

Giuseppe Verdi's *Jérusalem* between Adaptation and Self-Borrowing

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Giuseppe Verdi's first French opera, Jérusalem (1847), has often been described as a French version of his fourth opera, I lombardi alla prima crociata (1843). It is hardly a straightforward translation, however; the process of adapting the source to the French stage involved substantial rewriting of the libretto, thoroughly recasting the storyline and therefore requiring numerous changes in the music. Thus, Verdi not only provided several entirely new sections for the score of Jérusalem, but also reused material from I lombardi in radically different dramatic settings.

The purpose of this article is to review changing attitudes toward Jérusalem through the twentieth century, and to assert that it may be perceived both as a reworking of the earlier opera and as a new work in which Verdi, under unique circumstances, deployed strategies of self-borrowing. The first part addresses the historiography of Jérusalem, tracing changing attitudes of commentators gradually recognizing the importance and worth of the French work, and the second part examines in detail the transfer of selected passages that Verdi borrowed from I lombardi and adapted to vastly changed contexts.

It is hardly a surprise that a composer as enduringly popular as Giuseppe Verdi has been memorialised and honoured in countless ways from his own time to the present day. Streets, theatres, festivals, and restaurants in Italy and around the world are named after him, monuments adorn public places from Busseto to New York and Hangzhou, and the iconic semblance of the great maestro, often portrayed with the signature beard, scarf, and top hat drawn from a well-known painting by Giovanni Boldini, is appropriated to brand products from Verdi's native Po Valley and beyond.¹ There are, furthermore, research centres and fan clubs and societies, with the aim, scholarly or otherwise, to promote the

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¹ Giovanni Boldini's iconic portrait is part of the permanent collection of the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Rome. A public domain reproduction is available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Verdi_by_Giovanni_Boldini.jpg (accessed 21 December 2021).

knowledge and appreciation of Verdi's work. One such organization is a club in Parma, Italy, named 'Club dei 27 appassionati verdiani'. Membership is all-male, and each of its 27 members is appointed for life and named after the title of an opera by Giuseppe Verdi.² For those who are knowledgeable about Verdi and his work, it is almost inevitable to raise at least one eyebrow, as Verdi's operas are not 27 – I'd be prepared to say they are 28. The second, less responsive eyebrow will be raised upon learning that one of the 27's club name is 'Messa da Requiem' (hardly a stage work, despite Hans von Bülow's infamous claim that Verdi's Requiem is 'an opera in ecclesiastical garments' – 'Oper im Kirchengewande'). Thus, only 26 of the 27 are named after operas by Verdi. The two titles that are not included in the Club's headcount are *Jérusalem* and *Aroldo*.³

It is clear enough why *Jérusalem* and *Aroldo* were excluded from the list of Verdi's operas when the club was formed, in 1958. The two operas were broadly perceived not as original works, but as remakes, or *rifacimenti*, and as such, intrinsically inferior to Verdi's original creations. In the case of *Aroldo*, premiered in Rimini in 1857, Verdi had yielded to censorial pressure, setting aside the original *Stiffelio*, which seemed destined for oblivion, and recasting a good deal of its music into a new opera.⁴ Many commentators, especially in the early and mid-twentieth century, remarked in negative terms on these remakes, viewed, idealistically, not as unrestrained manifestations of Verdi's genius, but as products of social, cultural and political pressures.

When the Club dei 27 was established, the tacit exclusion or explicit censure of *Jérusalem* from Verdi's recognized and treasured operatic production had a long pedigree. A few examples are in order. One of the most influential biographies published during Verdi's lifetime, the one by Arthur Pougin, only addressed the work briefly in the context of his discussion of the mutation of *I lombardi*, merely accounting for a lukewarm public response first in Paris and then in Italy, when *Jérusalem* was translated into Italian by Calisto Bassi as *Gerusalemme* and presented at Milan's La Scala on 26 December 1850.⁵ Then, early in the twentieth century, in Camille Bellaigue's celebratory biography for Verdi's centennial, *Jérusalem* went altogether unmentioned. Bellaigue was no fan of Verdi's works between *I lombardi* and *Luisa Miller*, and he furthermore resisted the concept that Verdi had any involvement whatsoever with French operatic culture. His criticism of the French for attempting to appropriate *Don Carlos* as an opera 'secondo il gusto francese' provides a context for the omission of *Jérusalem* from his book.⁶

Neglect was followed by overt and sometimes vehement criticism. In the midst of the fascist era, Carlo Gatti was quick in passing a guilty verdict on Verdi's endeavour as something that corrupted the Italian purity of Milan and the Lombards:

² An overview of the history and activities of the Club dei 27 can be found on their web site: <http://clubdei27.com/en/> (accessed 21 December 2021).

³ In accordance with the count that stops at 26, a well-known series of DVDs issued by C Major, called Tutto Verdi and reproducing live performances from the Teatro Regio in Parma, also omits *Jérusalem* and *Aroldo*.

⁴ Several discussions of the mutation of *Stiffelio* into *Aroldo* are found in *Tornando a 'Stiffelio': Popolarità, rifacimenti, messinscena, effettismo e altre 'cure' nella drammaturgia del Verdi romantico (Atti del convegno internazionale di studi: Venezia, 17–20 dicembre 1985)*, ed. Giovanni Morelli, Quaderni della Rivista Italiana di Musicologia (Florence: Olschki, 1987).

⁵ Arthur Pougin, *Vita aneddotica di Verdi* (Milan: Ricordi, 1881): 48–50.

⁶ Camille Bellaigue, *Verdi: biografia critica* (Milan: Fratelli Treves Editori, 1913): 56.

The Lombard Crusaders become French, and Milan is transformed into Toulouse; the interplay of passions loses strength and meaning. Verdi takes the music of *I lombardi* and adapts it to the new libretto, organizing it in a new order. Some good pieces are removed; others, newly composed, do not turn out any better; finally, the ballet music is added, which, for unbreakable traditions, can never be absent in the productions at the Opéra.

Verdi is reduced to this: make a mess of his works, and take up again some very bad habits of other composers who preceded him.⁷

Two decades later Franco Abbiati, with characteristic verbosity, took his time to condemn *Jérusalem* as not only an artistic failure, but an endeavour in which Verdi seemed to have forsaken his integrity:

Lucky Parisians, then, who, being served a bowl of overcooked lentils, plus the required newly forged ballet music, plus the ripieno of a different March of the Crusaders, now French instead of Lombard, of a descriptive passage for the sunrise, and of a somewhat dramatic degradation scene, considered themselves satisfied. But poor Verdi, who, busy with entirely different matters, must agree to fiddle with the orchestration and to touch up the details of the funeral march and of the shrill battle in sight of Jerusalem; and who, attracted by the mirage of a smashing success at the Opéra, which he had not achieved at the Her Majesty's Theatre, did not heed the call of his conscience, not exactly at peace, and with a few patches to save his face, thought to have fulfilled his theatrical responsibilities, whilst he did not pay off his debt toward art. Unfortunate Verdi, who in exchange for the negligible changes, in the travesty of *I lombardi* entitled *Jérusalem*, has tolerated the horrible mutilations of a French text that subverts the already chaotic subject from [Tommaso] Grossi, and that seems stitched to music that was born from a different source of inspiration.⁸

As late as 1970, Gustavo Marchesi's monograph was far more concise and somewhat softer than Abbiati, but nonetheless negative:

⁷ 'I Crociati lombardi diventano francesi, e Milano si muta in Tolosa; il giuoco delle passioni perde forza e significato. Verdi prende la musica dei *Lombardi* e la adatta al nuovo libretto, disponendola con un nuovo ordine. Alcuni buoni pezzi sono tolti; ed altri, nuovamente composti, non riescono migliori; infine, sono aggiunti i ballabili che, per tradizioni infrangibili, non devono mai mancare negli spettacoli dell'Opéra.

A tanto si riduce Verdi: a rimpasticciare i suoi lavori, a riprendere certe pessime usanze d'altri compositori nostri, che lo hanno preceduto'. Carlo Gatti, *Verdi*, 2 vols (Milan: Edizioni Alpes, 1931): 1: 301. Unless otherwise stated, translations are by the author of this article. In a later edition of the same monograph, Gatti slightly softened the wording, but the substance did not change. See Carlo Gatti, *Verdi* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1950): 240.

⁸ 'Fortunati i parigini, dunque, che trovandosi scodellato un piatto di stracotte lenticchie, più i ballabili di rigore e conati di fresco, più i ripieni d'una diversa Marcia dei Crociati, ora francesi invece che lombardi, d'una descrittiva pagina per la levata del sole e d'una certa drammatica scena di degradazione, s'erano ritenuti soddisfatti. Ma disgraziato Verdi, che in ben altre faccende affaccendato, deve adattarsi a manipolare i ripieni e a ritoccare gli incisi della Marcia funebre e della squillante battaglia in vista di Gerusalemme; e che attratto dal miraggio di 'sfondare' al Grand Opéra come non gli era riuscito al Her Majesty's Theatre, non ha badato più che tanto ai richiami della coscienza non precisamente tranquilla, e con pochi rattoppi che salvino la faccia, s'è creduto solvitore d'un debito teatrale che non è affatto un debito d'arte. Disgraziato Verdi, che in cambio delle trascurabili modifiche, nella mascheratura dei *Lombardi* intitolata *Jérusalem*, ha sopportato le orribili storpiature di un testo francese che sovverte il già caotico soggetto grossiano e che risulta appiccicato a una musica nata da diverse fonti d'ispirazione'. Franco Abbiati, *Giuseppe Verdi*, 4 vols (Milan: Ricordi, 1959): 1: 730–31.

The Parisian adaptation of *I Lombardi* (*Jérusalem*, then *Gerusalemme*) turned out smooth, noble, but imprecise, due to a rather monotonous recitative, trimmed to the point of losing any substance (even when the substance derives from errors), with [only] the character of the repentant hermit who has his coherence. The usual love duet sticks out as a leafy branch.⁹

A few years earlier, however, Giuseppe Pugliese had broken new ground, authoring the first substantial study of *Jérusalem* that sought to reassess its significance. In his discussion of the music of *Jérusalem*, Pugliese made use of the Italian translation, *Gerusalemme*, perhaps revealing a difficulty in accessing the French-language materials, but more likely suffering from an ongoing discomfort with discussing Verdi's French-language works. According to Pugliese, in adapting *I lombardi* Verdi had made good use of his increased experience and of the opportunity to recast the plot of the opera. The latter process, for Pugliese, had resulted in a marked improvement:

The action, more linear, effective, runs parallel [to that of *I lombardi*], despite the differences. In *I lombardi* there is a true, long, criminal prologue. In *Gerusalemme* this is less important. All of the variants, the differences (and there are many) are born of a need to provide a more well-grounded dramatic examination.¹⁰

His discussion of the music of *Jérusalem* is remarkably nuanced and perceptive; he straightforwardly acknowledges the amount of modification that the source underwent and how the significant differences in the French libretto required Verdi to reorder and alter the original musical materials:

Now, it is true that *Gerusalemme* consists, essentially, for quality and quantity, of the music of *I lombardi*, but it is also true that it has undergone numerous modifications, of diverse nature and importance. (One must not forget the different subject matter, which, despite substantial analogies, has allowed, or forced, the Maestro to arrange the musical episodes in different order compared to *I lombardi*.) And those are interventions that for the most part have yielded positive results, improving the music.¹¹

Since the publication of Pugliese's pathbreaking study, in 1963, scholars, much like a Verdian chorus gathering to inspire or celebrate, have joined their voices in defence and praise of *Jérusalem*, which, in the face of the enduringly greater popularity of *I lombardi alla prima crociata*, is now broadly recognized as a noteworthy

⁹ 'La riduzione parigina dei *Lombardi* (*Jérusalem*, poi *Gerusalemme*) riuscì morbida, nobile ma sommaria, in funzione di un recitativo piuttosto uniforme, sfrondata fino alla perdita di ogni solidità (anche quella che deriva dall'errore), col personaggio dell'eremita pentito che ha una sua coerenza. Il solito duetto d'amore sporge fronzuto'. Gustavo Marchesi, *Giuseppe Verdi* (Turin: UTET, 1970): 119.

¹⁰ 'L'azione, fattasi più lineare, efficace, corre parallela, ad onta delle differenze. Nei *Lombardi* c'è un lungo, delittuoso antefatto, vero e proprio; in *Gerusalemme* è meno importante. Tutte le varianti, le differenze, e sono molte, nascono dall'esigenza di un più valido approfondimento drammatico'. Giuseppe Pugliese, 'Dai *Lombardi* alla *Gerusalemme*', in *Gerusalemme*, Quaderni dell'Istituto di Studi Verdiani 2 (Parma: Istituto di Studi Verdiani, 1963): 7–88, here 48.

¹¹ Pugliese, 'Dai *Lombardi* alla *Gerusalemme*', 50. 'Ora è vero che *Gerusalemme* è formata, nelle sue parti essenziali, per qualità e numero, dalla musica dei *Lombardi*, ma è vero pure che ha subito molti ritocchi, di varia natura ed importanza. (Non si deve dimenticare la diversa materia librettistica la quale, non ostante le profonde analogie, ha consentito, o costretto, al Maestro, di dare agli episodi musicali una successione diversa di quella dei *Lombardi*). E sono interventi i quali, quasi sempre hanno dato risultati positivi, hanno migliorato la pagina musicale.'

achievement – one in which the newly composed sections testify to Verdi's growing maturity as a composer, while the reused ones often gain strength from an improved dramatic framework and refinement of musical detail. Julian Budden included a substantial and perceptive chapter on *Jérusalem* in his monumental study of all of Verdi's operas, and important articles by David Kimbell and Arrigo Quattrocchi have given the opera pride of place, providing what remain to date the most detailed and best documented discussions of the genesis of the opera and its relation to *I lombardi*.¹² More recently, Andreas Giger has offered a discussion of *Jérusalem* in the context of his compelling reassessment of Verdi's French works.¹³ The critical edition prepared by Jürgen Selk, performed for the first time at the Festival Verdi in Parma in 2017 and forthcoming in print in *The Works of Giuseppe Verdi*, aims to do full justice to the complex textual implications of the opera.¹⁴

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Against the scenario outlined above, no discussions of *Jérusalem* have addressed the question of self-borrowing. This is of course understandable. *Jérusalem* is, to use some of the recurrent terminology in the studies mentioned above, a *rifacimento*, a revision, a reworking, an adaptation, in the sense that it reuses large quantities of materials from its source, in many instances with little or no modification to the music itself or to the dramatic context in which the music resurfaces. Kimbell used the term 'borrowing', as opposed to 'reworking', for passages from *I lombardi* imported *verbatim* into the score of *Jérusalem* – a distinction that will be important as we explore the layered connections between the two operas. He aptly acknowledged that 'the distinction between these categories is not always absolutely clear',¹⁵ but did not elaborate further on the matter – understandably given that he was writing in the late 1970s, when the issue of self-borrowing in nineteenth-century Italian opera or other contexts had hardly been explored or theorized. If we were to accept the status of *Jérusalem* as a remake, then we might question the utility of discussing self-borrowing at all in regard to this work.

Jérusalem, however, is no straightforward remake of an Italian opera, translated into French and provided with added ballet music and a limited number of minor alterations or replacements. Without getting into the theoretical intricacies of the concept of translation, such a status may be recognized more easily for other Italian works adapted for the French stage, from Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucie de Lammermoor* to Verdi's own *Le trouvère* (1857).¹⁶ With *Jérusalem* the matter is more complex, and a fundamental issue lurks behind the commentaries quoted previously: *I lombardi alla prima crociata*, was, one could say, lost in translation,

¹² Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, 3 vols, revised edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992): 1: 339–59; David R.B. Kimbell, 'Verdi's First Rifacimento: *I Lombardi* and *Jérusalem*', *Music & Letters* 60 (1979): 1–36; Arrigo Quattrocchi, 'Da Milano a Parigi: *Jérusalem*, la prima revisione di Verdi', *Studi verdiani* 10 (1994–1995): 13–60.

¹³ Andreas Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetics: Verse, Stanza, and Melody in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). See, in particular, the chapter '*Jérusalem* and its influence on the subsequent Italian operas' (91–120).

¹⁴ Giuseppe Verdi, *Jérusalem*, ed. by Jürgen Selk, vol. 12 of *The Works of Giuseppe Verdi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, in preparation).

¹⁵ Kimbell, 'Verdi's First Rifacimento', 15.

¹⁶ David Lawton, '*Le trouvère*, Verdi's Revision of *Il trovatore* for Paris', *Studi verdiani* 3 (1985): 79–119; Giuseppe Verdi, *Le trouvère*, ed. by David Lawton, vol. 18b of *The Works of Giuseppe Verdi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming 2023).

and there are significant difficulties in assessing its textual status within *Jérusalem*. That difficulty is not merely our own, writing in the early twenty-first century; it is also evident at the time of the genesis and premiere performance in 1847, as revealed in first-hand statements regarding the genesis of this opera, as well as in the libretto and the music.

The origins of *Jérusalem* are traced in great detail by Arrigo Quattrocchi, and for a full account of the negotiations that led to its commission and the creative process one may refer to his study. Here I will just concentrate briefly on two letters. The first, dated 8 August 1847, is from Verdi's pupil, Emanuele Muzio, to Antonio Barezzi, informing Verdi's father-in-law that there are new plans in Paris: 'Verdi has been contracted by the Grand Opéra in Paris to arrange to a new libretto the music of *I lombardi*, making some additions. The opera will be staged at the beginning of November. They give him all the royalties as if it were a new opera'.¹⁷ The key words for us are the final ones: 'as if it were a new opera'. Although Muzio indicates that Verdi was to provide some new music, the emphasis is on the fact that the opera in preparation, *Jérusalem*, was not to be a new work, but rather an adaptation made to a new libretto although it was paid as if it were new. Two weeks later, in a letter to Giuseppina Appiani, it was Verdi himself who spoke about the project for Paris, and the substance and tone of his words differ vastly from Muzio's earlier communication: 'Imagine spending the whole day in the midst of two poets, two impresarios, two music publishers (here they are always in pairs), contracting a prima donna, arranging the subject of a libretto, etc. etc., and tell me if it isn't enough to drive one insane'.¹⁸ Aside from the very Verdian register, informal and emphatic, the most revealing expression is 'arranging the subject of a libretto'. It was clear at that stage not only that the libretto for the Opéra would be different, but also that the choice of subject was far from straightforward, and that Verdi was engaged in the process, as one can sense from the frenzy and intensity of his words.

The differing perceptions of the status of *Jérusalem* outlined in the letters by Muzio and Verdi is reflected *post facto* also in the reviews of the premiere performance, with hardly any consensus emerging on the relation of Verdi's first French work to its source. As Mark Everist indicated, 'some thought it little more than a translation of the Italian original, while others claimed that there was no more of *I lombardi* in it than there was of *La donna del lago* (somewhat under half) in *Robert Bruce*'.¹⁹

The motives and processes that led to the choice of recasting *I lombardi* into what was to be *Jérusalem* are far from clear, and we do not know, at least for the time

¹⁷ 'Verdi è stato scritturato alla Grand'Opéra di Parigi per accomodare sopra un nuovo libretto la musica dei *Lombardi*, facendovi delle aggiunte. L'opera andrà in scena ai primi di novembre. Gli danno tutti i diritti d'autore come se fosse una nuova opera'. *Giuseppe Verdi nelle lettere di Emanuele Muzio ad Antonio Barezzi*, ed. L.A. Garibaldi (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1931): 350.

¹⁸ 'S'immagini: trovarsi tutto il giorno in mezzo a due poeti, a due impresarij, a due editori di musica (qui sono sempre a due a due), fare scritturare una prima donna, combinare un soggetto d'un libretto, ecc. ecc., e dica Lei se non è roba da diventar matti.' *I copialettere di Giuseppe Verdi*, ed. Gaetano Cesari and Alessandro Luzio (Milan: Commissione esecutiva per le onoranze a Giuseppe Verdi nel primo centenario della nascita, 1913): 462.

¹⁹ Mark Everist, 'Partners in Rhyme: Alphonse Royer, Gustav Vaëz, and Foreign Opera in Paris during the July Monarchy', in *Fashions and Legacies of Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera*, ed. Roberta Montemorra Marvin and Hilary Poriss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 38. Everist refers to the elaborate Rossinian pastiches entitled *Robert Bruce*, which included substantial materials from *La donna del lago*.

being, who was responsible for the decisions regarding substantial changes in the setting and storyline. What we do know is the end result; and for the purposes of our discussion it may be useful first to review briefly the plot of the source, *I lombardi alla prima crociata*. The opera follows the journey of a group of Lombard crusaders under the leadership of Arvino, Viclinda's husband and Giselda's father, from Milan to their conquest of Jerusalem. In Act 1, as the crusaders prepare to leave Milan, Pagano, Arvino's brother, blinded by love for Viclinda, plots to kill his brother; deceived by darkness, however, he stabs his own father to death and is sentenced to exile. In Act 2 the action moves to Antioch; Viclinda has died, the tyrant Acciano holds Giselda captive, and Acciano's son, Oronte, has fallen in love with Giselda. Aided by a hermit (who is none other than the repentant Pagano) the crusaders storm Acciano's palace; understanding that Acciano and Oronte have been killed by the Crusaders, Giselda turns fiercely against her father and the crusaders. In Act 3, having travelled to the Valley of Josaphat, Giselda is reunited with Oronte (who wasn't dead); soon thereafter Oronte is wounded in battle and dies in her arms, converting to the Christian faith and receiving the hermit's blessing. In Act 4, Giselda is reunited with the Lombards and the hermit is wounded in the decisive battle for the liberation of Jerusalem and dies, forgiven by his brother and contemplating in the distance the Holy City.

Some elements of this storyline are transferred more or less intact into the new libretto which, according to Verdi, was being prepared in late August 1847: the backdrop of the first Crusade, a forbidden love for the female protagonist, and a repentant hermit. And some of the changes enacted in Royer and Vaëz's text are quite straightforward: in particular, the Lombard crusaders became French, and concomitantly the locale of the action in Act 1 changed from Milan to Toulouse. Other aspects of the recasting were more sophisticated, however: in particular, the love between Giselda and a Muslim man, morphed into an all-French *ménage* between Hélène and a member of a rival family, Gaston. Their love, moreover, is not a new development in the plot, introduced when the crusaders are already well on their way to the Holy Land, but provides one of its foundations and informs its entirely new opening scene. Furthermore, Roger, the villain-turned-hermit, is in love not with his sister-in-law, but with his niece, Hélène; he does not kill his own father (or anyone else). His evil deed is to order the murder of Gaston, but the hitman mistakenly strikes Roger's brother, the Count of Toulouse, who is gravely wounded; Gaston stands accused of the attempted assassination, is exiled, and becomes a prisoner of the Emir of Ramla.

These brief summaries make it clear that adapting the music of *I lombardi alla prima crociata* into *Jérusalem* was no simple affair, and suggest that changes were not driven exclusively by Verdi's changing priorities and artistic choices. The addition of entirely new musical materials, as well as the transfer of passages from the earlier score, some of which were subjected to substantial revision, were prompted primarily by the changed poetic and dramatic content. Whereas the process of revising the source opera adapting it to a new verbal language and theatrical may qualify as adaptation, intended as the rethinking and recasting of an entire work, the use individual passages in novel dramatic contexts may well be viewed as instances of self-borrowing. Unlike instances of self-borrowing found in numerous operas by the likes of Gioachino Rossini and Gaetano Donizetti, where the composer normally drew from a broad pool of source works, in the case of *Jérusalem*, with only one exception, the source of pre-existing materials, borrowed *verbatim* or reworked to various degrees, is *I lombardi*. I suggest that the material transferred to *Jérusalem* qualifies as self-borrowing insofar as it is used in a different

dramatic context and with a poetic text that, aside from the technicalities of translation, diverges in substance from Solera's poetry. That material thus offers a unique vantage point from which to observe Verdi's familiarity with a practice that was on the wane but still significant in the late 1840s.

There are, of course, passages from *I lombardi alla prima crociata* that make their way into analogous dramatic contests in *Jérusalem*, and in such cases Verdi reused passages from the earlier score with no substantial alteration. An example is Pagano's aria in Act 1, whose cantabile became Roger's aria in the same act. For the cabaletta, however, Verdi borrowed from another source – the added cabaletta for Silva in *Ernani* ('Infin che un brando vindice'), which in turn had been adapted from a substitute aria for a revival of *Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio* in Barcelona.²⁰ Another instance is Giselda's 'Non fu sogno! ... Dentro all'alma', the cabaletta that closes the 'visione' at the beginning of Act 4, which became 'Quelle ivresse, bonheur supreme', the conclusion of the 'Réc. et Air Hélène' in Act 2 of *Jérusalem*. In the former, Giselda rejoices at the otherworldly connection with the spirit of the deceased Oronte, whereas in its new location in Act 2 of *Jérusalem* the same passage expresses a more earthly joy – the discovery that Gaston is still alive. But the basic sentiment and the opportunity for virtuosic display are the same in both contexts.

The transfer of the 'Ave Maria', the prayer sung by Giselda and Hélène in the first acts of the respective operas, is not as straightforward on dramatic grounds. In *I lombardi* the prayer takes place as a spontaneous invocation in a moment of foreboding and danger, immediately preceding Pagano's patricide. In *Jérusalem*, the 'Ave Maria' appears much closer to the beginning, immediately following the initial furtive, nocturnal encounter of the two lovers, which is interrupted by the bells that from the nearby chapel toll for the 'Ave Maria'. A stage direction in Verdi's autograph manuscript reads: 'La cloche sonne l'Ave Maria', and a few measures later Isaure, Hélène's confidante, observes: 'La cloche sonne'. Thus Hélène's prayer is institutionalized, triggered not by individual feeling or emotion, but by the bell that has just tolled; dramatically, it bridges the preceding furtive encounter with Gaston to the ensuing sunrise music. Conversely, whereas in *I lombardi* the words are, very daringly for 1840s Italy, a straightforward paraphrase of the angelic salutation, in *Jérusalem* the poetry drifts away from the opening invocation to the Virgin, as Hélène prays for peace and happiness in a more personal vein. None of these differences, however, prompted Verdi to make any substantial modifications in the prayer, which is in the same key as the original, with its distinctively intimate scoring (which includes one flute, one clarinet, and four pairs of violins scored on four staves, supported by violas and pizzicato basses only for the second section) reproduced with only minimal differences in phrasing and expression markings. It is likely that Verdi regarded this piece as perfectly suited for a Parisian audience familiar with the imaginative, sparse accompaniments that surface frequently in Meyerbeer's *grands opéras*. Remarkably, however, when *Jérusalem* arrived at La Scala as *Gerusalemme* in 1850, the prayer was omitted. A reviewer in the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* wondered why.²¹ Whilst we have no positive answer, one may wonder whether Verdi felt

²⁰ The added cabaletta for Silva in *Ernani* is discussed in David Lawton and David Rosen, 'Verdi's Non-definitive Revisions: The Early Operas', in *Atti del III^o congresso internazionale di studi verdiani*, 1972, ed. Mario Medici and Marcello Pavarani (Parma: Istituto di Studi Verdiani, 1974): 198–200. Roger Parker pointed to the *Oberto* connection in "'Infin che un brando vindice" e le cavatine del primo atto di *Ernani*', in *Verdi: Bollettino dell'Istituto di studi verdiani* 10 (1987): 144–45, 160.

²¹ 'I.R. Teatro alla Scala', *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* 8/52, 29 December 1850, 225.

that such a memorable piece from *I lombardi*, resurfacing in *Gerusalemme* so early in the first act, could have stacked the audience's disposition against the work. If so, he understood that borrowing worked best when the source material was not known to the audience at a particular city or venue and tried to remove the opening scene as much as from *I lombardi* by eliminating its highly individual Marian prayer.

The case of the tenor's aria appearing in Act 2 of both operas is more complex. In *I lombardi*, Oronte is introduced as a young man filled with love and hope. Together with his mother he muses on Giselda in the celebrated 'La mia letizia infondere', a cantabile that, true to formal conventions of early and mid-nineteenth-century Italian opera, is followed by a brief *tempo di mezzo* and a cabaletta (the magnificent 'Come poteva un angelo'). In *Jérusalem*, where Verdi was keen to detach himself from the conventions that inform his Italian operas of the time, the cabaletta was suppressed, whereas the cantabile was retained, albeit in a different dramatic context. Gaston is alone, believed guilty by his own people, and held captive in the palace of the emir of Ramla. Thus, an outpour of passion and enthusiasm had to become a song of nostalgia, and, furthermore, needed to be adjusted for the voice of Gilbert-Louis Duprez, who created the role in Paris in 1847. Verdi's response to the changed circumstances seems to balance finely between vocal and expressive needs. The piece is transposed down a semitone, from A major to A-flat major, probably not, as one might expect, to make the overall range more manageable, but to allow for two ascents to the mediant, high C near the end, the *ut de poitrine* for which Duprez was famous. At the same time, one could argue, the lower key gives the melody a more subdued effect in line with the dramatic context – an effect emphasised by a slower tempo indication (Andante instead of Andante mosso) and several changes in orchestration and expressive markings. In *I lombardi*, Verdi instructed Oronte to sing the opening phrase 'con gioia', whereas in *Jérusalem* there is a mere indication of 'espressivo'; then, while in *I lombardi* the end of the first phrase, at the words 'vorrei nel suo bel core', is intensified by the addition of flute and pairs of oboes, clarinets, and bassoons to the underlying chords of the strings, the corresponding passage in *Jérusalem* ('ta voix, ta voix si tendre') is highlighted more subtly by a sighing solo oboe. A clarinet and a bassoon are added to the texture only to conclude the subsequent phrase (Ex. 1). Even at the beginning of the fourth phrase, where the orchestration is essentially the same, with full woodwinds and four French horns, the vocal line in *Jérusalem* loses the indication 'con slancio' and the accents present in *I lombardi*, replaced by a 'stentato' indication (Ex. 2).²²

Although I would not hesitate to regard this passage as an instance of self-borrowing (transfer to a changed dramatic context and set to significantly different poetry), rather than adaptation (driven primarily by musical concerns), here we are reminded of the challenges of drawing clear lines of demarcation between the two categories. In both instances, after all, we are dealing with an expression of love – one driven by hope and excitement, the other by longing and nostalgia. The journey of Don Carlos's romance when it migrated from the Fontainebleau act of the early versions of *Don Carlos* in five acts (1867) to the Milanese four-act version (1884) is, in a sense, comparable.²³

²² For a compelling discussion of prosodic changes in Royer and Vaëz's translation of this aria, see Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetics*, 91–94.

²³ James Hepokoski discussed the two versions of the romance in the unpublished paper 'The Two Versions of Don Carlo's Romance, "Je l'ai vue" / "Io la vidi"', delivered at a conference at Sarasota Opera. See 'Abstracts from the Sarasota Conference on Verdi's revisions', *Verdi Newsletter* 24 (1997): 24. A version of the paper is now accessible on Hepokoski's

Ex. 1a Giuseppe Verdi, *I lombardi alla prima crociata*, No. 6, Cavatina Oronte, bars 19–27

19 *Andante mosso*

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.
in Do

Fg.

Oro. *con gioia*
La mia — le-ti-zia in-fon - de-re vor-rei nel suo bel co - re! Vor-

VI. I

VI. II

Vle

Vc. e
Cb. *pizz.*

Andante mosso

24

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.
in Do

Fg.

Oro. *dolce*
-rei — de-star co' pal - pi-ti del mi - o be-a - to a-mo - re

VI. I

VI. II

Vle

Vc. e
Cb.

Ex. 1b Giuseppe Verdi, Jérusalem, No. 11, Récitatif et Air Gaston, bars 44–51

44 *Andante*

Hb. *seul*
p

Cl. en Sib.

Gas. *espressivo*
p
Je veux en-core en-ten-dre ta voix, t'avois si

VI. I *p*

VI. II *p*

Alt. *p*

Vc. et Cb. *p*
Andante

48 *I*

Hb. *seul*
p

Cl. en Sib. *seul*
p

Bn.

Cor. en Mi♭ *seul*

Gas. ten-dre. Pour fuir il faut at-ten-dre les om-bres du

VI. I

VI. II

Alt.

Vc. et Cb.

Ex. 2a Giuseppe Verdi, *I lombardi alla prima crociata*, No. 6, Cavatina Oronte, bars 31–33

Ex. 2b Giuseppe Verdi, *Jérusalem*, No. 11, Récitatif et Air Gaston, bars 56–58

Given the transformation of the plot, there are of course other significant dramatic changes in passages associated with the lead tenor. One occurs in the Act 1 finale, which, true to the dramatic conventions of the time and in line with several Verdian precedents, ends with great dramatic tension. In *I lombardi*, Pagano murders his own father, is discovered, and is sent into exile; in *Jérusalem*, the crowd closes in not on Roger, who, unbeknownst to all, is responsible for the wounding of the Count, but on Gaston, who stands accused of the very crime to which he was to fall victim. Differences notwithstanding, there is sufficient common ground to allow the transfer of the principal lyrical sections of the Finale I of the source opera into the equivalent number of the French score. The bass, a recognized culprit in *I lombardi* and a false accuser in *Jérusalem*, retained his remorseful interjections (Ex. 3). But changes were necessary to give prominence to the tenor voice, which in *I lombardi*, as Arvino, was aptly contained within the choral texture in the concertato. Gaston, however, interjects an entirely new line foregrounding his dramatic and vocal presence and highlighting his isolation within the crowd of accusers (Ex. 4 – *Jérusalem*, bars 152–155).

personal website at <https://jameshepokoski.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/1996-Don-Carlos-Two-Versions-of-Je-lai-vue-Yale-1997.pdf> (accessed 21 December 2021).

Finally, we turn to the trio that in *I lombardi alla prima crociata* concludes the third act. In this poignant number, Oronte, wounded in battle, turns to the Christian religion, receiving the sacrament of baptism from the Hermit before expiring in Giselda's arms. The dramatic weight of the scene is highlighted in the title provided by Solera for Act 3 ('La conversione'), and its spiritual dimension is magnified by the use of an obbligato solo violin, which not only accompanies the conversion and death of Oronte, but introduces the scene in an extended and highly prelude that Verdi created for Eugenio Cavallini, 'primo violino, capo e direttore d'orchestra' at La Scala and a leading performer in Milan in various orchestras and ensembles.²⁴ But Gaston in *Jérusalem* survives. He is sentenced to degradation and death at the end of Act 3 – and that, aside from the ballet music, is the most conspicuous newly composed section of the French score. In Act 4, however, he leads the crusaders to the conquest of *Jérusalem*, and through Roger's last-minute confession is fully rehabilitated in the eyes of his people and at last united with Héléne. The opportunity for the trio comes when Gaston, facing execution, bids farewell to Héléne, but Roger, in a rather implausible turn of events, allows him instead to pick up the sword and head to battle. In absence not only of Cavallini, but also of the conversion and death, the solo violin had no *raison d'être* in *Jérusalem*; hence Verdi suppressed the prelude entirely, and recast the orchestration, in one passage assigning the violin figuration to the flute, in most cases suppressing it altogether.²⁵

Amidst such a profusion of adaptation, transfer, and borrowing, one passage of *Jérusalem* is somewhat puzzling and sheds light on how, in terms of perception, self-borrowing is not merely what is transferred or adapted between different works and dramatic context, but also what is perceived as related. The passage in question is the sunrise music that, as mentioned previously, follows Héléne's 'Ave Maria', realizing the indication in the libretto that reads 'l'orchestre peint le lever du soleil'. Here, Verdi had the obvious opportunity to reuse the analogous orchestral passage in *Attila*, which was premiered in Venice in 1846 and was still unknown in Paris when *Jérusalem* appeared. As Helen Greenwald has discussed in detail, the sunrise music in *Attila* was itself part of an intertextual network that encompassed the 'Lever du soleil' from Félicien David's *Le désert: Ode-symphonie en trois parties*, which Verdi probably heard in Milan in the spring of 1845, as well as the passage in Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* that depicts the creation of light (Verdi had directed *Die Schöpfung* in 1834 during his studies in Milan).²⁶

²⁴ Sergio Martinotti, 'Cavallini, Eugenio', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (1979), www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/eugenio-cavallini_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (accessed 21 December 2021).

²⁵ Julian Budden views the absence of the violin and the use of the flute for the 'angelico' arpeggios as a marked improvement, regardless of the changed dramatic context. *The Operas of Verdi*, 1: 357–8.

²⁶ Helen M. Greenwald, 'Son et lumière: Verdi, *Attila*, and the Sunrise over the Lagoon', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 21 (2009): 267–77. Greenwald stresses the similarity between Verdi's two 'sunrises' and the precedents by Haydn and David. She argues that the passage in *Jérusalem* 'bears so striking a resemblance to the *Attila* sunrise that a charge of self-plagiarism might be justified' (276). See also Greenwald's Introduction to Giuseppe Verdi, *Attila*, ed. by Helen M. Greenwald, vol. 9 of Works of Giuseppe Verdi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012): xvii–xviii. As Greenwald points out, Abramo Basevi's 1859 *Studio sulle opere di Giuseppe Verdi* also draws a connection between Verdi, David, and Haydn. See also Abramo Basevi, *The Operas of Giuseppe Verdi*, trans. Edward Schneider with Stefano Castelveccchi, ed. Stefano Castelveccchi (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013): 84–5.

Ex 3a Giuseppe Verdi, *I lombardi alla prima crociata*, No. 4, Finale Primo, bars 72–79

72

Gis. *so - lo il cie - lo i - nor - ri - dir!*

Vic. *so - lo il cie - lo i - nor - ri - dir!*

Arv. *so - lo il cie - lo i - nor - ri - dir!*

Pag. *so - lo il cie - lo i - nor - ri - dir! Fa - rò col no - me*

Pir. *so - lo il cie - lo i - nor - ri - dir!*

D. *so - lo il cie - lo i - nor - ri - dir!*

Coro T. *so - lo il cie - lo i - nor - ri - dir!*

B. *so - lo il cie - lo i - nor - ri - dir!*

pp

76

Arv. *Tu fai col no - me so - lo il*

Pag. *so - lo il cie - lo, il cie - lo i - nor - ri - dir.*

Pir. *Tu fai col no - me so - lo il*

D. *Tu fai col no - me so - lo il*

Coro T. *Tu fai col no - me so - lo il*

B. *Tu fai col no - me so - lo il*

Ex 3b Giuseppe Verdi, Jérusalem, No. 6, Finale I, bars 127–133

127 *ff*

Hél. Mon Dieu!

Isa. Mon Dieu!

Gas. Dieu! Mon Dieu!

Ray. Dieu! Mon Dieu!

Rog. - vi - de d'hor - reur. Mal - heur au fra - tri -

Adh. ciel, du ciel.

D. Dieu! Mon Dieu!

Ch. T. fou - dre du ciel.

B. *ff unis* fou - dre du ciel.

f

131

Rog. - ci - de, mal - heur à moi, à moi mal - heur!

Adh. Mal - heur à toi, per -

tous le chœur unis

Ch. Mal - heur à toi, per -

B. Mal - heur à toi, per -

Ex. 4 Giuseppe Verdi, *Jérusalem*, No. 6, Finale I, bars 151–153

151

Hél. - gi - de, toi qui lis dans son cœur.

Isa. - gi - de, toi qui lis dans son cœur.

Gas. *con slancio* Mon Dieu! sois mon é -

Ray. - gi - de, toi qui lis dans son cœur.

Rog. - ci - de! mal-heur à moi, à moi mal - heur.

Adh. - fi - de! In - fâ-me, in - fâ - me, à toi mal - heur.

D. *unis* Ô mon Dieu!

Ch. T. - fi - de! In - fâ-me, in - fâ - me, à toi mal - heur.

Ch. B. - fi - de! In - fâ-me, in - fâ - me, à toi mal - heur.

pp

Ex. 4 Continued

154

Hel. Mon

Isa. Mon

Gas. -gi - de, toi qui lis dans mon cœur. Mon

Ray. Mon

Rog. Mal-heur au fra-tri-ci - de,

Adh. Mal -

D. Mon

Ch. T. Mal -

B. Mal -

p

It is not entirely obvious why Verdi wrote new music for this moment. A plausible explanation is the quest for continuity from the preceding prayer, which ends in D major. Starting on the dominant of C major, as in the sunrise music for *Attila*, would have produced a harmonic hiatus, whereas a trill on $f\#\prime$, played by two violins at the opening of the new sunrise music, creates continuity from the closing D major of the prayer. Such a continuity, however, could have been achieved easily enough through transposition, or by providing a new modulation at the outset. The passage in *Jérusalem*, indeed, then proceeds chromatically, affirming the key of C major in its final measures; one might wonder why it should go to C major at all, however, considering that the ensuing choral number, just like its equivalent in *I lombardi*, is in E-flat major. Was Verdi composing under the spell of his own music in *Attila*? We cannot know for sure; be that as it may, the music in

Jérusalem, despite the shared rhetorical devices, may well bear similarities, but is not borrowed from *Attila*. Its dramatic use is different, too. Whereas in *Attila* the sunrise begins a new scene in the midst of the Adriatic lagoon, in *Jérusalem* it concludes the intimate part of the first act.

At the world premiere of *Jérusalem* in Paris, the sunrise music was well received. In *Gerusalemme* at La Scala, however, the reception was not as favourable, as some were seemingly troubled by the resemblance with the equivalent passage in *Attila*. The way in which the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* sought to defend the piece is remarkable:

The sunrise, very effective, appeared to some to remind of the one in *Attila*. We will say that, although they are diverse, yet it is not unlikely that people who are ignorant of art will find some resemblance, for the reason that in both, and in a hundred others if Verdi were to compose them, even with very different notes, the sunrise is expressed beginning with broken, pianissimo passages, with few instruments, and continues by weaving, developing, and reinforcing those passages to the *fortissimo* and to the display of all the sound effects in the orchestra.²⁷

For the reviewer, to be sure, it was clear that there weren't many ways to depict a sunrise in an orchestral passage. But for the 'taluno' who, upon hearing *Jérusalem*, was reminded of *Attila*, the notion of borrowing (negatively intended as lack of originality) rested on memory far more than on a careful comparison between scores or performances. Whilst the sun rose on the stage of La Scala, the trajectory of *Gerusalemme* in Italy was hardly ascending.

* * *

In closing, there is of course no denying that Verdi's greater experience is reflected in a number of ways in *Jérusalem*, both in the newly composed materials it includes and in the reuse of music from *I lombardi alla prima crociata*. That notwithstanding, in this context, preparing a French *rifacimento* of an Italian opera, as the likes of Rossini and Donizetti had done before him, Verdi drew on the practice of self-borrowing like he had never done before. In so doing, he proved to be a rounded practitioner, well aware of the experiences and strategies of his predecessors. He was not particularly pressed for time following the premiere of *I masnadieri* in London, and he was clearly not inclined to resort to copyists or collaborators (except for his librettists). The manuscript of *Jérusalem* is entirely in Verdi's hand – with the exception of a passage in the Act 3 love duet, where Giuseppina Strepponi's hand makes an appearance entering Héléne's words. But he proceeded according to principles and working methods established in the *primo ottocento*, even more so when he worked with Ricordi toward the preparation of an Italian translation and production. From straightforward, literal transfers to reshaped musical details, Verdi was plausibly driven by two aims: optimizing his workflow and preserving music that he considered worthwhile by making the adjustments

²⁷ 'Il levar del sole, di moltissimo effetto, che parve rammentare in parte a taluno quello dell'*Attila*; e noi diremo, che sebbene diversi l'uno dall'altro, pure non è difficile che persone profane all'arte vi trovino qualche somiglianza, per la ragione che in tutti e due, e in cento altri se il Verdi ne scrivesse ancora, quantunque con note ben differenti, l'alzata del sole viene espressa principiando con passi interrotti e pianissimi, a pochi istromenti, e va proseguendo coll'intrecciare, sviluppare e rinforzare i detti passi sino al *fortissimo* ed allo sfoggio di tutti i mezzi sonori dell'orchestra'. 'I.R. Teatro alla Scala', 225.

required by changed dramatic contexts. Thus, while I have sought to offer straightforward, perhaps obvious explanations for what happens to some of that music, I would not necessarily wish to try and find more profound meaning in what Verdi did with the passages of *Jérusalem* we have examined. His work was very much result-oriented, and, ultimately, as a finished product, it was successful.

Today, with our knowledge of practices and patterns of borrowing in nineteenth-century opera and related issues of convention, stylistic consistency, and memory, we are in a good position to understand how the work by Verdi that displays the most substantial use of self-borrowing, appearing just at a time when the practice seemed increasingly questionable, ultimately succumbed to the youthful, Italian, and 'original' *I lombardi alla prima crociata* and why, in the late 1950s, when a group of Verdian crusaders in Parma decided to form a club, the headcount was hardly an issue. At the same time, we can reconcile the understanding of *Jérusalem* as a remake with the perception of it as a new work. We can be delighted to have this piece and to be able to perform it, as at the Festival Verdi in Parma in 2017, with no cuts and relying on a preliminary critical edition, basking both in the newly composed music it contains and in the ways in which Verdi recast and, indeed, borrowed from himself.