually be a conflation of two preexisting motives.⁶¹ That Liszt chose specifically Protestant music as source material is intriguing. We might surmise that, having intentions of publishing the work in Germany, Liszt incorporated familiar melodies in his *Cantico* in an effort to help with its popularization.

⁵⁹ [Liszt to A. W. Gottschalg, Rome, 11 March 1862] Franz Liszt, *Letters of Franz Liszt*, ed. La Mara, trans. Constance Bache, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1894), 6.

⁶⁰ Eduard Grosse (1823 – 1887), trombonist and orchestral librarian at the Weimar court, also served as Liszt’s copyist and factotum. He played the trombone solo at the premiere of the “Gran” Mass and was involved in performances at the inaugural Bayreuth festival of 1876. See Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 404.

⁶¹ The relationship between *Cantico del Sol* and *Heilig ist Gott der Vater* is noted by Burghard Shloeman. “Preface,” *Hosannah* [edition] (Mainz, 1981), n.p. The chorale tune *Heilig ist Gott der Vater* dates back to at least the sixteenth century, having been set by Sixtus Dietrich (1493 – 1548) and Michael Praetorius (1571 – 1621).

Figure 2.5: Refrain A compared to *In dulci jubilo* and *Heilig ist Gott der Vater*

a) *Cantico del Sol*

Lau - da - to si - a mio Si - gnor!

b) *In dulci jubilo*

In dul - ci ju - bi - lo - - (sin)

c) *Heilig ist Gott der Vater*

Hei - lig ist Gott der Va - ter, (hei)

Although Liszt's *Cantico del Sol* does not adhere to any standard formal paradigm, the work follows a methodical mode of organization. Liszt employs three musically distinct themes as refrains that return at different points in the work. We shall categorize these musically as refrains A, B, and C (see figure 2.6). All three of the refrains are invariably accompanied by a recognizable rhythmic ostinato in the strings, which drives the music forward and provides contrast against the more subdued style of the verses (see figure 2.7).⁶²

⁶² Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt*, 245.

1) Refrain A



Lau - da - to si - a, mi - o Si - gnor!

2) Refrain B



Lau - da — to si - a, mi - o Si - gnor, con tut - te le cre - a - tu - re.

3) Refrain C



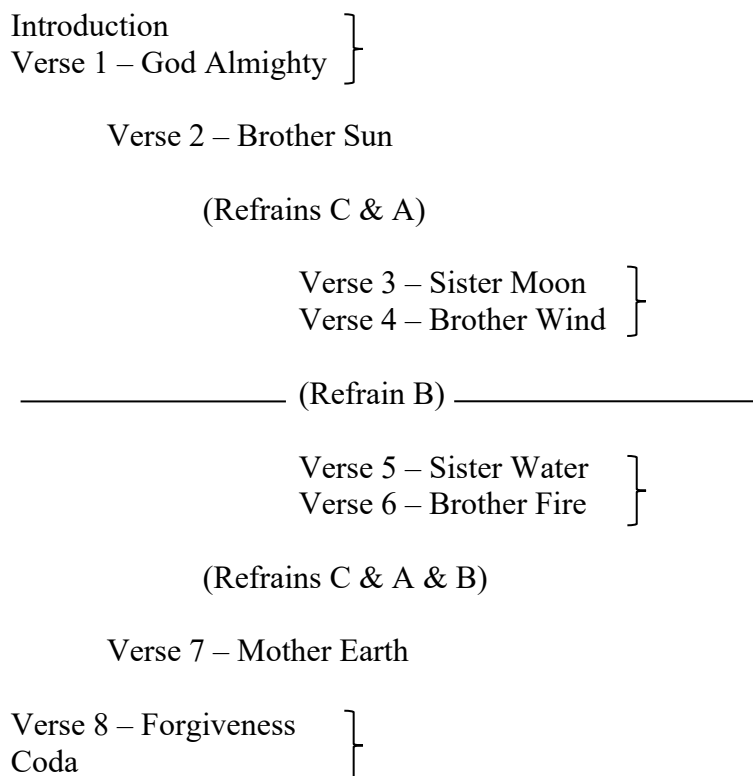
Lau - da - to lau - da - to si - a per Mes - ser lo fra - te so - le.

As the diagram illustrates, the musical materials A, B, and C first appear in verse 2, where they are not yet heard as refrains *per se*, but rather as setting particular verse lines. Notably, Liszt's usage of these materials creates a frame around verse lines 2–5 as follows: refrains A and B at mm. 56 – 95 set line 1, while refrain C at mm. 137 – 168 repeats line 2, and refrain A at mm. 168 – 181 repeats line 1.

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the other hand, is treated as a musical refrain only. Verse 4, starting at m. 225, is followed by refrain B text and music. For verse 6, at m. 354, line 1 of the verse is uttered to musical refrain C. Then, refrains A and B text and music follow at mm. 377 – 408. Finally, verses 2 and 8 both begin with a separate text-only refrain: “*Laudato sia, Dio mio, buon Signor*”—taken from line 1 of verse 2.

As can be further gleaned from the diagram, verses 3–4 and 5–6 are grouped together without intervening refrains. In so doing, Liszt not only pairs “sisters” and “brothers,” but also achieves a kind of structural symmetry. To visualize Liszt’s process, it is useful to imagine a line at the midway point bisecting the work into halves:



Liszt does not aim for perfect symmetry, however. The 10-measure introduction plus verse 1 of only 24 measures are not balanced by verse 8 and the coda, to which 127 and 83 measures are

devoted consecutively. Liszt's lopsided construction is a product of the prominence given to the eighth verse, which deals with forgiveness and the promise of the kingdom. As mentioned previously, Liszt omits the final verse of St. Francis's poem in his setting of the *Cantico*. Although the composer never specified his reasons for leaving out the verse about "Sister Death," we might assume that he wished to avoid a disruption of the jubilant and celebratory mood that pervades the work. Concluding the piece on a somber note—the subject of death, specifically—may simply have seemed inappropriate for Liszt. Yet another reason may have to do with the spiritual content of those lines, in which St. Francis issues a stern warning to those that "die in mortal sin"—a marked departure from the saint's usual benevolent tone. The phrasing used in the previous verse—"blessed are those"—changes to "woe unto those...". From Liszt's correspondence we can gather that the composer was drawn primarily to compassionate religious figures (like St. Francis of Paola, or the charitable St. Elisabeth), as well as to a forgiving and loving God, rather than one who punishes sinners. Such an affinity towards benevolence may be part of the reason the composer gravitated towards the kindly St. Francis, who generally abstained from imparting harsh judgements on those who did not follow Christ's teachings. I argue, however, that Liszt's omission of the final verse, which reminds humankind about the inevitability of death and judgement, stems from the importance he placed on the eighth verse. It is *that* part of the poem, and its message about the salvation of the soul, that most resonated with Liszt. Quite simply, no other verse could have followed the powerful final climax linked to the words "*Beati quelli che sostegneranno [infirmirate e tribolazione] in pace, che da Te, Altissimo, saranno incorati*" (*Blessed are those who endure [infirmity and tribulation] in peace, for by you, most high, shall they be crowned*).

Table 2.3: Formal Diagram, F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol* (final version)

Measure #	Perf. Forces	Original Text	Text additions by Liszt	Musical Material
Introduction				
(Dm → FM)				
1 - 11	Orch.			
Verse 1 - God Almighty				
FM → Dm				
12 - 35	Bar. + Orch.	1. <i>Altissimo, onnipotente, buon Signore,</i> 2. <i>Tue son le laude, la gloria, l'onore ed ogni benedizione.</i> 3. <i>A Te solo, si confanno,</i> 4. <i>et nullo ouomo è degno di nominar Te</i>		
Verse 2 - Sir Brother Sun				
FM → Gm/BbM → Dm → FM				
36 - 55	Bar. Solo		<i>Laudato sia, Dio mio, buon Signor!</i> <i>Laudato sia, Dio mio, buon Signor!</i>	
56 - 74	Bar. + Orch.	1. <i>Laudato sia mio Signor con tutte, [tutte] le creature</i>		Refrain A
75 - 95	Chorus		<i>Laudato sia mio Signor con tutte le creature.</i> <i>Laudato, laudato!</i>	Refrain B
95 - 101	Bar. Solo	2. <i>[Laudato] laudato sia per</i>		St. Francis motive
102 - 132	Bar. + Orch.	<i>Messer lo frate Sole,</i> 3. <i>il quale giorna e illumina noi per lui.</i> 4. <i>Ed ello è bello e radiante con grande splendore:</i> 5. <i>di Te, Signor, porta significazione.</i>		
133 - 137	Bar. Solo		<i>Laudato, laudato!</i>	
137 - 152	Bar. + Orch.		<i>Laudato, laudato sia per Messer lo frate Sole</i>	Refrain C
153 - 168	Chorus		<i>Laudato, laudato sia per Messer lo frate Sole.</i>	
168 - 181			<i>Laudato sia con tutte le creature</i>	Refrain A

Verse 3 - Sister Moon				
Am → AM				
181 - 187	Bar. Solo	1. [<i>Laudato</i>] <i>Laudato sia mio Signore per</i>		St. Francis motive
188 - 211	Bar. + Orch.	<i>suor Luna e per le stelle:</i> 2. [<i>le stelle</i>] <i>le quali in cielo hai formate clare e belle.</i>		
211 - 225			<i>Laudato sia, Dio mio Signore, per suor Luna e per le stelle.</i>	
Verse 4 - Brother Wind				
AM → [Dm] → BbM → [Ebm]				
225 - 255	Bar. + Orch.	1. <i>Laudato sia mio Signore per frate Vento</i> 2. <i>e per l'aere e nuvolo e sereno ed ogni tempo:</i> 3. <i>per li quali dai a tutte creature sostentamento.</i>		
255 - 263	Chorus		<i>Laudato sia mio Signor con tutte le creature</i>	Refrain B
264 - 273	Instrumental transition			
Verse 5 - Sister Water				
DbM				
274 - 303	Bar. + Orch.	1. <i>Laudato sia mio Signore per suor Acqua,</i> 2. <i>la quale è molto utile ed umile e preziosa, [preziosa] e casta.</i>		
Verse 6 - Brother Fire				
DbM → [GbM] → BbM → FM				
303 - 345	Bar. + Orch.	1. <i>Laudato sia mio Signor per frate Fuoco ,</i> 2. <i>per lo quale Tu illumini la notte:</i> 3. <i>ed ello è bello e giocondo e robustissimo e forte.</i>		
346 - 353	Bar. Solo		<i>Ludato, laudato</i>	
354 - 366	Bar. + Orch.		<i>Laudato, laudato sia per frate Fuoco</i>	Refrain C
367 - 377	Chorus		<i>Laudato, laudato sia per frate Fuoco</i>	
377 - 388			<i>Laudato sia con tutte le creature</i>	Refrain A
388 - 408				<i>Laudato sia, mio Signor, con tutte le creature. Laudato, laudato!</i>

Verse 7 - Mother Earth				
AbM → DbM				
408 - 414	Bar. Solo	1. [<i>Laudato</i>] <i>Laudato sia</i>		St. Francis motive
415 - 437	Bar. + Orch.	<i>per sora nostra matre Terra</i> <i>2. la quale ne sustenta e</i> <i>governa,</i> <i>3. e produce diversi frutti e</i> <i>coloriti fiori ed erbe.</i>		
437 - 454	Orchestral interlude			
Verse 8 - Forgiveness; Promise of life everlasting				
FM? → [Fm] → FM → BbM → EM				
454 - 494	Bar. + Orch.		<i>Laudato sia, Dio mio</i> <i>Signor! Laudato sia, Dio</i> <i>mio Signor!</i>	
494 - 501	Bar. Solo	1. [<i>Laudato</i>], <i>laudato</i>		
502 - 533	Bar. + Orch.	<i>per quelli che perdonano</i> <i>per Tuo amore,</i> <i>2. e sostengono infirmitate et</i> <i>tribolazione.</i>		
534 - 568		<i>3. Beati quelli che</i> <i>sostegnerranno in pace,</i> <i>4. che da Te, Altissimo, [da</i> <i>Te] saranno incoronati</i> <i>[incoronati].</i>		
569 - 581	Fanfare (EM → FM)			
Coda				
FM				
582 - 589	Bar. Solo		<i>Incoronati!</i>	
589 - 596	Bar. + Orch.		<i>Laudato sia, Dio mio</i> <i>Signor!</i>	
597 - 619	Chorus		<i>Laudato sia, Dio mio</i> <i>Signor, con tutte le</i> <i>creature, con tutte le</i> <i>creature.</i>	
620 - 665			<i>Laudato 7x</i>	

When Liszt revised the *Cantico* in 1881, he expanded the transitional material connecting the various sections and added unaccompanied baritone solos at the beginning and/or conclusion of some of the verses. These solos all carry the text *Laudato sia* (Praised be You), the words with which all but the first and last verses begin (see figure 2.8). The notes in three of these solos (bracketed in red in the figure) are of special significance for they form what Tibor Szász calls a *cruciform symbol*—that is, a melody of four pitches where a straight line drawn between the outer pair bisects a straight line drawn between the inner pair, forming a cross (see figure 2.9). Szász has identified several instances of Liszt’s use of the cruciform symbol in his religious works to convey extramusical meaning.⁶³ One of the most explicit examples comes from the orchestral funeral ode *Les morts*, (LW G25) based on a poem by Felicité de Lamennais (1782 – 1854). In this work, written in 1860, Liszt inserts passages from Lamennais’s text at various points in the score, thus indicating the correspondence between the programmatic idea and the respective musical material. At the moment when the music depicts the line “*Like a light from on high a cross in the distance appeared to guide their course,*” a cruciform melody in the cellos marked *espressivo* (up a perfect fourth, down a major second, up a minor third) cuts through the texture, rendering the motive’s musical symbolism explicit (see figure 2.10).

Figure 2.8: F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol*, unaccompanied baritone solos. “St. Francis motive” bracketed in red.



⁶³ Tibor Szász, “Liszt’s Symbols of the Divine and Diabolical: Their Revelation of a Program in the B-Minor Sonata,” *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 15 (1984): 85.



Figure 2.9: Cruciform Symbol (abstraction)



Figure 2.10: F. Liszt, *Les morts*, mm. 59 – 62 [cruciform symbol]

Sembleble à un rayon d'en haut, un croix, dans le lointain

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Contrabass

p dolce

tutti

mf espressivo

Liszt also used a cruciform melody in another Franciscan composition from 1862: the piano piece *Saint Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds* (LW A219). This work, which will be analyzed in detail in a subsequent chapter, contains an explicit musical depiction of the saint delivering a sermon to a flock of birds. The particular moment in the music is marked *recitativo* and bears an inscription by Liszt that reads, “*At the entry of Franciscus, the Recitativo fairly strong.*” Musically, the material “spoken” by St. Francis is a cruciform melody whose intervals closely match those in the *Les morts* passage (up a perfect fourth, down a [minor] second, up a minor third) (see figure 2.11). Although the work’s program makes no reference to the Cross, Liszt’s use of a cruciform melody to represent St. Francis is apt, given the saint’s “mad devotion for the Cross,” which culminated with his receiving the holy stigmata. Having established this intertextual connection, we now return to the *Cantico*. Given that the unaccompanied baritone solos containing the cruciform melody were later additions—absent from the original *Cantico* setting of 1862—we can

speculate that Liszt had the idea to incorporate them into this work after reflecting on the content of the “Sermon to the Birds.” As we learn from the verbal program, St. Francis’s sermon urges the birds “to sing [God’s] praise at all times and in all places”—a very similar sentiment to that expressed in the *Canticle*. Thus, Liszt wished to draw a connection between these two Franciscan works, both of which convey a message of praise to God for His creation. In the copyist’s manuscript of the 1862 setting of the *Cantico*, we can see that Liszt himself filled in three empty measures in the baritone part, adding the cruciform melody immediately before the “Mother Earth stanza” (folio 18; see figure 2.12).⁶⁴ In the final 1881 version, the motive is peppered throughout the work, always as a recitative-like solo for the baritone suggestive of St. Francis’s spoken word. The motive’s function as a symbol for the Cross in *Les morts* has been enriched to make it apply specifically to St. Francis in both *St. Francis Preaching to the Birds* and in *Cantico*, thereby warranting a designation as the *St. Francis motive* in these two pieces.

Figure 2.11: “St. Francis motive” from F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 51 – 54

The image shows a musical score for the "St. Francis motive" from F. Liszt's *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, measures 51–54. The score is for voice and piano. The voice part is marked "Recitativo" and "Un poco ritenuto il tempo". The piano part has markings "pp smorzando", "p dolce", and "pp leggierissimo". A red box highlights a specific melodic phrase in the voice part, which is a cruciform melody. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

⁶⁴ The full manuscript can be accessed at https://ores.klassik-stiftung.de/ords/f?p=401:2:::P2_ID:202780

Figure 2.12: Copyist's proof of 1862 version of *Cantico del Sol*. "St. Francis's motive" in Liszt's hand visible in upper right corner. D-WRgs. GSA 60/R 4a (folio 18).



Introduction (mm. 1 – 11)

The manner in which Liszt begins his *Cantico del Sol*—with an 11-bar introduction marked *Lento, solenne, largamente*—may relate to his understanding of the circumstances under which St. Francis composed the *Canticum*. Liszt presents a somber subject in bare octaves, which slowly emerges out of the depths of the low register projecting an air of solemnity. Timpani rolls and sparsely voiced chords in the winds punctuate the phrase at regular intervals. Tonally, the passage suggests D minor. Contrasted against the joyful character of the rest of the work, this rather austere introduction initially strikes the listener as being out of place. Yet Liszt includes this opening material not only in the *Cantico del Sol*, but also as an introduction to all other *Cantico*-derived compositions (refer back to Table 2.1). Only after considering the details of the poem's genesis can we understand Liszt's choice to begin the work in this manner. As will be recalled, St. Francis

composed the *Canticle* towards the end of his life, while afflicted with blindness, severe illness, and the pain of the stigmata. Yet, it is in this state of great suffering that the saint received the inspiration to compose a beautiful hymn of praise that radiates with optimism. In other words, St. Francis's *Canticle of the Sun* was born out of the depths of despair. Liszt would have known these facts, and we can surmise that the weighty opening bars of his *Cantico* acknowledge the oppressive circumstances under which the saint wrote the poem.

1. *God Almighty* (mm. 12 – 35)

*Altissimo onnipotente buon Signore,
Tue son le laude, la gloria, l'onore,
ed ogni benedizione.
A Te solo si confanno
E nullo uomo è degno di nominar Te.*

*Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor,
and all blessing.
To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no human is worthy to mention Your name.*⁶⁵

The brightness of the F major chord at measure 12, following immediately after the stark minor introduction, creates an arresting effect akin to a curtain being flung open and letting sunlight pour in. The musical analogy also calls to mind the image of the frail and ailing St. Francis, having just received assurance of his salvation, beaming with joy as he uttered the words of his *Canticle* for the first time.

St. Francis's *Canticle of the Sun* begins by praising God in the absolute, proclaiming the essential qualities that belong to Him, and stating that all praise is owed to Him alone. Additionally, the text declares that humankind is not worthy to utter that praise. The poem describes God as: “*most-high, all-powerful, and good.*” Following after two weighty adjectives, the word “good” might at first seem exceedingly simple or weak. But, as Moloney explains, in this context it represents a distillation of St. Francis's perception of God as “supremely good and the source of

⁶⁵ I am grateful to Dr. Craig Monson's insight regarding issues of translation in this section of the chapter.

all good.”⁶⁶ He suggests recalling Jesus’s words in Luke 18:19: “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.”⁶⁷ Moloney goes on:

There can be for Francis no higher praise than “good,” which is placed third in this sequence of adjectives in the poem in order to stress the idea of God’s merciful nature, after that of his power, in order to prepare the way for the themes of his generosity in creation and in reconciliation and forgiveness as a response to sin and death.⁶⁸

Liszt’s treatment of the opening verse, exuding an air of solemnity, reflects the significance of the only verse in the poem addressed to God alone. Always *fortissimo*, the section begins in F major and employs a strictly diatonic palette. The baritone part is written in a declamatory style, with many syllables recited on the same pitch (as in psalmody). In the strings, sparse four-part harmonization provides the accompaniment. On account of these features, this section of the work comes closest to resembling ecclesiastical music. Also notable is the use in two separate instances of a two-bar 4-3 suspensions with a decoration in the first bar that passes down to the note below the resolution (mm. 19 – 20; 31 – 32). This type of decoration would have been an outdated musical device in Liszt’s day harking back to the Baroque (see figure 2.13). The device not only contributes an air of religious solemnity to this section, but might also reflect Liszt’s admiration of masters of the past. Starting on measure 25, as the baritone sings “*and no man is worthy to speak your name,*” the music begins to modulate to the relative minor. This shift from F major to D minor brings with it an affective change as man solemnly recognizes that he is not worthy to speak God’s name. At measures 31 – 34, an authentic cadence brings the section to a close on a final chord that omits the

⁶⁶ Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His “Cantic of Brother Sun” Reassessed*, 124.

⁶⁷ Cited in Moloney, 124.

⁶⁸ Moloney, 124.

third. We might interpret this chord built out of open fifths and octaves as yet another archaism, meant to evoke the sound world of St. Francis’s time.

Figure 2.13: F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol*, mm. 18 – 20, 30 – 32

18

glo - ri - a, l'o - no - re ed o - gni

30

de - gno di no - mi - nar

5 3 5 4 — 3 — 2 — 3

5 3 5 4 — 3 — 2 — 3

2. *Sir Brother Sun* (mm. 36 – 181)

*Laudato sia Dio mio buon Signore
con tutte le tue creature,
Laudato sia per Messer lo frate sole,
Il quale giorno e illumina noi per lui,
Ed ello è bello e radiante
con grande splendore
Di Te, Signore, porta significazione.*

*Praised be You, my good Lord,
with all Your creatures,
especially **Sir Brother Sun**,
Who is the day and through whom
You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant
with great splendor;
and bears a likeness of You, Most High.*

According to Christian spirituality, the sun—as a source of light and life—can serve as a symbol of God and his generosity.⁶⁹ This is certainly how St. Francis viewed “Sir Brother Sun,” whose beauty and splendor he saw as an image of God himself, and therefore made the sun the central focus of his *Canticle*. Brother Leo of Assisi, Francis’s secretary and confessor, explains that:

⁶⁹ Moloney, 128.

... Because [St. Francis] considered and said that the sun is more beautiful than other creatures, and could more easily be compared to God, especially since, in Scripture, the Lord himself is called the *Sun of Justice*; he therefore called those *Praises* he composed for creatures when the Lord had assured him of His kingdom the “Canticle of Brother Sun.”⁷⁰

Particularly striking is the fact that St. Francis wrote his poem at a time when he suffered from photophobia and could not bear the light of the sun during the day, or the light of a fire at night.⁷¹ We should also note that only the sun receives the honorific title *Messer* (Lord/Sir) in the *Canticle*, which highlights the connection to God Himself.

The second verse of the poem, addressed to the sun, begins at measure 36 with a lengthy unaccompanied baritone passage set to the words “*Laudato sia Dio mio buon Signor*” (*Praised be You, my [God] good Lord*)—a textual addition by Liszt. This solo introduces the musical material used for refrain A, which is sung first in D minor then in F major (refer back to figure 2.4). The clarinets and bassoons, accompanied by the strings, enter at measure 56—marked *Allegro giubilando*—followed at measure 64 by the now accompanied baritone, who sings refrain A set to the first line of the verse: “*Laudato sia mio Signor, con tutte le creature*” (*Praised by You, my Lord, with all your creatures*). As mentioned earlier, this material is not yet heard as a refrain *per se*, but as simply the beginning of the verse. Refrain B follows immediately at measure 75, again setting line 1. Here, the chorus of male voices joins, singing in unison with the soloist and full orchestra. Vigorous scalar passagework played by the orchestra over a dominant pedal (on C) function as a preparatory gesture for the ensuing material (mm. 91 – 95). As all the instruments

⁷⁰ Regis J. Armstrong, Wayne J. A. Hellmann, and William J. Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 3 (New York, London, Manila: New City Press, 1999), 367.

⁷¹ Willem Marie Speelman, “A Song in the Dark. Francis of Assisi’s Canticle of Brother Sun,” *Perichoresis* 14, no. 2 (October 1, 2016): 57.

drop out at measure 95, the solo baritone reenters unaccompanied, singing the first instance of *St. Francis's motive* (mm. 95 – 101)—an ever present reminder of the poem's author.

At the mention of “*Messer lo frate sole*” (*Sir Brother Sun*; verse 2, line 2) (m. 103) the musical texture changes dramatically, contrasting with the more elaborate, rhythmically charged refrain music that preceded it. A chorale-like texture in the winds provides the accompaniment for the baritone's lilting melody, marked *dolce* (see figure 2.14). The harmonic palette is largely diatonic, wavering between tonic and dominant sonorities (F major and C major respectively). At measures 118–119, a D major harmony coincides with the word “*splendore*” (*splendor*), a word that Liszt clearly sought to emphasize. Though a relatively common harmony (V/ii), the fact that this D major sonority follows after an F major chord contributes to a particular kind of effect. Harmonic movement by thirds involving major chords, many scholars have noted, is a favorite device of Romantic composers—particularly Liszt—to evoke a sense of wonderment and awe.⁷² As Leonard Meyer explains, movement from an F-major triad to a D-major triad creates an arresting effect because “in tonal syntax it is highly probable that if motion is by thirds, a major triad will be followed by a minor one. Consequently, when a major triad follows instead, it seems transcendently radiant.”⁷³ Liszt further sets the word “*splendore*” in relief by having it coincide with the entrance of the full strings section (see figure 2.15). Also striking is what follows after mm. 118–119. Although we expect V/ii to resolve to a G major chord, Liszt defies the listener's expectations by presenting the resolution G harmonized with a C-minor triad (m. 120)

⁷² See Dolores Pesce, “Harmony, Gesture, and Virtuosity in Liszt's Revisions: Shaping the Affective Journeys of the Cypress Pieces from *Années de Pèlerinage* 3,” in *Liszt and Virtuosity*, ed. Robert Doran (Boydell & Brewer, 2020), 325; Leonard Meyer, *Style and Music: Theory, History and Ideology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 300; Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music: Music in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 101.

⁷³ Meyer, *Style and Music: Theory, History and Ideology*, 300.

Figure 2.14: F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol*, mm. 103 – 108 (concert pitch)

Moderato, non lento. $\text{♩} = 72$

Clarinet in B \flat

Bassoon

Horn in F 1

Horn in F 2

Baritone

dolce

p

dolce

Mes - ser lo fra - te so - le, il qua - le - gior - na ed

Figure 2.15: F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol*, mm. 116 – 122 (winds omitted)

The musical score for F. Liszt's *Cantico del Sol*, measures 116–122, is shown. The score includes parts for Baritone, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. A red box highlights measures 116–122. The Baritone part has lyrics: "con gran-des-plen - do - re di Te Si - gnor". The instrumental parts feature a melodic line in measures 116–122, marked *mf* (mezzo-forte), and pizzicato (pizz.) in measures 117–122. The Cello and Double Bass parts also feature a melodic line in measures 116–122, marked *mf* (mezzo-forte), and arco (arco) in measures 117–122.

As the Sun verse draws to a close, the music shifts to the relative minor. Although a D minor harmony never materializes, the solemn long-held chords that conclude the section (mm. 129 – 132)—G major to E minor to A major—imply this modulation (Dm: IV – ii – V). A brief unaccompanied baritone solo follows (mm. 133 – 137), but it falls short by one note of stating *St. Francis's motive*. The orchestra reenters at measure 137, launching into the first iteration of the C refrain, set to line 2 of the verse: “*Laudato sia per Messer lo frate sole*” (*Praised be you through Sir Brother Sun*). It is followed immediately at measure 168 by refrain A set to line 1. Together with refrains A and B at mm. 56 – 95, they create a frame around lines 3–5 of the verse. As in the

earlier instance, scalar passagework over a dominant pedal (on C) brings the refrain music to an end.

3. *Sister Moon* (mm. 181 – 225)

<i>Laudato sia mio Signore per suor luna e per le stelle le quali in cielo hai formate clare e belle.</i>	<i>Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.</i>
---	---

Unaccompanied, the baritone now sings *St. Francis's motive* in full, marking the beginning of the third verse (mm. 181 – 187). Capturing the perceived delicate character of the Moon—a feminine noun in both Italian and French—Liszt's music for the third verse stands in stark contrast to the vigorous refrain music that precedes it. The last refrain having ended on a C major harmony prolonged over nine measures (mm. 173 – 181), allows Liszt to modulate via common-tone to A minor. The baritone sings a lyrical melody in long-held notes marked *dolce* while, in the background, a texture of cascading dyads from the A minor sonority in the flutes evokes the shimmering of stars in the night sky (see figure 2.16). The harmonic progression in A minor is conventional: i to V/V resolving to V. Then, at measure 205, on the word "*Cielo*" (*Heaven*), Liszt effects a direct shift to A major by changing the key signature. This modal shift from minor to major not only sets the word *Cielo* in relief, but carries with it an overall "brightening" effect, appropriate to an evocation of the Heavens. At the same time, Liszt also thins out the orchestration. From this point on, the voice proceeds accompanied only by the strings, the viola providing an expressive countermelody over it. Although a refrain does not follow after the Moon verse, Liszt repeats the opening line of the verse—"Laudato sia, Dio mio Signor, per suor luna e per le stelle" (*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars*)—at mm. 211–225, rounding out the section. Interestingly, this final phrase employs the rhythm associated with refrain A, subtly

referencing its text: *Laudato sia mio Signor con tutte le creature* (*Praise be You, my Lord, with all your creatures*).

Figure 2.16: F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol*, mm. 188 – 194 (concert pitch)

Flute

Clarinet in B \flat

Bassoon

Baritone

dolce, man non troppo piano

p dolce

dolcissimo

per suor lu - na

4. *Brother Wind* (mm. 225 – 263)

*Laudato sia mio Signore per **frate vento**
E per l'aere e nuvolo e sereno
ed ogni tempo,
Per li quali dai a tutte creature
sostentamento.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through **Brother Wind**,
and through the air, cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather,
through whom You give sustenance
to Your creatures.*

Since no refrain follows after the Moon verse, the music segues immediately to the Wind verse, which uses the refrains' rhythmic ostinato in the strings as an accompaniment figure. The A major of verse 3 continues into verse 4, helping to tonicize D minor on the word "*Vento*" (*Wind*) at measure 233. To depict the vigorous might of the Wind, the fourth verse relies on loud dynamics and a minor palette, together with certain programmatic devices in the orchestration. Though more restrained than other musical depictions of storms from Liszt's output, the *Cantico*'s Wind verse

does bring to life vivid imagery of turbulent weather.⁷⁴ Timpani rolls, thus far used only sparingly, create a rumble suggestive of thunder while an undulating figure in the clarinets, oboes, and bassoons evokes the ebb and flow of wind gusts (mm. 233 – 238) (see figure 2.17). The combination of these specific musical gestures and devices tends to be associated with the so-called Tempest Style. As Janice Dickensheets explains, “the Tempest Style is usually cast in a minor mode. Wind is represented in the frequent use of ... running eighth-note patterns that either undulate or change directions unexpectedly; trills in the timpani signify thunder.”⁷⁵ At measure 239, the D minor harmony, which had been sustained for six bars, shifts to the new key of B-flat major, using the vi chord as a pivot. A half cadence in B-flat major at measure 255 concludes the Wind verse, with the music segueing immediately at that point to the B refrain, again set to line 1 of verse 2. The chorus joins the baritone, singing in unison the B refrain material now in B-flat major, doubled by the orchestra. The refrain music unfolds as expected, until the sequential pattern is broken at measure 261 on the note Eb. Here the music ventures in a new direction, seemingly shifting into E-flat minor. Triadic figurations, played by the strings in unison, prolong this E-flat minor harmony for 14 measures (mm. 261 – 274). This material serves as an instrumental transition leading into the Water verse, beginning at measure 274. At measure 275, a dominant seventh chord on Ab leads to a new key: D-flat major. Retroactively, it now becomes apparent that the E-flat minor sonority in measures 261 – 274 was not in fact a new key, but rather an extended ii chord in the new key of D-flat major (part of a ii – V⁷ – I progression).

⁷⁴ Some notable examples include *Orage* from the first *Années des pèlerinage* (LW A159), the “miracle” movement from *Christus* (LW I7), and *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves* (LW A219), which the present study addresses in detail in a subsequent chapter.

⁷⁵ Janice Dickensheets, “The Topical Vocabulary of the Nineteenth Century: Styles and Topics,” *Journal of Musicological Research* 31, no. 2–3 (April 2012): 115.

Figure 2.17: F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol*, mm. 233 – 238 (concert pitch)

Oboe

Clarinet in B \flat

Bassoon

Timpani

Baritone

mf *cresc.* *tr* *p*

Ven - to e per l'ae - re - e nu - vo lo e se

5. *Sister Water* (mm. 274 – 303)

*Laudato sia mio Signore per suor acqua,
La quale e molto utile ed umile
e preziosa e casta.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through **Sister Water**,
who is very useful and humble
and precious and chaste.*

Following the turbulent setting of the Wind verse, Liszt now chooses to drastically change the music's character to depict the subject of the fifth verse: Water (mm. 274 – 303), which the *Canticle*'s text describes as *useful*, *humble*, *precious* and *chaste*. Significantly, two of these adjectives—humble and chaste—epitomize Franciscan virtues. As Moloney explains, we might

view water as humble because its nature is to always flow to the lowest possible level; thus, it naturally obeys Jesus's command to his disciples to "take the lowest place" (Luke 14:10).⁷⁶

In some of his piano compositions—most notably *Au bord d'un source* (LW A159) and *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* (LW A283)—Liszt succeeded in capturing the sounds and motion of fountains and crystalline streams of water, establishing the definitive model for Impressionist composers like Ravel and Debussy.⁷⁷ In the *Cantico*, however, Liszt's task was a different one. Rather than merely evoking a watery soundscape, here the composer sought to represent the essential qualities of Water personified as described in St. Francis's poem. Whereas the preceding Wind music had employed the might of the full orchestra throughout, Liszt thins out the texture for the Water verse, leaving only the strings and woodwinds. We might interpret this economy of instrumentation as reflecting Water's humility, as well as its transparency and purity. Marked *piano* and *tranquillo con grazia*, the music unfolds delicately—the baritone carrying an expressive melody in long-held notes. Uninterrupted running eighth notes in the clarinets and violins serve as an accompaniment figure and suggest gently undulating waves, supported by sustained notes in the bassoons and lower strings. The flutes and horns enter at measures 277 and 283 respectively, adding countermelodies. *Dolce* and always *legato*, this intricate multi-layered texture captures the fluidity of water. Immediately after the word "*preziosa*" (*precious*) at measure 294, the voice rests, and every instrument drops out except the flutes, clarinets and violins. The baritone alone then concludes the verse, singing the words "*preziosa e casta*" (mm. 298 – 303). By having these words sung unaccompanied, Liszt sets them in relief.

⁷⁶ Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His "Canticle of Brother Sun" Reassessed*, 132.

⁷⁷ See Thomas Hoi-Ning Lee, "Evocations of Nature in the Piano Music of Franz Liszt and the Seeds of Impressionism" (DMA doc., University of Washington, 2016), 134–65.

6. *Brother Fire* (mm. 303 – 408)

<i>Laudato sia mio Signore per frate fuoco, Per lo quale Tu illumini la notte, Ed ello è bello e giocondo e robustissimo e forte.</i>	<i>Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom You light the night, and he is beautiful and playful and very robust and strong.</i>
--	--

As Liszt may have known from reading about the saint, Francis's respect for fire was so great that he refused to put out any flames, even when his own clothing caught fire from sitting too close to the hearth.⁷⁸ Psalms and passages from both the Old and New Testaments speak of light as emanating from God himself. Psalm 76:4, for example, describes God as being "radiant with light." Therefore, fire—as a natural source of light—might represent God's omnipresence. Similarly, in Exodus 13:21, we read that "the Lord went before them ... by night in a pillar of *fire* to give them *light*." Finally, Psalm 78:14 speaks of God having "led [his people] all the night with a *fiery light*."⁷⁹ Liszt clearly recognized the spiritual significance of the *Fire* stanza, to which he devoted more music than any other natural element in the poem.

Even the largest fires, capable of engulfing large areas in a matter of seconds, start out as a single spark, which then grows gradually into ever more robust flames. Liszt's musical depiction of fire captures this process with remarkable inventiveness. The setting of the *Fire* verse starts at measure 303, in D-flat major, and follows immediately after the *Water* verse. Instead of including an intervening refrain, Liszt embeds the refrain A material in the orchestral texture. At the outset, its theme is heard *piano* in the bassoons, doubled by the cellos and double basses. Always *piano*, the higher strings play rapidly ascending scales over *sul ponticello* tremolos, illustrating the flickering of flames. The baritone enters at measure 308 singing a melody based on the A refrain

⁷⁸ Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His "Canticle of Brother Sun" Reassessed*, 132.

⁷⁹ Moloney, 133.

material. With the word “*fuoco*” (*fire*), at measure 317, the music tonicizes G-flat major. Then, at measure 331, the text shifts from praising God for fire and its usefulness, to listing the personified element’s attributes (*handsome, merry, vigorous and strong*). Here the text is matched to an ascending melodic line in the baritone, which grows louder with the statement of each of these adjectives. The recognizable rhythmic ostinato of the refrains, played by the woodwinds, helps in building a crescendo. This moment is also delineated by a change of key signature, a prolongation of D major harmony, and a thickening of the orchestral texture. Increases of textural density of this sort—or “structural crescendi,” as Márta Grabócz calls them—are a common feature of Liszt’s music used to articulate formal sections and generate climaxes.⁸⁰ Notably, since the harmonic movement from G-flat major to D major at m. 331 involves chromatic mediants—it creates a striking effect, especially because these two major sonorities share only one common tone (Gb/F#). The music then progresses through another mediant relation, from D major to B-flat major in measure 339, where the music reaches a powerful climax on the word “*forte*.” This forceful culmination unmistakably represents the imposing might of a great fire. After this loud climax, all instruments drop out at measure 346, then the baritone, singing unaccompanied, introduces musical refrain C, which sets line 1 of the verse (mm. 354 – 366). The orchestra rejoins at measure 355, followed later by the chorus, launching into consecutive statements of the C, A and B refrains—all in F major.

⁸⁰ Márta Grabócz, *Morphologie des œuvres pour piano de Liszt: Influence du programme sur l’évolution des formes instrumentales* (Paris: Kimé, 1996), 128.

7. Mother Earth (mm. 408 – 454)

*Laudato sia mio Signore
per nostra **madre terra**,
La quale ne sostiene e governa,
E produce diversi frutti
e coloriti fiori ed erbe.*

*Praised be You, my Lord,
through our **Mother Earth**,
who sustains and governs us,
and who produces various fruit
with colored flowers and herbs.*

The verse addressed to Mother Earth begins with a final iteration of *St. Francis's motive*, sung by the solo baritone unaccompanied (mm. 408 – 414).

In his poem, St. Francis draws a link between the Sun and the Earth, who are addressed as “Sir” and “Mother” respectively rather than exclusively by their expected fraternal titles, a connection that Liszt recognized and reflected it in his musical setting. As the manuscript of the 1862 version shows, he originally used virtually the same musical material for both the Sun and Earth verses. This design allowed Liszt to achieve structural symmetry by having the Sun and the Earth frame the four central verses, which call upon the Moon, the Wind, Water and Fire. However, in 1881 Liszt re-envisioned the Earth verse altogether, setting it in a new key and changing its time signature from 3/4 to common-time (see figure 2.19 for a comparison). The sources show that this was a last-minute decision. For one, the change is not reflected in the contemporary piano version written in 1881. Additionally, the new Earth verse survives as a page-insert in Liszt’s hand added to the copyist’s proof (folio 65; see figure 2.18). This is by far the most substantial revision in the work’s final version. Presumably, Liszt may have wished to draw a distinction between the Sun and the Earth, and their respective roles. Thus, he chose to highlight Earth’s *motherly* role by starting her music—not in F major, as originally conceived—but in A-flat major, a key he consistently used in connection with love.⁸¹ Liszt’s compositions in A-flat include the three

⁸¹ See Paul Merrick, “Original or Doubtful? Liszt’s Use of Key in Support of His Authorship of Don Sanche,” *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 34, no. 3/4 (1992): 430.

Petrarch Sonnets in their original song version, two of the three *Liebestraume* songs, and the “Gretchen” movement from the *Faust Symphony*, among others. All these examples, Merrick explains, have either words or a program, and it is evident that their common theme is love.⁸² The change of key may also stem from Liszt’s desire to evoke a specifically *feminine* earth next to the masculine sun. A musical reason—related to the overall tonal plan of the composition—may also underlie Liszt’s decision to change the tonality of the Earth verse. It will be noted that the *Cantico* is written in the key of F major, the tonality in which the work begins and ends, and to which it returns for every refrain. On the other hand, each verse addressed to the elements begins in a tonality that lies a third away from F major (A minor for the Moon verse, D minor for the Wind verse, and D-flat major for the Water and Fire verses). A-flat completes this cycle. Thus we might surmise that Liszt changed the tonality of the Earth verse—from F major to A-flat major—in order to round off his tonal plan.

⁸² Merrick, 430.

Figure 2.18: “Mother Earth” verse. Full page insert in Liszt’s hand added to copyist’s proof of 1881 version of *Cantico del Sol*. D-WRgs. GSA 60/Dep. H 4 (folio 65).

Concetto Blatt. zu Seite 49, 50 -

Metronom 72

Clarinet *mf*

Flute *mf*

Cori 1-2 *mf*

3-4
Canto *f*

nostra madre terra la quale ne sostiene e so-verte
unsre Mütter er-de die holdt uns hegt und nähret nähret Wartet

Violoncello *mf*

Contrabasso *mf*

Figure 2.19a: F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol*, “Mother Earth” verse (1862 version)

no - stra Ma - dre Ter - ra la qua - le ne so - sten - ta

dolce espress.

Figure 2.19b: F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol*, “Mother Earth” verse (1881 version)

no - stra - Ma - dre Ter - ra la qua - le - ci so - sten - ta -

8. *Forgiveness; Promise of life everlasting* (mm. 454 – 581)

*Laudato sia mio Signore, per
quelli che perdonano per tuo amore,
E sostengono infirmitade e tribolazione.
Beati quelli che sostegnarranno in pace,
Che da Te altissimo saranno
incoronati.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through
those who give pardon for Your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, shall they be
crowned.*

Following the section about “Mother Earth” comes the verse which bore greatest significance for Liszt, and around which he built the climax of the entire work. This is also the verse which, in Ozanam’s retelling, God endowed with mystical power to bring bitter enemies to reconciliation.⁸³ Starting at measure 437, assuming the role normally accorded to the unaccompanied solo baritone, the strings play transitional material based on the cruciform melody. Reduced rhythmic activity and sparse harmonies then set the stage for what Paul Merrick calls “the best music of the piece,” starting at m. 454.⁸⁴ Instead of presenting one of the musical refrains

⁸³ “Then he ordered his followers to go ... sing in chorus the new verse. The disciples obeyed and, at the chanting of his words, to which God seemed to lend a secret virtue, the adversaries embraced each other in their penitence, and asked pardon.” See page 49 – 50 of the present chapter, and Appendix B.

⁸⁴ Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt*, 246.

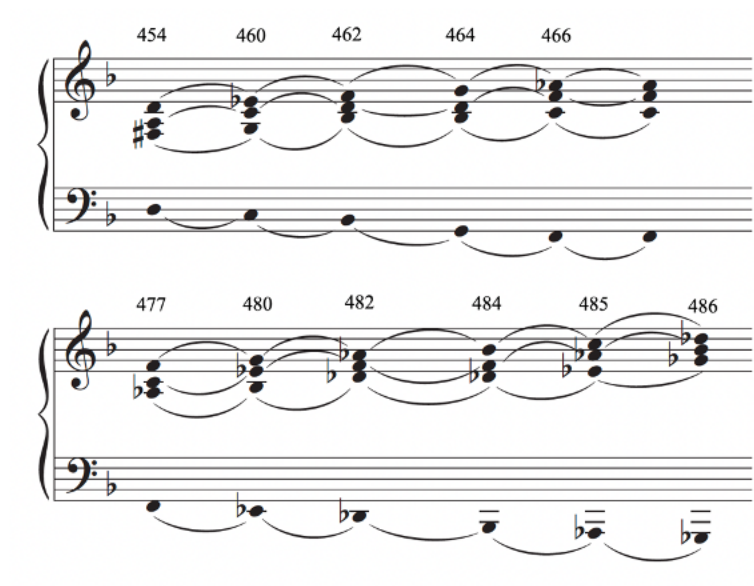
heard up to this point, Liszt composes entirely new material for the text “*Laudato sia mio Signor!*” (*Praised be You, my Lord*), thus transporting the music into a different realm, and creating a separation between the verses addressing God’s inanimate creations and those addressing humankind.⁸⁵ Liszt achieves a uniquely mystical effect through a gentle pulsating accompaniment pattern in the strings metrically offset by half a beat. Sustained chords in the woodwinds help carry the baritone, whose melodic line—marked *contemplativo*—traces a slow stepwise ascent from D to A-flat, and then from F to D-flat (mm 454 – 488). The underlying harmonies exemplify what Richard Cohn calls *maximally smooth voice leading*.⁸⁶ That is, individual chord tones do not move according to the rules of functional tonality, but rather by the smallest possible interval—generally major and minor seconds—to form new harmonies.⁸⁷ The progression creates a striking effect. Additionally, the outermost voices move in contrary motion, unfolding like a wedge progression. Figure 2.20, a harmonic reduction of the entire passage, illustrates the process.

⁸⁵ As will be recalled, St. Francis wrote the eighth stanza of the *Canticle* roughly a year after the rest of the poem, prompting Dorothea Redepenning to intriguingly suggest that this ethereal interlude between verses 7 and 8 might represent that lapse of time. See Dorothea Redepenning, “Die Franziskus-Thematik Bei Franz Liszt Und Sein Cantico Del Sol,” in “*Laudato Si, Mi Signore, per Sora Nostra Madre Terra*”: *Zur Ästhetik Und Spiritualität Des “Sonnengesangs” in Musik, Kunst, Religion, Naturwissenschaften, Literatur, Film Und Fotografie. Interdisziplinäres Symposium Der Hochschule Für Musik Und Darstellende Kunst in Frankfurt Am Main 6-8 Juni 2001*, ed. Ute Jung-Kaiser (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2002), 186.

⁸⁶ Richard Cohn, “Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions,” *Music Analysis* 15, no. 1 (March 1996): 9–40.

⁸⁷ See also Paul A. Bertagnolli, “The Choral Music of Franz Liszt,” in *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music*, ed. Donna M. Di Grazia (New York: Routledge, 2013), 410–30.

Figure 2.20: F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol*, harmonic reduction, mm. 454 – 486



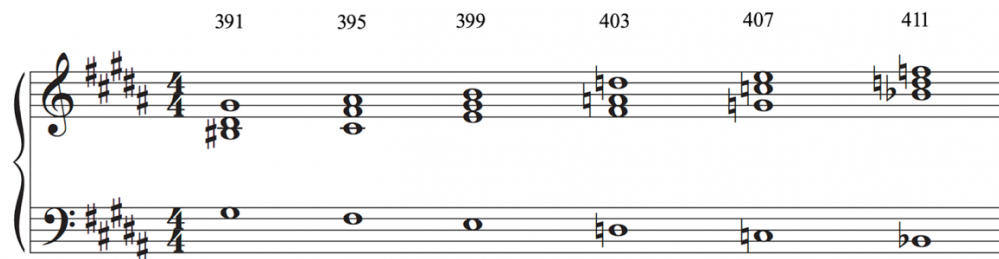
Notably, here Liszt turns to a particular type of harmonic progression that he often employed when evoking spiritual sublimity. Thanks to Lina Ramann, the composer’s own explanation on the symbolic meaning of this progression has come down to us. In 1902, Ramann published her important *Liszt-Pädagogium*—a collection of Liszt’s performance instructions for his own works, based on notes taken by pianists present at his masterclasses. In a chapter devoted to the piano piece *Mosonyi’s Grab-Geleit* (LW A249), Ramann records Liszt’s comments about a passage featuring a descending scale in the bass, which unfolds over several measures beneath changing harmonies in the right-hand part:

In this scale “without beginning and without end,” due to its sublime grandeur, the Master recognized material suitable for the symbolization and expression of ideas that refer to the immutable, to the eternal. He achieved this by means of two types of harmonization: in a religious tone, as a symbol and expression of *blissful peace elevated above the earthly*, as for example in the “Magnificat” of his *Dante-Symphonie*; in an earthly tone, to give voice to *the eternal and oppressive pain of the earth*, as for example in Lenau’s *Der traurige Mönch*. In the latter piece Liszt makes use

of dissonances, while in the former [he makes use] of consonant harmonies.⁸⁸

The passage in *Cantico del Sol* illustrated in figure 2.20 is constructed in the same manner as the excerpts described by Ramann. It features a descending scale in the bass unfolding over several measures beneath changing *consonant* harmonies, which, in Ramann's paraphrase, symbolize "blissful peace elevated above the earthly." It also shares with these excerpts a rising melody over the descending bass line (see figure 2.21a & b). Situated at this particular juncture within the work, this striking passage anticipates the spiritual message conveyed in verse 8, which for the first time treats mankind: God's promise of life everlasting awaits those who forgive and bear life's trials with grace.

Figure 2.21a: F. Liszt, *Dante Symphony*, "Magnificat," harmonic reduction, mm. 391 – 411.



⁸⁸ "In dieser Skala 'ohne Anfang und ohne Ende,' mit ihrer weiche Modulationen verbannenden, erhabenen Größe, erkannte der Meister ein Material zur Symbolisierung und zum Ausdruck von Ideen, die auf das Unabänderliche, Ewige sich beziehen. Zu diesem Trägeramt gestaltete er sie mittels seiner ihr entrissenen Harmonisierung nach zwei Richtungen hin: nach religiöser als Symbol und Ausdruck des über das Irdische erhabenen seligen Friedens, wie z. B. in dem Magnificat seiner Dante Symphonie – und im Gegensatz zu diesem Frieden, nach irdischer Richtung das düster-ewige Leid der Erde, wie z. B. in seiner Musik zu Lenau's 'Traurigem Mönch.' Hier griff Liszt zu Dissonanzen, dort zu konsonierenden Harmonien." Lina Ramann, *Liszt-Pädagogium. Klavier-Kompositionen Franz Liszt's, Nebst Noch Unedirten Veränderungen, Zusätzen Und Kadenzen Nach Des Meisters Lehren Pädagogisch Glossirt ...* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1901), 13. Translation mine.

Figure 2.21b: F. Liszt, *Der traurige Mönch*, harmonic reduction, mm. 1 – 11.



As the harmonic reduction in figure 2.15 shows, the ethereal progression culminates on a richly voiced G-flat major harmony at measure 486, which then dissolves into a single instrumental line. G-flat, enharmonically reinterpreted as F-sharp, then becomes the first note of a final unaccompanied baritone solo (mm. 494 – 501). From this remote tonal area, suspended one semitone above the home key, emerges Liszt’s poignant setting of the eighth verse (mm. 494 – 568).

As will be recalled, St. Francis added the eighth verse to the *Cantic* for the purpose of brokering peace between the bishop and the *podestà*, whose feud had generated a crisis in Assisi.⁸⁹ As Redeppening has noted, Liszt sets this verse in relief not only by making it the longest section of the entire work, but also by employing a lofty *arioso* style that contrasts with all that has preceded it.⁹⁰ The indication *con somma espressione e dolcezza* at m. 503 reflects the affect Liszt wished to associate with the first line of the verse, “*Laudato sia mio Signor per quelli che perdonano per Tuo amore*” (*Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love*). At the sounding of the first harmonies, starting at m. 503, the tonality is already ambiguous. Yet, at the point where the text speaks of “*infirmirate e tribolazione*” (*infirmity and tribulation*;

⁸⁹ See pages 49 – 50 of the present chapter.

⁹⁰ Redeppening, “Die Franziskus-Thematik bei Franz Liszt und sein Cantic del Sol,” 187.

mm. 515 – 526), chromatic inflections truly taint the melodic line, while the underlying harmonies grow increasingly dissonant. Ab and Db accidentals suggest the home key's parallel minor but, once again, the principle of *maximally smooth voice-leading*—not the rules of functional harmony—determines the direction of the harmonic progression (see figure 2.22). The remote sonorities of this passage stand in sharp relief against the largely diatonic harmonic language that pervades the work and thus sound harsher to the ear. Here again, Liszt presents a descending scale in the bass that unfolds over several measures beneath changing harmonies. However, this time the harmonies are *dissonant*, appropriately evoking the “eternal and oppressive pain of the earth.”⁹¹ A succession of sigh-motives in the horns, marked *dolente* (mm. 519 – 521), reinforces the inherent sorrowfulness of the text. Once the phrase has reached its expressive peak, the texture suddenly dissolves into monody at measure 528.

⁹¹ See quote by Ramann on page 106.

Figure 2.22: F. Liszt, *Cantico del Sol*, harmonic reduction, mm. 514 – 526.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system, starting at measure 514, features a Baritone vocal line in the bass clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: "e so - sten - go - no in - fir - mi - ta - te e". The second system, starting at measure 521, features a Baritone vocal line in the bass clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff. The lyrics are: "tri - bu - la - zi - o - - - - ne." The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes, with some measures featuring a melodic line in the right hand.

As Paul Bertagnolli points out, Liszt typically achieved the greatest expressive poignancy when subjects were personally significant.⁹² His setting of the eighth verse of *Cantico del Sol* is a case in point. The last two lines of that verse convey the idea that those who endure their earthly suffering with grace shall be granted entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven (“*they will be crowned*”). Numerous anecdotes from St. Francis’s life reflect his firm belief in this notion. When one of his disciples suggested that he ask God to treat him more mildly, “for he seemed to have laid his hand on [him] more heavily than he should,” the saint rebuked him for questioning God’s judgement and declared:

⁹² Bertagnolli, “The Choral Music of Franz Liszt,” 413.

I thank you, Lord God, for all these sufferings of mine; and I ask you, my Lord, if it pleases you, to increase them a hundredfold, because it will be most acceptable to me, that you do not spare me, afflicting me with suffering, since the fulfillment of your will is an overflowing consolation for me.⁹³

Chapter XXVIII of *The Deeds of Blessed Francis and His Companions*—the 14th-century text, likely by friar Ugolino Brunforte, which was translated into the Tuscan dialect as the *Fioretti di San Francesco d'Assisi*—relates the saint's encounter with a leper whose illness had driven him mad with anger and frustration. Francis advised him: "Dear brother, be patient, because the evils inflicted on our bodies provide the salvation for the soul, if they are endured with serenity."⁹⁴ Similarly, in his *Major Legend*, Bonaventure records: "But when he [Francis] was tortured by harsh bodily suffering, he called his tribulations not by the name of 'pains' but of 'Sisters.'"⁹⁵ Thomas of Celano, proposing an explanation for the saint's attitude towards suffering, wrote: "I believe the principal reason for his suffering was, as he affirmed about others, that in bearing them there is great reward."⁹⁶ Given his resigned acceptance of suffering, St. Francis's disciples considered him "another Job."⁹⁷

There is evidence that Liszt—at least towards the end of his life—found great value in the notion of bearing one's tribulations with patience. Research by Dolores Pesce has broadened our understanding of Liszt's final years. In her study of the aging composer, Pesce demonstrates that "Liszt overcame the despair brought on by grief, failures, and personal insecurities through a

⁹³ Cited in Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His "Cantic of Brother Sun" Reassessed*, 91.

⁹⁴ Armstrong, Hellmann, and Short, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 1999, 3:493.

⁹⁵ Armstrong, Hellmann, and Short, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 1999, 2:641.

⁹⁶ Armstrong, Hellmann, and Short, 2:384.

⁹⁷ Armstrong, Hellmann, and Short, 2:641.

Christian moral philosophy that embraced positive resignation to suffering, compassionate love, and trust in a just reward to come.” Specifically, Liszt identified with the Biblical figure of Job, whose faith is tested after enduring an unimaginable series of trials and misfortunes. Job finds peace only after reaching a state of complete resignation—a notion that helped Liszt understand human suffering. The composer also found solace in Christ’s “Sermon on the Mount,” which promised a just reward to those who suffer on earth. As Pesce explains, Liszt “found hope and consolation in the thought of a heavenly afterlife, made available to mankind through Christ’s suffering and death, and earned through an individual’s efforts here on earth.”⁹⁸

Given Liszt’s strong religious conviction and his belief in the Christian afterlife, we can assume that these particular lines in the *Canticle*—“*beati quelli che sostegnaranno in pace, che da Te, Altissimo, saranno incoronati*” (*blessed are those who endure [infirmity and tribulation] in peace, for by you, most high, shall they be crowned*)—bore special significance for the devout composer. Here again St. Francis’s words allude to the Bible: “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).⁹⁹

Liszt sets these lines of the verse, starting at measure 534, to what initially appears to be the same music used for the first two lines of the verse. However, when he gets to the line that refers to salvation—which would correspond musically to the “*infirmity and tribulation*” line—Liszt transforms the formerly chromatic music into a soaring diatonic melody, the dissonances expunged, suggesting that the promise of life everlasting can ease our troubles and absolve us of pain (mm. 547 – 554). Here again the rising melody functions in relationship to the bass line, which traces a linear descent from D₃ to G#₂. A powerful crescendo culminates on the symbolically

⁹⁸ Pesce, *Liszt’s Final Decade*, 111-129, 246-258.

⁹⁹ Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His “Canticle of Brother Sun” Reassessed*, 135.

significant word *incoronati* (*crowned*) at m. 559, at which point the music arrives on an E major triad, Liszt's religious key *par excellence*. The baritone sings the word *crowned* a second time, then the trumpets interject sounding a triumphant fanfare that outlines an E-major arpeggio (mm. 570 – 581). Here Revelation 11:15 comes to mind:

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet,
and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:
“The kingdom of the world has become
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah,
and He will reign for ever and ever.”

The fanfare concludes on the fifth scale degree B, then steps up to C-natural, which is reinterpreted as the dominant of F major. Here the baritone reenters and sings the word “*incoronati*” a third time, bringing the music back to the home key via a stepwise ascent from C to F, supported by a perfect authentic cadence.

The modulatory setting of the eight verse can be interpreted as enacting the promise of salvation, expressed musically as a promise of something stable to come but as yet unknown. At m. 587, the music goes straight into a triumphant coda that emanates from the word “*incoronati*.” Prepared by the unusual maneuver from B to C at m. 579 and the unanticipated ascent to and arrival in F major, we can interpret this moment in the music as emblematic of salvation itself—the entrance into a realm that had not yet been glimpsed in the journey towards it.¹⁰⁰

The coda brings back the refrain text taken from line 1 of verse 2, “*Laudato sia, Dio mio Signor, con tutte le creature*” (*Praise be to you, my Lord, and to all your creatures*) (mm. 587 – 665). By again invoking this line, present throughout the work as a unifying device, Liszt conveys through a final grand doxology an important message: Man alone is not worthy to praise God, but can join in God's self-praise as part of a total creation—one interconnected cosmic family

¹⁰⁰ I am grateful to Dr. Robert Snarrenberg for suggesting this compelling interpretation.

originating from the same loving creator.¹⁰¹ As the work draws to a close, the chorus in unison sings the word “*Laudato*” a total of *seven* times (mm. 620 – end), perhaps suggesting Liszt’s understanding of the theologically significant role the number plays in the poem.

Conclusion

Nearly 800 years after it was written, St. Francis’s *Canticle of Brother Sun* retains its vast appeal, and the remarkable frequency with which composers continue to set it to music is a testament to its everlasting relevance.¹⁰² Written in the early 1860s, Liszt’s setting of the *Canticle* is not only the first manifestation of the composer’s renewed interest in Franciscan spirituality—it is Liszt’s lasting musical monument to the glorification of St. Francis. The in-depth analysis of the *Cantico* undertaken in this chapter has revealed meaningful details about how Liszt responded to this sacred text, as well as which passages bore special significance for the composer. The work emerges as a deeply personal composition—a powerful song of praise rich with spiritual symbolism. Musically, Liszt foregrounds symbolically significant passages through the use of striking chord progressions that unfold over a descending bass line. A prominent feature of exalted moments in Liszt’s music, these progressions are intended to evoke spiritual sublimity, according to the composer’s own testimony. Throughout the *Cantico*, a musical motive taken from another Franciscan composition serves as a constant reminder of St. Francis himself. Liszt omits the poem’s final verse addressed to “Sister Death,” instead ending the work on a poignant climax built around the eight verse, elevating its message of salvation. Thus *Cantico del Sol* afforded Liszt not

¹⁰¹ Hammond, 237.

¹⁰² While Liszt appears to have been the first major composer to set St. Francis’s poem to music, *The Canticle* has since served as a source of inspiration for countless composers. Appendix C provides a long but by no means exhaustive list of their names, including Amy Beach (1867-1944), Carl Orff (1895-1982), and Leo Sowerby (1895-1968), whose setting of *The Canticle* earned him the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1944. See Timothy W. Sharp, “The Choral Music of Leo Sowerby: A Centennial Perspective,” *The Choral Journal* 35, no. 8 (1995): 11.

only the opportunity to pay tribute to his spiritual patron, but also served as a vehicle to express his hope in the promise of the afterlife.

Chapter 3:
Franciscan Legend No. 1:
St. François d'Assise: La prédication aux oiseaux.

In June 1863, Liszt moved into the Madonna del Rosario, a seventeenth-century monastery outside of Rome, which was to become the composer's permanent residence for the next five years.¹ This secluded setting offered Liszt much-needed peace and solitude, as well as plenty of time to compose and meditate. Though the accommodations were modest, Liszt's small room was furnished with an upright piano, and boasted a panoramic view of the city and surrounding countryside. Here, the composer brought to completion his two Franciscan *Legends* in 1863: *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, and *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*. The present and following chapter will examine each work in detail, respectively.

Liszt's *Legends*: Versions and Sources

Although Liszt's *Franciscan Legends* are best known as works for piano solo, scholars disagree about whether the piano versions or orchestral versions came first.² On the one hand, the more complex harmonic language of the piano pieces *might* be evidence that these are later reworkings. Additionally, Friedrich Schnapp points out that the autograph of the orchestral version of *St. Francis of Assisi* contains later addenda taken from the piano version, which would suggest that

¹ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 55.

² Dale John Wheeler, "Franz Liszt's Solo Piano Music from His Roman Period, 1862-1868" (DMA doc., University of Oklahoma, 1999), 149.

the orchestral versions preceded the piano scores.³ On the other hand, given that Liszt generally preferred composing first at the piano, Mária Eckhardt grants that the versions could well have originated in the reverse order.⁴ Of course, it is also possible that Liszt worked on both versions simultaneously. Nonetheless, all such theories will remain hypothetical until autograph manuscripts of the piano pieces are discovered. At present, the surviving sources are fragmentary and shed no light on the works' chronology. Only a single leaf containing bars 54 – 63 of the second Legend for piano, *St. Francis of Paola*, survives, held at the National Széchényi Library in Budapest (Ms. mus. 4.556),⁵ while any autograph manuscript of the piano version of the first *Legend* is missing altogether.⁶

The fact that Liszt wrote a simplified version of *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves* attests to the *Legend's* popularity. The complete autograph of this simplified version does survive and is also held at the National Széchényi Library (Ms. Mus. 15).⁷ According to a letter to his Paris publisher, dated October 11, 1866, Liszt had also intended to issue a simplified version of *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, but ultimately decided against it:

³ "The possibility that the [orchestral] scores were written prior to the piano version is supported by the later insertion of bars 77-81 and 128-135 to the orchestral score of *San Francesco d'Assisi* as they are incorporated into the piano version." Friedrich Schnapp, preface to *Legendes für Orchester*, by Franz Liszt (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1983), VI.

⁴ Mária Eckhardt, preface to *Zwei Legenden*, by Franz Liszt, ed. Ernst Günter Heinemann (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2004), VI.

⁵ Mária P. Eckhardt and Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (Budapest), *Franz Liszt's Music Manuscripts in the National Széchényi Library, Budapest* (Budapest: Akad. Kiadó, 1986), 106.

⁶ Regrettably, the autographs of the orchestral versions, which were once in the possession of August Göllerich, were sold in auction on 3 December 1975 and are now in private hands. See Friedrich Schnapp, preface to *Legendes für Orchester*, VII.

⁷ Eckhardt and Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (Budapest), *Franz Liszt's Music Manuscripts in the National Széchényi Library, Budapest*, 107.

The proofs of the two *St. François* were sent by post the day before yesterday. They contain almost no mistakes and publication can be undertaken immediately.

For Mr. Leroy's use I am holding the small manuscript of the simplified version of *St. François de Paule*. I have attempted to make it very playable without destroying the sense of the piece.

A similar operation with the *Predication aux Oiseaux* has hardly been successful, and I have given up attempting to simplify it, realizing that in substituting sixteenth notes for thirty-seconds, one changes the twittering of the birds to the gobbling of turkeys. Therefore let's not worry about it anymore, for there is no real equivalent for this type of effect, and pianists who do not know how to play trills have only to do without the song of the birds and imitate that of four-footed animals, if they so desire.⁸

As with his *Cantico del Sol di San Francesco*, evidence suggests that Liszt attached special significance to his *Franciscan Legends*. On July 11, 1863, shortly after moving into the Madonna del Rosario, Liszt received a visit from Pope Pius IX—an honor that made the composer immensely proud, as he told Franz Brendel in a letter dated July 18, 1863:

His Holiness Pope Pius IX visited the Church of the Madonna del Rosario, and hallowed my apartments with his presence. After having given His Holiness a small proof of my skill on the harmonium and on my work-a-day *pianino*, he addressed a few very significant words to me in the most gracious manner possible, admonishing me to strive after heavenly things in things earthly, and by means of my harmonies that reverberated and then passed away to prepare myself for those harmonies that would reverberate everlastingly.⁹

⁸ “Les épreuves des deux *St. François* ont été expédiées par la poste avant-hier. Elles ne contenaient presque pas de fautes et la publication peut se faire de suite. Je tiens à la disposition de Mr. Leroy le petit manuscrit de la version facilitée de *St. François de Paule*. J'ai tâché de la rendre très jouable sans pour cela détruire le sens de ce morceau. Une opération analogue ne m'a guère réussi avec *la Prédication aux Oiseaux*, et je renonce à la simplifier, m'étant aperçu qu'en substituant des doubles croches aux triples, on changeait le gazouillement des oiseaux en glougloutement de dindons. N'y pensons donc plus, car il n'existe pas d'équivalent pour ce genre d'effet, et les pianistes qui ne savent pas faire les trilles n'ont qu'à se passer du chant des Oiseaux et à imiter celui des quadrupèdes, s'il leur plait.” [Liszt to the Paris publisher Heugel, 11 October 1866]; unpublished letter quoted in Alfred Cortot, foreword to *Deux légendes*, by Franz Liszt (Paris: Editions Salabert, 1949), 5.

⁹ “Seine Heiligkeit der Papst Pius IX kam nach der Kirche der Madonna del Rosario und weihte meine Wohnzimmer durch Ihre Gegenwart. Nachdem ich dem Papste eine kleine Probe meiner Geschicklichkeit auf einem Harmonium und meinem Arbeits-Pianino dargelegt hatte, sprach derselbe in huldreichster Weise einige sehr bedeutungsvolle Worte zu mir, wodurch er mich ermahnte, dem Himmlischen im Irdischen nachzustreben und mich

Liszt chose none other than his first Franciscan Legend, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, to perform for the pontiff.¹⁰ While Liszt may have selected this work for its spiritual message or perhaps because its programmatic journey could be easily understood, it is worth entertaining another potential reason, which scholars have hitherto not considered. Before ascending to the papal throne, Pious IX had begun his religious career as a Franciscan Tertiary, joining the Order in 1821.¹¹ Thus, a musical depiction of St. Francis's famous miracle would likely have found receptive ears in the pope.

That the *Legends* were special to Liszt is also borne out by the fact that the composer gave their first public performance himself¹²—this at a time when his appearances on the stage were rare.¹³ Having retired from the concert platform in 1848, Liszt now generally entrusted his pupils to give the premieres of his new piano works. Hans von Bülow, for example, premiered the *Sonata in B minor* in 1857, and Hans von Bronsart premiered the *Piano Concerto in A major* that same year. Thus, the fact Liszt delighted audiences with both private and public performances of the *Legends* on more than one occasion¹⁴—even before they appeared in print—suggests the personal

durch meine vorüberschallenden Harmonien auf die ewig verbleibenden vorzubereiten.” [Liszt to Franz Brendel, 18 July 1863]. English translation from Franz Liszt, *Letters of Franz Liszt*, ed. La Mara, trans. Constance Bache, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), 55.

¹⁰ Lina Ramann, *Lisztiana: Erinnerungen an Franz Liszt in Tagebuchblättern, Briefen und Dokumenten aus den Jahren 1873-1886/87*, ed. Arthur Seidl and Friedrich Schnapp (Mainz: Schott, 1983), 88–89.

¹¹ See Agostino Gamelli, *The Franciscan Message to the World* (London: Burns & Oates, 1935), 200.

¹² Liszt gave the premiere of his *Franciscan Legends* at the Redoutensaal in Budapest, on August 29, 1865. His daughter Cosima, to whom the pieces are dedicated, sat in the audience alongside her then husband Hans von Bülow. See Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years*, 92.

¹³ Of all the piano works written in the 1860s, including—*Zwei Konzertetüden* (LW A218), *Berceuse* (LW A186), *Ave Maria* (LW A216/1), *Urbi et Orbi* (LW A228), *Vexilla regis prodeunt* (LW A226) *Klaviertück no. 1* (LW A116)—only the *Franciscan Legends* seem to have received public premieres by Liszt himself.

¹⁴ Besides the premiere of 1865 and the 1866 performance attended by Hanslick (see below), we can cite at least one other. On March 8, 1866, Liszt performed the *Legends* for an audience of about fifteen people at the salon of Princess Pauline Metternich in Paris. Among those present was Camile Saint-Saëns, who left a vivid account of the performance in his diary. See Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years*, 98.

connection he felt to these pieces. While the *Legends* generally met with a favorable reception, one can hardly be surprised by the fact that Liszt's nemesis—Eduard Hanslick—found them distasteful. After attending a performance by the composer himself in 1866, the critic wrote:

The worldly Liszt performed miraculously, but the Abbé Liszt performs miracles ... If, after all this, you examine the two pieces of music themselves, you find two ordinary brilliant concert studies, one of which spins out for a musical motive the twitter of birds, and the other imitates the roar of the sea. The pieces are grateful to a virtuoso, and not without some piquant spice of dissonance; of course, the birds preaching provide for the bravura of the right hand, and the walking on the waves for that of the left hand. These compositions might just as well have been called “*Les Amours des Oiseaux*” [The Affections of the Birds] and “*Souvenirs des Bain d'Ostende*” [Recollections of the Baths of Ostend], and ten years ago they probably would have received these titles. Perhaps Liszt will bring the rest of the saints before us, one by one, in the same pleasant manner. We must confess, this rigging out of the saintly halo for the concert hall, these hammering and trilling miracles make an unspeakably childish impression on us.¹⁵

By suggesting that an alternative title, such as “Recollections of the Baths at Ostend,”¹⁶ would have suited the second *Legend* equally well, Hanslick aims to highlight music's lack of connotative specificity.¹⁷ Yet, such an assessment reveals an incomplete understanding of the *Legends*, for their accompanying programs provide the requisite specificity. As the present analysis will show, Liszt went to great lengths to have the chronologically-ordered events in the written program map neatly onto the musical structure.

¹⁵ Eduard Hanslick, *Geschichte des Concertwesens in Wien. Aus dem Concertsaal: Kritiken und Schilderungen aus den letzten 20 Jahren des Wiener Musiklebens 1848-1868*, Vol. 2 (Vienna: W. Braumüller, 1869), 409-10; quoted in Walker, *Liszt: Final Years*, 59n.15.

¹⁶ Ostend is a coastal city in the Flemish region of Belgium known for its beaches, which would have been referred to as “baths” (*les bains*) in the nineteenth century.

¹⁷ In his famous treatise *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, Hanslick makes a similar argument about Gluck's aria “*Che farò senza Euridice*” from *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Although this music has long been admired for “the feeling of intense grief which it expresses in conjunction with [its text],” Hanslick remarks that the music would be at least equally effective if the aria instead expressed Orfeo's joy at recovering Euridice. Cited in Nicholas Cook, “Theorizing Musical Meaning,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 23, no. 2 (2001): 187.

State of Scholarship

Despite their popularity on the concert stage, Liszt's *Franciscan Legends* have attracted relatively scant scholarly attention. Of recent studies, two in particular deserve mention. In a 2008 article, Sorbonne researcher Grégoire Caux examines *Saint Francis of Assisi preaching to the birds*, and—at a more cursory level—*St. Francis of Paola walking on the waves*.¹⁸ Because the elements depicted in the *Legends* differ in important ways, Caux argues, each work warrants a different analytical approach. In other words, the flock of birds in the first *Legend* —“animate beings of a physical order”—cannot be equated with the raging waters of the second *Legend* nor be examined through the same analytical lens. Following the work of previous scholars, Caux explains the musical means by which Liszt conjures up images of nature in each composition. In the case of the first *Legend*, he explores how the composer endows the characters in the narrative—St. Francis and the birds—with vocal qualities to enact a dialogue between them. At a more abstract level, he considers the spatial dimension of the work and the way Liszt uses the piano's different registers to create the illusion of physical movement by the birds. As a result of Liszt's powerfully evocative musical devices, Caux argues that the piece emerges as a “sounding picture” (*tableau sonore*) which depicts the story in real time. Rather than drawing one overarching conclusion, Caux offers various useful observations and reflections that have informed the present study.

Most recently, Nicholas Susi has turned to Robert Bailey's concept of the “double-tonic complex” and Schenker's analytical methods to examine the tonal framework of Liszt's first Franciscan *Legend*.¹⁹ Although it may appear paradoxical to pair a methodology that supports the

¹⁸ Grégoire Caux, “Le Première Légende de Liszt: Saint François d'Assise: La Prédication Aux Oiseaux: Représentation d'un Tableau Sonore,” *Le Paon d'Héra: Gazette Interdisciplinaire Thématique Internationale/Hera's Peacock: An International Thematic Interdisciplinary Journal*. 4 (2008): *Saint François d'Assise/Saint Francis of Assisi* 4 (2008): 45–60.

¹⁹ Nicholas Susi, “Writing a Musical Icon: The Double-Tonic Complex in Liszt's Legend No. 1 ‘St. François d'Assise: La prédication aux oiseaux,’” *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 70–71 (2019–2020): 5–21.

projection of two tonal centers with a methodology that supports the projection of only a single tonal center, Schenkerian theory nicely compliments Susi's analysis by highlighting details of the background and middle-ground levels of the musical structure. Susi argues that the piece has two governing tonics—A and F-sharp—which Liszt juxtaposes and even combines, exploiting ambiguous and common harmonic functions. The present study counters Susi's claim about the work unfolding with two tonics, and offers an alternative interpretation of the tonal scheme centered around the work's narrative dimension.

Legend No. 1: St. Francis Preaching to the Birds

The first Franciscan *Legend* is one of Liszt's most explicit musical narratives—one through which the composer sought to convey a moving message about St. Francis's profound faith, and his tireless dedication to spreading the word of God to all he encountered. To express this message, Liszt chose as his vehicle one of the most famous episodes in St. Francis's life, the sermon to the birds, as recounted in chapter sixteen of the *Fioretti di San Francesco*.²⁰ In what follows, I argue that this work's narrative dimension is a function of Liszt's use of *topics*, the delineation of discrete *musical agents*, and the tension arising from a *story/discourse* dichotomy. It is the interplay between these elements—which will each be explained in detail—that generates an intelligible, plot-driven musical narrative. Liszt's own preface for the work, as published with the score, is provided below, followed by an English translation:

Ce qu'on pourrait appeler le *motif spirituel* de la Composition suivante est tiré d'un des plus touchants épisodes de la vie de Saint François d'Assise, raconté avec une inimitable grâce de naïveté dans

²⁰ *Fioretti di S. Francesco, Testi di lingua secondo la lezione adottata dal P. A. Cesari e con brevi note filologiche di P. Fraticelle* (Florence, 1854).

les *Fioretti di San Francesco*, petit livre devenu un des classiques de la langue italienne. Mon manque d'habileté, et peut-être aussi les bornes étroites de l'expression musicale dans une œuvre de petite dimension, appropriée à un instrument aussi dépourvu que le piano d'accents et de sonorités variées, m'ont obligé à me restreindre et à diminuer de beaucoup la merveilleuse surabondance du texte de la "prédication aux petits oiseaux." J'implore le "glorieux pauvre du Christ" ("Il glorioso poverello di Christo!") de me pardonner de l'avoir ainsi appauvri.

Voici le texte de "*Fioretti*:"

... "E passando oltre con quello fervore, levò gli occhi, e vide alquanti albori allato alla via, in su'quali era quasi infinita moltitudine d'uccelli; di che San Francesco si maravigliò; e disse a' compagni: Voi m'aspetterete qui nella via, e io andrò a predicare alle mie sirocchie uccelli, e entrò nel campo, e cominciò a predicare agli uccelli, ch'erano in terra; e subitamente quelli, ch'erano in sulli albori, se ne vennero a lui, e insieme tutti quanti istettono fermi, mentre che San Francesco compì di predicare; e poi anche non si partivano, insino a tanto ch'egli diè loro la benedizione sua, e secondo che recitò poi Frate Masseo a Frate Jacopo da Massa, andando San Francesco fra loro toccandoli colla cappa, nessun perciò si movea. La sostanza della predica di San Francesco fu questa: Sirocchie mie uccelli, voi siete molto tenute a Dio vostro Creatore, e sempre in ogni luogo il dovete laudare, imperocchè v'ha dato libertà di volare in ogni luogo, anche v'ha dato il vestimento duplicato e triplicato, appresso, perchè egli riserbò il seme di voi nell'arca di Noè, acciòchè la spezie vostra non venisse meno, ancora gli siete tenuti per lo elemento dell'aria, che egli ha diputato a voi – oltre a questo, voi non seminate, e non mietete; e Iddio vi pasce e davvi li fiumi e le fonti per vostro bene; davvi i monti e le valli per vostro rifugio; e gli alberi alti per fare i vostri nidi; e conciossiachè voi non sappiate filare, nè cucire, Iddio vi veste, voi e vostri figliuoli: onde molto v'ama il vostro Creatore, poi ch'egli vi dà tanti benefici, e però guardatevi, sirocchie mie, dal peccato della ingratitudine, e sempre vi studiate di lodare Iddio. Dicendo loro San Francesco queste parole, tutti quanti quelli uccelli cominciarono ad aprire i becchi, e distendere i colli, e aprire l'ali e reverentemente inchinare i capi infino in terra, e con atti e con canti dimostrare, che'l Padre Santo dava a loro grandissimo diletto: e San Francesco con loro insieme si rallegrava e diletta, e maravigliavasi molto di tanta moltitudine d'uccelli, e della loro bellissima varietà e della loro attenzione e familiarità; per la qual cosa egli in loro divotamente lodava il Creatore. Finalmente

compiuta la predicazione, San Francesco fece loro il segno della croce; e diè loro licenza di partirsi, e allora tutti quelli uccelli si levarono in aria con meravigliosi canti; e poi secondo la croce, ch'aveva fatta loro San Francesco si divisono in quattro parti; e l'una parte volò inverso l'Oriente, e l'altra inverso l'Occidente, e l'altra inverso lo Meriggio, la quarta inverso l'Aquilone, e ciascuna schiera n'andava cantando maravigliosi canti; in questo significando che, come da San Francesco gonfaloniere della Croce di Cristo era stato a loro predicato e sopra loro fatto il segno della croce, secondo il quale eglino si divisono in quattro parti del mondo; così la predicazione della Croce di Cristo rinnovata per San Francesco si dovea per lui e per li frati portare per tutto il mondo; i quali frati, a modo che gli uccelli, non possedendo nessuna cosa propria in questo mondo, alla sola provvidenza di Dio commettono la lor vita.” (Capitolo 16. – Fioretti di San Francesco.)

That which might be called the “spiritual motive” of the following composition, is drawn from one of the most touching episodes of the life of St. Francis of Assisi, which is told with an inimitable grace of simplicity in the *Fioretti di San Francesco* [The Little Flowers of St. Francis], a little book which has become a classic in the Italian language. My lack of facility, and perhaps also the narrow limits of musical expression possible in a work of small dimensions, assigned to an instrument so lacking in variety of accents and tone-color as the piano, have obliged me to restrain myself, and to greatly diminish the wonderful profusion of the text of the “Sermon to the little birds.” I implore *Il glorioso poverello di Cristo* (“The glorious poor servant of Christ”) to pardon me for having thus impoverished him.

The following is the text of the *Fioretti*:

“... And as he was going along further in that same fervor he raised his eyes, and along the road he saw some trees in which there was an almost infinite multitude of birds. Saint Francis marveled at this and said to his companions: ‘You wait for me here on the road, and I'll go and preach to my sisters the birds.’ He entered the field and he began to preach to the birds that were on the ground. And quickly the birds that were in the trees all came down to him and together remained still while Saint Francis finished preaching, and did not leave until he gave them his blessing. And, according to what Brother Masseo later told Brother James of Massa, as Saint Francis went among them, touching them with his tunic, not one of them moved. The substance of Saint Francis's sermon was this: ‘My sister birds, you owe much to God your Creator and you ought to praise

Him always and everywhere because He has given you the freedom to fly everywhere, and has given you two and three layers of clothing. He preserved the seed of you all in the Ark of Noah so that your kind would not disappear. And you are also indebted to Him for the element of air that He assigned to you. Furthermore you neither sow nor reap, and God feeds you, and gives you the rivers and springs for your drink; and He gives you the mountains and valleys as your refuge, the high trees to make your nests; and since you do not know how to spin or sew, He clothes you, you and your little ones. Therefore, your Creator loves you very much, since He gives you so many benefits. So beware, my sisters, of the sin of ingratitude and always strive to praise God.’ As Saint Francis was saying these words all those birds began to open their beaks, stretch their necks, open their wings, and reverently bend their heads to the ground, and with singing and movements showed that the holy father gave them great delight. And Saint Francis together with them was filled with joy and delight, and marveled greatly at such a multitude of birds and their beautiful variety, their attention and friendly manner. Therefore, he devoutly praised the Creator in them. Finally ending his sermon, Saint Francis made the sign of the Cross and gave them permission to leave. Then all those birds rose into the air with marvelous songs. Then, following the Cross Saint Francis made over them, they divided themselves into four groups: one group flew toward the east, one toward the west, one toward the south and one toward the north. And each group went singing marvelous songs. Thus they signified that just as Saint Francis, the banner-bearer of the Cross of Christ, had preached to them, and made the sign of the Cross over them, according to which they divided themselves into the four parts of the world, so, in the same way, the preaching of the Cross of Christ, renewed by Saint Francis, was to be carried through the whole world by himself and his brothers who, like the birds, possess nothing of their own in this world, and entrust their life only to the providence of God.”

(Chapter 16. – *Little Flowers of St. Francis*).²¹

The *Fioretti di San Francesco*, which enjoyed great popularity in the nineteenth century, are a vernacular translation of a Latin text titled *Actus beati Francisci et sociorum eius*.²²

²¹ This translation of the *Fioretti* passage is taken from Regis J. Armstrong, Wayne J. A. Hellmann, and William J. Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 3 (New York, London, Manila: New City Press, 1999), 593–94.

²² The exact title of the text is, in fact, *Quedam notabilia de beato Francisco et sociis eius et quidam actus eorum mirabiles*.

Composed between 1327 and 1341, the *Fioretti/Actus* are a collection of about seventy episodes of Franciscan history from its origins to the beginning of the fourteenth century.²³ As Antonio Montefusco explains, the *Fioretti* were written and compiled as a form of “suitable propaganda” to meet the demands—not of Franciscan friars—but of educated 14th-century readers. Thus, wealthy merchants who enjoyed reading the texts of Dante and Petrarch could have found in the *Fioretti* the history of the Franciscan Order told in the same style as secular literature, and in the more accessible vernacular rather than the original Latin.²⁴ It is this charmingly evocative narrative style that so appealed to nineteenth-century readers, including Liszt.

Although the version of “the sermon to the birds” described in the *Fioretti* differs from that recorded in verifiable sources that be traced directly to St. Francis, the essence of the anecdote is based on an actual event that shaped the saint’s attitude towards the natural world in a significant way.²⁵ Francis’s early biographer Thomas of Celano recounts that the saint was surprised when he saw that the birds did not fly away when he approached them: “But, not a little surprised that the birds did not rise in flight, as they usually do, he was filled with great joy and humbly begged them to listen to the word of God.”²⁶ The saint, who did not expect non-human creatures to react in such a way to his presence, believed that something miraculous had taken place. From that moment on,

²³ Antonio Montefusco, “The History as a Pendulum: The ‘Actus’ and the ‘Fioretti,’” *Franciscan Studies* 71 (2013): 363–64.

²⁴ Montefusco, 373.

²⁵ Roger D. Sorrell, “Tradition and Innovation, Harmony and Hierarchy in St. Francis of Assisi’s Sermon to the Birds,” *Franciscan Studies* 43 (1983): 399. That the sermon to the birds in fact took place is confirmed by its retelling in Thomas of Celano’s *Vita prima*, the earliest hagiography of St. Francis. Thomas (c. 1185 – c. 1265) is one of the earliest Friars Minor, who lived in close contact with St. Francis.

²⁶ Regis J. Armstrong, Wayne J. A. Hellmann, and William J. Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1 (New York, London, Manila: New City Press, 1999), 234.

“he began to blame himself for negligence in not having preached to the birds before, seeing that they had listened to the word of God with such great reverence.”²⁷ Thomas goes on:

And so it happened that, from that day on, he solicitously admonished all birds, all animals, and reptiles, and even creatures that have no feeling, to praise and love their Creator, for daily, when the name of the Savior had been invoked, he saw their obedience by personal experience.²⁸

Episodes of a similar nature involving St. Francis and creatures of the natural world eventually became commonplace, causing the saint’s disciples to grow accustomed to them. Brother Leo (? – c. 1270), secretary and confessor to St. Francis, provides an eyewitness account:

It is not surprising that creatures obeyed and showed him reverence because, as we who were with him very often saw, how much he loved them, and how much delight he took in them. His spirit was moved to so much piety and compassion toward them that he did not want to see when someone did not treat them decently. He used to speak with them with joy, inside and out, as if they were rational creatures, on which occasions he was frequently rapt in God.²⁹

As part of the nineteenth century’s rediscovery of St. Francis, several editions and translations of the *Fioretti* came into circulation, capturing the imagination of a new readership. Although the historical accuracy of several of the stories in the *Fioretti* cannot be proven, their appeal is undeniable. This was perhaps best expressed by Paul Sabatier, author of the first modern biography of St. Francis, who in 1893 wrote:

[the stories in the *Fioretti*] are legendary, worked over, exaggerated, false even, if you please, but they give us with a vivacity and intensity of coloring something that we shall search for in vain elsewhere—the surroundings in which St. Francis lived. More than any other biography the *Fioretti* transport us to Umbria, to the

²⁷ Thomas of Celano, *Vita Prima*, 58. Cited in Sorrell, “Tradition and Innovation, Harmony and Hierarchy in St. Francis of Assisi’s Sermon to the Birds,” 401.

²⁸ Thomas of Celano, *Vita Prima*, 58. Cited in Sorrell, 402.

²⁹ Armstrong, Hellmann, and Short, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 1999, 3:364.

mountains of the March of Ancona; they make us visit the hermitages, and mingle with the life, half childish, half angelic, which was that of their inhabitants.³⁰

Two copies of the *Fioretti*,³¹ in both Italian and French, were part of Liszt's personal library. We can surmise that the composer was inspired by the text's evocative prose and aimed to create an equally evocative musical response to one of its celebrated tales.

Legend No. 1 as Musical Narrative

Liszt's first *Franciscan Legend* is, unambiguously, a paradigm of narrative music. The title of the work, its lengthy plot-driven program, and the verbal cues in the score designating characters, make it clear that Liszt aimed to "tell a story" through musical means. Therefore, a narratological analysis is not only appropriate but, in fact, necessary for a full understanding of the work as envisioned and realized by the composer. Thus, my analysis draws on the work of numerous theorists and their understanding of musical narrative, with the recognition that no one theory can totally explain this complex phenomenon.

The issue of whether musical narrativity is intrinsic to a musical work has long been the subject of scholarly debate. Fred Maus, author of the *Grove* article on musical narrativity, explained the viability of musical narrative as rooted in our inherent impulse to listen to instrumental music as an unfolding story:

To understand the appeal of the idea of musical plot, it is better to begin from listeners' capacity for interpreting musical events

³⁰ Quoted in C.J.T. Talar, "Saint of Authority and the Saint of the Spirit: Paul Sabatier's Vie de S. François d'Assise," *The Catholic Historical Review* 82, no. 1 (January 1996): 29.

³¹ *Fioretti ou petites fleurs de Saint François d'Assise, avec la vie du frère Junipère et du bienheureux Frère Égide [...] Traduite de l'italien, sous la direction de M. Ch. Sainte-Foi* (Paris-Tournai: Casterman, 1860); *Fioretti di S. Francesco, testi di lingua secondo la lezione adottata dal P. A. Cesari e con brevi note filologiche di P. Fraticelle* (Florence, 1854).

anthropomorphically. Listeners can hear musical successions as story-like because they can find something like actions, thoughts, and characters in music. ... Musical events can be regarded as characters, or as gestures, assertions, responses, resolutions, goal-directed motions, references, and so on. Once they are so regarded, it is easy to regard successions of musical events as forming something like a story, in which these characters and actions go together to form something like a plot.³²

Additionally, music's capacity to trace trajectories from instability to stability, from tension to resolution, invites narrative interpretations:

The medium of tonal instrumental music permits the creation of musical problems and the depiction of attempts to solve them, and this pattern is crucial for the sense of musical events as motivated behavior. Analytical descriptions of problems and solutions can occupy various points in the spectrum from technical to emotive or anthropomorphic language.³³

Among those who contend that music has no intrinsic ability to narrate is semiologist Jean-Jacques Nattiez. He argues that, while music may have semantic potential, it is ultimately semantically unspecific. Therefore, whatever narrative we might draw from it is not to be found *in* the music, but rather *in the plot imagined and constructed by the* listeners to fill in the gaps:

If, in listening to music, I am tempted by the "narrative impulse," it is indeed because, on the level of the strictly musical discourse, I recognize returns, expectations and resolutions, but of what, I do not know. Thus I have a wish to complete through words what the music does not say because it is not in its semiological nature to say it to me.³⁴

Nattiez gives the example of two initials—"J & M"—within a heart carved on a tree trunk. To a passerby, the initials might conjure up various romantic narratives: "John loves Mary," or "Mary

³² Fred Everett Maus, "Music As Narrative," *Indiana Theory Review* 12 (1991): 6.

³³ Maus, 19–20.

³⁴ Jean-Jacques Nattiez and Katharine Ellis, "Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 115, no. 2 (1990): 244–45.

loves John,” “Here, John met Mary,” “Mary and John love each other,” “John and Mary will love each other forever,” etc. Here the narrative exists only on a potential level, which is then reconstructed by the person who perceives the initials and establishes between them a story to link them. Exactly as with the constituent parts of a musical work, the initials carved on a tree do not in themselves constitute a narrative: “they are the result of a narrative ‘thread’ and they trigger off an infinite number more in those who read them.”³⁵ It is in our nature, Nattiez explains, to establish such relationships every time we are given a minimum of two objects that we can place in a linear and temporal dimension.³⁶ Finally, he concludes:

In itself, and as opposed to a great many linguistic utterances, music is not a narrative and any description of its formal structures in terms of narrativity is nothing but superfluous metaphor. But if one is tempted to do it, it is because music shares with literary narrative the fact that, within it, objects succeed one another: this linearity is thus an incitement to a narrative thread which *narrativizes* music. Since it possesses a certain capacity for imitative evocation, it is possible for it to imitate the semblance of a narration without our ever knowing the content of the discourse.³⁷

Perhaps one of the most important arguments made against music’s narrative capability was put forth by Carolyn Abbate. In her influential 1989 article, later turned into a book,³⁸ Abbate sought to demonstrate that music lacks a past tense, which excludes it from the canon of narrative genres.³⁹ Through the past tense, genres like the novel or myth project a *narrator*—someone who

³⁵ Nattiez and Ellis, 246.

³⁶ Nattiez and Ellis, 246.

³⁷ Nattiez and Ellis, 257.

³⁸ Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton Studies in Opera (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

³⁹ Carolyn Abbate, “What the Sorcerer Said,” *19th-Century Music* 12, no. 3 (1989): 228.

lived past the end of the story. Given that music lacks a narrator's voice, Abbate argues, it cannot be classified as narrative. Furthermore, that which we call "narrative" falls under the Aristotelian category of *diegesis*—that is, of tales recounted rather than shown or acted out (*mimesis*). But music, Abbate explains, is fundamentally different:

not diegetic but mimetic; like any form of theater, any temporal art, [music] traps the listener in present experience at the beat of passing time, from which he cannot escape. Mimetic genres perform the story, in the present tense. They cannot disarm the story, or comfort us, by insisting upon its pastness.⁴⁰

Vera Micznik, on the other hand, argues that narrativity in music exists on a spectrum and that different works exhibit varying "degrees of narrativity." In her words, "music, on the basis of its distinct characteristics, may present qualities and processes that render it closer to, or farther from, the condition of narrative. Hence, to approach music with notions developed for narrative literary theory enriches our understanding of how this music communicates meanings beyond what conventional analysis can offer."⁴¹ These narrative musical features, which became increasingly commonplace in the nineteenth century, include: multiplicity and heterogeneity of themes with strong referential connotations, freedom from formal and tonal constraints, episodic formal construction, and musical processes imitating non-musical gestures.⁴² In short, Micznik argues that narrative interpretations of music are triggered not only by what Jean-Jacques Nattiez calls the

⁴⁰ Abbate, 228. On the subject of *mimesis* vs. *diegesis*, Michael Klein brings up an interesting irony. Music's limited capacity to represent actions and actors is a failure of *mimesis*, yet its inability to project a narrator is a failure of *diegesis*. Thus music seems to exist in "a shadow realm between *mimesis* and *diegesis*." See Michael Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative," *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 1 (2004): 24.

⁴¹ Vera Micznik, "Music and Narrative Revisited: Degrees of Narrativity in Beethoven and Mahler," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 126, no. 2 (2001): 244.

⁴² Micznik, 248.

narrative impulse, “but also by the special qualities of the music itself”⁴³ and by historically conditioned associative meanings. *Musical topics* in particular can endow music with greater potential to narrate. As we shall see, Liszt relied on musical topics to convey the programmatic ideas underlying his first Franciscan *Legend*. Thus, an understanding of this referential musical language, its connotative function, and how it is used to signify is crucial for the analysis of this work.

The notion of a musical “topic”—from the Greek *topos* (i.e. “commonplace”)—was first introduced in the scholarly literature by Leonard Ratner in 1980. He defined a musical topic as a “subject for musical discourse” that, when employed by the composers of a given period, represented specific affects or ideas readily comprehensible to contemporary listeners.⁴⁴ In his book *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style*, Ratner identified 27 such topics, ranging from simple dance types such as the gavotte and minuet (distinguished by their rhythmic patterns) to styles like the pastoral and *Sturm und Drang* (identified by their use of distinct musical gestures). Musical topics often have an iconic character associated with real-world phenomena: for example, the sigh or the musical depiction of rippling water.⁴⁵ Other topics carry conventional associations that originate in sound. For example, fanfares and horn calls.⁴⁶ Further, as Raymond Monelle explains:

Topics may be fragments of melody or rhythm, styles, conventional forms, aspects of timbre or harmony, which signify aspects of social or cultural life, and through them expressive themes like manliness,

⁴³ Micznik, 199.

⁴⁴ Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer, 1980), 9.

⁴⁵ Joan Grimalt, “A Pragmatic Map of Music Signification for Music Analysis Courses,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Music Signification*, ed. Esti Sheinberg and William P. Dougherty (London: Routledge, 2020), 311.

⁴⁶ See Kofi Agawu, *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 43–44.

the outdoors, innocence, the lament. The nexus between musical element and signification is by means of correlation, Hatten's word for the direct one-to-one signaling of ordinary language and expression.⁴⁷

Through recurrent use over time, many conventional topics eventually become detached from their original associations, allowing for new ones.⁴⁸ Thus, by the nineteenth century, topics carried over from the classical period begin to accrue new layers of meaning.⁴⁹ Liszt's topical vocabulary is often idiosyncratic, relying both on standard topics as well as "generic" musical figures with malleable topical associations, whose meanings can be assigned through the verbal program.⁵⁰ Micznik offers the example of fast, *fortissimo* dotted figures connoting "decisiveness" in *Hamlet*, "nobility" in *Prometheus*, and "struggle" in *Hunnenschlacht*.⁵¹ Given Liszt's tendency to use similar musical signs to serve quite different programmatic purposes, one must be cautious not to assume a one-to-one correspondence between the musical and programmatic ideas of every programmatic work.⁵² Of course, Liszt's music often features an additional explicatory layer—that of a written-out program, or at least a title that would evoke a well-known narrative. As James Garratt has pointed out, Liszt saw these programs as a means of facilitating audience's abilities to follow the musical discourse:

Program music, for Liszt, served not only as a means to bring music and literature into closer proximity, but a way to make instrumental

⁴⁷ Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral*, Musical Meaning and Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 177.

⁴⁸ Grimalt, "A Pragmatic Map of Music Signification for Music Analysis Courses," 311.

⁴⁹ Janice Dickensheets, "The Topical Vocabulary of the Nineteenth Century: Styles and Topics," *Journal of Musicological Research* 31, no. 2–3 (April 2012): 101.

⁵⁰ Vera Micznik, "The Absolute Limitations of Programme Music: The Case of Liszt's 'Die Ideale,'" *Music and Letters* 80, no. 2 (May 1, 1999): 219.

⁵¹ Micznik, 219–20.

⁵² Micznik, 219.

works communicate to a broader audience. Much of what Liszt has to say about programs in his most important statement on the matter – ‘Berlioz und seine “Harold Symphonie”’ (1855) – emphasizes their communicative function. ... In describing the program’s function... Liszt makes it clear that it is primarily listeners unaccustomed to complex instrumental music whom he has in mind; those who need ‘a preface in comprehensible language’ or ‘an Ariadne thread’ to help their way through the musical labyrinth.⁵³

In addition to topics, another relevant theory concerns an important distinction made by literary theorists between “story” and “discourse” in narrative. The presence of this dichotomy is generally considered a fundamental prerequisite for a literary narrative.⁵⁴ “Story” refers to the content of the narrative, or the narrated events abstracted from the text and reconstructed in their chronological order. These are the events that took place prior to, and independently of, narrative presentation, and which the narrative then reports.⁵⁵ Discourse, on the other hand, is the means by which the content of the story is communicated. It refers to the events as recounted in the process of “telling.”⁵⁶ Put another way, the discourse consists of the verbal narration, while the story consists of the events narrated, which occurred earlier than the narration.⁵⁷ The absence in music of the story/discourse tension forms the basis for many of the arguments made against musical narrative. In the case of compositions like Liszt’s Franciscan *Legends*—where the accompanying program unfolds as a plot-driven narrative⁵⁸—I suggest viewing the written program as the “story,”

⁵³ James Garratt, *Music, Culture and Social Reform in the Age of Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 182–83.

⁵⁴ See Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

⁵⁵ Micznik, “Music and Narrative Revisited,” 202–3.

⁵⁶ Micznik, 203.

⁵⁷ Maus, “Music As Narrative,” 22.

⁵⁸ This categorization excludes programmatic works that lack an explicit narrative dimension. For example, evocative works that aim to describe a scene or phenomenon (Ex.: Debussy’s *La mer*), and works designed to represent a character (Ex.: Strauss’s *Don Juan*).

and the musical work itself as the “discourse.” This model, which binds together music and program as inseparable constituent elements of the musical work, satisfies an important prerequisite for classifying music as narrative. Finally, having accepted the possibility that the story/discourse dichotomy *can* exist within a piece of music, we can apply other concepts from literary theory to the analysis of Liszt’s *Legend*.

Literary theorist Gérard Genette identified three ways that temporal properties of story and discourse may differ, which in turn, help to make sense of certain idiosyncrasies of narrative music:

- 1) “Discourse may order events differently from their order in the story
- 2) Story and discourse may differ with regard to the frequency of an event; that is, an event that occurs once in the story may be mentioned repeatedly, or a type of event that occurs often in the story may be summarized in discourse by a single mention.
- 3) The duration of the discourse may differ from the time taken by the event in the story; relatedly, the temporal proportions within the descriptions or depictions may differ from those of the events.”⁵⁹

These postulates can help explain, on a theoretical level, the types of temporal discrepancies in the music that often contradict the chronological order of events as presented in the written program. According to Liszt, “in program music ... the return, alteration, change, and modulation of motifs are caused by their relation to a poetic idea.”⁶⁰ Yet even Liszt himself, in defiance of this rule, sometimes positions themes and musical episodes at unexpected junctures, seemingly ignoring

⁵⁹ Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980).

⁶⁰ Franz Liszt, “Berlioz und seine Harold-Symphonie,” quoted in Jonathan Kregor, *Program Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 104.

programmatic coherence. We find an example of this in the *Legend*, where a condensed “reenactment” of the sermon scene occurs towards the end of the work (m. 140). Of course, in the written program (the story), St. Francis delivers the sermon only once. But we can make sense of this recapitulatory episode if we view the music as the “discourse,” where events that occur only once in the “story” may be mentioned repeatedly.⁶¹ Put another way, such repetitions of material can be construed as “a return, at the level of discourse, to the same part of a story.”⁶² Decades before scholars even considered applying literary narrative theory to music, Donald Francis Tovey remarked on this phenomenon with far-seeing insight:

We are apt to forget or ignore the privilege of music to treat the time-direction in a way of its own, retracting the past and grasping the future without regard to the way in which human life is confined to one order of events.⁶³

In the absence of a narrator *per se*, one final theory, proposed by Edward T. Cone, proves both applicable and instructive for the purposes of the present analysis. In his well-known monograph *The Composer's Voice*,⁶⁴ Cone raised the question, “if music is a language, then who is speaking?” By way of answering that query, Cone introduced what is perhaps one of his most notable contributions: the notion of a *persona*—a concept adapted from literary criticism, which he defined as a musical projection of the composer’s consciousness that experiences and *communicates* the events of the composition. Together with his concept of a musical persona, Cone also introduced the notion of musical *agents*. In ensemble music, so-called *unitary agents*

⁶¹ See bullet point 2 on page 135.

⁶² Maus, “Music As Narrative,” 31.

⁶³ Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, vol. 5 (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 227.

⁶⁴ Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, The Ernest Bloch Lectures (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

correspond to single instruments that are *individualized* and assume leading roles for the duration of a movement, theme, or motive.⁶⁵ “A unitary agent becomes a *permanent agent* if it maintains its role fairly consistently throughout a movement or an entire work—as does the solo of a concerto. If the instrument performs shifting functions and is only a protagonist for a brief period, it is a *temporary agent*.”⁶⁶ In the case of a solo composition, such as the *Legend*, there is only one unitary agent but it assumes a number of roles:

Often a single instrument—whether a solo or a member of a group—is responsible for a number of melodic lines or other musical components. In this case, the unitary agent’s part, like that of a complex instrumental persona, embraces a number of subsidiary roles. Each of these can be construed as implying its own agent. ... The performer on a keyboard instrument, especially, is responsible for many implied roles. An important part of his job is to decide just what, in every passage of a composition, constitutes such an implicit agent.⁶⁷

Drawing from this framework, we can identify St. Francis and the birds—that is, the musical elements that represent them—as *implicit permanent agents*, for they assume leading and distinguishable roles that are maintained consistently throughout the entire work. As the ensuing analysis will demonstrate, this clear delineation of implicit agents, each with a distinct musical personality, is an important device Liszt uses to build a musical narrative.

Having offered this theoretical overview, I now proceed with an in-depth analysis of Liszt’s first Franciscan *Legend*, which relies on topic theory, the distinction between story and discourse, and Cone’s concept of *implicit agents* in order to explain the work’s narrative unfolding.

⁶⁵ Cone, 89.

⁶⁶ Cone, 88–89.

⁶⁷ Cone, 98–99.

ANALYSIS

An analysis of Liszt's first Franciscan *Legend* must take as its starting point the written program, which we might summarize as follows: while traveling with his companions one day, St. Francis encountered a flock of birds and decided to preach to them. Miraculously, the birds did not fly away but listened attentively to St. Francis's sermon, which urged them to be thankful for God's providence and sing his praises at all times. Once he finished preaching, the saint made the sign of the cross and let the birds take their leave. The birds then flew to the four corners of the world, symbolizing the Franciscan brethren in their evangelizing mission. As the diagram below illustrates (figure 3.1), the work can be divided into five sections, each corresponding to an event in the written program. The rightmost column of the diagram also assigns sonata-form labels to the piece, an idea first proposed by Márta Grabócz.⁶⁸ As one might expect, the work does not behave in the same manner as would a Classical-period sonata—yet, Liszt is able to effectively satisfy a program without sacrificing formal coherence. In other words, Liszt organizes the piece—somewhat loosely—according to sonata principles, while still preserving the linear narrative dimension called for by the program. Grabócz interprets measures 1 – 17 as an introduction. The A major theme associated with the birds, which unfolds starting on measure 18, she views as the sonata's primary material. The depiction of the sermon, starting on measure 52, constitutes the transition, while the benediction at m. 72 serves as the secondary material. The development unfolds from measure 85 to measure 130. Finally, in the recapitulation, starting on measure 131, Liszt reintroduces two of the three themes in reverse order. In sum, even if divorced from its program altogether, the piece can still be perceived as a logical, coherent musical thought. If we adopt Grabócz's formal interpretation, however, we must also point out some of the

⁶⁸ Márta Grabócz, *Morphologie des œuvres pour piano de Liszt: influence du programme sur l'évolution des formes instrumentales* (Paris: Kimé, 1996), 159–60.

idiosyncrasies at play. For example, the “sermon” (m. 52) begins in E major—the dominant of A—which initially gives the listener the impression that Liszt is adhering to the traditional tonal scheme of a sonata. But according to Grabócz’s analysis, this E major section functions as the transition, not the secondary theme. It is the ensuing theme, starting on m. 72, in D-flat major—the enharmonic spelling of C-sharp—that serves as the secondary theme proper. Additionally, the two themes reintroduced in reverse order in the recapitulation are the secondary theme and the transition theme (not the primary theme). Thus, it is evident that Liszt gave precedence to programmatic considerations over formal considerations. Simply put, Liszt wished to depict three ideas: birds in their habitat, the delivery of a sermon, and a benediction. Therefore, he needed three distinct musical materials (namely, themes and/or thematic complexes), as well as a way to encompass them within a sonata key scheme. The tripartite organization of the exposition, and the selective return of two of the three themes in the recapitulation, thus arises not from an attempt to adhere to a preestablished formal scheme, but rather to satisfy the program. The result is a work that at once draws upon and adapts the conventional arc of a sonata form.

The ensuing analysis is divided into the aforementioned five sections, the first four of which correspond to specific events in the written program. The fifth section, on the other hand, constitutes a return, at the level of discourse, to an event related in the story.

- I. Setting of Pastoral Scene (mm. 1 – 51)
- II. The Sermon (mm. 52 – 71)
- III. The Benediction (mm. 72 – 84)
- IV. The Birds Depart (mm. 85 – 130)
- V. Reminiscences of Events Past (mm. 131 – END)

Table 3.1: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi preaching to the birds*, formal diagram.

Measure #	Programmatic Content Depicted	Tonal area(s)	Dynamics/Exp. Markings	Motivic Material/Texture		
Setting of Pastoral Scene						
1 - 17	Birds in the trees chirping and fluttering about	A Major	<i>p</i>	Introduction: Fast passagework, trills,	E X P O S I T I O N	
18 - 51		A Major → F# minor → E Major	<i>dolce graziosamente</i>	"Birds theme" Pastoral signifiers		
The Sermon						
52 - 71	St. Francis delivers sermon to the birds	E major → [F Major]	<i>pp</i> ; <i>dolce</i> ; <i>leggierissimo</i>	"St. Francis's motive" (recitative) interrupted by birds (tremolos)		
The Benediction						
72 - 84	St. Francis makes the sign of the Cross over the birds, blessing them	Db Major → Bb Major	<i>Solenne</i> <i>mf</i> → <i>ff</i> → <i>pp</i>	"Cross motive"; Richly-voiced chords		
The Birds Depart						
85 - 89	St. Francis addresses the birds & the birds take flight, heading east	[Ambiguous]	<i>ppp</i>	"St. Francis's motive" transformed [rhythmic augmentation] + Pastoral signifiers	D E V E L O P M E N T	
90 - 103	St. Francis addresses the birds & the birds take flight, heading west	[Ambiguous] → A Major	<i>un poco cresc.</i> → <i>p</i>	"St. Francis's motive" transformed [rhythmic augmentation] + Pastoral signifiers		
104 - 108	St. Francis addresses the birds & the birds take flight, heading south	[Ambiguous]	<i>pp</i> ; <i>un poco marcato ed espressivo poco a poco</i> → <i>leggero e dolcissimo</i>	"St. Francis's motive" transformed [rhythmic augmentation] + Pastoral signifiers		
109 - 130	St. Francis addresses the birds & the birds take flight, heading north	[Ambiguous] → [F# Major] → [Ab Major] → Bb Major	<i>poco a poco cresc.</i> → <i>ff</i> <i>marcatissimo</i>	"St. Francis's motive" transformed [rhythmic augmentation] + Pastoral signifiers → Thick chords + octaves → monody; "St. Francis motive"		
Reminiscence of Events Past						
131 - 140	[Re-enactment of] benediction	Bb Major → A Major	<i>p</i> ; <i>dolce</i> ; <i>una corda</i>	"Cross motive" [mod.] Melody + chordal accompaniment	R E C A P	
140 - END	[Re-enactment of] sermon	A Major	<i>dolcissimo</i> ; <i>pp</i> → <i>ppp</i>	"St. Francis's motive" (recitative) <i>answered</i> by birds (tremolos)		

Section I: Setting of Pastoral Scene (mm. 1 – 51)

... “And as he was going along further in that same fervor he raised his eyes, and along the road he saw some trees in which there was an almost infinite multitude of birds. Saint Francis marveled at this and said to his companions: ‘You wait for me here on the road, and I’ll go and preach to my sisters the birds.’”

In this first section of the piece, Liszt depicts a pastoral scene. The work opens with a repeated downward figuration in the keyboard’s upper register. A ninth and an added sixth blur an underlying B minor sonority that later turns into a dominant seventh chord over B (see figure 3.1). Short embellished dyads abruptly enter the texture as a long-held trill unfolds then dissolves into a chromatic swirl. One can interpret the aforementioned dyads as depicting the chirping of the birds, while the trill evokes the fluttering of their wings. Although the key signature suggests A major, the tonality is not firmly established until measure 18. Only retroactively can we understand the opening harmonies on B as V/V in A major, and the introduction as a whole as a prolongation of the dominant.⁶⁹ In anticipation of the first full-fledged theme, harmonic tension begins to build up. At measure 7, a diminished chord over D-sharp is left hanging, unresolved. This is followed by a chain of diminished triads, starting at measure 13, that will finally lead the music to a tonic arrival in measure 18 (see figure 3.2). The first clear melody in the work also emerges at measure 18, marked *dolce graziosamente*. A lingering trill, which remains a persistent part of the texture throughout the entire passage, acts as a drone, a device commonly associated with the pastoral topic.

⁶⁹ Susi, “Writing a Musical Icon: The Double-Tonic Complex in Liszt’s Legend No. 1 ‘St. François d’Assise: La Predication Aux Oiseaux,’” 9.

Figure 3.1: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 1 – 9.

Allegretto

The musical score is divided into four systems, each spanning measures 1 through 9. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked **Allegretto**. The score includes the following musical elements:

- System 1 (Measures 1-9):** The piano part begins with a *loco* marking and a *p* (piano) dynamic. The right hand features a trill (tr) in measure 9. A *Reo.* (Rehearsal) mark is present at the start of the system.
- System 2 (Measures 1-9):** The right hand contains complex fingerings (e.g., 3 1 3 1, 5 4 2, 2 3 4, 1 3 1 3 2 4 1 3 2 4 1 3) and a trill (tr) in measure 9. The piano part has a *p* dynamic. A *Reo.* mark is at the end of the system.
- System 3 (Measures 1-9):** The right hand includes fingerings (e.g., 2 1 3 1 3 1, 5 4 2, 3 1 3 1) and a trill (tr) in measure 9. The piano part has a *p* dynamic. A *Reo.* mark is at the end of the system.
- System 4 (Measures 1-9):** The right hand features fingerings (e.g., 2 3 4 1 3 1 3 2 4 1 3 2 4 1 3) and a trill (tr) in measure 9. The piano part has a *p* dynamic. A *Reo.* mark is at the end of the system.

Figure 3.2: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 14 – 19.

The musical score for F. Liszt's *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, measures 14–19, is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 14 and 15, and the second system contains measures 16, 17, 18, and 19. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. Measures 14–15 show a treble staff with a rapid sixteenth-note melody and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. Measures 16–17 show a similar texture. Measure 18 is marked *dolce graziosamente* and *ten.* (tension), featuring a more complex melody in the treble and a bass line with a *3 2 1 2* fingering. Measure 19 continues the melody. A *una corda* marking is present at the bottom of measure 18.

One of the most ancient and ubiquitous of all literary and cultural genres is the pastoral topic, which evokes the simplicity of rustic life. As Raymond Monelle explains:

In music... the tradition encompasses the whole of the notated repertoire, beginning with the troubadour *pastourelles* and Adam de la Halle's *Jeu de Robin et Marion* (thirteenth century), and leading, through the madrigal, early opera, the Arcadian movement, and Romantic nature worship, to the songs of Debussy and Strauss's *Daphne*.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 185.

Some of the most common musical devices that have come to signify the pastoral include lilting melodies in compound, ample use of parallel thirds, drones, and symmetrical phrases.⁷¹ Traits such as these feature prominently in the first Franciscan *Legend*, demonstrating that Liszt sought to establish a pastoral topic and conjure images of the countryside. The *dolce graziosamente* theme that starts on measure 18 is harmonized in parallel thirds in imitation of the panpipe music of shepherds. As already noted, a persistent trill in the texture imitates the fluttering of the birds' wings while also serving as a drone-like figure. Furthermore, the theme is made up of two symmetrical phrases—the first of which moves from tonic to dominant (mm. 18 – 22), and the second from dominant back to tonic (mm. 23 – 27). Perhaps most interesting, however, is Liszt's attempt to emulate the lilting rhythm of the *siciliana*, a style Monelle describes as “fundamental to the pastoral spirit”⁷² (Fig. 3.3). Although the *siciliana* is typically in a compound meter, Liszt's stylized version in common time retains the rhythm's characteristic dotted inflection. Figure 3.4 shows a stripped-down version of the theme, which omits the trill and left-hand accompaniment and renders the underlying rhythmic pattern more discernable. The repetitiveness and simplicity of the melody, as well as its accompanying expressive marking (*dolce graziosamente*) are also common pastoral signifiers. Not incidentally, musical imitations of birdsong have a long history of association with the pastoral topic dating at least as far back as the sixteenth century. Examples abound in the music of Handel and several of his contemporaries.⁷³ Of course, the second

⁷¹ Geoffrey Chew and Jander Owen, "Pastoral," *Grove Music Online*, accessed 13 Feb. 2022, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

⁷² For a history of the *siciliana* and its connection to the pastoral topic, see Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 215–20.

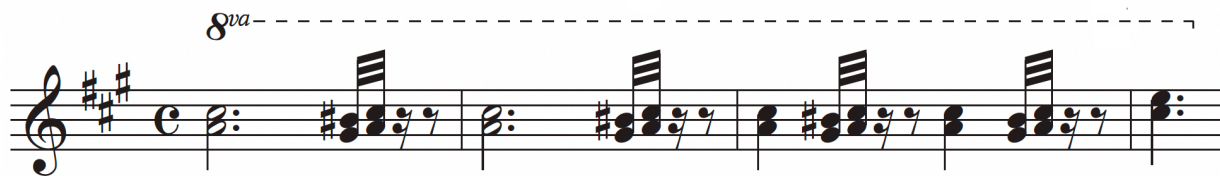
⁷³ Monelle, 235.

movement of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, Op. 68, with its mimicking of cuckoos and nightingales, offers the most celebrated use of the device. As Monelle explains, "since the *locus amoenus* is part of the world of the pastoral, and since the mimicking of birdsong is such an obvious musical resource, we must probably identify this device as a *subtopic* of the pastoral genre."⁷⁴

Figure 3.3: *Siciliana* Rhythm



Figure 3.4: "Birds theme" simplified, mm. 18 – 22.



In sum, Liszt makes use of a vast repertoire of conventional devices to denote the pastoral. Most importantly, however, he establishes a correlation between the birds and the pastoral topic, so that whenever pastoral signifiers are employed, the listener immediately thinks of the birds. Similarly in the ensuing section, the composer will associate other specific musical elements (primarily the recitative) with the figure of St. Francis himself. It is this system of association that allows the piece to unfold like a plot-driven narrative with clearly defined dramatic characters that take part in the action.

⁷⁴ Monelle, 235–36.

Section II: The Sermon (mm. 52 – 71)

“... He entered the field and he began to preach to the birds that were on the ground. And quickly the birds that were in the trees all came down to him and together remained still while Saint Francis finished preaching, and did not leave until he gave them his blessing. And, according to what Brother Masseo later told Brother James of Massa, as Saint Francis went among them, touching them with his tunic, not one of them moved.”

Preceded by a perfect authentic cadence in E major, the section starting on measure 52 depicts the moment in the program when St. Francis of Assisi approaches the birds and begins preaching to them. Here Liszt uses the piano's middle-register for the first time in order to introduce a new theme, marked *recitativo*. Using the un-beamed notation of vocal music, the motive emulates the rhythm and inflection of speech. A verbal cue in the score indicates that this declamatory motive corresponds to St. Francis's voice.⁷⁵ Juxtaposing the recitative figure with high-register onomatopoeic gestures representing the birds, Liszt enacts a kind of musical dialogue, or exchange—each pronouncement by the saint matched by a corresponding response by the birds (Fig. 3.5). Here the concept of *musical agents*, referenced earlier, proves useful. The recitative motive representing St. Francis, by virtue of its monophonic texture, rhythmic profile, and middle-range tessitura, emerges as a *unique* musical statement markedly distinct from any material thus far presented. It becomes *individualized* and assumes a leading role, which it preserves for the duration of the entire piece, making it an *implicit permanent agent*. The same is true for the high-register tremolo figures that represent the birds—they, too, become *implicit permanent agents*. As Cone remarks, “every instrumental composition can be described in terms of the interaction of all its agents. Whether the work is for orchestra or for chamber group, for ensemble or for solo,

⁷⁵ Here Liszt's inscription in the score reads, “at the entry of Franciscus, the Recitativo fairly strong.”

intelligent performance demands that its agents and their functions be clearly distinguished.”⁷⁶ In the *Legend*, these implicit permanent agents are clearly delineated and assume the role of dramatic characters from the written program (*story*).

Figure 3.5: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 51 – 57.

Recitativo
Un poco ritenuto il tempo

51 8- pp smorzando p dolce pp leggerissimo 2# 5 Red.

55 8- pp Red.

*) “At the entry of Franciscus, the Recitativo fairly strong. ... the right hand demisemiquavers which break up the recitative always very fast.” (L-K, 121)

The first four pitches of the motive “spoken” by St. Francis—B, E, D#, F#—bear special signification for they form a *cruciform symbol*. As discussed in Chapter 2, this refers to a melody of four pitches where a straight line drawn between the outer pair bisects a straight line drawn between the inner pair, forming a cross.⁷⁷ Again, the use of a cruciform symbol is specially apt for

⁷⁶ Cone, *The Composer’s Voice*, 96.

⁷⁷ See Chapter 2, pages 82 – 86.

representing St. Francis, whose “mad devotion for the Cross” culminated in his receiving the holy stigmata—the wounds of the crucified Christ. As will be recalled from the discussion in Chapter 2, Liszt used this same cruciform motive—up a perfect forth, down a minor second, up a minor third—in another of his Franciscan works: *Cantico del Sol di San Francesco*. Scholars have long assumed that the motive originated in the *Cantico* and was subsequently employed in the *Legend*. This line of reasoning stems from the fact that the earliest (unpublished) version of the *Cantico* (1862) predates the piano work by at least a few months. However, this conjecture is incorrect. Although *Cantico del Sol* is indeed an earlier composition, my consulting the manuscript sources revealed that the earliest version of the work did not contain the cruciform motive. Rather, this motive appears only in the *Cantico*’s much-revised version of 1881, making it clear that Liszt borrowed the motive *from* the piano *Legend*, and not the other way around. As has been remarked, it makes sense that Liszt chose to link these two compositions through the use of common musical material. Beyond the obvious fact that both works pay homage to St. Francis of Assisi, a subtler connection also exists. In his *Canticle of the Sun*, St. Francis calls on all creation to sing the Lord’s praises and thank him for his providence. In his sermon to the birds, the saint conveys a very similar message to the little sparrows, warning them against the sin of ingratitude and urging them to thank God, in all places and at all times, for all he provides them (“*My little sisters the birds, ye owe much to God, your Creator, and ye ought to sing his praise at all times and in all places ... He has given you fountains and rivers to quench your thirst, mountains and valleys in which to take refuge, and trees in which to build your nests...*”).

As St. Francis preaches, the birds—not yet fully receptive to his message—interject and interrupt his sermon four times. Significantly, the music of this section reflects a sense of uncertainty—as if for a moment St. Francis doubts his ability to convey his sermon. Initially in E

major, St. Francis's music quickly becomes unstable, going through E minor, F major, F minor, then finally dissolving into a single chromatic line. The unusual expressive marking at measure 67—*febile* (faint)—bears pointing out. Conceivably, Liszt chose to subtly show St. Francis's *humanity* by exhibiting his hesitation, doubt, perhaps even wavering faith—but only for a moment. Alternatively, the chromatic inflections could represent St. Francis voicing his warning against ingratitude: “*So beware, my sisters, of the sin of ingratitude and always strive to praise God.*”

Section III: The Benediction (mm. 72 – 84)

“... And Saint Francis together with them was filled with joy and delight, and marveled greatly at such a multitude of birds and their beautiful variety, their attention and friendly manner. Therefore, he devoutly praised the Creator in them. Finally ending his sermon, Saint Francis made the sign of the Cross and gave them permission to leave. Then all those birds rose into the air with marvelous songs.”

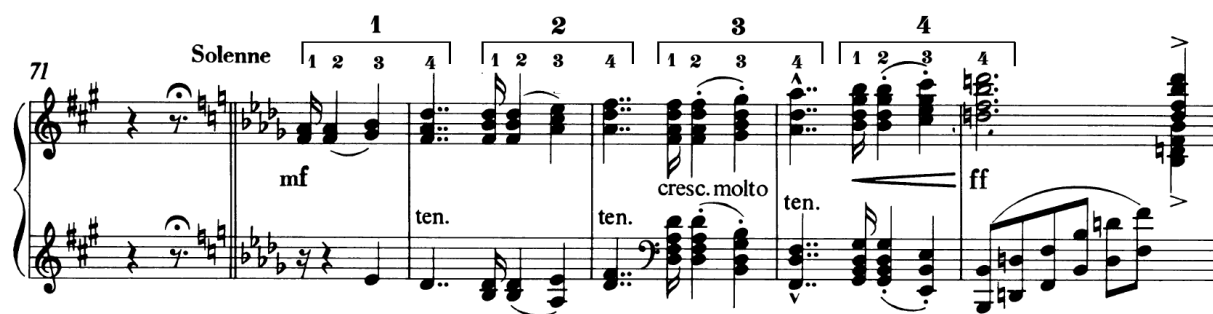
The next section, beginning on measure 72, is rich with semantic meaning and musical symbolism. It depicts the benediction following the sermon. Here Liszt relies on a very standard religious topic: the chorale. Marked *solenne*, this passage unfolds like a wedge progression, with the outer voices expanding in contrary motion and the texture growing gradually thicker (see figure 3.5). Liszt uses chorales, hymn tunes and even Gregorian chants consistently throughout his oeuvre as expressions of transcendence and immortality.⁷⁸ The spiritual implication of the chorale texture is supported by the expression *solenne*. Furthermore, successions of third-related major harmonies sharing only one common-tone, achieve the effect of an awe-filled atmosphere—much like in certain passages in *Cantico del Sol*, examined in Chapter 2. For example, when the music reaches a climax at

⁷⁸ Keith T. Johns, *The Symphonic Poems of Franz Liszt* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1997), 26.

measure 75, the harmony shifts from D-flat major to B-flat major and then to D major at measure 77—all third-related sonorities.

In this section, the number *four* plays an important role. Liszt likely chose the number four because a cross has four points. In the Catholic faith, the act of blessing someone—as St. Francis does to the birds after his sermon—involves the tracing in the air of these four points in the shape of a cross. The number four also corresponds to the four corners of the world, to which the birds are instructed to bring the Franciscan message. (*“St. Francis, the bearer of the Cross of Christ, had preached to them and made upon them the sign of the cross, after which they had divided among themselves the four parts of the world, so the preaching of the Cross of Christ, renewed by St Francis, would be carried by him and by his brethren over all the world”*). Quadruple groupings of musical material are also found in various places. The chorale’s main motive is stated four times, each time at a higher pitch level within the tonic triad. The motive itself, in turn, consists of four notes. (See figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6: Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 71 – 76.



Yet another layer of meaning is found in the motive that opens the section: it derives from the hymn *Crux fidelis*, known to Liszt scholars as the “Cross motif.”⁷⁹ This *motif*, built out of an ascending major second plus an ascending minor third (see figure 3.7), bore special significance for the composer and can be found in several of his sacred works. Liszt himself mentions the Cross motif in the accompanying commentary to his *St. Elisabeth* oratorio, where he reveals its origin and identifies it as the *tonisches Symbol des Kreuzes*. The Cross motif features prominently throughout the oratorio, but is perhaps most famously used in the symphonic poem *Hunnenschlacht*, based on a painting by Wilhelm von Kaulbach. In an 1879 letter to his pupil Walter Bache, Liszt explained:

Kaulbach’s world-renowned picture presents two battles – the one on earth, the other in the air, according to the legend that warriors, after their death, continue fighting incessantly as spirits. In the middle of the picture appears the Cross and its mystic light; on this my Symphonic Poem is founded. The chorale “Crux fidelis,” which is gradually developed, illustrates the idea of the final victory of Christianity in its effectual love to God and man.⁸⁰

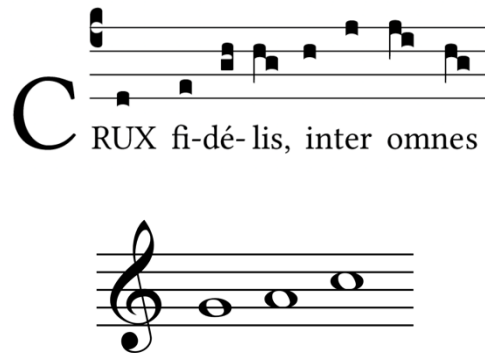
And to the artist’s wife Liszt wrote in 1857, “I was led by the musical demands of the material to open proportionately more space to the solar light of Christianity, personified in the Catholic chorale “Crux fidelis,” than appears to be the case in the glorious painting, in order to thereby win and poignantly represent the conclusion of *the* Victory of the Cross, with which I, both as a

⁷⁹ For a discussion on Liszt’s use of the “Cross motif” see Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 284–85; Liszt’s use of the Cross motif in *Legend* No.1 is noted in David E. Gifford, “Religious Elements Implicit and Explicit in the Solo Piano Works of Franz Liszt” (DMA doc., University of Missouri - Kansas City, 1984), 25–30; It is also acknowledged in Susi, “Writing a Musical Icon: The Double-Tonic Complex in Liszt’s Legend No. 1 ‘St. François d’Assise: La Predication Aux Oiseaux,’” 13.

⁸⁰ “Kaulbach’s weltberühmtes Bild führt zwei Schlachten vor: die eine auf dem Erdboden, die andere in der Luft, gemäss der Legende, dass die Krieger noch nach ihrem Tode als Gespenster unaufhaltsam fort kämpften. Inmitten des Bildes erscheint das Kreuz und sein geheimnisvolles Licht; daran haftet meine “symphonische Dichtung.” Der sich allmählig entwickelnde Choral “Crux fidelis” verdeutlicht die Idee des endlich siegenden Christentums in wirksamer Liebe zu Gott und den Menschen.” [Liszt to Walter Bache, 25 May 1879] La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt’s Briefe*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1893), 284.

Catholic and as a man, could not dispense.”⁸¹ Liszt’s use of the Cross motif within the benediction scene serves to reference the sign of the cross, which is explicitly mentioned in the written program.

Figure 3.7: *Crux fidelis* chant & Liszt’s “Cross motif.”



Section IV: The Birds Depart (mm. 85 - 130)

“... Then, following the Cross Saint Francis made over them, they divided themselves into four groups: one group flew toward the east, one toward the west, one toward the south and one toward the north. And each group went singing marvelous songs. Thus they signified that just as Saint Francis, the banner-bearer of the Cross of Christ, had preached to them, and made the sign of the Cross over them, according to which they divided themselves into the four parts of the world, so, in the same way, the preaching of the Cross of Christ, renewed by Saint Francis, was to be carried through the whole world by himself and his brothers who, like the birds, possess nothing of their own in this world, and entrust their life only to the providence of God.”

⁸¹ “War ich durch die musikalischen Erfordernisse des Stoffes dahin geführt, dem solarischen Licht des Christentums, personifiziert durch den katholischen Choral “Crux fidelis,” verhältnismäßig mehr Platz einzuräumen, als es in dem herrlichen Gemälde der Fall sein durfte, um somit den Abschluss des Kreuzes-Siegs, den ich dabei sowohl als Katholik wie als Musiker nicht entbehren mochte, zu gewinnen und prägnant darzustellen.” La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt’s Briefe*, vol. 1 (Breitkopf & Härtel, 1893), 281.

A 4-bar transitional passage, starting on measure 81, connects the benediction scene to the ensuing section (see Fig. 3.8). After the expansive registral span of the benediction, the transitional material narrows to simple chords in a high register of the right hand, a register that is carried over into m. 85 and is at least one contributing factor in creating a new affective realm. The delicate dynamics and expressive markings—*pianissimo*, *una corda*, and *ritenuto*—also help in setting the scene, preparing the *pianissimo*, *dolcissimo* section that follows. The transition’s final sonority—Ab-C-F—changes in the ensuing section (m. 85) to a dominant seventh chord on G-sharp in the righthand part (G#-B#-F#)—that is, an enharmonic spelling of the previous harmony with semitone movement from F to F-sharp.

Figure 3.8: Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 81 – 84.



The programmatic associations of this next section (mm. 85 – 130) correspond to the events that follow chronologically in the written program. Thus, the music depicts the birds as they take flight and head for the four corners of the world, tracing in the sky the shape of a cross. The section is subdivided into four (mm. 85 – 89; 90 – 103; 104 – 108; 109 – 130), each of which elaborates on two musical ideas: St. Francis’s motive, representing him speaking, and pastoral signifiers for the birds in motion. At measure 85, although a change of key signature from five flats back to three sharps hints at a return to the home key, the music’s tonality remains ambiguous. The final note

from the previous passage—F—moves up to F-sharp becoming part of a dominant seventh chord on G-sharp—a sonority that implies the key of C-sharp but never resolves to that tonic. Perhaps not incidentally, C-sharp is the enharmonic equivalent of D-flat, and thus possibly related to the key in which the benediction opens. Stated repeatedly, the dominant seventh chord on G-sharp serves as accompaniment to a motive in the left hand marked *dolcissimo*. This material is, in fact, a statement of St. Francis’s motive (first introduced in mm. 52 – 53) under a different guise. This is an instance of *thematic transformation*—a Lisztian technique used to preserve a substantive relation between contrasting passages in order to satisfy a program.⁸² St. Francis’s motive and the material introduced in these measures bear significant similarities. Measures 85 – 87 use the rhythm of St. Francis’s motive in augmentation. The phrasing indicated by the slurs in these measures is also identical to that of mm. 52 – 53. The two initial intervals in m. 85 are inversions of the first two intervals in m. 52. Finally, both passages are written in the middle register, consistently reserved for St. Francis’s “voice” throughout the work. Figures 3.9 & 3.10 illustrate the relationship between both passages. Thus, we are prompted to interpret this middle-register motive as St. Francis speaking to the birds and directing them towards the east, in accordance to the program. A melody in the high register follows immediately as an antiphonal response (mm. 88-89). Although seemingly new, this melody bears several of the pastoral signifiers that Liszt associates with the birds—most notably, melodic harmonization in thirds. Also present are a pedal-tone (on E), an ornament-like three-note figure derived from the opening material, and undulating arpeggios in the left-hand part (see figure 3.11). These types of fluid accompaniment figures, which are commonly associated with rippling water, also connote the pastoral.⁸³ Hence, it becomes

⁸² Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. Bradford Robinson, California Studies in 19th Century Music 5 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 268.

⁸³ Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 244.

clear that Liszt wished for the listener to associate these pastoral signifiers with the birds, and understand the passage to symbolize the birds taking flight. As in the sermon section, Liszt enacts a dialogue through the use of individualized agents and musical descriptors associated with each of the dramatic characters in the program.

Figure 3.9: Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 51-53 & 85-86.



Figure 3.10: Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 51 – 53 & 85 – 86, abstraction.

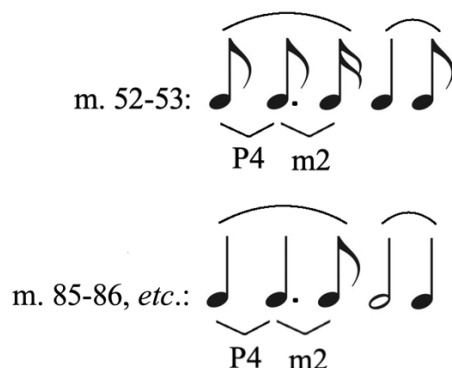


Figure 3.11: Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 2, 26 & 88 – 90.

Allegretto

2 8

tr

p

26

8

88

5 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 3 1 2 3

dolcissimo leggiero e non agitato

The functionally ambiguous harmony outlined by the arpeggios texture in mm. 88 – 89, (and later mm. 93 – 94, 107 – 108 & 112 – 113) might represent a certain level of uncertainty on St. Francis’s part, given that his mission is not yet fully accomplished. Alternatively, it could represent striving, or the fact that the mission is still in progress. Musically, the harmony results from a compounding of neighbors to notes in the preceding G-sharp chord in mm. 85 – 87: the E as upper neighbor to D-sharp, A as upper neighbor to G-sharp, B as lower neighbor to B-sharp, and D as lower neighbor to the implied D-sharp, with F-sharp as the one common tone. The chord behaves non-functionally, leading back to a repetition of the material just presented.

An exact repetition at mm. 90 – 94 of the *complex of ideas* presented in the previous five measures (mm. 85 – 89) makes one reflect on the program and St. Francis’s command to the birds to fly in different directions—namely, towards the west this time. Rather than immediately repeating the material to depict the saint pointing the birds in a new direction, Liszt appends an

extension (mm. 95 – 103). A semblance of tonal stability is achieved on the downbeat of measure 97, where we arrive at an F-sharp major chord in second inversion. After so much V7 of C-sharp, one is tempted to hear this harmony as a cadential 6/4 chord in F-sharp major. We expect that 6/4 chord to resolve to V of F-sharp. Instead, Liszt arpeggiates down to A# at m. 98, creating a first-inversion F-sharp chord, then veers back and cadences in A major at measure 102. This cadence, however, is understated—marked *piano*—and does not function as a point of arrival, its stability undermined by its sounding in a very high register and the preceding V chord being in second inversion. Indeed, the cadence goes by so quickly, the listener risks missing it entirely.

The aforementioned material—comprising St. Francis’s motive plus the bird’s pastoral signifiers—repeats again at measure 104, with the saint now pointing the birds towards the south, and then towards the north at measure 109, leading to a climactic passage at mm. 116 – 127. Within this exalted passage, St. Francis’s sermon motive sounds in *fortissimo* octaves in a major guise three times—each time at a higher pitch level (F-sharp major, then A-flat major, then B-flat major) (see figure 3.12). This powerful reemergence of St. Francis’s motive in a harmonically stable context signals a crucial transformation. When it first appeared at mm. 51 – 52, the motive was in E major, but quickly devolved to a suggestion of E minor, then F minor – it was not stable. Now, with the saint’s mission having been accomplished, harmonic stability is restored. Programmatically, this musical culmination also coincides with the end of the written program, the birds—symbolizing Franciscan friars—now having scattered in every direction to spread the Christian message, as suggested by the passage in the *Fioretti*. Notably, the right-hand texture drops out altogether at measure 124—only St. Francis, represented by the left-hand part, remains once the birds have departed. In the manner of a release, an ascending arpeggio spanning three octaves leads to St. Francis’s motive one last time, unaccompanied, *diminuendo* and *poco a poco*

rallentando, suggesting that a calm has finally set in (mm. 128 – 130). Significantly, in this final iteration, St. Francis’s motive is rendered entirely diatonic, as if purified, redeemed.

Figure 3.12: Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 116 – 126.

The musical score for measures 116–126 of Liszt's *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds* is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 116–118) begins with the instruction *accel. poco a poco* and features a treble staff with octaves and a bass staff with triplets. Measure 118 is highlighted with a red box and labeled *marcatiss.* The second system (measures 119–121) starts with a tempo change to *Schnell ** and includes markings like *ten.*, *ff*, *p*, *cresc. molto*, and *sf*. Measure 120 is highlighted with a red box and labeled *marcatiss.* The third system (measures 122–124) continues the *Schnell* tempo and includes markings like *ten.*, *ff*, *p*, *cresc. molto*, and *sf*. Measure 122 is highlighted with a red box and labeled *marcatiss.*

Section V: Reminiscence of Events Past (mm. 131 – END)

The closing section of the work begins at measure 131, at which point the benediction theme returns, *recitativo* and stripped of its former grandeur—like a distant memory lingering in the imagination. In this final utterance, the benediction theme unfolds in purely stepwise motion, and

although the Cross motif is no longer present, the symbolic associations are still fresh in the listener's memory. At measure 137, chromatic voice-leading brings the music back to the home key of A major, its return signaled by much-delayed perfect authentic cadence at measures 139 – 140. This concluding section of the work (mm. 131 – end), where Liszt presents reminiscences on events prior, serves a number of different functions. First, it represents a lingering memory of the sermon, the pivotal event of the piece—a kind of afterglow following the birds miraculously falling silent to listen to St. Francis. As mentioned earlier, we can view it as a return, at the level of *discourse*, to a central moment in the *story*. On a structural level, on the other hand, it acts as an abridged recapitulation that lends formal symmetry to the work. Finally, from a narratological point of view, it constitutes a restoration of the *ideal* state of affairs. At the beginning of the work, the birds were unexposed to the word of God. They were also unknowingly guilty of the sin of ingratitude in their failure to thank their Creator for all that he provides them. (“*My little sisters the birds, ye owe much to God, your Creator, and ye ought to sing his praise at all times and in all places ... He has given you fountains and rivers to quench your thirst, mountains and valleys in which to take refuge, and trees in which to build your nests...*”) Metaphorically, the birds also symbolized men who had not answered the calling of Christ. But after coming into contact with St. Francis, the birds underwent a subtle transformation, which Liszt depicts in this final section of the work.

As will be recalled, in the first depiction of the sermon (mm. 52-71), the birds interrupt St. a number of times. This lent an element of realism to the scene, capturing the fact that the birds did not fall silent immediately but likely continued to chirp and flutter about for some time even as St. Francis addressed them. That these were interruptions, rather than the birds attempting to engage in a dialogue (assuming that a dialogue between man and creature would be possible), is

borne out by the fact that the interjections do not occur during moments of silence but overlap with St. Francis's speech. That is, every time the birds "enter," the saint is still in the process of speaking (see figure 3.6). When the scene is reprised in the final section of the work (mm. 143-159), the birds no longer interrupt St. Francis or speak out of turn. Now receptive to the saint's message, they wait for Francis to stop speaking before interjecting. Additionally, whereas the birds' original utterances were abruptly cut off, left seemingly unresolved, now they are preceded by root-position tonic triads and rounded off by tonic arpeggios, solidifying the tonality and emphasizing a sense of harmonic stability (See side-by-side comparison in figures 3.13 & 3.14). The notes in St. Francis's recitative are also adjusted so as to reduce non-harmonic tones and reinforce the A-major tonality. Whatever tension initially arose from the interspersed interruptions to St. Francis's sermon is now eliminated and a sense of harmony is achieved. The gentle dynamics, ranging from *piano* to *pianississimo*, also contribute in projecting an atmosphere of calm. Scholars have interpreted St. Francis's sermon to the birds as evidence of the saint's special relationship to his environment—a relationship akin to that originally shared between Adam and Eve and the creatures in the Garden of Eden. In other words, divine grace favored the saint with a restoration of *original paradisal innocence*, endowing him with thaumaturgical power to control his environment and moving animals to re-accept the saint as their benevolent master.⁸⁴ Conceivably, Liszt may have wished to depict this state of original paradisal innocence—of utter harmony, and peaceful communion between man and creation—in this final section of his musical depiction of the Sermon to the Birds.

⁸⁴ Sorrell, "Tradition and Innovation, Harmony and Hierarchy in St. Francis of Assisi's Sermon to the Birds," 401.

Figure 3.13: Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 51 – 57.

Recitativo
Un poco ritenuto il tempo

51 *p dolce* *pp leggierissimo*

55 *pp*

Figure 3.14: Liszt, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, mm. 140 – 151.

140 *dolcissimo* *p dolce*

144 *pp* *p dolce*

148 *p dolce*

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to examine the mechanisms by which Liszt's first *Franciscan Legend* presents an unfolding narrative. It argued that the work's narrative dimension is a function of Liszt's use of *topics*, the delineation of discrete *musical agents*, and the tension arising from a *story/discourse* dichotomy. On this latter point, the study proposed a model that binds together music and program as inseparable constituent elements of the musical work, and which views the written program as "story," and the music itself as "discourse." This model, too, offered a theoretical explanation for the types of temporal discrepancies in the music that may contradict the chronological order of events as presented in the written program. For example, the repetition and reenactment, at the level of *discourse*, of a particular programmatic episode that occurs only once in the *story*. By closely examining each section of the work in relation to the written program, the study demonstrated that Liszt went to great lengths to create a one-to-one correspondence between events described in the program and musical passages meant to depict them. Drawing on topic theory, the chapter demonstrated how Liszt relies on the referential system of musical topics to convey his programmatic ideas, endowing the music with greater potential to narrate. Although a program acts a road map for the listener, defining the general direction of the work, it is the music itself—through a combination of connotative devices, as well as inherent qualities of harmonic stability/instability—that paints a complete picture and guides the listener through the various stages of the narrative. Finally, the study applied Cone's theory of *implicit permanent agents* to show how Liszt endows specific musical materials with distinguishable roles that are maintained consistently throughout the entire work, and how their clear delineation as "dramatic characters" signals narration. Thus, by creating a correlation between specific musical elements—such as pastoral signifiers, or instrumental recitatives—and characters depicted in the program, Liszt is

able to enact dramatic scenes and dialogues and come as close as music will allow him to “tell a story in tones.”

In translating the story from the *Fioretti* into a musical statement, Liszt presents a narrative arc that takes the listener through various dramatic episodes and corresponding expressive states. The trajectory begins from a neutral state, with the birds in their habitat, unexposed to the word of God. A moment of brief, “innocent” conflict follows when the two principal actors—St. Francis and the birds—come into contact. As St. Francis attempts to preach to the birds, he encounters some resistance in the form of gentle interruptions. Then follows the solemn benediction, accompanied by a thickening of the texture, the first loud dynamics in the piece, and religious symbolism embedded in the music. The act of benediction effects an important *transformation* on the birds. Now with St. Francis having imparted the Christian message onto them, they are entrusted with propagating it—a mission they take on willingly. It is St. Francis’s sainthood, his unwavering *faith* and closeness to Christ—symbolized musically through the *cruciform motif*—that causes the birds not only to listen, but to follow his command and spread the word of God throughout the world. The saint is endowed by divine grace with the power to speak to God’s creatures, who in turn follow him and act according to his will. In an ensuing climactic moment St. Francis, having imparted his message and successfully instructed the birds to travel to the four corners of the world to spread it, rejoices. The narrative arc finally concludes with the achievement of an ideal state of affairs—not a state of neutrality, but of complete and utter harmony and peaceful communion between man and creation.

Chapter 4:
Franciscan Legend No. 2:
St. François de Paule “marchant sur les flots”

*“The motto of my patron saint, Francis of Paola, is ‘Caritas!’
To this motto I shall remain faithful my whole life long!”*

FRANZ LISZT¹

This chapter examines Liszt’s second Franciscan *Legend*—*St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*—a work that depicts one of the most famous miracles performed by the composer’s patron saint. In bringing his program to fruition, Liszt moves beyond simple musical representation. He reveals the deeper spiritual meaning of the *Legend*, highlighting its message about overcoming life’s challenges through unwavering religious faith. As with the first *Legend*, the ensuing analysis proceeds from the premise that Liszt deliberately employed musical techniques and devices that signal narration, aiming to establish a one-to-one correspondence between events described in the program and musical passages meant to depict them. Although Liszt again relies on the delineation of musical agents and the use of topics to communicate programmatic ideas, he does so to a different degree than in the first *Legend*. Drawing upon Michael Klein’s work on Liszt’s music, my analysis argues that Liszt uses specific harmonic devices—including a particular third-related progression, and the “arrival six-four chord”—to signify moments of *transcendence* in the narrative. Liszt consistently pairs these exalted moments with overtly virtuosic material, heightening the sense of transcendent breakthrough. Through the use of recognizable signifiers of

¹ “Le devise de mon patron, St. François de Paule, est ‘Caritas!’ J’y resterai fidèle ma vie durant!” [Liszt to Amadé Saissy, editor of the *Gazette de Hongrois*, 6 February 1883] English translation in Franz Liszt, *Franz Liszt: Selected Letters*, ed. Adrian Williams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 897. Original text in La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt’s Briefe*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1893), 345.

struggle and transcendence, as well as mimetic musical devices connoting real-world phenomena, Liszt renders intelligible a complex musical narrative. Furthermore, he brings intertextuality into play to nuance the work's message. By employing material directly taken from one of his own textured compositions, Liszt endows the music with additional layers of meaning, the implications of which will be considered in the pages to follow.

Liszt and St. Francis of Paola

Although Liszt's second Franciscan *Legend* is arguably the more popular of the two works, the saint who inspired it remains a relatively unknown figure outside of Italy. St. Francis of Paola cured the sick, raised the dead, walked on water, and was canonized only twelve years after his death, yet no English-language biography of the saint existed until 1977.² Thus, in order to better understand Liszt's spiritual connection to his patron saint, it is worth revisiting St. Francis's fascinating life story.

Francis was born around 1416 in the province of Calabria, Italy. While still an infant, he developed an illness that threatened to rob him of his sight. His parents prayed to St. Francis of Assisi, promising that, should their son recover, they would send him to a Franciscan monastery for a year. Francis healed and, at age 13, fulfilled his parents' promise. Thereafter, he devoted himself to a life of prayer, solitude, and penance. In 1435, Francis and two of his followers began a religious movement called the "Poor Hermits of St. Francis of Assisi," later renamed the Order of Minims. They received official recognition as a religious order from Pope Sixtus IV in 1474.³

² Gino J. Simi and Mario M. Segreti, *Saint Francis of Paola: God's Miracle Worker Supreme, 1416-1507* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, 1977).

³ David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 194.

The name *Minim* comes from the Italian word *minimo*, meaning the smallest or the least. Francis chose this name as a sign of humility, to show that the members of his order were of even less significance than the Friars Minor founded by St. Francis of Assisi.⁴ In addition to the traditional Franciscan vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, the Minims adopted a fourth vow of perpetual abstinence from all meat and dairy products.

In 1483, Francis's reputation as a healer and miracle worker earned him an invitation to the court of King Louis XI of France. While the ailing king had hoped that the renowned mystic could prolong his life, he died shortly after Francis's arrival. Louis's successor, Charles VIII, persuaded Francis to remain in his kingdom and provided the resources to build the Minim monastery at Plessis (outside of Paris), where the saint was later buried. The devotion of the royal family to St. Francis of Paola played an important role in the spread of his cult, which grew rapidly after his death in 1507. By the 1560s, Saint Francis's tomb had become the second most prominent pilgrimage shrine in the region after the tomb of Saint Martin.⁵

In the spring of 1562, the first of a series of violent religious wars broke out in France. Within weeks, Protestant Huguenots had gained control of various urban centers across France. As part of their mission, they sought to end the practice of relic veneration—which they viewed as a form of idolatry—by destroying saintly remains kept in churches and monasteries. On April 7, iconoclasts seized the Minim monastery at Plessis, desecrated the tomb of St. Francis of Paola,

⁴ See chapter 1, page 22.

⁵ Eric Nelson, "Remembering the Martyrdom of Saint Francis of Paola," *History and Memory* 26, no. 2 (2014): 77.

and burnt his remains.⁶ To his followers, St. Francis's martyrdom after his death is considered "the final triumph for a saint who embraced martyrdom during his life."⁷

Starting in the late 1850s, Liszt remained fervently devoted to St. Francis of Paola, mentioning him often in his correspondence with friends and, particularly, Princess Carolyne. "My name saint, Francis of Paola, is the patron of the humble and of the minims—I *belong to them with all my heart*," he wrote in 1885.⁸ We also know that he regularly observed the saint's feast day on April 2nd, and in 1879, bestowed the sum of two thousand lire on the Cathedral of Albano⁹ for a special mass to be celebrated on that day in perpetuity.¹⁰ Liszt also embraced the saint's motto—*Caritas*—famously showing kindness and generosity to his students and colleagues.¹¹ Two of the composer's works pay homage to St. Francis of Paola: *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, and a choral piece titled *An den Heiligen Franziskus von Paula, Gebet* (LW J13), which is addressed later in this chapter.

⁶ See Eric Nelson, *The Legacy of Iconoclasm: Religious War and the Relic Landscape of Tours, Blois and Vendôme 1550–1750* (Saint Andrews: Centre for French History and Culture of the University of Saint Andrews, 2013), 18–28.

⁷ According to Dony d'Attichy, Francis had already been a martyr during his life because of his death on "the cross of penitence" and the austere life that he had lived, which d'Attichy labeled a "long martyrdom." Louis Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire générale de l'ordre sacré des Minimes*, vol. 2 (Paris: Sebastien Cramoisy, 1624), 3; See also Nelson, "Remembering the Martyrdom of Saint Francis of Paola," 82.

⁸ "Mon Patron St. François de Paule est celui des humbles et minimes – je leur appartiens de tout cœur." [Liszt to Princess Carolyne, 2 February 1885] La Mara, 7:420. English translation from Adrian Williams, ed., *Franz Liszt: Selected Letters*, 925. Of the many examples, we can also cite a letter of 2 April 1881 to Princess Carolyne, where Liszt writes: "On this feast of St. Francis of Paola, patron of the humble minims, I kneel—and beg you to ask Our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, to grant me the heavenly grace and humility! – Your old *minimal* servant, F. L." ["A cette fête de St. François de Paule, le Patron des humbles minimes, je m'agenouille – et vous prie de demander à notre Rédempteur Jésus-Christ qu'il m'accorde la céleste grâce de l'humilité! Votre vieux minime serviteur, F. L."] English translation from Williams, 862–63; original text in La Mara, 7:313. In the Williams volume, see also: pp. 500, 651, 797, 812–13, 828, 897, and 936.

⁹ Consecrated in 1721, the cathedral is located in the city of Albano Laziale, in the province of Rome and the region of Lazio, Italy. In July of 1879, Cardinal Hohenlohe, in his capacity as bishop of Albano, made Liszt an honorary canon of Albano. See Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 391.

¹⁰ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years*, 392.

¹¹ See epigraph at the beginning of this chapter.

Liszt's second Franciscan *Legend* draws its inspiration from one of St. Francis's most famous miracles. Needing to get across the channel of water that lies between Calabria and Sicily—known as the Strait of Messina—Francis begged a local boatman for a ride on his ferry. When the humble saint could not afford the fare, the boatman refused his request, saying “if he is a saint... let him walk on the waters, and work miracles.” Then, invoking divine aid, St. Francis laid his cloak on the water, tied one end to his staff as a sail, and glided across the channel.¹² Astonished, the boatman, having set out across the strait, implored forgiveness and begged the saint to come on his boat. “But God... caused [St. Francis] to refuse this offer, and to arrive in port before the boat.” In his preface to the published score, Liszt explains his source of inspiration and quotes a passage from Giuseppe Miscimarra's 1852 hagiography, *Life of St. Francis of Paola*, which describes the miracle:

Parmi les nombreux miracles de Saint François de Paule, la légende célèbre celui qu'il accomplit en traversant le détroit de Messine. Les bateliers refusèrent de charger leur barque d'un personnage de si peu d'apparence; il n'en eut garde, et marcha d'un pas assuré sur la mer. Un des plus éminents peintres de l'école religieuse actuelle en Allemagne, M. Steinle, s'est inspiré de ce miracle, et dans un admirable dessin dont je dois la possession à la gracieuse bonté de Mme la Princesse Carolyne Wittgenstein, il a représenté, suivant la tradition de l'iconographie catholique: Saint François debout sur les flots agités; ils le portent à son but, selon l'ordre de la Foi, qui maîtrise l'ordre de la Nature. Son manteau est étendu sous ses pieds; il lève une de ses mains comme pour commander aux éléments; de l'autre il tient un charbon ardent, symbole du feu intérieur qui embrase les disciples de Jésus-Christ; et son regard est tranquillement fixé au Ciel où reluit dans une gloire éternelle et immaculée la devise de Saint François, la parole suprême « Charitas! »

La Vie de Saint François de Paule, écrite en italien par Giuseppe Miscimarra, contient le récit suivant:

¹² It bears noting that Liszt's title describes St. Francis as “walking” on the waves. Yet, according to Miscimarra's account and other hagiographical sources, the saint sailed, rather than walked, across the strait on his cloak.

“Giunti in fine a vista del Faro di Messina e poi in quella parte del lido della Cattona, trovò quivi una barca che portava in Sicilia doghe per botti. Presentatosi con i due compagni al padrone chiamato Pietro Coloso, dissegli ‘per carità fratello portateci nell' isola su la vostra barca’ e quegli ignorando la santità di chi lo pregava, gli chiese il nolo. E poichè rispos’egli di non averlo, quegli soggiunse di non aver barca per condurli. Presenti alla negativa quelli di Arena che aveano accompagnato il Santo, pregarono il padrone che imbarcasse que’ poveri frati e di essere nella certezza che un di quelli era un santo. E s’è santo quegli, rispose con massima inciviltà, che cammini su le aque e che faccia miracoli; e partito li lasciò sul lido. Senza turbarsi il Santo del tratto incivile di quel gonzo marinaio, perchè rincorato dal divino spirito che sempre lo assisteva, si dissociò per poco da’ compagni ed invocò con preghiere il divino aiuto in quel rincontro. Indi tornato a’ compagni, disse loro, ‘figlioli allegramente; con la grazia di Dio abbiamo un naviglio migliore per passare’ ma fra Giovanni innocente e semplice alcun legno non vedendo, con quale barca disse, Padre, noi passeremo, se quella è partita? Ci ha provvisti il Signore, egli rispose, di altro buon naviglio più sicuro su questo nostro mantello che stava per distendere sul mare. Sorrise fra Giovanni (perocchè il p. Paolo come prudente non aveva difficoltà del miracolo che il Santo gli significava) e con la sua solita semplicità disse, passiamo almeno sul mantello mio che ci sosterrà meglio perchè nuovo e non rattoppato come il vostro. In fine disteso il mantello suo il nostro Santo su le aque, le benedisse in nome di Dio, e poi alzata una parte del medesimo mantello, come vela bassa che veniva sostenuta dal suo bastone come albero, montò con i suoi compagni su quel prodigioso palischermo, e fece vela con istupore di quelli di Arena, che guardando dal lido come velocemente percorreva le aque, gridavano piangendo e battevan le mani, come anco i marinari del naviglio con l’ingrato padrone che chiedendogli perdono della negativa, lo invitava a salir sul legno: ma Dio che a glorificazione del suo santo nome voleva manifestare di aver sottoposto all’impero del nostro Santo la terra e il fuoco non solo, ma anche le aque, gli fece disprezzare gl’inviti, e lo fece giugnere al porto prima del naviglio indicato. “...

Gregorio XIII. avendo fatto dipingere nella sala del Vaticano quel miracolo, sembra che Dio abbia voluto che manifestazione continua la Chiesa con quella pittura ne fafacesse.”

(Cap. 35. *Vita di San Francesco di Paolo* descritta da Giuseppe Miscimarra.)

Of the numberless miracles of St. Francis of Paola, the legend celebrates in particular the one which he performed while crossing the Straits of Messina. The sailors refused to burden their boat with a person of such lowly aspect; but he, paying no attention to this, strode with firm step across the sea.

One of the most eminent painters of the current religious school in Germany, Mister Steinle, has been inspired by this miracle. In an admirable drawing, the possession of which I owe to the gracious kindness of Princess Carolyne Wittgenstein, he has depicted the following, in accordance with the tradition of Catholic iconography:

St. Francis stands on the rolling waves; they bear him to his destination, as befits the power of faith, which holds sway over the order of nature. His cloak is spread beneath his feet; he raises one hand as if to command the elements; in the other he holds a glowing coal, a symbol of the inward fire that enflames the disciples of Jesus Christ; his eyes are raised placidly toward heaven, where the device of Saint Francis—'Caritas!'—is emblazoned in eternal and immaculate majesty.

The Life of Saint Francis of Paola, written in Italian by Giuseppe Miscimarra, contains the following tale:

“Once they had come within sight of the Lighthouse of Messina, and had arrived ashore at Cattona, [St. Francis] found there a boat that carried cooper’s staves to Sicily. He presented himself and his two companions to the boat’s owner, whose name was Pietro Coloso, and said to him: ‘In the name of God, brother, carry us to the island in your boat;’ and this man, not being aware of the saintliness of his petitioner, demanded from him the cost of passage. And when the saint replied that he had no money, the boatman responded that he had no boat with which to carry them.

The people from Arena, who had accompanied the saint, witnessed the refusal and asked the owner of the boat to transport the poor friars, claiming, to strengthen their request, that one of them was a saint. ‘If this man be a saint,’ responded the man with utter discourtesy, ‘then let him walk on water and work miracles;’ at which he departed, leaving them on the shore.

Our saint, drawing encouragement from the Holy Ghost, who had always lent him support, was not daunted by the incivility of the coarse seaman; and he briefly went aside from his companions and prayed for divine assistance in his predicament. Then, returning to his companions, he said to them, ‘Children, rejoice; by the grace of God, we have a better boat for our passage.’ But Friar John, in his

innocence and simplicity, not seeing any boat, asked, ‘With which boat, Father, shall we travel now that the other has left?’ [St. Francis] replied ‘The Lord has provided us with another good and safe vessel in the form of my cloak,’ which he was about to spread out upon the water. Friar John smiled (whereas the circumspect Father Paul had no difficulty understanding the miracle intimated to him by the saint) and said with his wonted naivety: ‘Then let us at least travel on my cloak, which, being new and not patched, as is yours, will carry us better.’ Finally our saint spread his cloak upon the waves, blessed it in the name of God, and then, lifted part of the cloak to form a low sail suspended from his walking-stick as a mast, stepped with his companions onto the miraculous launch, and sailed away, to the amazement of the people of Arena, who could see from the shore how swiftly he plied the waves. They laughed, cried, and clapped their hands, as did the sailors in the boat with their ungrateful owner, begging forgiveness for his refusal and inviting the saint to step onboard. But God, who, to glorify his holy name, wished to demonstrate that he had subordinated not only Earth and Fire but also Water to the command of our saint, made him turn down the invitation and allowed him to reach harbor before Coloso’s boat ...

Gregory XIII has caused the decoration of the hall in the Vatican with a painting of this miracle; it would seem that God had, with this image, willed the Church to enact a never-ending revelation.” (Chapter 35, *Life of St. Francis of Paola* by Giuseppe Miscimarra).¹³

From this preface, we learn that the work draws its inspiration from two sources: Miscimarra’s text, and the drawing by Eduard von Steinle (1810 – 1886).¹⁴ Liszt shared a deep fascination for the visual arts and recognized the potential for translating painterly figurations into music.¹⁵ To him, the works of a great painter or sculptor shared a universal quality that transcended aesthetic

¹³ This translation of the preface is taken from Franz Liszt, *Zwei Legenden*, ed. Ernst-Günter Heinemann (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2004), 35. For Miscimarra’s original text, see Giuseppe Miscimarra, *Vita di S. Francesco di Paola Fondatore dell’Ordine de’ Minimi* (Naples: A. Festa, 1856).

¹⁴ Eduard von Steinle was an Austrian historical painter associated with the Nazarene Movement, which aimed to revive spirituality in art.

¹⁵ A number of Liszt’s programmatic works were inspired by the visual arts, including *Sposalizio*, *Il Penseroso*, *La Notte*, *Totentanz*, *Orpheus*, *Hunnenschlacht*, *the Legend of St. Elisabeth*, and *Von der Wiege bis Zum Grabe*.

boundaries and could serve as enlightening models for a composer. Perhaps most importantly, he believed that a work of art in one medium could find its equivalent in another:

Every day my realization of the hidden relationships between works of genius is reinforced through my thoughts and emotions. Raphael and Michelangelo helped me to understand Mozart and Beethoven. ... The Colosseum and the Campo Santo are not so different from [Beethoven's] Heroic Symphony and [Mozart's] Requiem as one might think. Dante found his visual echo in Orcagna and Michelangelo; perhaps one day he will find his musical echo in a Beethoven of the future.¹⁶

Furthermore, Liszt subscribed to a specifically "New German" ideal that viewed the arts—painting, literature and music—as interconnected.

Steinle's drawing of St. Francis of Paola clearly bore special significance for Liszt (see figure 4.1). He excitedly described it to Wagner in 1860, writing:

Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, and others of the same stamp keep your portrait company in the anteroom ... here, I want to have you alone, together with my *Saint Franciscus*, whom Steinle has drawn for me quite splendidly. On his outspread cloak he stands firmly, steadfastly over the tumultuous waves—his left hand calmly holding burning coals, his right hand giving the sign of blessing. His gaze is directed upwards, where the word 'Caritas,' surrounded by an aureole, lights his way!¹⁷

Indeed, the composer considered the drawing important enough to mention in his last will and testament, also written in 1860:

¹⁶"Jeder Tag befestigte in mir durch Fühlen und Denken das Bewußtsein der verborgenen Verwandtschaft der Werke Genies ... Das Kolosseum und der Campo Santo sind der heroischen Symphonie und dem Requiem nicht so fremd, also man wähnt. Dante hat seinen künstlerischen Widerhall in Orcagna ... gefunden: vielleicht findet er eines Tages seinen musikalischen in einem Beethoven der Zukunft." *Gesammelte Schriften von Franz Liszt*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1881), 253–54.

¹⁷ "Beethoven, Weber, Schubert und andere dergleichen, leisten Deinem Portrait ... Gesellschaft in dem Eingangszimmer; – hier will ich dich allein haben, bei meinem heiligen Franciscus, den Steinle für mich prächtig gezeichnet; – über brausenden Meereswogen auf seinem ausgebreiteten Mantel, fest, unerschütterlich stehend, – in der linken Hand brennende Kohlen ruhig haltend – die rechte segnend bewegt – den Blick nach oben gerichtet, wo das Wort 'Charitas' in einer Glorie ihm leuchtet!" [Liszt to Wagner, 31 May 1860]. Erich Kloss, ed., *Briefwechsel zwischen Wagner und Liszt*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1910), 283; English translation from Adrian Williams, ed., *Franz Liszt: Selected Letters*, 500.

I ask [Carolynne] to send directly to Cosima the drawing by Steinle representing my patron saint, St. Francis of Paola, standing on the waves of the sea, with his cloak spread beneath his feet, calmly holding in one hand a burning ember, the other hand raised either to bid the storm cease or to bless the mariners in distress, and with his eyes raised towards heaven, where in glory shines the redeeming word ‘Caritas.’ This drawing, which was given to me by Carolynne, has always stood on my desk.¹⁸

Despite Liszt’s admiration for Steinle’s drawing, it did not appear on any of the published scores that circulated during the composer’s lifetime. The title page illustration of the *Legends*’ first edition, issued in 1865 by the Hungarian firm Rózsavölgyi & Co., featured imagery from classical antiquity—namely, two figures wearing togas and laurel wreaths on their heads amidst flowers and musical instruments. Given that such imagery bears no relation to the *Legends*’ programmatic content, one wonders if this was a standard title page reused for various miscellaneous compositions (see figure 4.2).¹⁹ The French edition, published by Heugel & Cie., appeared roughly one year later. Though it also failed to reproduce Steinle’s drawing, it did include a beautifully illustrated title page by a different artist²⁰ depicting both St. Francis of Assisi and St. Francis of Paola (see figure 4.3). As to why Steinle’s drawing was not used, we might surmise that the publisher wanted a single illustration to suffice for both *Legends*.

¹⁸ “Je la prie aussi d’envoyer de suite à Cosima le dessin de Steinle représentant mon Patron St. François de Paule debout sur les vagues mouvantes de la mer, son manteau étendu sous ses pieds, tenant paisiblement d’une main un charbon ardent, l’autre main levée soit pour conjurer l’orage, soit pour bénir les nautoniers en détresse, et le regard tendu vers le ciel où reluit dans une gloire le mot rédempteur ‘Charitas.’ Ce dessin, qui m’a été donné par Carolynne, est toujours resté sur mon bureau.” La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt’s Briefe*, vol. 5 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1900), 59; English translation from Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 560.

¹⁹ Mária Eckhardt, preface to Franz Liszt, *Zwei Legenden*, ed. Ernst-Günter Heinemann (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2004), VI.

²⁰ The artwork on the title page of the Heugel edition bears the signature of “E. DELAY.”



Figure 4.1: *St. Francis of Paola* by Eduard von Steinle²¹

²¹ Image taken from Franz Liszt, *Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke herausgegeben von der Franz Liszt-Stiftung*, ed. José Vienna da Motta, vol. IX (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1927), 79.



Figure 4.2: F. Liszt, *Deux Légendes*, first edition title page. Rózsavölgyi & Co., Pest (1865)²²

²² Image taken from Pauline Pocknell, "Author! Author! Liszt's Prayer An Den Heiligen Franziskus von Paula," *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 30 (July 1991): 35.



Figure 4.3: F. Liszt, *Deux Légendes*, French edition title page. Heugel & Cie., Paris (1866)

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Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum and Research Centre, Budapest.

Legend No. 2 – Versions and Sources

As is well known, Liszt seldom left a composition alone after finishing it. Throughout his career, the composer made a habit of revising published works, sometimes even rewriting them entirely. As a result, it is not uncommon for there to be as many as three or four versions of a given composition.²³ On the surface, the situation does not appear to be quite so complicated with the Franciscan *Legends*. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Liszt wrote both piano and orchestral versions of these works (LW A219 & G27), but there is no conclusive evidence as to which came first. Regardless, no significant differences across versions exist as far as form and thematic material is concerned. In other words, we are not talking about revisions or reworkings. If it were the case that the orchestral versions are earlier compositions, we can say that the piano versions are faithful transcriptions of the original works (or vice versa). In the case of the second *Legend*, however, Liszt also wrote a simplified piano version accessible to the amateur performer. This is an unusual step for Liszt to take, given that he generally did not concern himself with whether such pianists could play his works. That Liszt wrote a “*version facilitée*” of the second Franciscan *Legend* speaks to his affinity for the piece and his desire to maximize its dissemination. In this version, Liszt cleverly renegotiates the more technically demanding passages without compromising the integrity or overall effect of the original work. Figure 4.4 shows a side-by-side comparison between a passage in the simplified version and its parallel in the parent work. Note that, in the simplified version, Liszt presents fewer notes in the left-hand part, allowing the amateur performer to more easily execute the passagework in tempo without sacrificing accuracy.

²³ For example, the following works exist in four versions: *Die Zelle in Nonnenwerth* (LW A81), *Hymne de l'enfant à son réveil* (LW J2), *Mignons Lied* (LW N8), *Der du von dem Himmel bist* (LW N10), and *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher* (LW N37).

Importantly, the simplified version preserves the harmonic scheme and formal layout of the parent work intact.

Fig. 4.4: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, version *facilitée*, mm. 40 – 41.

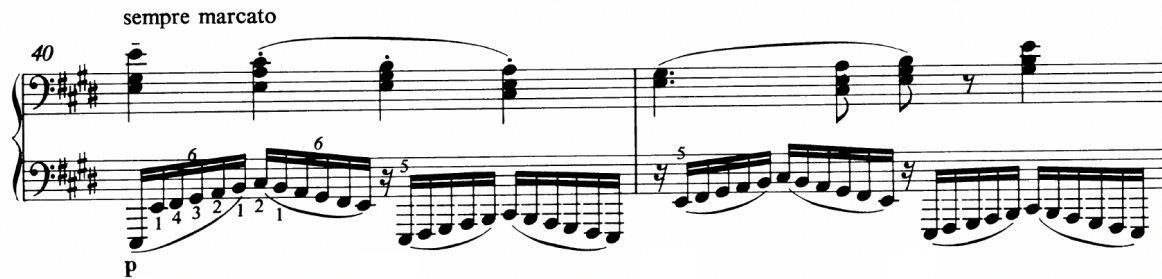
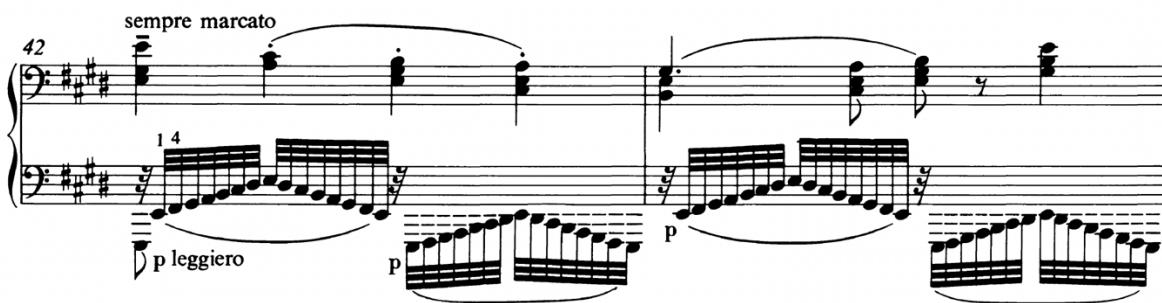


Fig. 4.4 (continued): F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 42 – 43.



Might there be other versions of *St. Francis of Paola* besides those mentioned above? Some suggestive remarks by the Liszt pupil José Vianna da Motta (1868 – 1948) could offer a tentative answer. Between 1907 and 1936, da Motta served as one of the editors for the *Liszt Gesamtausgabe*, published by Breitkopf & Härtel.²⁴ The project included the involvement of other prominent members of Liszt's inner circle, such as Berthold Kellermann, August Stradal, and

²⁴ *Franz Liszt: Musikalische Werke*, ed. F. Busoni, P. Raabe, P. Wolfrum and others (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1907–36). 33 volumes were published in the series until the Second World War brought the project to a premature conclusion.

Eugen d'Albert. In the preface to volume 9 of the edition, da Motta mentions the existence of other versions of the second *Legend*, which he readily dismisses for not adhering to the *Urtext* ideal:

Other Liszt students possess numerous variants to this second *Legend*, which are however so invasive—cuts, doubling and alteration of passages—that the piece as a result turns into a completely different work. In the view of Professor Kellermann,²⁵ such changes often had their origin in the weakness of the student whose strength was not sufficient for the performance of the original. But in any case, so far as they are not available in Liszt's own hand, like those from Professor Kellermann mentioned above, they cannot feature in this edition, because no guarantee on their accuracy can be given.²⁶

Kenneth Hamilton has proposed that the “weak student”²⁷ Kellermann is referring to is fellow Liszt pupil Bernhard Stavenhagen (1862 – 1914), whose performance of the second *Legend*, preserved in a 1905 piano roll, differs so drastically from the published score that it constitutes an entirely new version of the piece.²⁸ Importantly, this piano roll bears the tantalizing inscription “*gespielt nach persönlicher Erinnerung an Liszt*” (played according to personal recollection of Liszt[’s playing]), implying that Liszt himself played the piece in this manner. Hamilton maintains that, to his knowledge, no other Liszt pupils still alive in 1905 publicly questioned the reliability of this or other piano rolls bearing the same rubric.²⁹ Nonetheless, it is difficult to believe that

²⁵ Berthold Kellermann (1853 – 1926) studied with Liszt from 1873 to 1878. As one of the more “senior” Liszt pupils involved in the *Gesamtausgabe*, he seems to have exerted considerable influence on other editors such as José Vianna da Motta, whose relationship with Liszt had been shorter-lived.

²⁶ José Vianna da Motta, preface to *Franz Liszt's Musikalische Werke: Herausgegeben von der Franz Liszt-Stiftung*, Series II, no. 9, ed. José Vianna da Motta (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1927), vi.

²⁷ Hamilton explains that Kellermann's scornful dismissal of Stavenhagen—a great pianist indeed—stems from a bitter rivalry that existed between the two men.

²⁸ Kenneth Hamilton, “‘Nach Persönlichen Erinnerungen’: Liszt's Long-Ignored Legacy to His Students,” in *Liszt's Legacies*, ed. James Deaville and Michael Saffle (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 2014), 112–13.

²⁹ Alfred Reisenauer (1863 – 1907) also issued series of piano rolls bearing the inscription “*nach persönlichen Erinnerungen an Liszt*” the same year as Stavenhagen. See Hamilton, 113.

Stavenshagen could have remembered Liszt's vastly different rendition of the piece two decades after hearing it. More likely—Hamilton suspects—his memory was aided by an actual Liszt manuscript once in his possession but now lost. In the absence of such a manuscript or a transcription of the Stavenshagen piano roll, we must rely on Hamilton's description of the piano roll performance:

The version of [*St. Francis of Paola*] played by Stavenshagen is also astonishingly different—a thorough transformation of the familiar score, with several pages almost unrecognizably recomposed. To those familiar with the published version, much of this will come as a shock. But if it be madness, there is indeed method in it, for the “Stavenshagen version” has its own coherence and logic. Some of the left-hand tremolo bass is replaced with chromatic scales, the initial “wave” figuration is extended, part of the “storm” music is cut to compensate, and the work culminates in a totally new climax, far less strident than the original. The waves finally dissipate into misty figuration in the treble, in similar fashion to the transition between the first two scenes of *Das Rheingold*. What's more, as St. Francis strides in sodden triumph to the other side of the Straits of Messina, his theme is underpinned by new triplet octaves rather than chords.³⁰

Unless a manuscript in Liszt's hand resurfaces, we shall never be able to confirm the provenance of the Stavenshagen version. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge the existence of this intriguing rendition by one of Liszt's most distinguished pupils, even if the century-old piano roll on which it is enshrined is not considered a valid or reliable means of transmission according to modern editorial standards.³¹

³⁰ Hamilton, 115–16.

³¹ Hamilton, 117.

State of Scholarship

Liszt's second *Franciscan Legend* has generally eluded in-depth scholarly analysis, perhaps due to its seemingly simple form and uncomplicated harmonic scheme. Among the few scholars to have engaged with the piece is Márta Grabócz, who has offered surface-level analyses of the work in at least three studies.³² Drawing on A. J. Greimas's semiotic concepts of narrative grammar and structural semantics, Grabócz developed a system for analyzing meaning in Liszt's piano works. Grabócz's approach, which we can view as a form of *topical analysis*,³³ provides a method for better comprehending the work's underlying narrative structure. By dividing compositions into hierarchical signifying units—called *semes*, *classemes*, and *isotopies*—she demonstrates that numerous instrumental works by Liszt involve identical successions of topics and archetypical narrative structures. A summary of her methodology will serve to clarify these theories. It should be noted that Grabócz's theories and corresponding terminology, first introduced in her 1996 monograph *Morphologie des œuvres pour piano de Liszt: Influence du programme sur l'évolution des formes instrumentales*, have evolved over time. In the interest of clarity, the ensuing discussion uses only Grabócz's latest terminology in her 2002 and 2014 articles, as translated into English by the author herself.

The smallest unit of signification in Grabócz's system is the *seme*, which operates at the level of the musical motif. She identifies four Lisztian *semes*: the pastoral, the fanfare “eroico,”

³² Márta Grabócz, *Morphologie des œuvres pour piano de Liszt: Influence du programme sur l'évolution des formes instrumentales* (Paris: Kimé, 1996); Márta Grabócz, “Common Narrative Structures in Music and Literature: A Semio-Styletic Investigation in the Arts of the Nineteenth Century (Liszt and Goethe),” in *Nineteenth-Century Music: Selected Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference*, ed. Jim Samson and Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 155–68; Márta Grabócz, “Narrative strategies of the Romantic ‘philosophical epics’ in the piano works of Franz Liszt (Analysis of Sposalizio, Valee D'Obermann, Ballade No. 2 and the Sonata in B minor),” *Interdisciplinary Studies in Musicology* 14 (2014): 113–35.

³³ In a 2020 article, Grabócz uses the terms “topic” and “isotopy” interchangeably. See Márta Grabócz, “From Music Signification to Musical Narrativity: Concepts and Analyses,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Music Signification*, ed. Esti Sheinberg and William P. Dougherty (London: Routledge, 2020), 197–206.

the storm, and the macabre.³⁴ Next is the *classeme*, which operates at the level of the period or musical phrase. Grabócz identifies sixteen categories of *classemes* in Liszt's music, including march, scherzo, heroic, religioso, etc.³⁵ Finally, combinations of *semes* and *classemes* form *isotopies*, the largest signifying unit operating at the level of self-contained thematic complexes.

The seven *isotopies* used by Liszt, as codified by Grabócz, are as follows:

- 1) Macabre Quest
- 2) Pastoral-Amoroso
- 3) Heroic
- 4) Macabre Fight
- 5) Mourning
- 6) Religious
- 7) Pantheist³⁶

While the topical associations of certain isotopies are self-explanatory, others require some explanation. The isotopy of the “macabre quest,” for example, is signaled by *classemes* and expressive markings that suggest a “Faustian quest”—a profound, sorrowful, even anxious questioning about the meaning of existence (e.g. *marche funèbre*; *lamento-lagrimoso*; *recitativo*; *lugubre*).³⁷ Similarly, the isotopy of the “macabre fight” generally refers to a struggle against an imaginary external or internal enemy, and includes musical depictions of storms or battle fanfares (examples of expressive markings for this isotopy are *tempestoso*; *energico*; *agitato*; *stringendo*). The macabre fight isotopy, Grabócz explains, appears in almost all works with a heroic isotopy, including the second Franciscan *Legend*.³⁸ In 2002, Grabócz argued that the way isotopies are

³⁴ Grabócz, “Narrative strategies of the Romantic ‘philosophical epics’ in the piano works of Franz Liszt (Analysis of Sposalizio, Valee D’Obermann, Ballade No. 2 and the Sonata in B minor),” 115.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Grabócz, 116.

³⁷ Grabócz, *Morphologie des œuvres pour piano de Liszt*, 121.

³⁸ Grabócz, 122.

arranged in succession is determined by archetypal narrative schemes derived from 19th-century literary models.³⁹ In 2014 she went on to claim that the majority of Liszt's works completed in the 1840s and 1850s, including pieces in *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* and *Années de pèlerinage*, follow an identical narrative pattern based on a series of two, three or four isotopies. They often open with the isotopy of mourning or of the macabre quest, before ranging through the pastoral and heroic stages and eventually reaching a pantheist or religious conclusion.⁴⁰ In her 2014 article, Grabócz illustrated Liszt's reliance on archetypal narrative structures, as summarized in the following graph covering five works.⁴¹ "TC" stands for *thematic complex*—which, in Grabócz's system of segmentation, refers to a self-contained section of a work whose narrative function is determined by the isotopy.⁴²

³⁹ Grabócz, "Common Narrative Structures in Music and Literature, 167."

⁴⁰ Márta Grabócz, "Narrative Strategies of the Romantic 'Philosophical Epics' in the Piano Works of Franz Liszt (Analysis of Sposalizio, Valee D'Obermann, Ballade No. 2 and the Sonata in B minor)," 120.

⁴¹ Grabócz, 117.

⁴² Grabócz, 115–16.

Isotopy	Macabre quest	Heroic	Pastoral [amoroso]	Macabre fight	Mourning	Religious	Pantheist
<i>Vallé d'Obermann</i>	TC1		TC2	TC3			TC4
<i>Pensée des morts</i>			TC1		TC2		
<i>St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves</i>	TC4	TC3 TC5	TC1	TC2			
<i>Sunt lacrimae rerum</i>		TC3	TC2		TC1		
<i>Tombez, larmes silencieuses</i>			TC2		TC1	TC3	

According to Grabócz, *St. Francis of Paola* cycles through four isotopies in an unfolding narrative structure. The pastoral isotopy corresponds to the opening material up to the “storm” section (m. 64), where the macabre fight isotopy then takes over. The heroic isotopy is associated with the theme’s apotheosis (m. 103), followed by the macabre quest at the recitative section (m.139), and returning to the heroic isotopy at the coda (m. 156).⁴³ Although Grabócz does not state this explicitly, it is likely that her use of the word “pastoral” in the context of the second *Legend* does not refer to evocations of the idyllic countryside, but rather to the religious undertones that the term also carries.⁴⁴ The *heroic* label also proves apt given Liszt’s use of certain musical

⁴³ In *Morphologie des œuvres pour piano de Liszt*, Grabócz offers a different succession of isotopies for this piece: *pastoral-religious—pastoral—macabre fight—heroic-religious—lugubrious quest—heroic-religious*. See p. 175

⁴⁴ This is suggested by the more specific designation that she uses in an earlier study: *pastoral-religious*. See *Morphologie des œuvres pour piano de Liszt*, 175. On the Christian associations of the pastoral topic, see Raymond

signifiers in the *Legend*—particularly, the fanfare—which suggest that the composer may have viewed St. Francis’s miracle, his conquering of the menacing waves, as the accomplishment of a heroic feat. On the other hand, given the work’s subject, the designation of “macabre quest” for the recitative section comes across as inadequate. As will be demonstrated, that passage carries no associations of “a profound and sorrowful questioning about the meaning of existence,” but instead depicts a moment of prayerful introspection. In addition to these concerns, Grabócz’s analytical method offers only a bird’s eye view of this particular composition. Therefore, the present chapter provides a more in-depth analysis that takes into account not only the work’s narrative structure, but also its relationship to the written program, and the crucial role of harmony.

ANALYSIS

The pages to follow will examine Liszt’s *St. Francis of Paola* through a narrative lens. Narrative analysis can take on different forms. In the case of music with an accompanying verbal program, such as Liszt’s Franciscan *Legends*, a starting approach is to determine to what degree sections of the work correlate to events described in the program. The process can further entail describing expressive states evoked by the music and the ways that their unfolding implies a narrative.⁴⁵ The present analysis explores Liszt’s use of topics, harmonic progressions, and other musical means as he attempted to bring his program to fruition. It also considers an unfolding of expressive states suggested by the transformations to which the work’s sole theme is subjected and the ways these reflect the program.

Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral*, Musical Meaning and Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 202–5.

⁴⁵ Michael Leslie Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Indiana University Press, 2005), 115.

The diagram below (figure 4.2) offers a possible reading of the structure of Liszt's second Franciscan *Legend*, which forms the basis of the ensuing analysis. Under the "tonal areas" column, only keys in bold correspond to stable tonalities, while those written in brackets represent tonicizations. It bears mentioning, however, that this is a subjective interpretation which, though informed by knowledge of the musical vocabulary of the nineteenth century, cannot purport to correspond precisely to the composer's intentions. The aim here is to provide a framework to better understand the piece, its affective trajectory,⁴⁶ and how particular elements of the music, when presented in chronological succession, can work to signify actions and natural phenomena, creating the effect of an unfolding narrative. It should also be noted that certain designations under the "programmatic content" column do not necessarily correspond to events or actions described in the written program. As will be recalled, Miscimarra makes no mention of inclement weather in his retelling of the story. Yet, it is quite clear that, in Liszt's depiction, a powerful musical storm occupies the work's middle section. We might surmise that the idea for a storm originated with Steinle's drawing, which captures the movement of the rising tides and strong winds associated with tempestuous weather. Perhaps programmatic considerations—namely the need for a source of musical conflict—dictated that a storm be depicted. Whatever the case, Liszt took the verbal program as a point of departure but moved beyond it. It is with this premise in mind that the present interpretation is construed. Thus, moments in the music labeled as "transcendent," for example—while not describing anything mentioned specifically in the written program—identify expressive states evoked by the music at appropriate moments in the narrative unfolding.

⁴⁶ For use of this expression, see Dolores Pesce, "Harmony, Gesture, and Virtuosity in Liszt's Revisions: Shaping the Affective Journeys of the Cypress Pieces from *Années de Pèlerinage* 3," in *Liszt and Virtuosity*, ed. Robert Doran (Boydell & Brewer, 2020), 311–45.

Liszt's second *Legend* does not adhere to any standard formal archetype. Instead, the work relies primarily on a single theme, which is subjected to various types of transformations. Crucially, these transformations are applied to the texture only, and not to the melodic and/or rhythmic parameters. In contrast to his more all-encompassing approach seen in other compositions, here Liszt is at pains to preserve the rhythmic and melodic integrity of the work's sole theme. Noting the cyclical structure of the piece, Dale Wheeler described the second *Legend* as a "character variation superimposed on a rondo,"⁴⁷ and offered the following formal analysis:

Measures	Section	Key
1–24	Theme	E major
24–41	Extension & Development	modulating
42–53	Theme	E major
54–102	Extension & Development	modulating; sequential; chromatic
103–13	Theme	E major
113–38	Extension & Development	modulating; sequential
138–55	Recitative	G major, C-sharp minor; E major
155–69	Theme/Coda	E major

By narrowly circumscribing the theme proper, and labeling as an "extension" any material that ventures beyond the home key of E major, Wheeler's interpretation yields a relatively simple rondo-like scheme, which involves periodic statements of the theme alternating with "modulating" episodes. The present study opts instead to view the piece as a monothematic composition— informed by Liszt's extensive experience designing virtuoso piano textures,—which relies on the principle of thematic transformation to depict changing expressive states which contribute to an unfolding musical narrative.

⁴⁷ Dale John Wheeler, "Franz Liszt's Solo Piano Music from His Roman Period, 1862-1868" (DMA doc., University of Oklahoma, 1999), 155–56.

Table 4.1: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, formal diagram.

Measure #	Programmatic Content	Tonal area(s)	Dynamics/Exp. Markings	Thematic material/Texture
St. Francis Appears - Storm Begins to Brew				
1 - 5	St. Francis of Paola appears → Storm begins to brew	G# minor	Andante maestoso	St.F. theme distorted; bare octaves
6 - 41		E Major → [C# minor] → [D major] [G minor] → [B major] [C# minor] → [D major] [G minor] → G# minor	p; non troppo lento	St.F. theme over tremolandos → chromatic scales
Miracle				
42 - 51	St. Francis walks on the waters	E major	p; (r.h): leggiero (l.h): sempre marcato	St.F. theme over sweeping scales
52 - 55	Awe and wonderment	Third-relationship [C# major] → [F major]		
56 - 57	Resistance	[F major/Ambiguous]		
58 - 61	Awe and wonderment	Third-relationship [Eb major] → [G major]		
62 - 63	Resistance	[G major/Ambiguous]		
Storm				
64 - 71	Storm brewing (unrest)	C Major → F minor Db Major → F# minor	mf; più marcato poco a poco animato il tempo	Arpeggio figurations over St.F. theme in l.h.
72 - 98	Raging storm (struggle + unrest)	[G minor] → [Bb minor] → Ambiguous/Chromatic	f; rinforzando → stringendo ff; più rinforzando → più stringendo	Dense textures → chromatic interlocking chords & octaves
Miracle (Apotheosis)				
99 - 113	St. Francis conquers the storm	E Major	ff → fff Allegro maestoso e animato	Apotheosis: St.F. theme in thick chordal texture
113 - 132		[B major] [C# minor] → [D major] [G minor] → [B major] [C# minor] → [D major] [G minor] → Chromatic		Chordal texture + octaves
133 - 138	Transcendence	Third-relationships [C# major] → [F# major] [Eb major] → [G major]		Virtuosic arpeggios involving both hands
Prayer - Caritas!				
139 - 155	Prayerful introspection [not part of linear narrative]	G Major? → C# minor? → E Major	Lento p; accentuato assai con somma espressione	Recitative over sparse chordal accompaniment
St. Francis Triumphant				
156 - 169	St. Francis reaches the shore	E Major	Tempo I marcato; p → cresc. → fff	St.F. theme in octaves (l.h) + syncopated chords → tremolandos

St. Francis Appears – Storm Begins to Brew (mm. 1 – 41)

Liszt's second Franciscan *Legend* begins with a five-bar introduction marked *Andante maestoso* (figure 4.5). The theme, which we can interpret to symbolize St. Francis himself, is harmonized in bare octaves and emerges from the depths of the keyboard's low register, lending it an aura of gravity. Three beats of silence separate the first and second phrases, much like a speaker placing a dramatic pause between statements to heighten anticipation. Although the piece has a four-sharp signature, these opening measures suggest G-sharp natural minor. Programmatically, we might correlate this minor statement of the theme to St. Francis's original predicament of being denied passage across the Strait of Messina and having his sainthood questioned by the incredulous boatman.

Fig. 4.5: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 1 – 11.



On the upbeat to measure 6, the music shifts to E major and abandons stark octaves in favor of a richly-voiced texture. Underpinned by soft *tremolando* figures, the theme is harmonized in the

manner of a hymn, reinforcing the religious subject of the program. Simple yet dignified, it is a fitting musical analog to the humble patron of the minims. Commenting on the saint's modest appearance, Liszt refers to St. Francis as a person of "lowly aspect" in the work's preface, and it is precisely this simplicity that he sought to capture in the theme's first iteration. Yet, the *maestoso* marking also paints an image of a dignified person. Later in the piece, as St. Francis accomplishes his miraculous feat through divine intervention, the theme will reemerge in grand manner, majestically transformed.

As is often the case, Liszt's choice of key carries symbolic significance. Scholars have long recognized E major as Liszt's "religious key," given its frequent use in the composer's sacred works.⁴⁸ Much of the music of the *Christus* oratorio unfolds in E major, which more specifically confirms the connection in Liszt's mind between that tonality and Christ himself. Liszt's use of E major in his second Franciscan *Legend* does not merely denote a sacred subject—it draws a link between St. Francis and Christ. Many of St. Francis's reported miracles set him apart from other saints. He cured the blind, walked on water, and even raised the dead—miraculous deeds one tends to associate only with Christ. Recognizing the Christ-like nature of his patron saint, Liszt highlights St. Francis's divinity by casting his music in E major.

The theme attributed to *St. Francis of Paola* stands out on account of its sheer length. As each phrase elides into the next, the melody is never allowed to come to a resting point, creating what Grabócz calls an "infinite melody." As she explains:

The main theme of the piece *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves* embodies, all at once, a symbol of momentum, of victory, and of religious faith. It is only under the inspiration of this three-fold meaning ... that such a rare type of theme among instrumental pieces could be born—a kind of *wandering* theme, built out of

⁴⁸ Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 297.

sequences and modulations, and outlining a single arch spanning 36 measures, “an infinite melody.”⁴⁹

Starting at measure 16, certain elements of the musical texture begin to function as imitations of a watery soundscape, suggesting that St. Francis has reached the water’s edge. At measures 16 and 18, for example, the continuous tremolo texture in the left hand is interrupted on the second beat by a group of triplets. Informed by our knowledge of the program, we are inclined to hear these wave-like scale fragments as rippling water. Additionally, Liszt indicates in the score that the triplets are to be “well emphasized in contrast to the tremolo and played *crescendo*.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, starting at measure 16, the harmonic rhythm speeds up, with changes of harmony occurring almost every beat, rather than every measure,⁵¹ and the music begins exploring new tonal areas, slowly venturing away from the home key of E major. Cadential motion in C-sharp minor at mm. 17 – 18 appears to suggest a modulation to the relative minor, but this turns out to be only a brief tonicization. D major and G minor sonorities follow at measures 20 and 21 respectively. At the same time, as the music moves farther away from the home key, the accompaniment becomes more complex, with increasingly more chromatic notes introduced in the left-hand part. By measure 22, a registral expansion also takes place, with the left-hand figuration now spanning three octaves (see figure 4.6). The music finally reaches the peak of harmonic tension on the downbeat of measure 22 on a C-sharp fully-diminished sonority. Again, informed

⁴⁹ “Le thème principal de la pièce *St. François de Paule marchant sur les flots* incarne en même temps un symbole d’élan, de victoire, de foi religieuse. C’est seulement sous l’inspiration de ce double sens ... qu’a pu naître un type de thème principal très rare parmi les pièces instrumentales, un type de thème vagabondant, errant à partir de la construction des séquences, des modulations, en décrivant un seul arc de 36 mesures, “un mélodie infinie.” Márta Grabócz, *Morphologie des œuvres pour piano de Liszt: influence du programme sur l’évolution des formes instrumentales* (Paris: Kimé, 1996), 75.

⁵⁰ This score indication can be seen in the Urtext edition. See Franz Liszt, *Neue Liszt-Ausgabe. Serie I, Band 10*, ed. Imre Mező and Imre Sulyok (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1980), 15.

⁵¹ It should be noted that, for mm. 6 – 15, although nearly every note in the right-hand part is harmonized as a different chord, the octave tremolos in the accompaniment act as pedal points, changing only every measure.

by our knowledge of the program, we are inclined to hear these changes as signaling the onset of something ominous—specifically, rising tides and increasingly turbulent waters. Then, at mm. 23 – 24, an authentic cadence in B major leads the music back to tonal stability and closer to the home key. For a moment, we appear to have returned to safety, but the sense of having settled in B is only momentary, and quickly undermined by the addition of B-sharp in measure 25. The formerly agitated left-hand accompaniment (mm. 22 – 23) now turns into a *tremolo*-like broken octaves as the music ventures through the same harmonic path already heard—C-sharp minor, D major, G minor, and again reaching the height of harmonic tension on a C-sharp diminished seventh chord on the downbeat of measure 30. Throughout the piece, Liszt consistently uses fully diminished chords as a unifying harmonic device, signaling peaks of harmonic tension. Next, the right-hand part begins to ascend, expanding its register and slipping into G-sharp minor by measure 33. By this point, the music has changed course and deviated from the harmonic blueprint established in measures 16 – 24. The left-hand part now becomes entirely chromatic, ascending and descending in a vivid evocation of the ebb and flow of the wind and waters (mm. 32 – 35). Once again, at measure 36, a B dominant seventh chord extended over six measures eventually directs the music back to the home key. The right-hand part drops out altogether at measure 37, giving way to a brilliant virtuosic run in the left hand. Although redistributing the notes of this cadenza between the two hands would facilitate its execution, Liszt's notation demands that the pianist play it entirely with the left hand—the visual spectacle here being an important element of the performance. It is at this point that Liszt begins emulating the sound and movement of the surging waves. The left-hand runs, all in 32nd notes, ascend and descend unpredictably, evoking the rising tides. The rumble created by the keyboard's low register with the aid of the sustain pedal reproduces the indescribable sound of the seas.

Fig. 4.6: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 20 – 23.



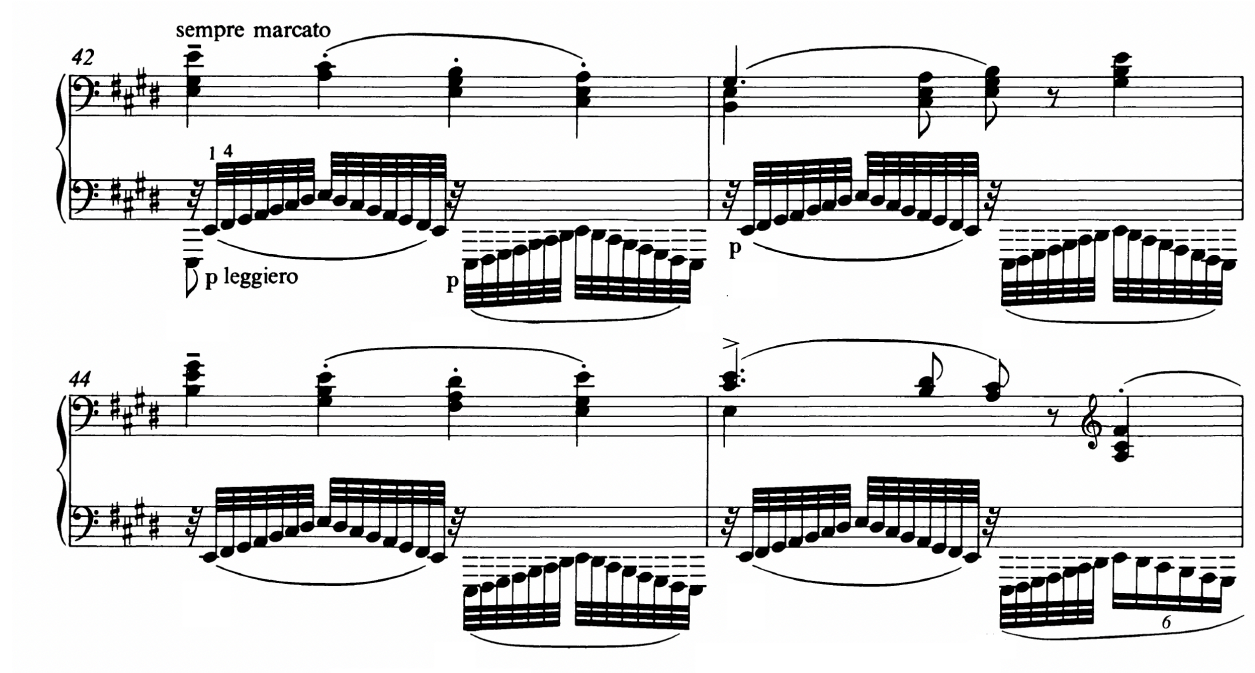
Miracle (mm. 42 – 63)

Measures 42 – 63 depict “the miracle.” As the left-hand part continues to unfold in sweeping undulating scales, the theme re-enters *marcato* on the upbeat to measure 42. Here, more explicitly than before, both the right and left hands assume separate roles, becoming what Cone terms *implicit agents*. As will be recalled from the discussion in Chapter 3, this concept refers to the *individualization* of particular musical materials, which assume roles akin to those of characters in a story.⁵² This passage offers a clear example of musical pictorialism. The resolute manner in which St. Francis’s theme is to be performed—suggested by *sempre marcato* and *tenuto* markings—evokes the image of the saint sailing across the strait wave by wave, themselves represented by the intricate left-hand passagework (see figure 4.7). The musical surface of this passage is conspicuous enough to elucidate its symbolic meaning, but it is of course our

⁵² Edward T. Cone, *The Composer’s Voice*, The Ernest Bloch Lectures (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 88-90. See also Chapter 3, pages 136 – 137, 146.

knowledge of the verbal program that guides our imagination and allows us to picture the saint miraculously walking on water.

Fig. 4.7: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 42 – 45.



Measures 50 – 63 depicts the increasingly turbulent waters and St. Francis’s attempts to quell them (see figure 4.8). At measure 50, as the saint begins to encounter resistance from the rising tides (indicated by the left-hand scalar passage increasing in range upward, then downward), the music begins a modulation towards F-sharp minor, with a G-sharp major chord at measure 52 and a C-sharp major chord at measure 53 functioning as V/V and $V \frac{6}{4}$ respectively. Rather than cadencing in F-sharp minor, however, the six-four C-sharp chord in m. 53 shifts by a single common-tone to its chromatic mediant, F major (6), evoking a sense of *awe and wonderment*. Numerous scholars have remarked on the effect evoked by these types of third-related progressions involving two major chords. Richard Cohn notes that “in music of the nineteenth century, and

throughout the history of music for film, [chromatic progressions by major third] frequently depict sublime, supernatural, or exotic phenomena.”⁵³ He further posits that, “the affective power of [these progressions] derives from a paradoxical characteristic that is inherent to them, when they are heard against the expectations of classical diatonic tonality.”⁵⁴ Similarly, Richard Taruskin explains that, in the nineteenth century, “[harmonic motion by thirds involving major chords] marked a kind of boundary between inner and outer experience and its sounding came to signify the crossing of that edge, endowing the music on the other side with an *uncanny aura* [emphasis mine].”⁵⁵ Referencing their use in film music, Erik Heine notes that these same types of third-related progressions often highlight or illustrate “an event or occurrence that is impossible in our real world or gives the impression of achieving the impossible.”⁵⁶ Although composers have been exploiting the expressive potential of third-related progressions since the Renaissance,⁵⁷ the specific present-day connotations mentioned above stem from conventional associations formed in the nineteenth century.⁵⁸

⁵³ Richard Cohn, *Audacious Euphony: Chromatic Harmony and the Triad's Second Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 21.

⁵⁴ On this point, Leonard Meyer explains more specifically that, “in tonal syntax it is highly probable that if motion is by thirds, a major triad will be followed by a minor one. Consequently, when a major triad follows instead, it seems transcendently radiant.” Leonard Meyer, *Style and Music: Theory, History and Ideology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 300. See also the discussion in chapter 2 of the present study, p. 46.

⁵⁵ Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music: Music in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 3 (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 69.

⁵⁶ Erik Heine, “Chromatic Mediants and Narrative Context in Film,” *Music Analysis* 37, no. 1 (2018): 108.

⁵⁷ Some notable examples include *Thule, the Period of Cosmology* by Thomas Weelkes, *Adoremus te Christi* and *Pulchra es* by Adriano Banchieri, and *Ave Stella Matutina* by Lucrezia Vizzana.

⁵⁸ Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, another film scholar, describes progressions of two major triads whose roots lie a major third apart as a “nineteenth-century trope commonly associated with the benevolent aspects of magic, mystery, and otherworldliness.” Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 136.

Fig. 4.8: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 50 – 63.

52

54

56

58

60

marcato

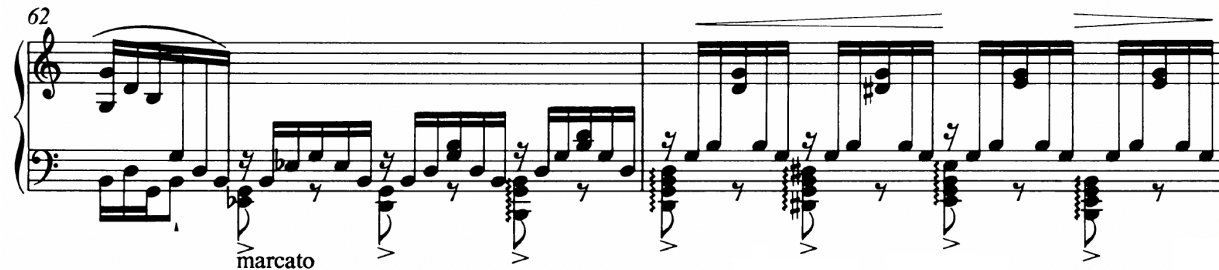
rinforz.

ten.

ten.

rinforz.

Fig. 4.8 (continued): F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 50 – 63.



Immediately after the awe-inducing progression at mm. 53 – 54, an overtly virtuosic passage involving both hands follows. Although the piece presents significant technical challenges throughout, gratuitous virtuosity is never at the forefront. Rather, virtuosity is used in a calculated way that serves the program. Such is the case with this particular passage. As Klein explains:

When virtuosity turns away from its role as a signifier for Liszt's brilliant pianism, it aspires to more than kitschy spectacle and aligns itself rather with musical codes for struggle, brilliance, the demonic, anxiety, salvation, the heroic and the transcendent. ... Though virtuosity might signify transcendence on its own, it tends to function in tandem with harmony and form to create musical narratives powerfully directed toward an exalted moment. Harmonically, these moments of transcendence are associated with chromaticism.⁵⁹

In other words, “exalted” moments in Liszt's music tend to be associated not only with the use of chromatic harmony, but also with virtuosic material. Thus, Klein's assessment applies fittingly to the passage in question: the virtuosic arpeggios in mm. 54 – 55 function within the harmonically marked passage to suggest the crossing of a boundary, a breakthrough. But the aura of wonderment is short-lived as ominous minor and augmented sonorities appear in mm. 56 – 57. At mm. 58 – 63, Liszt repeats the material from mm. 52 – 57 transposed up a whole step. This time, the third relation

⁵⁹ Michael L. Klein, “Liszt and the Idea of Transcendence,” *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 54-55-56 (2003): 103.

involves E-flat major going to G major, harmonies that are quite removed from the previous pair (C#/Db and F). Again the programmatic associations are clear: despite resistance, St. Francis attempts to assert his awe-inducing domination over nature's forces, only to encounter resistance again.

Storm (mm. 64 – 98)

A new section begins at measure 64, where various musical signifiers suggest that a full-fledged storm is starting to materialize. St. Francis's theme now appears in the left-hand part, supported by arpeggio figurations in the middle register. That the theme now appears in the low register, almost as if St. Francis were now under water, might suggest the saint's struggle against the storm as the rising waves practically envelop him. The music in this section explores various tonal areas through the use of sequence. The theme is initially presented in C major (mm. 64 – 65), and then F minor (mm. 66 – 67). This material then repeats, in exact transposition, up a half step, with the theme appearing in D-flat major (mm. 68 – 69), and finally in F-sharp minor (mm. 70 – 71). Such quick modulations work to undermine the music's tonal stability, signaling struggle and unrest. Thus, programmatically, we associate this unstable material with a brewing storm, growing increasingly furious and posing danger to St. Francis as he attempts to reach the other shore. But he continues to move wave by wave in choppy waters, as suggested by the *più marcato* indication in the score (versus *sempre marcato* at m. 42). A new episode then begins to unfold at measure 72. Acrobatic leaps in contrary motion (mm. 72, 74, 76) alternate with short rising scale fragments (mm. 73, 75, 77). Once again, the material cycles through various tonalities in quick succession, gradually getting faster and louder. The techniques and musical devices featured in this section are used often and consistently throughout Liszt's oeuvre to symbolize storms. These elements include

strong accents, syncopated rhythms, full textures, rapidly ascending chromatic scales in double thirds (mm. 79–84), and the frequent use of diminished sonorities. As Grabócz points out, musical storms are often part of Liszt’s heroic epics, where they take on symbolic meaning as signifiers of struggle or heroes in battle.⁶⁰ Taking into account the message of the *Legend*, we understand the storm to symbolize adversity and the trials of earthly life, which St. Francis conquers through faith. It is also worth pointing out that—since there is no mention of a storm in Miscimarra’s written program—Liszt in fact adapting his source material, endowing it with characteristics redolent of the heroic narratives we find elsewhere in his oeuvre.

The notion of drawing strength through faith to overcome the metaphoric “storms of life, as Liszt calls them in the preface to *Les Preludes*, ” is a theme that resonated deeply with the composer and often turns up in his music. An example from the *Christus* oratorio, written around the same time as the Franciscan *Legends*, is instructive. Movement 9, “Das Wunder,” depicts the calming of the storm by Jesus Christ at the Sea of Galilee. Liszt derives his program for the Miracle Scene from Matthew 8: 24–26, whose lines he inscribes throughout the score in Latin. The following translation is from the King James version:

²⁴And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; but he was asleep.

²⁵And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us; we perish.

²⁶And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

⁶⁰ “Outre les œuvres faisant allusion à l’orage par leur titre ... ce sont les pièces appartenant à l’épopée héroïque qui contiennent ces figurations d’orage – le plus souvent au sens figuré du mot, avec une signification symbolique: motif d’orage comme symboles de la lutte, des héros au combat.” [“In addition to the works alluding to a storm by their title ... it is the pieces of a heroic nature which contain these storm figurations – most often in the figurative sense of the word, with a symbolic meaning: storm motifs as symbols of struggle, of heroes in battle.”] Márta Grabócz, *Morphologie des oeuvres pour piano de Liszt: influence du programme sur l’évolution des formes instrumentales* (Paris: Kimé, 1996), 89.

The similarities to St. Francis's legend are clear and it is significant that this is the only miracle, besides the Resurrection, that Liszt chose to feature in *Christus*. However, whereas the disciples experienced a trial of faith during the storm, St. Francis remained courageous and unwavering in his trust in God—hence his “endless theme,” which signifies steadfastness of faith. As theologians have pointed out, St. Francis possessed the faith that Jesus urged his disciples to have, “Amen, I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” [Matthew 17:20].⁶¹

Thus, whereas major thematic transformations played an important role in *St. Francis of Assisi* (see chapter 3), in the second *Legend*, Liszt never subjects the theme to any significant transformations. Instead, he is able to evoke varying expressive states and create an unfolding narrative merely by changing the *texture* of the saint's theme, and concomitantly, its expressive character in each of its presentations. By preserving the theme generally intact, Liszt conveys his patron saint's steadfast belief in God, undaunted in the face of mounting challenges.

The storm section reaches a highpoint on a *sforzando* diminished chord on the downbeat of measure 85. Then, after a sudden drop to *piano*, Liszt employs a device that is almost ubiquitous in his depictions of tempestuous scenes: a series of ascending chromatic scale fragments, where each note is harmonized as a diminished chord (Fig. 4.9). Beginning quietly, they gradually grow louder and immediately quiet again after reaching peaks within the phrase. The resulting swells of sound call to mind various kinds of storm-related imagery, including menacing surging waves, and powerful gusts of wind. Comparison to near-identical passages in two other works shows the frequent use of this device in Liszt's music and confirms its programmatic meaning. Figure 4.10, from the symphonic poem *Les Preludes*, shows a depiction of the “storms of life” referenced in

⁶¹ Philip Kosloski, “The Franciscan Saint Who Walked on Water,” Aleteia.org, April 2, 2019, <https://aleteia.org/2019/04/02/the-franciscan-saint-who-walked-on-water/>.

the work's verbal program. Similarly, figure 4.11 from "The Miracle" movement in *Christus* represents the storm at the Sea of Galilee.

By measure 91, the diminished chords turn to octaves, then, the chromatic figurations seamlessly morph into arpeggiations of a dominant seventh chord on B around measure 95, preparing the return of the home key. The massive wave of sound that built up over 14 measures prepares the listener for a *fortissimo* sounding of a B-dominant-seventh chord in root position and the beginning of a new section at measure 99, marked *Allegro maestoso e animato*. This heralding chord is played in the middle, high, and low registers of the keyboard. (see figure 4.12). The many repeated notes in this motive, as well as its characteristic rhythm, reference the fanfare, a device historically used to announce the entrance of monarchs or other important figures. In the present context, the fanfare-like figuration serves to arrest the listener's attention, and to prepare the return of the tonic E at m.103. Programmatically, it might signal St. Francis's arrival on the other shore.

Fig. 4.9: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 86 – 89.



Fig. 4.10: F. Liszt, *Les Preludes*, mm. 124 – 129 (Piano solo version; arr. August Stradal).

This musical score is for a piano solo arrangement of the final section of Liszt's *Les Preludes*. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a grand staff with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Above the treble staff, the instruments are listed: Fl., Ob., Klar., Fag., and Str. The music features a complex, chromatic texture with many accidentals. Above the first measure of the first system, the markings "cresc. - e - stringendo" are present. The second system also has a grand staff. Above the treble staff, the instrument "Hrnr." (Horn) is indicated. The music continues with similar chromatic complexity. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass staff, marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Fig. 4.11: F. Liszt, *Christus*, “Das Wunder,” mm. 81 – 90 (piano reduction).

This musical score is a piano reduction of the "Das Wunder" section of Liszt's *Christus*. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a grand staff with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is characterized by a complex, chromatic texture with many accidentals. Above the first measure of the first system, the marking "cresc." is present. The second system also has a grand staff. The music continues with similar chromatic complexity. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass staff, marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Fig. 4.12: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 99 – 105.

Miracle – Apotheosis (mm. 99 – 138)

At the sounding of the E major tonic triad at m. 105, St. Francis’s theme reemerges in grand and exalted manner—a classic example of what scholars call musical apotheosis. As Edward T. Cone defined the term, apotheosis is “a special kind of recapitulation that reveals unexpected harmonic richness and textural excitement in a theme previously presented with a deliberately restricted harmonization and a relatively drab accompaniment.”⁶² Though a common feature of Liszt’s music in general, these powerful climaxes occur especially often in certain types of musical narratives that Liszt was drawn to. These programmatic works, for which apotheosis lends itself particularly well, thematize the idea of a final vindication after some form of conflict. Instances from Liszt’s oeuvre are numerous. The symphonic poem *Mazeppa* (LW G7) follows this narrative trajectory. The poem by Victor Hugo that served as its inspiration describes the title character being strapped

⁶² Edward T. Cone, *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), 84.

naked to the back of a horse and left to die. He survives, and is eventually crowned king. At the moment of apotheosis, Liszt inscribes in the score the phrase ‘*il s’élève roi!*’ (he rises as king!). Another example is the symphonic poem *Tasso: lamento e trionfo* (LW G2). The work depicts the misfortunes of the 16th-century Italian poet Torquato Tasso, whose merits went unappreciated by contemporary detractors. Following many setbacks, including a lengthy imprisonment in a mental asylum, Tasso receives vindication in his final days, with the pope declaring him Poet Laureate. Although Tasso died shortly before his coronation could take place, Liszt nonetheless presents his once wistful theme in full majestic splendor at the end of the piece, crashing cymbals and all.⁶³ David Larkin has suggested that Liszt’s fascination with these narrative archetypes stems from the fact that he identified with the central characters in them.⁶⁴ As we know, Liszt directed much of his energy towards achieving artistic immortality in spite of the negative reception of his works, and the often scathing response by critics. We can surmise from his private correspondence that Liszt yearned for the kind of vindication that was granted to Tasso. He hoped his contributions would one day be accorded their rightful place in the musical pantheon.

The legend of St. Francis of Paola crossing the strait takes the same narrative archetype that so appealed to Liszt and situates it within a religious context. St. Francis is derided by the incredulous boatman—his sanctity questioned. In his preface, Liszt is deliberate in reminding us that Francis was dismissed as a person of “lowly aspect.” Furthermore, the boatman taunts him: “if this man be a saint... then let him walk on water, and work miracles.” Because he has God on his side, St. Francis miraculously overcomes the challenges at hand, much to the astonishment of

⁶³ In another symphonic work, *Le triomphe funèbre du Tasse* (LW G25/3), Liszt thematizes the posthumous glorification of the poet.

⁶⁴ As of yet, Larkin’s thoughts on this subject remain unpublished. Assertions such as the one cited here were part of a public lecture he delivered on 11 May 2015 at the University of Sydney, which can be accessed online via the university’s YouTube channel. See David Larkin, “Liszt’s Attitudes to the Audience” (May 11, 2015).

his detractors. In a swift reversal of fortune, the boatman and his crew beg for forgiveness. It is they who now seem insignificant next to St. Francis's wondrous feat. With all this in mind, we can see why the device of apotheosis is practically indispensable for the musical depiction of these types of narratives. As Alexander Rehding asserts, "if the theme characterizes the hero, the technique used for the apotheosis presents it no longer as a contiguous melody but as the gigantic, larger-than-life—in short, superhuman—object of admiration and glorification."⁶⁵ Thus, at measure 103, through the exalted transformation of his theme, St. Francis's miraculous powers become musically manifest: he conquers the storm.

Liszt "glorifies" St. Francis's theme by harmonizing the melody in a rich chordal texture, with low *sforzando* octaves on the downbeats (see figure 4.10 above). By measure 111, a scalar figuration in octaves begins to creep into the left-hand part, making a brief reference to the scalar runs that elsewhere in the piece represented the surging waves. As the music begins cycling through different keys, the music takes on a militaristic character starting at m. 113 (see figure 4.13). The theme's smooth melodic line is abandoned in favor of short, accented gestures in dotted rhythms—elements commonly associated with martial music. Here Liszt relies on the military topic, a device he often uses to denote heroic achievement or some sort of moral victory.⁶⁶ Moving chromatically in sequential fashion, the music creates a powerful buildup using both extremes of the keyboard. Statements in the low register are promptly answered by corresponding gestures in the high register and vice versa. The music finally breaks off on the downbeat of measure 127, reaching a moment of heightened anticipation, where a diminished seventh chord on C-sharp is left hanging, unresolved. Immediately, accompanied by a sudden drop to *piano*, a passage in

⁶⁵ Alexander Rehding, "Liszt's Musical Monuments," *19th-Century Music* 26, no. 1 (2002): 56.

⁶⁶ Keith T. Johns, *The Symphonic Poems of Franz Liszt* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1997), 19.

chromatic double octaves emerges from the depths of the low register. Liszt calls for the pedal to be held down through measures 127–129, generating a powerful *crescendo* (see figure 4.13). In mm. 130–132, the chromatic figurations then morph into arpeggiated diminished seventh chords on the same C-sharp sonority, now respelled as A# C# E G.

Fig. 4.13: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 109 – 132.

This musical score is for the piece "St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves" by Franz Liszt, measures 109 through 132. The score is written for piano in G major (three sharps) and 2/4 time. It consists of six systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef).
Measure 109: The right hand plays a series of chords, while the left hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Dynamics include *sf* (sforzando).
Measure 112: The right hand features a triplet of eighth notes. The instruction *sempre fff* (sempre fortissimo) is present.
Measure 115: The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.
Measure 118: The right hand continues with eighth-note patterns. The left hand maintains the eighth-note accompaniment.
Measure 121: The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes. The instruction *fff* (fortissimo) is present in both hands.
Measure 124: The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes. The left hand continues with the eighth-note accompaniment.

Fig. 4.13 (continued): F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 109 – 132.



Following the clamorous passage at mm. 127–132, framed by a fully diminished seventh sonority, the programmatic climax of the piece sounds on the downbeat of measure 133, conveying a final aura of transcendent breakthrough. Here Liszt introduces a C-sharp major chord in second inversion. This is an instance of a harmonic device Robert Hatten calls an “arrival six-four chord.” In an example from Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in A major, Op. 101, Hatten points to a series of diminished seventh chords that move to an augmented sixth before resolving to a major six-four chord. Opposition between the diminished seventh and the major six-four gives the latter chord an “expressive connotation of transcendent resolution.”⁶⁷ Michael Klein has broadened our understanding of the arrival six-four by examining its use in Liszt’s music as a signifier of transcendence. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Klein argues that transcendence is signified “either when the music makes evident a sudden move into chromatic space, or when harmony, as if by magic, resolves dissonances that have accrued. The former is associated

⁶⁷ Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 15.

particularly with direct modulation, especially through chromatic mediants, while the latter is associated with ... the ‘arrival six-four chord.’”⁶⁸ The chord at measure 133 functions precisely as Klein prescribes by following upon the fully diminished sonority extended over measures 127–132. Not incidentally, Klein also notes that the arrival six-four chord “may be set within a virtuoso passage that marks it as transcendent, suggesting special insight, the breaking of boundaries.”⁶⁹ Such is also the case with the passage in question, where sweeping arpeggios of an overtly virtuosic nature follow immediately after the arrival six-four chord. The C-sharp six-four chord at m. 133 moves to F-sharp (6) at m. 134, then E-flat ($\frac{6}{4}$) at m. 135, and finally G (6) at m. 136, each chord enveloped in a swirl of arpeggio figurations (see figure 4.14). With every change of harmony the music reaches ever-higher registral peaks, heightening the sense of transcendent breakthrough. The voice-leading procedure employed here, as well as some of the harmonies themselves, recall the “awe-inducing” progressions of measures 52–55 and 58–61, which never fully materialized. Retroactively, these passages now emerge as having foreshadowed the climactic moment at measures 133–137, where full transcendence is finally achieved. It is also worth pointing out how the chromatic voice-leading in this passage, having directed the music to a G major harmony in first inversion at m. 136 (B and G in the outer voices), sets up the opening tones of the next section at mm. 138–139.

⁶⁸ Klein, “Liszt and the Idea of Transcendence,” 105.

⁶⁹ Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music*, 66.

[illegible]

Prayer – *Caritas!* (mm. 139 – 155)

After a prolonged pause of five and a half beats, Liszt inserts a “prayer” in the work—a *Lento* section beginning at measure 139, bearing the indication *accentuato assai con somma espressione*. This single moment of respite in the piece stands out from everything around it, giving the impression of a parenthetical insertion. The texture, reduced to a single-line melody punctuated by rolled chords, imitates accompanied recitative and thus creates the effect of someone speaking. Occurring after the final climax of the piece, this recitative passage can be interpreted in a number of ways. Rather puzzlingly, Grabócz has proposed that it represents a crowd of onlookers, astonished after witnessing St. Francis walking on the waters, although it is unclear how the

material in question conveys astonishment.⁷⁰ On the other hand, the change of tempo and significant reduction of rhythmic activity mark this passage as a moment of solemn introspection that Liszt chose to insert here, as the program does not call for it. Its sudden interruption of the preceding material also creates the effect of time suspended, or perhaps of shifting to another temporal plane. As Hatten remarks about similar types of parenthetical insertions, “by interrupting the unmarked or expected flow of events, especially in such dramatic or rhetorical fashion, time is problematized as neither strictly sequential nor smoothly continuous.”⁷¹

In a subtle way, this new section at mm. 139–155 conveys a sense of uplift. The music begins with an ascending leap spanning a minor sixth (B to G), which is filled in by descending conjunct motion (mm. 138–142). The underlying harmonies—first G major in first inversion to C major, then F-sharp dominant seventh to B dominant seventh—could be read as I_6 to IV in G major, and V_3^4/V to V_7 in E minor respectively, but what follows confirms E minor. This phrase repeats verbatim at measures 143–146, then, on its third iteration, shifts up by a half step, effecting a modal change (E minor to E major). In the initial leap of a sixth, G natural changes to G-sharp, essentially retaining the underlying harmonic pattern: G major (6) becomes G-sharp major (6) and C major becomes C-sharp minor. This constitutes an example of what Leonard Meyer calls “stretching.” The original leap of a minor sixth in mm. 138–139 establishes the standard. Its repetition at mm. 142–143 reinforces the listener’s expectations. But when the interval is *stretched* by a half-step (G to G#), it creates an arresting effect, heightening the expressive impact.⁷² Then, at measure 149,

⁷⁰ “Dans la partie finale de la second (Légende) le rôle du récitatif consiste à montrer la foule incrédule, ébahie regardant la traversée sur la mer de St. François de Paul avec scepticisme.” See Grabócz, *Morphologie des œuvres pour piano de Liszt*, 54–55.

⁷¹ Robert S. Hatten, “The Troping of Temporality in Music,” in *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, Musical Meaning and Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 68.

⁷² Meyer, *Style and Music: Theory, History and Ideology*, 259–62.

the motive stretches yet again, now leaping up to A (with B as an *appoggiatura*)—the gradual upward inflection of the motive conveying a sense of uplift.

Liszt imbues this section with meaning through intertextuality. As Peter Raabe first pointed out,⁷³ the musical material in this passage is taken directly from a choral piece titled, *An den heiligen Franziskus von Paula, Gebet* (LW J13), likely dating from 1858 or 1859 (See figure 4.15a & b). Though little known today, this musical “prayer” clearly bore special significance for the composer.⁷⁴ It is among the handful of compositions that, in his will, Liszt asked Princess Carolyne to publish under Hans von Bülow’s supervision, should he die before seeing it to print.⁷⁵ Liszt specified that the title-page image should be Steinle’s drawing of St. Francis of Paola.⁷⁶ The author of the text remained unknown to scholars for most of the twentieth century.⁷⁷ It is thanks to some remarkable detective work by Pauline Pocknell that we now know the author to have been Martha von Sabinin (1831 – 1896), the daughter of a Russian Orthodox priest in the employment of Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna in Weimar.⁷⁸ Sabinin befriended Liszt in the 1850s and became his pupil. The text that Liszt set to music appears to have been a gift from Sabinin commemorating the feast of St. Francis of Paola, April 2nd. It reads as follows in Pocknell’s translation:

⁷³ Peter Raabe, *Franz Liszt*, vol. 2 (Tutzing: H. Schneider, 1968), 324.

⁷⁴ For a performance history of the piece see Pauline Pocknell, “And Furthermore...: The First Performances of Liszt’s Prayer An Den Heiligen Franziskus von Paula?,” *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 33 (January 1993): 37–43.

⁷⁵ Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years*, 562.

⁷⁶ Ibid. Interestingly, an image by Gustav Doré, not Steinle, was used for the published edition.

⁷⁷ Paul Merrick mistakenly attributed the text to Liszt himself. See Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt*, 248.

⁷⁸ Pocknell, “Author! Author! Liszt’s Prayer An Den Heiligen Franziskus von Paula,” 39–41.

Heiliger Franziskus!
Über Meeres Fluten
Wandelst du im Sturm
und du verzagest nicht!
In dem Herz die Liebe,
in der Hand die Gluten
Durch des Himmels Wolken
schauend Gottes Licht.

Saint Francis!
Over ocean's billows
You walk in the storm,
and you do not take fright!
Love is in your heart,
and in your hand an ember,
Through the clouded heavens
you can see God's light.

Heiliger Franziskus!
O sieh, das Meer der Zeiten
Wogt. und braust gewaltig
und bestürmt das Land.
Ach, uns fehlt der Glaube,
auf der Flut zu schreiten!
Sieh, die heilige Flamme
wankt in unsrer Hand!

Saint Francis!
Lo, the sea of ages
heaves and roars most fearful,
and assails the land.
Alas, our faith is wanting
to stride out on the billows.
See, the holy flame
is trembling in our hand.

Heiliger Franziskus!
Über Meeres Fluten
Lehre du uns wandeln,
nach dem ewgen Licht.
**O lasse uns bewahren
heilger Liebe Gluten,**
Laß durch Stürme
uns schauen Gottes Angesicht!

Saint Francis!
Over ocean's billows
teach us how to walk
towards the everlasting light.
**Oh let us preserve
Love's sacred glowing ember,**
Grant that we through tempests
God's face keep in sight.⁷⁹

The first verse of the poem reads like a description of Steinle's drawing of St. Francis, suggesting that Sabinin, like Liszt, might have drawn inspiration from the image.⁸⁰ These first lines praise the saint for his unwavering faith and courage in the face of trials and tribulations (*you walk in the storm and you do not take fright!*). While verse 2 acknowledges the challenges of following his example, the final verse asks the saint to "teach us how to walk towards the everlasting light," while preserving God's grace alive within us as we traverse the obstacles of life. In verse 3, the

⁷⁹ The poem's English translation is taken from Pocknell, 31–33. However, I adopt a variant of this translation for the crucial lines "*O lasse uns bewahren heilger Liebe Gluten.*"

⁸⁰ Pocknell, 31; See also Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt*, 248.

musical setting of the two lines in bold—for which a different translation, “*Oh let us preserve the embers of holy love,*” is used here—correspond to the musical material quoted in the *Legend*. Through this intertextual reference, Liszt embeds a prayer in the piano composition—one that carried special significance for the composer and reminds us of the importance of keeping the burning ember—symbolic of *God’s love*—in view as our faith fluctuates.

The autograph manuscript of the orchestral version of the *Legend* further enriches our understanding of this passage. At the moment of the quotation, Liszt inscribes the word “*Caritas!*” in the score in large letters, twice underlining it (see figure 4.16). In Steinle’s drawing, it will be recalled, St. Francis’s gaze is directed at the heavens, where the word “*Caritas*” prominently shines through. It guides him through the storm. This imagery, and its corresponding symbolism, appears to have made a powerful impression on Liszt. In the preface to the *Legends*, he describes “the *supreme* word *Caritas*” as being “emblazoned in eternal and immaculate majesty.” In his 1860 letter to Wagner quoted above, the composer marvels at the way the word *Caritas*, “surrounded by an aureole, light’s [the saint’s] way.” And in his will, he refers to *Caritas* as a “*redeeming* word,” shining in glory. That Steinle positioned the word in the skies, exuding light, suggests an association with God Himself. Thus, the symbolic meaning of the imagery appears to be the following: as revealed by St. Francis, God’s love can guide us through life’s challenges, drawing us ever closer to Him. As Liszt’s inscription in the score reveals, the introspective recitative section at the end of the *Legend* is linked to this message—one which resonated deeply with the devout composer.

Fig. 4.15a: F. Liszt, *An den heiligen Franziskus von Paula, Gebet*, mm. 74 – 88.

74 SOLO-QUARTETT
Inbrünstig betend.

f las - se uns, — las - se uns be - wah - ren heil - ger
f Las - se uns, — las - se uns be - wah - ren heil - ger
f Las - se uns, — las - se uns be - wah - ren heil - ger
f Las - se uns, — las - se uns be - wah - ren heil - ger

80 *un poco riten.*
f Lieb', heil - ger Lie - be Glu - ten, heil - ger Lie - be, heil - ger
f Lie - be, heil - ger Lie - be Glu - ten, heil - ger Lie - be, heil - ger
f Lieb', heil - ger Lie - be Glu - ten, heil - ger Lie - be, heil - ger
f Lie - be, heil - ger Lie - be Glu - ten, heil - ger Lie - be, heil - ger
ff *un poco riten.*

86
 Lie - be Glu - ten.
 Lie - be Glu - ten.
 Lie - be Glu - ten.
 Lie - be Glu - ten.

Fig. 4.15b: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 139 – 150.

Lento 139
accentuato assai
con somma espressione

143

147

Fig. 4.16: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola*, orchestral version. Autograph manuscript. Mus.Hs.42179, folio 18. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

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St. Francis Triumphant (mm. 156 – 169)

A perfect authentic cadence in measures 154–155 marks the end of the recitative section and the beginning of the coda, which we might interpret as signifying St. Francis having reached the shore. A truncated version of St. Francis's theme now returns in octaves, punctuated by syncopated chords in the right-hand part. Displacing the water-like figurations, St. Francis's theme now occupies the lowest register, suggesting his newfound steadiness as he walks on dry land. Having completed his crossing, the saint goes on his way. No longer does the theme extend and endlessly wander—it instead sounds its first two measures three times, *marcato*, growing louder on the third iteration. Moving in contrary motion, the right-hand and left-hand parts begin to diverge at measure 161, reaching opposite extremes of the keyboard. A *tremolo* at mm. 163–164 then rings vigorously in the high treble conveying a celebratory air, while a rising figure, doubled twice at the octave, emerges from the bass register. Virtuosity also plays a role in heightening this final climax. At measure 165, Liszt calls for the music to accelerate, compounding the technical challenges. As elsewhere in the piece, the overcoming of these difficulties by the performer becomes a signifier of transcendence, of boundaries crossed. As we approach the end of the piece, at mm. 165–169, ascending arpeggios in the left-hand part reassert the tonic harmony. These fanfare-like triadic figurations, associated with the heroic topic, also serve to project a sense of triumphant victory (see figure 4.17). The work concludes *fortississimo*, in marked contrast to the subdued *pianississimo* ending of the first *Legend*.

Fig. 4.17: F. Liszt, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, mm. 165 – 169.



Conclusion

The two Franciscan *Legends* are deeply personal works. Inspired by St. Francis of Assisi and St. Francis of Paola—saints dear to Liszt's heart—they depict stories the composer had known since childhood. On Liszt's rare appearances as a soloist during the 1860s, the *Legends* featured regularly on his programs. Liszt published the two works as a set and evidently designed them to complement one another. Each piece exploits opposite ends of the keyboard's register, as well as contrasting dynamic ranges. Liszt aimed to capture the public's imagination with these works, casting them as vivid musical narratives to which he attached lengthy plot-driven verbal programs. The subject of this chapter—*St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*—further draws its inspiration from a work of visual art. As Andrew Haringer points out, whenever Liszt translates painterly figurations into music, he uses recognizable musical topics to suggest the surface content

of the corresponding artwork—in this case, water-like figurations and “storm” music—but then “transforms this material to reveal the deeper spiritual meaning.”⁸¹ To this end, here Liszt relies on a specific type of third-related progressions and the arrival six-four chord to evoke an atmosphere of wonderment and awe linked to St. Francis’s miraculous feat. Thus, using the expressive potential of chromatic progressions, Liszt signifies transcendence and, more metaphorically, the overcoming of earthly challenges through religious faith. These exalted moments during which diatonicism is suspended consistently align themselves with virtuosic material, further heightening the sense of transcendent breakthrough. Finally, Liszt further imbues meaning into the second *Legend* by quoting musical material from one of his own choral works with a related program about St. Francis of Paola. By referencing a texted passage, the composer invokes a personal prayer that highlights the importance of always keeping God’s *holy love* in sight as we face life’s trials, in the manner of St. Francis of Paola. The corresponding music, projecting a subtle sense of uplift, reflects the solace that God’s love can afford us.

⁸¹ Andrew Haringer, “Visual Art and Artists,” in *Liszt in Context*, ed. Joanne Cormac, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 95.

Chapter 5: Epilogue

This dissertation attempts to broaden our understanding of Liszt's Franciscan identity and the ways it influenced the composer's musical output—a subject that has hitherto received insufficient treatment in the scholarly literature. Starting in the mid nineteenth century, Europe underwent a Franciscan revival. The impact of this newfound fascination with St. Francis of Assisi was reflected in literature and the arts. Within this cultural framework, Liszt—a lifelong devotee of St. Francis—took steps to strengthen his connection to the saint and Franciscanism more broadly. First, in 1856, he requested to be named a *confrater* by the Franciscans of Pest, solidifying ties to that monastery dating back to his early youth. Second, he asked to have a Franciscan habit made for him and requested to be buried in it. And finally, he composed and published a series of Franciscan-themed works, including the first modern setting of St. Francis's famous *Canticle of the Sun*. The intensification of Liszt's Franciscan devotion can be viewed as part of the composer's lifelong spiritual journey—one which began with his youthful desire to join the priesthood, then culminated in 1865 with his taking the four minor orders of the Catholic Church.

On the issue of Liszt's alleged membership in the Third Order, the branch of the Franciscans traditionally associated with lay penitents, one important distinction has generally eluded Liszt scholars—namely, that between the Third Order *Regular* and the Third Order *Secular*. Today, the former pertains to vowed religious who live in community, and traditionally wear the habit. The latter, on the other hand, pertains to lay people who live in the world, do not take vows, and do not wear the habit. While both are Third Order and can be referred to as Tertiaries, the two are fundamentally different. By recognizing this distinction, we can rule out the possibility that Liszt was a Third Order Regular. On the other hand, given the fact that Liszt received the title of

confrater, it is possible that he was recognized as a member of the “Confraternity of the Franciscan Penitents,” which would make him a Third Order Secular.

This study argues that Liszt may have received Tertiary status without the public written pronouncement that scholars have hitherto looked for. Simply put, the language of the *Rule* that governed Third Order Secular status until 1883 allows for conferral without a formal pronouncement in consideration of “the condition and dignity of the person.”¹ Liszt’s artistic status could have warranted such an exception. This possibility does not preclude another: that Liszt fashioned himself as a Tertiary, allowing those close to him to fall under the impression that he enjoyed Tertiary status. In at least two letters to Princess Wittgenstein Liszt makes implicit reference to his Tertiary status by asking that, at the time of his death, his body be clothed “in the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis.”² Additionally, in at least two instances he explicitly refers to himself as a Tertiary in written communications with old acquaintances.³ It would seem that, in Liszt’s mind, membership in the Third Order would have elevated his social stature, drawing him spiritually and symbolically closer to prominent Tertiaries he idolized—particularly Dante or even St. Elisabeth of Hungary. Liszt believed that he enjoyed a special connection to the latter, as he told his mother in 1862: “An extraordinary coincidence led me lovingly to St. Elisabeth. Born, like her, in Hungary, I spent twelve years—of decisive importance for my destiny—in Thuringia, not far from the Wartburg in which she dwelt.”⁴ It is clear that, whatever status the Franciscans of Pest

¹ See chapter 1, page 24.

² “J’y exprime mon désir d’être revêtu dans mon cercueil de l’habit de l’ordre tertiaire de St François.” [Liszt to Princess Wittgenstein, 6 March 1873]. La Mara, ed., *Franz Liszt’s Briefe*, vol. 7 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1900), 10.

³ See chapter 1, pages 26 – 27.

⁴ “Ein besonderes Zusammentreffen hat mich liebevoll der heiligen Elisabeth zugeführt. Wie sie, in Ungarn geboren, habe ich die zwölf über mein Schicksal entscheidenden Jahre meines Lebens in Thüringen verbracht, nahe der Wartburg, die sie bewohnte.” [Liszt to Anna Liszt, 2 December 1862] *Franz Liszt’s Briefe an seine Mutter*, ed. La

may have bestowed on Liszt by, possibly in a non-public manner, he wished to be viewed as a Franciscan.

The Franciscan compositions of the 1860s examined in this study should be understood as manifestations of Liszt's affinity with Franciscanism, and perhaps as a musical offering to the saint in response to that affiliation. Liszt probably gravitated towards these particular Franciscan subjects for different reasons. In the case of St. Francis's *Canticle of the Sun*, discussed in chapter 2, we can surmise that he was drawn to the text, in part, because of its renewed popularity. His reading of Ozanam's *The Franciscan Poets in Italy of the 13th century*, likely played a role as well. In this work, Ozanam depicts St. Francis as a divinely inspired artist, who improvises his finest work while experiencing an "ecstasy," an image that would certainly have appealed to the Romantic imagination.⁵

It is also possible that Liszt was drawn by the book's primary thesis, which posits that St. Francis's *Canticle*—and the vernacular poetry of other Franciscans—directly influenced Dante in his writing of the *Divine Comedy*. In other words, Ozanam proposes that one can trace a direct line from St. Francis, through the various Franciscan poets of the thirteenth century, to Dante. Ozanam recounts that Dante originally considered writing his masterpiece in Latin but then opted for the vernacular, following St. Francis's example.⁶

We might also surmise that Liszt was drawn to the text of the *Canticle* itself, and its simple yet poignant message of praise and gratitude towards the Creator, who provides mankind with

Mara (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1918), 146; English translation from *Franz Liszt: Selected Letters*, ed. Adrian Williams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 593.

⁵ See Appendix B.

⁶ "Dante was tempted to write in Latin, and to compose at first in hexameters the beginning of the 'inferno.' ... [then] by reading his poems he came to realize that the purest mysteries of faith and the loftiest speculations of philosophy could be fitly expressed in the idiom of the people." See Frederick Ozanam, *The Franciscan Poets in Italy of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. A. E. Nellen and N. C. Craig (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1914), 294.

everything he needs. Significantly, Liszt's setting emphasizes the eighth verse, which promises the kingdom to those who forgive and endure life's challenges with grace. Liszt concludes with this verse, discarding St. Francis's final verse about death and judgement. In constructing the work's final climax around verse eight, Liszt thus elevates its message about the promise of life everlasting.

Liszt's treatment of harmony is noteworthy—particularly his use of striking progressions that unfold over a descending bassline. A prominent feature of exalted moments in Liszt's music, these types of progressions are intended to evoke spiritual sublimity, according to the composer's own testimony. In the *Cantico*, Liszt exploits the expressive potential of such progression to heighten the final climax of the piece and enhance its message.

Liszt also highlights another important message in his setting of the *Canticle*. He creates two musical refrains that return periodically and unify the piece: both musical refrains set the first line from verse 2, addressed to “*Sir Brother Sun*,” “*Praised be You, my Lord, with all your creatures*.” Liszt wanted that particular line and its corresponding sentiment to resonate throughout the work, contributing to the overall message. The line synthesizes the doxological formula of the entire poem. Taken in conjunction with the apophatic restriction in verse 1: “*no man is worthy to mention [God's] name*,” a powerful message emerges: man alone is not worthy to sing God's praises; yet, he may join God's self-praise as part of the larger creation—an interconnected cosmic family with a common benevolent creator.⁷ By turning the wording about “all God's creatures” into a refrain, Liszt suggests that he truly understood the underlying message of the *Canticle*.

⁷ See Jay M. Hammond, “The Canticle of Creatures,” in *The Writings of Francis of Assisi: Letters and Prayers*, ed. Michael W. Blastic, Jay M. Hammond, and Wayne J. A. Hellmann, vol. 1, *Studies in Early Franciscan Sources* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2011), 235–37.

The two Franciscan *Legends*, examined in chapters 3 and 4, depict famous miracles performed by St. Francis of Assisi and St. Francis of Paola. The first, *St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*, is one of Liszt's most explicit musical narratives—one through which the composer conveys a moving message about St. Francis's tireless dedication to spreading the word of God to all he encountered, fueled by a faith that could falter, yet reemerge stronger. The second *Legend*, *St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves*, thematizes the notion of drawing strength through unwavering religious faith in order to overcome the metaphoric storms of life. Liszt selected these colorful episodes from the saints' lives purposefully, then cast them as vivid musical narratives to capture the public's imagination.

Given the 19th century's newfound interest in St. Francis of Assisi, one can surmise that at least the "sermon to the birds" would have been familiar to educated audiences. It is evident that the *Legends* were important compositions to Liszt and he wished for them to reach that wider public. To this end, Liszt did much to promote them, writing both piano and orchestral versions. Importantly, he wrote a simplified piano version of the 2nd *Legend* in order to appeal to amateur pianists, ensuring maximum dissemination. The composer's private correspondence reveals that he also intended to create a "*version facilité*" of *St. Francis Preaching to the Birds*, but ultimately found it impossible to simplify the intricate passagework in 32nd notes and still preserve the essence of the ornithological effects. That Liszt went to such lengths surely suggests that he wished for his *Legends* to be well-known, widely circulated, and frequently performed. He even gave their public premiere himself, at a time when his appearances as a piano soloist had become quite rare. He also performed them privately to friends, even before they appeared in print.

Liszt used his Franciscan works as vehicles to convey Christian tenets that he believed in. Moving beyond simple musical representation, he reveals the deeper spiritual meaning of the

Legends, highlighting their respective messages about the propagation of the holy gospels, and overcoming life's challenges through religious faith. In the first *Legend*, Liszt went to great lengths to create a one-to-one correspondence between events described in the program and musical passages meant to depict them. As in a number of his programmatic works, Liszt relies on the referential system of musical topics to create an unfolding narrative, and endows specific musical materials with distinguishable roles, delineating them as "dramatic characters." Liszt also employs thematic transformation to convey changing expressive states. Through these mechanisms, Liszt renders intelligible a complex musical narrative.

Liszt again relies on the aforementioned mechanisms in the second *Legend*, though to a different degree. Importantly, he uses specific harmonic devices—including a particular third-related progression, and the "arrival six-four chord"—to signify moments of *transcendence* and, more metaphorically, the overcoming of earthly challenges through religious faith. Liszt consistently pairs these exalted moments with overtly virtuosic material, heightening the sense of transcendent breakthrough. Finally, he brings intertextuality into play, employing borrowed material from one of his own texted compositions, to nuance the work's message.

This dissertation offers the first in-depth examination of Liszt's Franciscanism in more than fifty years. It also constitutes the first systematic study of three particular compositions by Liszt that share a conceptual connection. As such, it contributes to a broader understanding of the composer's identity, the influence of his religious convictions on his music, and his compositional practice at large.

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APPENDIX A

*Cantico di Frate Sole (Original Text – Umbrian dialect)*¹

1. Altissimu, onnipotente, bon Signore,
Tue so' le laude, la gloria e l'honore et onne benedizione.
Ad Te solo, Altissimo, se konfane,
et nullu homo ène dignu Te mentovare.
2. Laudato sie, mi' Signore, cum tutte le Tue creature, 5
spezialmente **messor lo frate Sole**,
lo qual è iorno, et allumini noi per lui.
Et ellu è bellu e radiante cum grande splendore:
de Te, Altissimo, porta significazione.
3. Laudato si', mi' Signore, per **sora Luna** e le stelle: 10
in celu l'ài formate clarite et preziose e belle.
4. Laudato si', mi' Signore, per **frate Vento**
e per aere e nubilo e sereno et onne tempo,
per lo quale a le Tue creature dàì sustentamento.
5. Laudato si', mi' Signore, per **sor'Aqua**, 15
la quale è multo utile et humile e preziosa e casta.
6. Laudato si', mi' Signore, per **frate Focu**,
per lo quale ennallumini la notte:
et ello è bello e iocundo e robustoso e forte.
7. Laudato si', mi' Signore, per **sora nostra matre Terra**, 20
la quale ne sustenta e governa,
e produce diversi frutti con coloriti flori et herba.
8. Laudato si' mi' Signore, per quelli ke perdonano per lo Tuo amore
e sostengo infirmitate et tribulazione. 25
Beati quelli ke 'l sosterrano in pace,
ka da Te, Altissimo, sirano incoronati.
9. Laudato si', mi' Signore, per **sora nostra Morte corporale**,
da la quale nullu homo vivente po skampare:
guai a quelli ke morrano ne le peccata mortali;
beati quelli ke trovarà ne le Tue santissime voluntati, 30
ka la morte secunda no 'l farrà male.

¹ Paolazzi, *Francisci Assisiensis Scripta*, 121–23.

10. Laudate e benedicite mi' Signore et reingraziate
e serviateli cum grande humilitate.
-

German translation used by Liszt²

1. Erhabener Gott, Schöpfer des Weltalls! Gütiger Vater!
Du bist voll des Lobes, des Ruhmes voll,
der Ehre voll und himmlischen Segens,
und Dir Gott allein gebühren sie:
kein irdisch Wesen ist wert, daß mit Namen es nennt Dich!
2. Sei hoch gepriesen, Gott, allmächtiger Schöpfer,
(Sei hoch gelobt, allmächtiger Gott,)
Um aller Deiner Geschöpfe Dasein!
Die Sonne, die goldene Schwester,
die Tag um Tag herrlich leuchtet am Firmament!
Die strahlend schön und gewaltig!
Voll himmlischen Glanzes, von Dir, Gott und Herr,
gibt ihr Strahl ein lebendig Zeugnis.
(Sei hochgelobet, mein Herr und Gott,
sei hochgelobet von goldener Sonne Strahl!)
3. Gelobet vom **frommen Mond** und seinen Sternen,
die Du am Himmel schüfest so klar und leuchtend!
(Sei hochgelobt, o Gott, allmächtiger Schöpfer, von dem Mond und allen Sternen.)
4. Sei hochgelobet vom **Meister Sturm**:
von allen Lüften, vom Wolkenzug,
von den Zeiten klar und trübe,
durch die Allem, Gott, was hehr Du geschaffen,
Atem Du einhauchst.
(Sei hochgelobt, mein Herr und Gott,
durch Deiner Geschöpfe Dasein!)
5. Sei hochgelobt von **Wasserwogen**,
kristallinen Fluten segensreich,
von Demut voll und Wunderkraft und Reinheit.

² Text taken from the [unpaginated] preface to Franz Liszt, *Franz Liszts Musikalische Werke Herausgegeben von der Franz Liszt-Stiftung: Kirchliche und Geistliche Gesangswerke*, ed. Philipp Wolfrum, vol. V (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1936).

6. Sei hochgelobet , allmächtiger Gott, von **Feuers Flammen**,
dem zu hellen Du die Macht verliehen,
wenns nachtet!
Die Flamme glüheth so freudig,
und lodert empor so mächtig!
(Sei hochgelobet, Herr, allmächtiger Gott, sei hochgelobt von Feuers Flammen!)
7. Sei hochgelobet durch unsre **Mutter Erde**,
die hold uns hegt , und nährend webt und waltet,
Fülle bietend der süßen Früchte und des Laubs,
der bunten Halm und Blumen!
8. Sei hochgelobte, heiliger Schöpfer der Weltalle,
Von **allen, die versöhnungsmild durch Deine Liebe**,
die da tragen still der Leiden Loos
und Mühsal, Schmach und Qualen.
Zu preisen selig sind, die da harren in Frieden,
die von Deiner Hand, o Gott, dereinst die
Kron empfangen!
(Sei hochgelobet, o Gott! Laut preisen Dich alle Geschöpfe!)
9. Sei hochgelobet, Gott, mein Herr, durch **unsern Bruder, den Tod des Leibes**,
dem kein Lebendiger sich kann entziehen.
Weh denen, die da sterben in Todsünde.
Selig, die sich finden auf den Wegen Deines hochheiligen Willens,
denn der zweite Tod wird ihnen nichts anhaben können.
10. Lobet und preiset meinen Herrn und danket ihm
und dienet ihm in großer Demut.

APPENDIX B

**Preface to Liszt's *Cantico del Sol di S. Francesco*
from *Les poètes franciscaines en Italie au treizième siècle*
by Frédéric Ozanam¹**

In the eighteenth year of his penitence, the servant of God, after a forty night's vigil, had an ecstasy, after which he ordered Brother Leo to take a pen and write. Then he intoned the Canticle of the Sun and, after he had improvised it, he charged Brother Pacifico, who had been a poet in his worldly life, to fit the words to a more regular rhythm, and he ordered the brothers to learn them by heart so that they might recite them every day. The words of the Canticle are these:

“O highest, almighty, excellent Lord,
Thine be the praise, the glory, the honor, and all benediction.
To Thee, O Highest, alone they belong,
And to name Thee no man is worthy.

Be Thou blessed, O Lord, with all things created,
Especially my Lord and Brother the Sun,
For by his dawning thou lightenest our darkness;
Beautiful is he and radiant with mighty splendor:
Of Thee, O Most High, he beareth the token.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, for Sister Moon and the Stars,
For that Thou madest them clear, precious, and lovely.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, for our Brother the Wind,
For air and cloud and sunshine and every weather
Whereby Thou givest thy creatures their sustenance.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, for Sister Water,
Our helpmate, lowly and precious and pure.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, for our Brother the Fire,
Whereby Thou sheddest Thy light on darkness,
For he is comely and pleasant and mighty and strong.

¹ English translation taken from Frederick Ozanam, *The Franciscan Poets in Italy of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. A. E. Nellen and N. C. Craig (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1914), 79–82.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, for our Sister the Earth,
That as a Mother sustaineth and feedeth us,
And after its kind bringeth forth fruit
And grass and many-colored flowers.”

A few days afterwards a great dispute arose between the bishop of Assisi and the magistrates of the city. The bishop fulminated the interdict, the magistrates placed the prelate beyond the pale of the law and forbade all intercourse with him and his followers. The saint, distressed by such strife, lamented that there was no one who would intervene to establish peace. He then added to his canticle the following verse:

“Praised be Thou, O Lord, for them that for Thy love forgive,
And undergo tribulation and weakness,
Blessed are they that shall in peace sustain,
For by Thee, O Most High, they shall be crowned.”

Then he ordered his followers to go boldly to seek the principal men of the town and to beg them to make their way to the bishop, and on arriving there to sing in chorus the new verse. The disciples obeyed and, at the chanting of his words, to which God seemed to lend a secret virtue, the adversaries embraced each other in their penitence, and asked pardon.

Then, having been taken to Foligno to restore his failing health by the change of air, he experienced some alleviation of his sufferings. Soon, however, it was revealed to him that he would suffer for two years more, and after that he would enter into everlasting rest. Intoxicated with joy, he composed the following verse with which he ended the canticle:

“Blessed be Thou, O Lord, for our Sister, Bodily Death,
From which may no man that liveth escape;
Woe unto them that shall die in deadly sin;
Blessed they that shall conform to Thy most holy will,
For them the second death harmeth not.

Praise and bless our Lord and thank Him
And serve Him with all lowliness.”

APPENDIX C

Musical Settings of St. Francis's *Canticle of the Sun*

	Composer	Work
1862	Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886)	<i>Cantico del Sol di San Francesco d'Assisi</i> for solo baritone, men's chorus, organ & orchestra.
1918	Rudolf Moser (1892 – 1960)	<i>Il cantico di frate sole di San Francesco d'Assisi</i> Op. 90 for solo voices, mixed chorus & orchestra.
1919	Désiré-Emile Inghelbrecht (1880 – 1965)	<i>Le cantique des creatures de St. François</i> for mixed chorus & orchestra
1921	Theo van der Bijl (1886 – 1971)	<i>St. Franciscus Zonnelied</i> for solo tenor, organ & orchestra
1924	Amy Marcy Beach (1867 – 1944)	<i>The Canticle of the Sun</i> Op. 123 for SATB chorus, SMTB solo voices, & orchestra
1925	Charles Marcin Loeffler (1861 – 1935)	<i>Canticum fratris solis</i> for women's chorus
1932	Giorgio Federico Ghedini (1892 – 1965)	<i>Cantico del sole per voce maschile e quintetto d'archi</i> for men's chorus & string quintet
1932	Hugo Herrmann (1896 – 1967)	<i>Chorvariationen über die Sonnengesänge des Franz von Assisi</i> Op. 85 for solo soprano, solo tenor, women's chorus & harp
1938	Paul Müller-Zürich (1898 – 1993)	<i>Der Sonnengesang des heiligen Franz von Assisi</i> , Op. 29 for women's chorus, solo soprano, solo alto & seven instruments
1944	Leo Sowerby (1895 – 1968)	<i>The Canticle of the Sun</i> for chorus & orchestra (winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Music)
1945	Richard Sturzenegger (1905 – 1976)	<i>Cantico di San Francesco</i> for mixed chorus, string orchestra & harp
1951	Klaus Georg Roy (1924 – 2010)	<i>St. Francis's Canticle of the Sun</i> for solo viola & a capella chorus
1952	Friedrich Cerha (b. 1926)	<i>Sonnengesang des Heiligen Franz von Assisi</i> for soloists, mixed chorus & string orchestra

1954	Carl Orff (1895 – 1982)	<i>Laudes creaturarum</i> (part 2 of the Concerto di voci) for a <i>capella</i> mixed chorus
1956	Hans Lang (1897 – 1968)	<i>Der Sonnengesang des Heiligen Franziskus</i> op. 52 for mixed chorus, children's chorus, 10 brass inst. & perc. <i>ad lib.</i>
1960	Bonaventura Somma (1893 – 1960)	<i>Cantico del sole</i> , Lauda drammatica for men's chorus and orchestra
1961	Anton Wurz (1903 – 1995)	<i>Sonnengesang des Heiligen Franziskus</i> for baritone, oboe & string orchestra
1963	Howard Leake Boatwright (1918 – 1999)	<i>Canticle of the sun</i> for chorus, soprano & orchestra
1965	Otto Eduard Crusius (1892 – 1965)	<i>Cantico di Frate Sole</i> for men's chorus, organ & string orchestra (with 2 horns & harp)
1968	Paavo Johannes Heininen (b. 1927)	<i>Cantico delle creature</i> Op. 17 for solo baritone & orchestra
1968	Dante Alderighi (1898 – 1968)	<i>Sonnengesang</i> for voice & piano
1970	Rudolf Brandl (b. 1943)	<i>Sonnengesang des Heiligen Franziskus</i> for solo alto & tape recording
1974	Bert Rudolf (1905 – 1992)	<i>Der Sonnengesang des heiligen Franziskus</i> for solo soprano, mixed chorus & orchestra
1976	Rudolf Brandl (b. 1943)	<i>Sonnengesang des Heiligen Franziskus</i> for solo alto, violin, bassoon (or cello) & piano
1976	Wolfgang Hochstein (b. 1950)	<i>Der Sonnengesang des Heiligen Franziskus</i> , cantata for solo tenor, mixed chorus & orchestra (or organ)
1976	Alfred Schnittke (1934 – 1998)	<i>Der Sonnengesang des Franz von Assisi</i> [<i>Solnechnaia pem'</i>] for 2 mixed choruses, organ, celeste, vibraphone, bells & timpani
1979	Siegfried Neuber (b. 1931)	<i>Der Sonnengesang des heiligen Franziskus von Assisi</i> for mixed chorus
1980	Eyvind Solås (1937 – 2011)	<i>Solsangen</i> for women's chorus [in Norwegian]

1980	Alphonse Stallaert (1920 – 1995)	<i>Il cantico del sole di Francesco d'Assisi</i> for soloists (SA), mixed chorus & orchestra
1985	Klaas Govers (b. 1950)	<i>Cantico del sole</i> (1980-1985) for vocal ensemble
1981	Joaquin Rodrigo (1901 – 1999)	<i>Cántico de San Francisco de Asís</i> for mixed chorus & orchestra
1982	Ingbert Ziegler (b. 1942)	<i>Sonnengesang des heiligen Franziskus</i> for mixed chorus (slightly revised in 1982, 1996), for solo alto & string quartet (1999)
1984	Geruaud Kaltenecker (b. 1915)	<i>Der Sonnengesang des Heiligen Franz von Assisi</i> Op. 44, Partita for organ
1986	Walter Gieseler (1919 – 1999)	<i>Il cantico del sole</i> for soloists, chorus & orchestra
1987	Petr Eben (1929 – 2007)	<i>Cantico delle creature</i> for a capella chorus
1987	Willem Kersters (1929 – 1998)	<i>Het zonnelied (canticum solis fratris)</i> op. 81 for mixed chorus, trumpet, 2 pianos & timpani
1989	Roland Leistner-Mayer (b. 1945)	<i>Meditationen über den "Sonnengesang" von Franz von Assisi</i> Op. 57 for organ
1990	Gunther Andergassen (1930 – 2016)	<i>Sonnengesang – laudes creaturarum</i> Op. 44 for solo soprano, trumpet in C & organ
1991	Franz Koringner (1921 – 2000)	<i>Sonnengesang des Heiligen Franziskus</i> for chorus & orchestra
1992	Johannes Petzold (1912 – 1985)	<i>Sonnengesang nach Franz von Assisi</i> for children's chorus, soloists (SBar), flute & organ.
1993	Fritz Schieri (1922 – 2009)	<i>Der Sonnengesang des Heiligen Franz</i> for mixed chorus, congregation <i>ad lib</i> & organ
1994	Hermann Kronsteiner (1914 – 1994)	<i>Sonnengesang des Heiligen Franziskus</i> for soloists & mixed a capella chorus
1996	Theo Wegmann (b. 1951)	<i>Il Cantico delle creature</i> for soloists, mixed chorus, organ & percussion

1996	Ruth Zechlin (1926 – 2007)	<i>Sonnengesang des Franz von Assisi</i> for a capella chorus
1997	Sofia Gubaidulina (b. 1931)	<i>Der Sonnengesang des Heiligen Franz von Assisi</i> for chamber choir, percussion & celeste
1998	Wolfram Wagner (b. 1962)	<i>Sonnengesang</i> for mixed chorus, brass, percussion instruments & cello
1999	Jacques Chailley (1910 – 1999)	<i>Le cantique du soleil</i> for solo alto & orchestra
2000	Stefan Heucke (b. 1959)	<i>Il Cantico di frate sole</i> Op. 37 for soli voices, mixed chorus, percussion, organ & orchestra
2005	György Orbán (b. 1947)	<i>Cantico di frate sole</i> for solo voices & orchestra
2008	Enjott Schneider (b. 1950)	<i>Der Sonnengesang des Franz von Assisi (Il cantico di frate sole)</i> for two a capella mixed choruses
2014	Tõnu Kõrvits (b. 1969)	<i>The Canticle of the Sun</i> for a capella mixed chorus
2016	Luc van Hove (b. 1957)	<i>Cantico di frate sole</i> Op. 51 for mixed chorus and cello
2017	Vincent Kennedy (b. 1962)	<i>Canticle of the Sun</i> for solo soprano, harp & trumpet