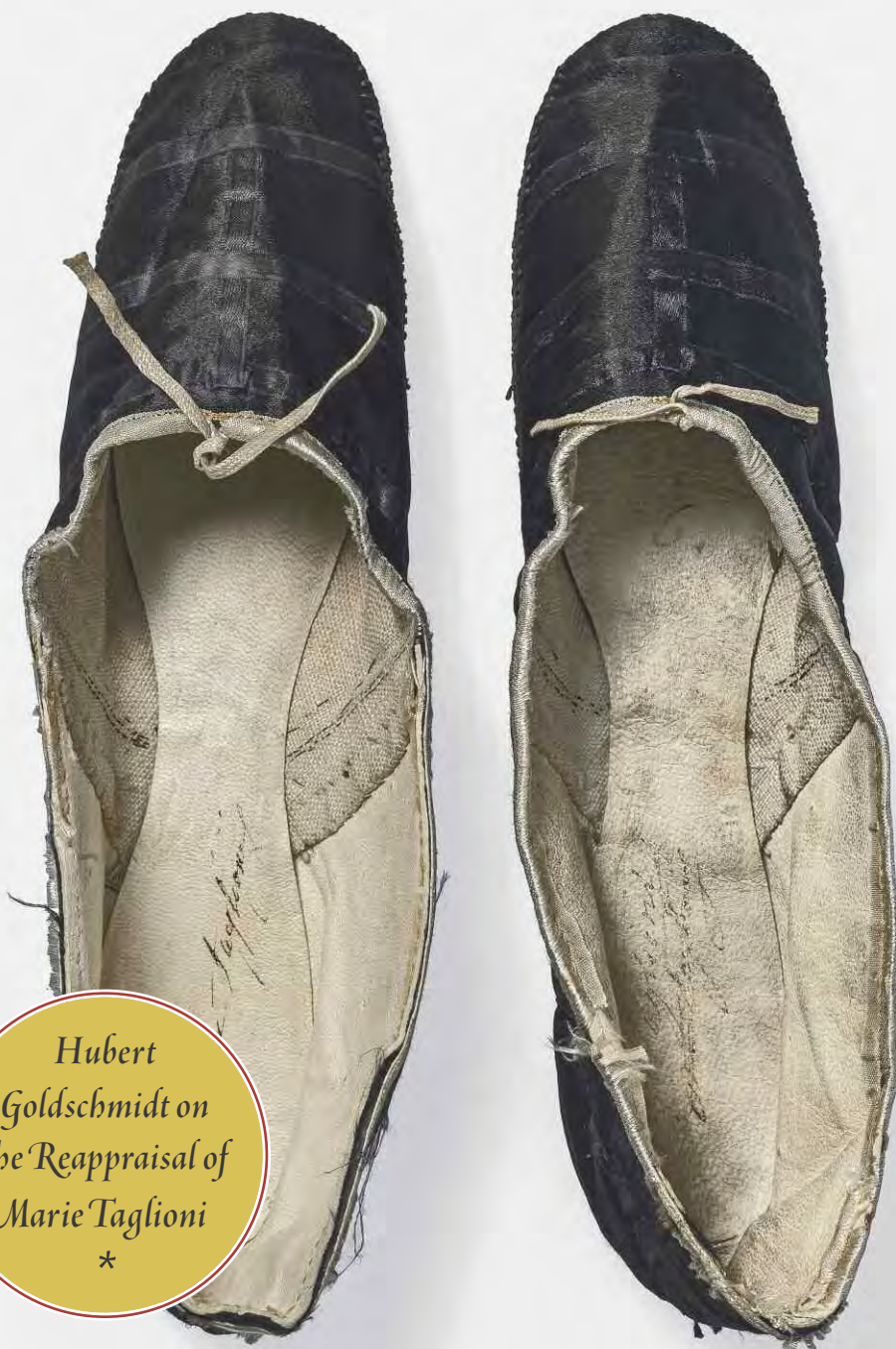


Summer 2018

Ballet Review



Hubert
Goldschmidt on
the Reappraisal of
Marie Taglioni

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**Ballet Review 46.2
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Souvenirs à ~~l'usage~~ rompus.
Sac de Lomo 1876.

Depuis longtemps on me demande
d'écrire mes Mémoires; des Souvenirs, oui,
mais des Mémoires jamais! quelques pages
seraient, pour moi, trop triste à relire, mieux
vaut ne pas les retracer; il faudrait y insérer
des personnages jouant de pauvres rôles, s'ils
ne sont plus de ce monde, peut-être ont-ils
laissé quelques êtres qui ont dû les aimer et les
regretter, il serait donc peu généreux à moi
d'en parler dans ces souvenirs que le hasard peut
faire connaître du public; j'aime donc mieux
me taire, et oublier: d'ailleurs mes chagrins
n'intéressent personne, et attirent le blâme,
pourquoi se dit-on, avoir fait ceci ou cela? blâme
faible pour peu qu'on soit égoïste. Les dévouements
et les sacrifices sont généralement méconnus; on
ou oublie qu'on a été jeune; c'est cependant bien
cette jeunesse si insouciante de l'avenir! heureux
dans le présent!

Je me demande quelquefois, ai-je réellement

Marie Taglioni

Hubert Goldschmidt

In this report, I wish to draw attention to the rediscovery in Paris of the holograph text of Marie Taglioni's memoirs and its subsequent publication, *Souvenirs: Le manuscrit inédit de la grande danseuse romantique*,¹ in July 2017. The document, lost for so many years, was "found" in 2015 at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, and in *Souvenirs*, Bruno Ligore and Audrey Gay-Mazuel clarify the mysteries surrounding the manuscript, as well as describing the museum's entire Marie Taglioni Collection (Fonds Marie Taglioni), thus giving us a new and direct connection to this great ballerina.

Icônes du Ballet Romantique: Marie Taglioni et sa famille,² published the year before, should be considered a companion book to Taglioni's own text. In fact, to fully appreciate the memoirs, it is best to examine both books in conjunction with the essay by Francesca Falcone and the chronology and the genealogy of the Taglioni family established by Madison Sowell and included in *Icônes*.³ Through the memoirs and the work of Falcone, many myths about Taglioni's dancing, personal life, and legacy are laid to rest and we now have a better vision of her – both as an artist and as a human being.

My own interest in Taglioni began with my work for the French Project of the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library (now the Jerome Robbins Dance Division). In 1979 Genevieve Oswald, the curator of the Dance Collection, initiated the project. She asked me to investigate the holdings of the French libraries and museums related to dance. I was then to report back to her on their materials in order for the New York Public Library to purchase copies (microforms or photographs) of the most important ones and make them available in New York. With the support from the entire New York Public Library, we were

able to build up a corpus of materials covering the whole history of French dance from the seventeenth century to the present, which documents the most important ballets performed in France, including all aspects of their performances (librettos, music scores, choreographic notation, set and costume designs), as well as the great companies and dancers that performed there.

The Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra (Opera Library) is undoubtedly the most important French repository of dance materials and was the primary source of materials for the French Project. Among its many items, one can find unique copies of books and manuscripts of Feuillet notation, materials on Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes, costume and set designs, and music scores for the Paris Opera. Its Taglioni Collection documenting Marie's career is considered one of its prized holdings and includes her memoirs and press clippings. In fact, obtaining microfilms of the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra's Diaghilev's notebooks and the library's Taglioni materials were our very first priority.⁴

Because of my work on the French Project, I had for a long time been intrigued by the fact that the Musée des Arts Décoratifs has its own extensive Taglioni collection. For many years, the museum presented a fine Taglioni display, which included statuettes showing Marie, the painting *Marie Taglioni Going aboard a Gondola in Front of Her Palace in Venice* [see page 115], and the famous painting by François Gabriel Guillaume Lepaulle representing Marie and her brother Paul in the opening pose of *La Sylphide* [page 109], well-known through the lithographs after the canvas. Eventually I found that the museum's Taglioni holdings are more extensive and far more important than the displayed materials and that many had been donated or bequeathed by the Taglioni family. However, the question remained: how did this museum, whose core collections are far removed from the dance, come to be the repository of these artifacts?

For these reasons, when I met for the first time with Audrey Gay-Mazuel, I asked to see

the Musée des Arts Décoratifs' complete Taglioni Collection, and in November 2014, Gay-Mazuel, who is the museum's curator in charge of the nineteenth century decorative arts, provided me with a dossier on the extent and provenance of the holdings. Gay-Mazuel also showed me all of the ballerina's own possessions that she had been able to locate within the Arts Décoratifs' archives. Viewing Marie Taglioni's personal effects was indeed a moving and exciting experience.

Unfortunately, at the time, the cardboard document box containing nine notebooks of Marie Taglioni's memoirs listed in the inventory was nowhere to be found. In fact, I had been greatly surprised to learn of the Arts Décoratifs' manuscript, because it was thought that the original manuscript of the memoirs was at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, and the existence of a second holograph version seemed unlikely.

Gay-Mazuel immediately set about searching for the missing items – in particular the memoirs – with the goal of establishing a comprehensive accounting of her museum's Taglioni Collection. In January 2015 this pursuit was rewarded when the archivist of the Arts Décoratifs located the seven notebooks. This discovery enabled Ligore to transcribe the manuscripts and Gay-Mazuel to make a complete inventory of the Arts Décoratifs' Taglioni objects.

Before answering many of the questions surrounding the donations of Marie Taglioni's personal possessions to the two Parisian institutions, we need to recall some facts concerning Marie's life and family.

In 1832, Marie married Comte Alfred Gilbert de Voisins in London, and their marriage contract was registered in Paris in 1834. Gilbert des Voisins was an old family of parliamentary nobility. Marie and Alfred separated in 1835; however, the couple *legally* separated only in 1844. Until the end of her life, Marie remained the Countess Gilbert de Voisins, and often signed with that name.

Marie's two children, Marie-Eugénie, born in Paris in 1836, and Georges (Youri), born in

Munich in 1843,⁵ were both recognized by Alfred although they were products of extramarital relationships.

The father of Marie-Eugénie was undoubtedly Marie's lover Eugène Desmares, an author and playwright.⁶ When Marie left Paris for St. Petersburg in 1837, Desmares followed her only to die there in 1839. In a recently discovered letter dated 10/22 December 1839, Marie wrote to a friend of her grief and said that she was inconsolable.⁷ The father of Marie's son Georges was probably Prince Alexander Troubetzkoy.⁸ In 1846, Troubetzkoy bought the Venetian palace Ca' d'Oro on the Grand Canal for her⁹ and later, in 1852, married Marie's daughter Marie-Eugénie.

After leaving the stage in 1847, Marie lived in Paris, in her house at Blevio on Lake Como, in Venice, and in London. She also owned another Venetian palace on the Grand Canal: the Palazzo Corner Spinelli, which is the one depicted in the Arts Décoratifs' painting [page 115]. She did not retire for long. In 1859, Marie became active again, teaching at the Paris Opera, and staging her only ballet *Les Papillons* for her student Emma Livry. Later Marie moved to London surrounded by her family and taught ballroom dancing and gave lessons for presentations at court.

Her son Georges was an officer in a zouave regiment of the French army and fought in the Franco-Prussian War. In 1876 in London, he married Sozonga Ralli, the daughter of Stephen Augustus Ralli. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Ralli family had established a successful merchant business in London; Stephen Augustus Ralli had succeeded his uncle as president of the family business. After leaving the army, Georges entered his father-in-law's business in Marseilles. Marie rejoined him after 1880, and they lived comfortably at the Château Ralli in Marseilles until her death in 1884.

Marie Taglioni certainly did not pass the end of her life in financial difficulty or in dire straits as has often been claimed. She had amassed a considerable fortune and owned many properties, however it is likely that she



A pair of ballet slippers, 1842, MAD.

did incur some financial uncertainties at a certain point. In 1862 at a Paris auction, Marie sold important jewels and other possessions, including gifts from sovereigns.¹⁰

In her will, Marie Taglioni bequeathed her memoirs to her daughter-in-law Sozonga Gilbert de Voisins and “in case she wishes to publish them, begs her that it be for the benefit of the poor of my religion.”¹¹ This is the first mention of the notebooks. Just after Marie’s death in April 1884, the press reported the existence of the memoirs, and two months later a leading newspaper published clearly apocryphal excerpts from the supposed memoirs.

Auguste (Augusto) Gilbert de Voisins, the only child of Georges and Sozonga, was brought up in Marseilles and arrived in Paris in 1898. He frequented literary circles, published his first novel, and undertook numer-

ous trips to Africa. In 1909, he accompanied Victor Segalen (a French naval doctor who attained fame as a novelist, poet, and explorer) to Peking, and they embarked on a ten-month trip to western China. They returned to China together in 1913, accompanied by Jean Lartigue, for a grand, official, archeological adventure devoted to the funerary monuments and sculptures of the Han and T’ang dynasties and known as the “Segalen-Lartigue-de Voisins Expedition.”

Upon his return to France, Auguste pursued his career as an author, writing poems, novels, and essays. In particular, he wrote the libretto of Albert Roussel’s ballet *Le Festin de l’Araignée* whose premiere took place at the Théâtre des Arts in Paris in April 1913 with choreography by Léo Staats. In 1915, Auguste Gilbert de Voisins married Louise de Heredia, the daughter of the poet José-Maria de Here-

dia and former wife of the writer Pierre Louys. In 1926, Auguste was awarded, for the whole of his work, the Grand prix de littérature de l'Académie française.

At the time of Marie's death, Auguste was just six years old. All his life he would cherish all of her personal belongings, portraits, photographs, prints, and notebooks that he had inherited. In his autobiographical novel *Les Miens*, he recalls with great emotion the times he spent with his grandmother and how he would take pleasure in listening to her stories; he even goes so far as to integrate there a reworked passage from Marie's *Souvenirs*.¹² Although Auguste was a well-known writer and shared his personal recollections of his grandmother with many of his visitors, he never undertook publication of her memoirs. Tamara Karsavina, in her book *Theater Street*, remembers that "Taglioni's souvenirs were piously kept in a glass cabinet" in Auguste's apartment and recalls the "generous gift: [Auguste] had presented [her] with a fan of Taglioni's, which she had during her stay in Russia and had used on the stage."¹³

Auguste Gilbert des Voisins died in September 1939 leaving no heirs. In a letter to his executors, he instructed them to donate the painting by Lepaulle representing Marie Taglioni in *La Sylphide* [page 109] to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs as well as to give any other of his Taglioni holdings that might be of interest to the museum.¹⁴

He undoubtedly chose this particular institution because of his close ties to its director Paul Alfassa. In fact, they had collaborated on a translation of poems of Robert Browning, and, in 1908, Auguste had lent the painting by Lepaulle to an exhibition at the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs (the former name of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs). In October 1931, he had donated the silver table centerpiece *Diana and Endymion* [page 110], sculpted by Edmund Cotterill for the silversmith Robert Garrard II, which had been offered to Marie Taglioni in 1846 by a group of British gentlemen that included Prince George of Cambridge, Wellington, and the Duke of Devon-

shire. With these last gifts the Musée des Arts Décoratifs became the richest repository of Taglioni holdings in France.

Auguste's friend Dr. Paul Fouquiou, the husband of Victor Segalen's widow Yvonne, must have been one of Auguste's executors, for he drafted a list of Auguste's Taglioni holdings and in April 1940 arranged for their transfer to the Arts Décoratifs. At that time, the museum was essentially closed, its collections dispersed. Upon the receipt of the donation, the museum's director acknowledged that it would have to remain in storage until the museum's "resurrection." Because of the war and the occupation of Paris by the Germans in June 1940, this bequest remained largely unknown, leaving few traces in the archives of the museum.

Many of these Taglioni objects, however, reappeared shortly thereafter in the exhibition *Le ballet et la danse à l'époque romantique 1800-1850*, organized at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in 1942 by Serge Lifar. Curiously enough, in the exhibition catalog, the paintings, drawings, and sculptures representing Marie Taglioni are listed as individual items, whereas Marie's more personal possessions are grouped into a single lot, with the provenance "Musée des Arts Décoratifs, bequest of Count G. des Voisins."

Not all of Auguste's Taglioni holdings were included in Arts Décoratifs donations. At the Hôtel Drouot in Paris in October 1940, books from the collection of Gilbert de Voisins and some autographed letters that probably belonged to Marie Taglioni were put up for auction. Perhaps because the notebooks were stored in a document case, they were included in the donation to the Arts Décoratifs and thus separated from the rest of the Taglioni papers and manuscripts, which were probably kept by Fouquiou and his wife Yvonne.

In his biography of Marie Taglioni,¹⁵ Léandre Vaillant mentions that pure luck put him in the presence of Taglioni's personal papers and that, after reading them carefully, he classified them chronologically. As he dedicates his book to "his friends Dr. and Mme.



Laurel wreath with the titles of Marie Taglioni's major roles, painted cloth, France, c. 1860, MAD.

Paul Fouquiau," we can surmise that he had access to all the Taglioni papers held by the Fouquiaus, although he never mentions in his book any source for the documents he had consulted.

It seems likely that the Fouquiaus gave all their Taglioni holdings, as well as Auguste's personal papers, to Annie Joly-Segalen, the daughter of Victor and Yvonne Segalen. In any case, between 1959 and 1962, Annie Joly-Segalen donated to the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra all the Taglioni papers that remained in her family. At that time, she stated that she had

found some of Taglioni items interspersed with Auguste's personal papers. As we shall see, there still remain unanswered questions about the Taglioni documents held by the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra. But the fact remains that essentially all of the items that Marie Taglioni kept and cherished are now housed in these two Parisian institutions.

The Taglioni Notebooks

Marie Taglioni's *Souvenirs* was reconstructed by Ligure using the Art Décoratifs' notebooks and the R18 manuscript of the Bibliothèque de



Castanets, ebony and guaiacum, c. 1840, MAD.

l'Opéra's Taglioni Collection. The latter is an autograph manuscript of Marie Taglioni's, consisting mainly of drafts, often with the word "duplicate" is written at the top of a page. Also interspersed are pages in another handwriting; apparently Marie shared her writings with a correspondent who sometimes made corrections or additions.

Among the Taglioni papers of the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, the R 17 manuscript is not completely in her hand. Cataloged as "Manuscript copy of Marie Taglioni's *Souvenirs*," it was written by six different persons (mostly Léandre Vaillat) on paper that is easily datable to the first half of the twentieth century. There are also notes, in Serge Lifar's hand, relating to the myth of Prometheus. The typewritten R19-23 manuscripts are reworked versions of R17 – probably used by Vaillat in preparing Marie's autobiography.

Unfortunately, it is not known exactly how the manuscripts R17 and R19-23 arrived at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra. Either Vaillat or Lifar donated them directly to the library or at

some point one or the other of them mixed them with the Taglioni papers that Annie Joly-Segalen later gave to that institution.

Souvenirs

Here I shall paraphrase certain portions of the notebooks and present some excerpts. I have selected those parts that I find the most interesting or noteworthy and, as you will see, give illuminating insights into Marie's career or opinions. I have also added some comments that will shed light on her text. All the excerpts from Marie Taglioni's *Souvenirs* appearing in this section are within quotation marks.

Souvenirs spans the years from Marie Taglioni's early years until 1829, with some additions mainly concerning her trip to Stockholm in 1841. It is not known when Marie began writing her *Souvenirs*. However, one of her notebooks¹⁶ starts with the heading "Souvenirs à bâtons rompus, Lac de Come, 1876."¹⁷ In it, she goes on to say that she is beginning to write at Blevio on Lake Como, at her villa, La

Florida, which at the time belonged to her daughter, and she mentions that she is on the balcony of the chalet *Mon Désir*, which her father had built on the property. She explains that her manuscript will not be her complete memoirs, but only some recollections, because evoking all the past would be too painful. She admits that she had been “very happy in all that was related to my art; I do not think there was a woman more beloved and more spoiled by the public, so I shall only retrace what is connected with this art.”¹⁸

**Stockholm, Vienna, Kassel, Paris
1804-1821**

Born in 1804 in Stockholm, Marie Taglioni was the daughter of the Italian dancer and choreographer Filippo Taglioni and the Swedish dancer and musician Sophie Karsten. Her grandfather Cristoffer Christian Karsten was a famous opera singer at the court and, according to Marie Taglioni, also secretary to King Gustave III.

In 1805, Filippo Taglioni and his family moved to Vienna as he pursued his career as a dancer there and choreographed his first ballets. When Filippo was engaged in 1809 as premier danseur and ballet master of the Royal Opera House at the court of Jérôme Bonaparte, the King of Westphalia, the Taglioni family followed him to Kassel.

In 1813, when the Russian armies invaded Westphalia, Filippo was in Vienna, and, as the troops were about to enter Kassel, Sophie Taglioni was obliged to pack all her belongings and flee abruptly to Mainz with Marie and her brother Paul. There the Taglionis were unable to find lodgings and wished to go to Paris to escape the dangers of the Napoleonic wars, in a stroke of luck, Sophie Taglioni was put in touch with a wounded French general who was willing to have her and her children accompany him to Paris under the condition that she

accept passing herself off as his wife. The general's intentions were not in fact without ulterior motives. This rather dramatic episode is described by Marie with great verve.¹⁹

While Filippo pursued his career as a dancer with engagements in Milan, Torino, Naples, Florence, Munich, and other European cities, Sophie Taglioni remained in Paris with her children. Marie took harp lessons with her mother and also piano lessons; she also took dancing lessons with the renowned teacher Jean-François Coulon, who had formed a whole generation of French dancers. Filippo and his sister Luigia had studied with Coulon in 1798 before they became members of the corps de ballet of the opera. At the beginning, Marie did not always attend dancing lessons very assiduously. Life was not necessarily easy as Filippo often could not send enough money to his family in Paris.

“Often friends came to spend the evening with us; one did not fail to make me dance, which would give me great pleasure [as] I would put on my short dress. Then I would compose many steps and assert that my professor had taught them to me; all were amazed. I really do not know what I was executing in front of them, but often I made them cry. When my mother played the harp, I would be-



Bracelet with MT monogram; hair, gold, enamel, and rhinestones; c. 1840, MAD.

gin to dance and to mime, my inspirations coming from the sentiment of music, and that sentiment has always remained with me! This would help me a great deal in varying my dance.”²⁰

It was at the balls organized by Coulon that Marie had the first opportunity to dance in public, either waltzing or part of a quadrille. Marie’s mother had her audition for the opera’s ballet master, Jean Aumer, a friend of her father’s. After seeing Marie execute several pas, Aumer told her mother that Marie would never be a good dancer and advised her to make a seamstress of her daughter. On the other hand, Madame Gardel thought that “if Marie were to work assiduously, she would succeed.”

In her letters to Filippo Taglioni, Marie’s mother praised her daughter’s talents to such an extent that he obtained a contract for Marie as a première danseuse at the Kärntnertortheater (also known as the Imperial and Royal Court Theater) in Vienna, where he was holding a permanent position as ballet master. Marie was dismayed at this news, for she knew very well that she was not in any condition to hold that appointment. Coulon agreed with her, but, given that she was a very promising student and that she would be more advanced had she studied more energetically, he recommended that Marie should put the six months before her departure to Vienna to good use. He wanted Marie to attend his class every morning and granted her the special favor of attending his evening class of social dances for ladies of good society to which he never admitted artists.²¹

Vienna 1822-1824

Upon Marie’s arrival in Vienna in January 1822, her father installed a special raked floor in a room of the their apartment for Marie to study dance. He immediately realized that she was not at all prepared for her debut and told her that she would need to work hard. Marie took class from her father “six hours per day: two hours in the morning, two hours before

dinner and two hours before going to bed.” She describes the rigorous training her father gave her from January 15 to June 10, 1822, in considerable detail:

“I would like to be able to explain the kind of work I did, but it is hard to be clear. Thus, during these six hours, at least two were devoted only to exercises, thousands for each foot. It was extremely painful, arid and boring, and yet it is the only means to soften the nerves, to fortify them, and to arrive at a certain perfection. Even at the pinnacle of my career I never neglected them; they gave me great flexibility and rendered all difficulties easy.

“Then two more hours were devoted to what I will call aplombs, or adagio[. T]hus I would take poses held on a single foot, which then had to be developed gently, when the pose presented great difficulties, I tried to keep it, and I counted up to a hundred before leaving it[. W]ith this perseverance, I mastered it com-



Jean-Auguste Barre: Marie Taglioni in *La Sylphide*, bronze statuette, 1837, MAD.

pletely[. T]hese poses must be done by standing on demi-pointe on one foot – that is, by raising the heel so that it does not touch the floor[. I]t is a very difficult study, and very interesting; in these poses it is necessary to turn the body with great grace, aplomb, and assurance [and] I had attained a very great perfection in this style[. I]t is a study from the antique[. I]t served me very much and pleased the public. I resorted to these poses when I needed rest, whereas for the other artists it is generally a fatigue and is almost abandoned.

“Today we call aplomb or adagio grotesque groups that are done with the help of a dancer who looks like a kind of clown[. H]e draws his dancer from right to left, makes her turn like a top, and raises her by the strength of his wrist[. T]here is no merit in this, and frankly it is unsightly; I do not think that a sculptor or a painter would want to represent such contortions. We owe the beginning of this bad taste to the two Elssler sisters: the elder Thérèse, who was very tall – too tall – would dress up as a man; she was extremely skillful in turning her sister Fanny, but this could not be called art.”²²

The remaining two hours of Marie’s training were devoted to jumps. She would begin “by loosening the instep and the tendons (the most delicate part of our person),” and then proceed to do pliés.

“We do thousands of these exercises before we attain a certain degree of perfection, and then we start to jump. . . . Finally I will say by dint of jumping, one ends up finding the spring



François Gabriel Guillaume Lepaulle: Marie and Paul Taglioni in *La Sylphide*, oil on canvas, 1834, MAD.

of a doe[. F]or me I know I could launch myself across the stage in one or two leaps, turning on myself in a way that surprised a great deal, and in all my movements, I remained straight without stiffness[. O]ne did not hear me land, because it was always the tip of my foot that landed first and my heel would come down gently. I adored these pas that included jumps in which I hardly felt the floor. I actually vibrated in the air.

“I had acquired great perfection in the pose of my arms[. T]hey never served me to make an effort; they were always supple[. M]y hands also had graceful movements; however they were rather large When one has to appear before the public, one naturally exposes oneself to its criticisms; that is why we must

make a general study of one's whole person – see one's defects and seek as much as possible to make qualities out of them[. T]hus, I was not pretty: The top of my body left much to be desired. I was slim without being thin; my legs were very well made – a little elongated, but well proportioned; my foot, remarkably small and graceful. I knew to walk on the stage like nobody[. F]inally, what I am going to say will seem ridiculous: [I] had spiritual feet and hands. I always avoided making grimaces or simper[ing. M]y face expressed happiness; when I danced I smiled, I did not laugh. I was happy.

“One of the great reproaches that my father made was that he found that I did not hold myself straight.”

Marie overcame this defect, and as she “continued to hold herself straight, she was quite persuaded that it was only a question of will!”²³



Edmund Cotterill and Robert Garrard II: *Diane and Endymion*, sterling silver, London, 1846, MAD.

Marie made her debut on June 10, 1822, in the ballet *La Réception d'une nymphe au temple de Terpsichore* choreographed by her father, and an engagement for two years followed. Marie recalls the various ballets in which she performed.

“March 25, 1823 Performance for the benefit of Mademoiselle Millière, I danced in a pas to the tune of the Folies d'Espagne, arranged and performed by the celebrated violinist Mayzeder. Mademoiselle Millière had danced the role of Terpsichore in the ballet of my debut, and already was of a certain age, and was then lacking in execution, but she was truly the noble dancer, distinguished and decent. I admired her very much; she was the only dancer I truly admired. I understood her dancing, I never understood that of the other ballerinas. Mademoiselle Millière, had danced for many years in Italy – in particular in Milan; as she was rather old, some would make a bad pun in saying ‘She is the thousand-years-old dancer!’”²⁴

Antoinette Millière was a ballerina from the Paris Opera whose real name was Marie Bigot. She danced in Italy as Antonietta Millier, Italianizing the spelling of her name. In particular, often partnered by Coralli, she performed at La Scala in Milan as a prima ballerina during the years 1814–1817 in ballets choreographed by Salvatore Viganò, Giovanni (Jean) Coralli, Pietro Angiolini, Gaetano Gioja, and Louis Henry. A rare lithograph by M. Bisi from the Cia Fornaroli Collection in the Dance Division of the New York Public Library represents her on demi-pointe wearing a diaphanous dress.²⁵

“31 December [1823] The first performance of the ballet *La Fée et le Chevalier* composed by Armand Vestris, for the debut of



Portrait of Marie Taglioni, oil on canvas, c. 1840, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, Paris.

Mademoiselle Brugnoli. [S]he had a great success, she was a dancer who initiated a new kind of dance[. S]he did very extraordinary things on pointe[. H]er feet were thin and long, very advantageous for this kind of dance; she was thin, rather small, not very pretty, but agreeable. I did not find her graceful: for in order to rise on pointe, she was obliged to make great efforts with her arms; yet she was a very talented artist. She always called me her little princess."²⁶

Amalia Brugnoli is supposedly the first ballerina to dance on pointe and this took place in the performance of *La Fée et le Chevalier* mentioned by Marie Taglioni.

"February 20 [1824] first performance of *Eleonor*, for the benefit of Mademoiselle Thé-

rèse Heberlé. Mlle. Heberlé was a pupil of my father's; she was a light dancer; she was charming, pretty, very well proportioned, although her dance was not very decent, but she danced to delight. In the ballet of my debut I danced with her and my father: a pas de trois whose music was lovely. . . . When one knew that I was to dance with this artist, one was persuaded that my father would sacrifice her to show me off, but my father was much too intelligent to act in this way; he made her execute all that she did best and most brilliantly, as I was not able to compete with her[. W]hile I made poses, he had her flying around me, this pas [de trois] created a furor and we both had a very great success."²⁷

Thérèse Heberlé was an Viennese dancer who performed as a child with Friedrich Horschelt's Viennese Kinderballett. She danced the role of Venus in Jean Coralli's anacreontic ballet *La statua di Venere* at La

Scala in 1825. In June 1832, the young Queen Victoria saw Heberlé perform in the ballet *Daphnis and Céphisé* and represented her in three watercolors in the title role of Céphisé; in one of them, she is shown dancing with the male dancer, Monsieur Albert.

In her journal entry of 2 July 1835, Queen Victoria notes, "There is only one dancer who is to be compared with Taglioni, which is Heberlé, She was a most beautiful dancer and a very pretty person. She was here 3 years ago for the first and last time, for she is now married and does not dance anymore; and I only saw her once. She had immense force and power and was like a young deer in her actions, but her style was quite different to Taglioni's. I prefer the style of the latter as being far



Medal of Marie Taglioni, gilt bronze, Milan, 1843, MAD.

more quiet, less jumping, and more graceful”²⁸

Stuttgart Würtemberg 1824-1829

Marie lists the ballets choreographed and presented by her father in Stuttgart from 1824 to 1827. She also participated in the fetes at the court of the King of Würtemberg, and in particular in tableaux vivants of the paintings *Belisarius Begging for Alms* and *The Oath of the Horatii* by Jacques-Louis David²⁹ and quadrilles performed at masked balls.

“Stuttgart [1825] . . . Mr. Briol was a comic and grotesque dancer, and he had lightness and was not lacking in intelligence. My father imagined a ballet entitled *Danina or the Brazilian Ape*, he had drawn the idea from a ballet represented in Paris, called *Jocko*, whose role was played by the famous comic dancer Mazurier;³⁰ Briol had succeeded in perfectly imitating all the movements of an ape[. W]e had the costume and the mask, which was perfect, brought from Paris. Nothing could be more amusing than to attend [the rehearsals and seeing what] my father had this man do, who was thus transformed into an ape[. R]opes and nets were stretched out in the hall of the chateau, on which he had to jump from one to the other[. M]y father had a riding-whip in

his hand, pursuing relentlessly the unfortunate Briol, leaping like a desperate man, in order to avoid the blows that he would sometimes receive.

“The ballet *Danina* was an immense success. The music was original and charming, composed by the chapel-master Mr. Lindpainter. This ballet was performed in almost all the German theaters, which gave Mr. Briol great advantages[. H]e should have been grateful to his benefactor; instead he abandoned his unhappy wife and child[. A]nd he had very fine engagements in Italy, where he presented this ballet as being a composition of his own!”³¹

Marie Taglioni danced the role of *Danina* in the ballet *Danina, or the Brazilian Ape* and she indicates that the premiere took place on March 12, 1825.³² Two engravings of the Viennese production of Filippo’s Taglioni’s ballet *Joko or the Brazilian Ape* are reproduced in the book *Îcônes du Ballet Romantique*.³³

Giovanni Briol went on to choreograph ballets for Italian theaters and, in particular, for the Teatro la Fenice in Venice and the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples from 1838 to 1847.

As we have seen above, Marie had very strong opinions about both dancers and choreographers. She considered “monsieur Hen-

ry [a] very good ballet master, he left a great reputation in Italy.”³⁴ Louis Henry was a French choreographer who worked extensively in Paris, Vienna, Milan, and Naples during the years 1805 to 1835.

Paris 1827

Marie made her debut at the Paris Opera on July 23, 1827, and performed there six times in all in July and August. She describes how the style of her dancing, so different than the opera’s, and her immense success antagonized the other dancers:

“My father had consented to my debut at the Opéra on the sole condition that I would only dance pas composed by him; he knew that it was the means of showing myself to the public with all my talent[. I]t was at the same time a new genre and a new school, which aroused the jealousy of the dancers of the Opéra. They realized that I was going to do them the greatest wrong, so they started saying: ‘Certainly it’s not bad, but it’s not real dancing[.]’ The teachers, for their part, went around the public’s foyer saying: ‘She is a dancer with no future, she does not belong to any school.’”³⁵

Marie asserts that the reviews were very favorable and can be found in the volume of press clippings that her friend the Comte de Mondreville presented to her. She adds, “I found this idea very ingenious, so from that moment on I have always continued.”³⁶

In *Souvenirs*, Marie describes how her ballet slippers needed to be prepared and how she would require two or three pairs for each performance:

“I came upon Mme. Briol³⁷ in Paris, in a profound misery, . . . [and] I gave [her] work [to do], my ballet shoes to stitch[.] When one has not been a dancer one is unable to understand what it means to *stitch shoes*; it consists in a darn that is done around the tip of the shoe so that the fabric does not tear too quickly[.] Without this preparation, we would only have them an instant on our feet; at the first dance steps they would be in tatters[.] Usually it is an undertaking that we do ourselves, it takes a long time and it is very boring. Having been

a dancer, Mme. Briol prepared them very well. I would give her 50c for each pair; she would do one pair per hour. I cannot say how many she prepared in this way, but the number was very great[.] every time I danced I would put on two and even three pairs at each performance. [S]he sent me all those I needed, either to Russia or to England, or I had them made by Janssen in Paris, the only shoemaker who knew how to make these shoes to perfection.”³⁸

The Taglioni Collection at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs

We know with certainty that more than seventy items of the Taglioni Collection belonged to the ballerina herself. Before their donation they were considered as relics by the few who had the privilege to see or touch them. In her essay, Gay-Mazuel gives detailed descriptions of most of the objects, placing them within the context of the design and the fashion of the times;³⁹ a complete list also can be found in the appendix.⁴⁰ Here I will mention only the most significant ones, which all belonged to Marie Taglioni:

Two portraits, drawings in pencil, by Jean Gigoux and Tony Johannot.

An oil portrait of Marie in her seventies [page 117], an image to which we are certainly not accustomed – the one that her grandson Auguste fondly describes in his memoirs.⁴¹

Two paintings by Lepaulle [page 109] and by Carlo Ferrari [page 115].

The famous bronze statuette of Marie Taglioni in *La Sylphide* [page 108].

Three copies of the portrait medal by Luigi Cossa of Marie Taglioni; the medal’s reverse is a dedication to her dated Milano 1843 [page 112]. According to a document belonging to the Bibliothèque de l’Opéra’s Taglioni Collection, this medal was commissioned by a group of admirers, which included her friend, the opera singer Giuditta Pasta.

A pair of castanets [page 106] that Marie probably used in performances of the ballet *La Gitana*. (Several prints representing Marie dancing with castanets in this ballet are re-

produced in Madison Sowell's iconography of Marie Taglioni.⁴²⁾

Two pairs of ballet slippers, one inscribed by Marie Taglioni "Saint-Petersburg, March 1, 1842, shoes with which I danced at my farewell evening . . . M. Taglioni" [cover and page 103].⁴³

The cloth laurel wreath with the names of all the principal ballets in which Marie performed inscribed in gold letters on its leaves [page 105].⁴⁴

Four fans that belonged to Marie Taglioni, which she might have used in performances; eyeglasses; some posters of Marie Taglioni's performances in London and Paris; and lithographs depicting Marie Taglioni.

Throughout her reminiscences, Marie mentions the various gifts of jewels offered to her by admirers. In particular, she records that the first one, which was given to her after a performance in Vienna in May 1824, was a small gold and enamel brooch.⁴⁵ In the anonymous portrait of Marie Taglioni that now hangs at the Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra [page 111], she is represented wearing a set of gold and ruby earrings and brooch, the gold bracelet in the form of a serpent that was a gift from the Tsar Nicolas I, and a gold watch.⁴⁶ Although Marie sold many of her jewels in 1862 as we saw above, the Taglioni Collection includes several jewels of lesser importance whose variety gives us a fairly good idea of the kind of gifts she would receive. One of these is the bracelet in matted hair with a blue enamel medallion on which Marie's interlaced initials are inlaid in rhinestones [page 107].

Gay-Mazuel mentions the other institutions that have extensive Taglioni holdings: the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Netherlands Music Institute in the Hague, the St. Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music, and the Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra. Cyril Beaumont bequeathed to the Victoria and Albert Museum the Taglioni objects that Margaret Rolfe had given him and that she had inherited from her grandmother, who was a close friend of Marie Taglioni's when she was teaching dance in London. The Bibliothèque-musée

de l'Opéra possesses holdings that were acquired from the Archives Internationales de la Danse that had once belonged to Anna Pavlova.

It is difficult to know which of the objects held by these institutions ever actually belonged to Marie Taglioni. Certainly not all of the preserved ballet shoes can be authentic. Gay-Mazuel points out that the size of some of them is not consistent with that of her stockings or of her ballet slippers held by the Arts Décoratifs.

Several years ago, when visiting the Cottage Palace in Peterhof, built by the Tsar Nicolas I for his wife Alexandra Fedorovna as a family residence and still with its original furnishings, I noticed to my surprise a lithograph depicting Taglioni in *La Sylphide*. It is testimony to her importance at court. The lithograph is the one after Achille Devéria, based on the Barre statuette [page 108], that is reproduced in Madison Sowell's iconography as fig. 61.⁴⁷

The Biographies of Marie Taglioni

In 1912, the first monographs devoted to Marie appeared: by Nikolaï Soloviev in St. Petersburg and by Émile Henriot in Paris.⁴⁸ The Russian critic André Levinson's book on Marie Taglioni has had a profound impact on our vision of the ballerina.⁴⁹ Ideological reasons led Levinson to create a myth of Marie Taglioni, portraying her as the quintessential French ballerina and a pure product of the French school and of Coulon's teachings. As we saw in Marie's own words, her French schooling did not play a fundamental role in her dance training. It was really during her stay in Vienna that her father formed her as a dancer and brought out her special qualities as a ballerina through his choreographies.⁵⁰

After the death of Levinson in 1933 and of Svetloff in 1935, Serge Lifar and Léandre Vaillat attempted to position themselves as the leading authorities on the Romantic ballet. Vaillat was a journalist who started out mainly writing on urbanism and the visual arts. He wrote a monograph on the painter Jean-Baptiste Peronneau in collaboration with the cu-



Carlo Ferrari: *Marie Taglioni Going aboard a Gondola in Front of Her Palace in Venice*, oil on canvas, c. 1850, MAD.

rator of the Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, and in 1935 organized an exhibition on Parisian urbanism at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. Beginning in 1934, he wrote columns on dance for several newspapers.

Lifar wanted to make a name for himself not only as a dancer and choreographer, but also as a dance historian and theoretician. He hired a well-known author to ghostwrite for him and published several books under his own name.⁵¹ He continued to disseminate Levinson's false view of Taglioni. In 1939, Lifar organized *Ballets Russes de Diaghilew 1909 à 1929* at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the dissolution of the company and the death of Diaghilev. A ballet slipper worn by Karsavina at the premiere of *Le Spectre de la Rose* was lent by Auguste Gilbert des Voisins to this exhibition.

After the fall of France in June 1940, both Lifar and Vaillat established close ties to the Vichy regime. Their desire to please the Vichy and the occupying authorities permeated their writings on ballet. Lifar's collaboration with the German occupier are well-documented. Vaillat obtained a government position in the

Vichy regime as technical adviser for urban planning to the prefect of the Seine, Charles Magny. He published articles in the weekly *L'Illustration* expressing his admiration for Marshal Petain and encouraging the French to reconstruct their country. There he also wrote that German legends often inspired the authors of ballet libretti and claimed that "the ancient German poets knew, according to the *joli mot* of Théophile Gautier, [how to] 'write for the legs.'"

In 1941 Lifar began organizing the exhibition *Le ballet et la danse à l'époque romantique, 1800-1850*, which was to take place at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs from January to April 1942. The head of the Vichy government, Admiral Darlan, promised Lifar a very substantial subsidy for the exhibition, which was later confirmed by Fernand de Brinon, the Vichy government's representative to the German High Command in occupied Paris.⁵²

This exhibition was conceived within the context of collaboration both with the Vichy regime and the German occupier and served as a propaganda tool. It was in fact a joint effort with German museums, since Lifar directly negotiated loans from the Austrian Na-

tional Library and from the Museum of the Prussian State Theater in Berlin (including forty-three designs for Paul Taglioni's ballet *Théa, ou La Fée aux Fleurs*). Most of the items came from the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, the Archives Internationales de la Danse, and the Austrian National Library. As we saw above, many objects from the Gilbert des Voisins donation to the Arts Décoratifs were included in the show,⁵³ which was completed with a few loans from private collections.

The rather extensive exhibition presented 560 entries, many of which consisted of several objects. The group of Marie Taglioni portraits, for example, included twenty-seven items. In the catalog, the descriptions are preceded by a biography of Marie Taglioni, by Lifar or one of his writers, which states that "after her retirement in 1847 she lived poorly" until her death in 1884.⁵⁴ Three separate essays – by Lifar, Vaillat, and Joseph Gregor, the director of the Austrian National Library – serve as an introduction to the catalog. Political overtones permeate Gregor's contribution; he even goes so far as to say that "Opera and the Romantic Ballet have united Germany and France for a long time in the same cult." In their contributions, Vaillat and Lifar publicize their books on Taglioni and Carlotta Grisi.

Posters promoting the exhibition were displayed throughout Paris and the show received substantial press coverage. A photograph of Lifar, Fernand de Brinon, and Charles Magny at the opening of the exhibition, in front of Fanny Elssler's dress, was published on the first page of a leading newspaper.

Between the second half of 1941 and the opening of the exhibition, Vaillat worked on his biography of Marie Taglioni.⁵⁵ During the preparation of the exhibition, Vaillat as well as Lifar and his fellow workers had access to the notebooks that were kept in the archives of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. As we saw above, Vaillat also was able to consult the Fouquiau documents. It is not known how much Lifar and Vaillat worked together on this biography.

The handwriting and the paper of the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra's manuscript R17 presents definite similarities with those of the archival material in the exhibition. Vaillat published his biography in 1942 to rave reviews, but there he mentioned neither the Arts Décoratifs nor how he was able to consult Marie's notebooks or her personal papers.

Ligore had simply placed the Vaillat biography within the context of its publication and the author's goal. Just as Levinson had done before him, Vaillat was more interested in glorifying and celebrating the myth of an artist than in painting an image based on documentary evidence. He transposed most of Marie's *Souvenirs* into a text written in the style of a novel and constantly invented the necessary dialogue. He did however quote certain important passages of the *Souvenirs*, changing only the punctuation.

Since Vaillat did not cite any of his sources, it is often impossible to distinguish narratives based on facts that can actually be documented from those that use his embellishments for the period of Marie's life not covered in *Souvenirs*. He did however exploit Filippo Taglioni's diary and other documents held by the Fouquiaus. In particular, he quoted letters written by Marie and some of the twenty-two letters that Eugène Desmares wrote to Anténor Joly and his brother Constantin or to the poet Joseph Méry.⁵⁶ Most of the latter letters were sent from St. Petersburg and provide us with detailed information on Marie's stays there. (Anténor Joly was a well-known journalist and the director of the important Théâtre de la Renaissance, which was inaugurated with the premiere of the Victor Hugo play *Ruy Blas*.)

A complete study of Marie Taglioni's life and career now needs to be done taking into account all the documents held in the Taglioni Collection of the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, her correspondence, and the many press reports on her dancing throughout Europe and Russia. Only then will we have an accurate idea of Marie's real contributions and her true impact on the history of dance.

A first step in this direction is Francesca

Falcone's essay.⁵⁷ There she analyzes both Levinson's motivations and ideology in creating the Taglioni myth and its impact. For Levinson, Marie was a pure product of the French school that he considered superior to all others. He would not take into account the complexity of her training and formation. Falcone then offers a reevaluation of Taglioni as a dancer and advances the vision of a much more complex and complete artist than the one that had been handed down to us by Levinson, Lifar, and Vaillat.

So much has been said about Marie's elevation and lightness that all the other aspects of Marie's dancing have been largely ignored. To remedy this, Falcone mainly bases her study on descriptions of Marie's performances from outside France. Falcone gives convincing arguments that Marie was certainly a more eclectic artist than usually recognized. Marie incorporated techniques and styles of the various European schools of her day. At her debut in Paris in 1827, the Parisian commentators perceived Marie as a foreign dancer.

With the support of contemporary testimonials, Falcone argues that Marie was adept at pantomime and in diverse styles, would prove capable of interpreting roles of diverse nature, and was truly a ballerina with many facets.⁵⁸ One should remember that Filippo Taglioni created different types of ballets for his daughter throughout Europe, both showing off the variety of Marie's talents and taking into account the taste and demands of each particular audience. His understanding of the latest artistic trends and movements led him



Portrait of Marie Taglioni, oil on canvas, 1870-1880, MAD.

to incorporate their currents and themes into his ballets and to create a new esthetic of dance.

Îcônes du Ballet Romantique

The main purpose of the book *Îcônes du Ballet Romantique: Marie Taglioni et sa famille* is to present an iconographic study of the Taglioni family and their entourage. Most of the 200 or more images reproduced in this book come from the collection of Debra H. Sowell and Madison U. Sowell, one of the most important private collections of images concerning the Taglioni dynasty. The central part of this book is devoted to Madison Sowell's complete listing of the iconography of Marie Taglioni – a total of 145 images of objects related to Marie Taglioni, all reproduced in color and presented in chapter 3.⁵⁹

In 1984, for the centenary of Marie's death, Edwin Binney presented *Longing for the Ideal: Images of Marie Taglioni in the Romantic Ballet*, an exhibition at the Harvard Theatre Collection. Following the exhibition, he wished to undertake a more complete iconographic study of Marie Taglioni, but was unable to realize it before his death in 1986.

In the paths opened up by Edwin Binney and by George Chaffee in cataloging Romantic prints, Madison Sowell has pursued Binney's dream. He describes, gives precious cataloging information and bibliographic references, and provides detailed commentaries on each of the images appearing in his third chapter. He also includes variants of certain prints. Sowell's researches lead us to a better appreciation of the diversity of Marie's roles and talents both through his analysis and the juxtaposition of the images.

The aim of his book is also to situate Marie within her family and their traditions to better understand her artistic personality and to have a image of her beyond the notoriety on which her current fame is based. In chapter 1, Sowell lists a complete genealogy of the Taglioni family starting with Marie's grandfather Carlo Taglioni, who was a dancer and choreographer.⁶⁰ His sons Filippo and Salvatore became important choreographers, while his daughters Giuseppa and Luigia were both ballerinas. Filippo pursued an itinerant career throughout Europe both as a dancer and ballet master, depending on his contracts and engagements, while most of his brother Salvatore's career as a choreographer took place in Naples.

Marie's brother Paul was first one of her partners and later had a successful career as a choreographer and ballet master in Berlin, London, and Milan. His daughter Marie, usually known as Marie Taglioni II or Marie Paul Taglioni, was also a renowned dancer. To verify the exactness of all the dates, research was done in numerous archives and with the help of various types of documents.

Chapter 2 of the book is devoted to an analysis of the choreographic works of members of

the Taglioni family – namely, the ballets by Carlo, Salvatore, Filippo, Marie, and Paul.⁶¹ Here Debra Sowell relies mainly on the published librettos and previous studies to describe the works and their scenarios and to analyze their diverse styles. In particular, she explains how Filippo introduced a new Romantic style with the *Ballet des nonnes* in the 1831 Paris Opera production of Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable* and in 1832 in *La Sylphide*, his most famous work, and how he created roles for his daughter that would show off her strengths to full advantage – all the while offering his audiences sufficient variety to arouse their curiosity. In fact, Filippo often associated the roles with specific countries in order to display colorful or exotic-looking costumes and would either present Marie as a supernatural or ethereal being, where her lightness could be displayed, and sometimes as mere mortal full of grace and innocence.

In chapter 5, Patrizia Veroli studies the images of Marie Taglioni and their immense success.⁶² Due to the development of lithography, images of Marie circulated throughout Europe. Veroli places the diffusion of the images of Marie into the sociocultural context of the time and shows how they were used as a tool to promote her career and social status. Sometimes Marie would be embellished in a print, her face simply an invention of the artist with no attempt to conform to reality. In portraits, Marie would be represented as an elegant, serene, and discreet woman with the distinct purpose of conveying an aura of respectability and social prominence. In the images of her dancing, sobriety and good taste were emphasized.

In her dancing, Filippo always presented Marie as a woman of proper manners and purposely differentiated her from the other dancers and actresses of her theatrical milieu whose behavior might have been considered vulgar or who could be viewed as women of easy virtue. One must remember that well into the nineteenth century, performers, actors, and dancers were not considered respectable persons. Filippo's strategy allowed Marie to



The Musée des Arts Décoratifs's Marie Taglioni notebooks with their storage case.

attain a certain social status, which would culminate with her marriage to Count Alfred Gilbert de Voisins and her subsequent acceptance into society.

The following is a passage from the memoirs of Louis Véron, the director of the Paris Opera from 1831 to 1835, that provides insights into Filippo's influence on Marie:

"Just like the artists who belonged to the great eras of painting, M. Taglioni père [Filippo] founded a new school of dance, quite different in style and philosophical thought from the school of the Gardels and the Vestrises. These two schools presented a striking contrast: Vestris taught grace and seduction; he was a sensualist; he demanded provocative smiles, poses, postures almost without decency and without modesty. I have often heard him say to his pupils in a cynical language: 'My dear friends, be charming, coquettish; display in all your movements the most stirring freedom; you must, during and after your *pas*, inspire love, [to the extent that] the audience and the orchestra would wish to sleep with

you.' The school, style, and language of Mr. Taglioni père said quite the opposite: he demanded a graceful ease of movement, lightness, above all elevation, *ballon*; but he did not allow his daughter a gesture, a posture that lacked decency and modesty. He would say to her: 'Women and girls must be able to see you dance without blushing; let your dance be full of austerity, delicacy and taste.'

"Vestris wanted everyone to dance as in Athens, as bacchantes and as courtesans; Mr. Taglioni demanded an almost mystical and religious naivety in dancing. While one taught pagan dance, we can say that the other professed dance as a Catholic. Mademoiselle Taglioni danced better and differently from the others who had danced before her, two indispensable conditions for brilliant and lasting successes: among her admirers she had all the women and men of good society."⁶³

This excerpt sheds light on the distinctive qualities of Marie's dancing and the new style of dance that her father created for her. Here Véron specifies the esthetic that Filippo sought

and how it differed from that of the French school. Part of this excerpt is quoted in Veroli's essay in the section where she mentions the importance and role of proper manners in Marie's dancing.⁶⁴ This text also illuminates Falcone's thesis on Marie's dancing put forward in her essay; furthermore, it explains what Marie meant by *decent* when she describes the qualities of a ballerina.

Madison Sowell's Taglioni family chronology, which runs from the year of Filippo Taglioni's birth (1777) to that of Marie's death (1884), places the family's major events and the highlights of their careers within their historical, artistic, musical, and literary con-

text.⁶⁵ This is particularly important because the Taglionis were well aware of the various milieus in which they evolved. They frequented society's elite, and this allowed the social rise of several family members and led them into unions with European aristocracy. The appendix to the book reproduces the rare pamphlet *Biographie de Mlle Taglioni: Adieux de Paris à la Sylphide*, published in Russian and French in St. Petersburg in 1837.

It is my hope that the two recent books, with their revelations and solid foundations of fact, will be the immediate catalyst for new research into the careers of Marie Taglioni and her family.

NOTES

1. Marie Taglioni, *Souvenirs: Le manuscrit inédit de la grande danseuse romantique, édition établie, présentée et annotée par Bruno Ligore, préface de Flavia Pappacena, avec un essai d'Audrey Gay-Mazuel* (Paris: Gremese, 2017).

2. Madison U. Sowell, Debra H. Sowell, Francesca Falcone, and Patrizia Veroli, *Icônes du Ballet Romantique: Marie Taglioni et sa famille* (Saint-Denis-sur-Sarthon: Gremese, 2016).

3. Ibid. Chapter 1, "Les Taglioni. La généalogie" (Madison U. Sowell), 21-36; chapter 4, "Marie Taglioni au-delà du mythe de la Sylphide" (Francesca Falcone), 149-68; chapter 6, "Chronologie de la famille Taglioni. De la naissance de Filippo à la mort de Paul et Marie Taglioni" (1777-1884) (Madison U. Sowell), 185-226.

4. The microfilms of the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra's Fonds Taglioni (Taglioni Collection) are available at the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library (R1-R14 and R16-R87; Fonds Taglioni, Lettres autographes).

5. Georges' birth date has been rectified thanks to his baptism record, dated 19 October 1843 (see Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 14).

6. Eugène Desmares also wrote under the names Victor-Eugène Desmares and Eugène Des Mares. In 1838, Desmares publishes *St-Pétersbourg*, a poem dedicated to his Majesty the Emperor of all Russias (Paris: Imprimerie Lange Lévy et Ce, 1838).

7. In a letter dated St. Petersburg 10/22 December 1839, Marie writes on black-bordered writing paper ("demi-deuil") to a friend Mme. Laska, the wife of an important banker from Warsaw: "Vous

avez peut-être déjà appris le coup affreux qui vient de me frapper dans la mort de Monsieur Des Mares, plaignez-moi j'en ai besoin, me consoler c'est impossible, le temps le fera, peut-être, vous comprenez n'est-ce pas tout ce que je dois souffrir vous qui l'avez connu, vous qui avez vu tout son dévouement pour moi, oh j'ai beaucoup perdu, j'étais si heureuse il me fallait ma page noire, cependant je ne me croyais pas tant de courage voici un mois est demi qu'il n'est plus . . . et je ne pleure pas toujours. Sa maladie a été très courte 15 jours, mais il a beaucoup souffert, il est mort comme un ange." In two letters sent from St. Petersburg in November 1839, Marie Taglioni reveals the full extent of her sentiments towards Desmares and describes the short illness to which he succumbed. These latter letters are integrally quoted in Léandre Vaillat, *La Taglioni, ou la vie d'une danseuse* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1942), 413-14.

8. See Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 14.

9. Marie hired the architect Giovanni Battista Meduna to restore the palace. He removed the gothic stairway and balconies in the courtyard, much to the dismay of the Venetians.

10. This auction is mentioned on page 173 of Taglioni, *Souvenirs*. It took place at the Hôtel Drouot, Salle No. 7, Étude de M. Soyer, on December 26 and 27, 1862. Its catalog is entitled *Catalogue des diamants, perles fines, rubis, émeraudes, opales, topazes, turquoises, etc., Bijoux, argenterie, malachite, curiosités, porcelaines de Sèvres, fourrures, cachemires de l'Inde, etc. Appartenant à Mme Marie Taglioni, . . . Et provenant de cadeaux de divers souverains*.

11. "Je . . . lègue à ma belle fille Sozonga . . . mes souvenirs que je lui ai dédiés et la prie dans le cas où elle voudrait les publier que ce soit en faveur des pauvres de ma religion." It should be noted that Marie Taglioni was Protestant.

12. Auguste Gilbert des Voisins, *Les Miens* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1926).

13. Tamara Karsavina, *Theater Street: The Reminiscences of Tamara Karsavina*, rev. and enl. ed. (London: Constable, 1948), 242.

14. "Donnez au Musée des Arts Décoratifs le grand portrait de ma grand'mère dansant devant son frère Paul Taglioni et tels autres souvenirs de Marie Taglioni qui feraient l'affaire du Musée."

15. Vaillat, *La Taglioni, ou la vie d'une danseuse*.

16. Taglioni, *Souvenirs*.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 57.

19. Ibid., 77-78.

20. Ibid., 85.

21. Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, Les manuscrits R18 à la Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, 139.

22. "J'aimerais pouvoir expliquer le genre de travail que je faisais, mais c'est difficile pour être clair. Ainsi dans ces six heures, deux au moins étaient employées rien qu'à des exercices, dont des milliers pour chaque pied, c'était extrêmement pénible, aride et ennuyeux, et cependant, c'est le seul moyen d'assouplir les nerfs, de les fortifier et d'arriver à une certaine perfection. Aussi à mon plus grand apogée ne les ai-je jamais négligés, ils m'ont donné une grande souplesse et rendu facile toutes les difficultés.

"Puis deux autres heures étaient employées, à ce que j'appellerai des aplombs, ou adagio. Ainsi je prenais des poses me tenant sur un seul pied, qu'il fallait développer doucement, lorsque la pose offrait de grandes difficultés, je tâchais de la garder et je comptais jusqu'à cent avant de la quitter, avec cette persévérance, j'en devenais tout à fait maîtresse, ces poses doivent être faites en se tenant sur la demi-pointe d'un pied, c'est à dire relever le talon de façon à ce qu'il ne touche pas la terre, c'est une étude très difficile, et très intéressante; dans ces poses il faut faire pivoter le corps avec beaucoup de grâce, d'aplomb et d'assurance, j'étais parvenue à une très grande perfection dans ce genre, c'est une étude d'après l'antique, cela m'a beaucoup servi et plaisait infiniment au public, je recourais à ces poses lorsque j'avais besoin de repos, tandis que pour les autres artistes, c'est généralement une fatigue, aussi est-ce presque abandonné,

on nomme aujourd'hui aplomb ou adagio, des groupes, grotesques que l'on fait avec le secours d'un danseur qui a l'air d'une espèce de clown; il tire sa danseuse de droite à gauche, la fait tourner comme un toton et la soulève à la force du poignet, il n'y a la aucun mérite, et franchement c'est disgracieux, je ne pense qu'un sculpteur ou un peintre voulut représenter de telles contorsions. Nous devons le début de ce mauvais goût aux deux sœurs Elssler, l'aînée Thérèse qui était très grande trop grande s'habillait en homme, elle était extrêmement adroite à faire tourner sa sœur Fanny, l'ensemble produisait beaucoup d'effet, mais on ne pouvait pas appeler cela de l'art." Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 90-92.

23. "Enfin dirai-je à force de sauter on finit par trouver des élans de biche, pour moi, je sais que je pouvais me lancer à travers la scène en un ou deux bonds m'enlever en me tournant sur moi-même d'une façon qui surprenait beaucoup, et dans tous mes mouvements j'étais droite sans raideurs, on ne m'entendait pas retomber car c'était toujours sur la pointe de mon pied qui arrivait la première et mon talon redescendait doucement à terre, j'adorais ces pas où j'avais des élans dans lesquels je ne sentais presque pas la terre réellement je vibraïis dans l'air.

"J'avais acquis une grande perfection dans la pose de mes bras, jamais ils ne me servaient pur faire un effort, ils étaient toujours souples, mes mains aussi avaient des mouvements gracieux, cependant elles étaient plutôt grandes . . . Lorsque l'on doit paraître devant le public, naturellement on s'expose à ses critiques; c'est pourquoi, il faut faire une étude générale de toute sa personne, voir ses défauts et chercher autant que possible à en faire des qualités, ainsi, je n'étais pas jolie, le haut de mon corps laissait à désirer, j'étais mince sans être maigre, mes jambes étaient très bien faites, un peu allongées, mais bien proportionnées, mon pied remarquablement petit et gracieux, je savais marcher sur la scène comme personne, enfin ce que je vais dire paraîtra peut-être ridicule, j'avais les pieds et les mains spirituels; j'ai toujours évité de faire des grimaces ou de minauder, ma figure exprimait le bonheur, quand je dansais je souriais, je ne riaïis pas, j'étais heureuse.

"Un des grands reproches que me faisais mon père, c'est qu'il trouvait que je ne me tenais pas assez droite. . . je continuai à me tenir droite, je fus bientôt persuadée alors qu'il s'agissait que de vouloir!" Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 92.

24. "25 Mars [1823] Bénéfice de mademoiselle Millièrre, j'y ai dansé un pas sur l'air des Folies d'Espagne, arrangé et exécuté par le célèbre violoniste Mayzeder. Mademoiselle Millièrre était celle qui représentait Terpsichore dans mon ballet de début, et avait déjà un certain âge et manquait alors d'exécution, mais c'était tout à fait la danseuse noble, distinguée, et décente. Je l'admirais beaucoup, c'est même la seule danseuse que j'ai réellement admirée, je comprenais sa danse, je n'ai jamais compris celle des autres. Mademoiselle Millièrre, avait longtemps dansé en Italie à Milan surtout, comme elle était assez âgée on faisait la mauvaise plaisanterie de dire 'C'est la danseuse de mille ans!'" Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 97.

25. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library, "Antonietta Millier," New York Public Library Digital Collections, <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-0c5e-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

26. "31 Décembre [1823] première représentation du ballet *La Fée et le Chevalier* composé par monsieur Armand Vestris, pour le début de mademoiselle Brugnoli, elle eut un grand succès, c'était une danseuse qui apportait un genre nouveau, elle faisait des choses très extraordinaires sur la pointe du pied qu'elle avait mince et long très avantageux pour ce genre de danse; elle était maigre, assez petite, pas très jolie, mais agréable, je ne la trouvais pas gracieuse : parce que pour se relever sur ses pointes, elle était obligée de faire de grands efforts avec ses bras; cependant c'était une artiste de beaucoup de talent. Elle m'appelait toujours sa petite princesse." Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 98.

27. "Le 20 février [1824] première représentation du Eleonor, au bénéfice de mademoiselle Thérèse Heberlé. Mlle Heberlé était élève de mon père, c'était une danseuse légère, elle était charmante, jolie, très bien faite, quoique sa danse ne fut pas très décente, elle dansait cependant à ravir. Dans mon ballet de début je dansais avec elle et mon père un pas de trois, dont la musique était ravissante. . . . Lorsque l'on su que je devais danser avec cette artiste, on fut persuadé, que mon père la sacrifierait, pour me faire valoir, mais mon père était bien trop intelligent pour agir ainsi; il lui fit exécuter tout ce qu'elle faisait de mieux et de plus brillant, comme je n'étais de force à lutter avec elle, pendant que je faisais des poses, il la faisait voltiger autour de moi, ce pas fit fureur et toutes les deux y avons obtenu un très grand succès." Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 98-99.

28. The three drawings are in the Royal Collection Trust; two of them are dated June 15, 1832, and the third is dated February 17, 1833. It should be noted that the Royal Collection Trust also holds forty-three drawings by Queen Victoria of Marie Taglioni in various ballets.

29. The paintings *Belisarius Begging for Alms* and *The Oath of the Horatii* by Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825) are presently in the Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille and the Louvre, respectively.

30. *Jocko ou le Singe du Brésil* was a "grand spectacle" mixed with music, dance, and pantomime, first performed at the Théâtre du Porte-Saint-Martin in Paris on March 16, 1825, with choreography by Frédéric-Auguste Blache, music by Alexandre Piccinni, and sets by Pierre-Luc Charles Cicéri. Its main interpreters were Mazurier as Jocko and Louise Pierson as Cora.

31. "Mr Briol était danseur comique et grotesque, il avait de la légèreté et ne manquait pas d'intelligence. Mon père imagina de faire un ballet intitulé *Danina ou le Singe du Brésil*, il en avait tiré l'idée d'une pièce représentée à Paris nommée Joco, dont le rôle du singe était joué par le fameux comique Mazurier; ce Briol était parvenu à imiter parfaitement tous les mouvements d'un singe, on avait fait venir de Paris le costume et le masque qui était parfait. Rien de plus amusant que d'assister aux études que mon père faisait faire à cet homme transformé ainsi en singe, on avait tendu des cordes et des filets dans la salle du château, sur lesquels il devait sauter de l'un à l'autre, mon père avait une cravache à la main poursuivait sans relâche ce malheureux Briol, sautant comme un désespéré afin d'éviter les coups qu'il recevait quelquefois.

"Le ballet de *Danina* eut un succès immense le musique en était originale et charmante composée par le maître de chapelle Mr Lindpainter, ce ballet fut représenté dans presque toute les salles d'Allemagne ce qui valut à Mr Briol de grands avantages; il aurait dû en avoir la reconnaissance à son bienfaiteur, au lieu de cela, il abandonna sa malheureuse femme ainsi que l'enfant; et eut de très beaux engagements en Italie, où il représenta ce ballet comme étant d'une composition à lui!" Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 111-112.

32. *Ibid.*, 104.

33. Sowell, Sowell, Falcone, and Veroli, *Icônes du Ballet Romantique*, 40 and 67.

34. "monsieur Henry [était un] très bon maître de ballet, il a laissé une grande réputation en Italie." Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 97.

35. "Mon père avait consenti à mes début à l'Opéra à la seule condition que je ne danserais que les pas composés par lui; il savait que c'était le moyen de me montrer au public dans tout mon talent, c'était en même temps un genre nouveau et une nouvelle école, ce qui éveilla la jalousie des danseuses de l'Opéra. Elles comprirent que j'allais leur faire le plus grand tort, aussi commencèrent-elles à dire: 'Certainement ce n'est pas mal, mais ce n'est pas la vraie danse,' les professeurs, de leur côté, parcouraient le foyer de la danse en disant: 'C'est une danseuse sans avenir, elle n'a pas d'école.'" Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 124.

36. *Ibid.*, 126. All these press clippings, including the Mondreville volume, are in the Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, Fonds Taglioni, R1-R13.

37. Mme Briol was the wife of Giovanni Briol mentioned above.

38. "Je retrouvais Mme Briol à Paris, dans une profonde misère; . . . je [lui] donnais alors . . . du travail, mes souliers de danse à piquer, quand on n'a pas été danseur on ne peut pas comprendre ce que veut dire, *piquer des souliers* cela consiste en une reprise qu'on fait autour de la pointe du soulier afin que l'étoffe ne se déchire pas trop vite, sans cette préparation, on ne aurait pas un moment dans les pieds qu'aux premiers pas de danse ils seraient en lambeaux; habituellement, c'est un travail que nous faisons nous-mêmes, cela prend beaucoup de temps et c'est fort ennuyeux. Mme Briol, ayant été danseuse me les préparait très bien, je lui donnais 50c la paire, elle en faisait une paire par heure, je ne puis pas dire quelle quantité elle a préparé ainsi, mais le nombre en a été très grand, chaque fois que je dansais j'en mettais deux et même trois paires par soirée, elle m'expédiait donc tous ceux dont j'avais besoin, soit en Russie soit en Angleterre ou le les faisais faire à Paris chez Janssen, seul cordonnier qui suit faire ces souliers dans la perfection." Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 112.

39. Audrey Gay-Mazuel, *Memoriae et reliquiae. Le fonds Marie Taglioni du musée des Arts Décoratifs*, in Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 161-76.

40. "Annexe. Fonds Marie Taglioni – Les Arts Décoratifs," in Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 177-82.

41. des Voisins, *Les Miens*.

42. Sowell, Sowell, Falcone, and Veroli, *Icônes du Ballet Romantique*, 111-13.

43. "St. Petersburg 1er mars 1842. Souliers avec lesquels j'ai dansé à ma soirée d'adieu chez l'Impératrice de Russie au palais d'Anichkoff le pas espagnol de Herta et la cachucha. Taglioni."

44. This is the object that I personally find the most moving, perhaps because such a fragile object given to a ballerina as a final tribute rarely survives. The names of the ballets or roles inscribed on the leaves are: *La Naïade / Une nymphe chez Terpsichore / Flore et Zéphir / Le pas des déesses / La Mazurka / Miranda / La Créole / La révolte au sérail / L'ombre / La Napolitaine / La Tyrolienne de Guillaume Tell / La Gitana / La nonne de Robert-le-Diable / Le pas de quatre / La fille du Danube / Aglaé / Dayo / La laitière suisse / Le lac des fées / L'écumeur de mer / La Romaneseo / La Bayadère / Le papillon / Diane / Le menuet / La gavotte*.

45. Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 99.

46. The painting was given by Antoine Courtin, administrator of the Paris Opera, to Pierre-Auguste-Louis Blondeau, a composer and violinist in the Paris Opera orchestra. The Courtin family were very close to the Taglioni (see Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 97, 129). In 1988 the Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra purchased the painting from Blondeau's heirs. Dimensions: 119 cm x 84 cm.

47. Sowell, Sowell, Falcone, and Veroli, *Icônes du Ballet Romantique*, 98.

48. N. V. Soloviev, *Marija Taleoni, 23 aprilja 1804 g.-23 aprilja 1884 g.* (St. Petersburg: Sirius, 1912); E. Henriot, *Portraits de femmes, No. 45, Marie Taglioni* (Paris: July 1912).

49. André Levinson, *Marie Taglioni: (1804 - 1884)* (Paris: Alcan, 1929).

50. F. Falcone, "Marie Taglioni au-delà du mythe de La Sylphide," in Sowell, Sowell, Falcone, and Veroli, *Icônes du Ballet Romantique*, 149-68.

51. P. Veroli, "Modest L. Goffman as the Ghostwriter of Serge Lifar's Early Books," in *Russian Movement 1920s and 1930s: Proceedings of the Conference Held at Columbia University February 12-14, 2015*, ed. L. Garafola (New York: Harriman Institute, 2015), 63-66.

52. Fernand de Brinon was one of the main architects of the French collaboration. After the war, in 1947, he was sentenced to death and executed.

53. See Bruno Ligore's essay "Histoire et succès des Souvenirs de Marie Taglioni: éléments pour un récit," in Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 40-43.

54. "Elle se retira de la scène en 1847 et vécut pauvrement, jusqu'en 1884, date de sa mort à Marseille." Musée des Arts Décoratifs and S. Lifar, *Le ballet et la danse romantique à l'époque romantique 1800-1850. Notices rédigées d'après les textes de Serge Lifar, janvier-avril, 1942, Musée des Arts Décoratifs* (Paris: La Musée, 1942), 74.

55. Vaillat, *La Taglioni, ou la vie d'une danseuse*.

56. Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, Fonds Taglioni, R25 and LAS 10.

57. Falcone, "Marie Taglioni au-delà du mythe de La Sylphide."

58. In *Souvenirs*, Marie acknowledges that she had difficulties with certain styles, but she would prove to be capable of interpreting roles of a very diverse nature. Already in her debut in Vienna in 1822, Marie was obliged to incorporate different styles in the ballet *La réception d'une nymphe au temple de Terpsichore*: "Voici les divers genres de mon temps; la danse sérieuse et noble, la danse légère, la demi-caractère ou comique. La danse généralement exécutée par celles qui devaient représenter des dames ou Junons, les hommes des seigneurs ou des Apollons etc. Danse demi-caractère ou comique par des bacchantes, ou des paysannes, des satyres ou paysans, etc. Aussi dans cette espèce d'examen que je devais passer devant Terpsichore, le plus difficile pour moi la danse de demi-caractère, qui était nullement mon genre." Taglioni, *Souvenirs*, 93.

59. Madison U. Sowell, "L'iconographie de Marie Taglioni. Catalogue annoté et illustré," in Sowell, Sowell, Falcone, and Veroli, *Icônes du Ballet Romantique*, 63-148.

60. Madison U. Sowell, "Les Taglioni. La généalogie," in Sowell, Sowell, Falcone, and Veroli, *Icônes du Ballet Romantique*, chapter 1, 21-35.

61. D. Sowell, "L'oeuvre chorégraphique de la famille Taglioni. Carlo, Salvatore, Filippo, Marie et Paul," in Sowell, Sowell, Falcone, and Veroli, *Icônes du Ballet Romantique*, chapter 2, 37-62.

62. P. Veroli, "Taglioni-mania. Les images de Marie Taglioni dans la culture visuelle de son époque," in Sowell, Sowell, Falcone, and Veroli, *Icônes du Ballet Romantique*, chapter 5, 169-183.

63. "Comme les artistes des grandes époques de peinture, Taglioni père [Filippo] fonda pour la danse une école nouvelle, bien différente par le style et la pensée philosophique de l'école des Gardel et des Vestris. Ces deux écoles offraient un piquant contraste: Vestris enseignait la grâce, la

séduction; c'était un sensualiste; il exigeait des sourires provoquants, des poses, des attitudes presque sans décence et sans pudeur. Je l'ai souvent entendu dire à ses élèves dans un langage cynique: 'Mes bonnes amies, soyez charmantes, coquettes; montrez dans tous vos mouvements la plus entraînante liberté; il faut que, pendant et après votre pas, vous inspiriez de l'amour, et que le parterre et l'orchestre aient envie de coucher avec vous.' L'école, le style et le langage de M. Taglioni père disait tout le contraire: il exigeait une gracieuse facilité de mouvements, de la légèreté, de l'élévation surtout, *du ballon*; mais il ne permettait pas à sa fille un geste, une attitude qui manquât de décence et de pudeur. Il lui disait: 'Il faut que les femmes et les jeunes filles puisse te voir danser sans rougir; que ta danse soit pleine d'austérité, de délicatesse et de goût.'

Vestris voulait qu'on dansât comme à Athènes, en bacchantes et en courtisanes; M. Taglioni exigeait dans la danse une naïveté presque mystique et religieuse. L'un enseignait la danse païenne; on peut dire que l'autre professait la danse en catholique. Mademoiselle Taglioni dansait mieux et autrement qu'on ne dansait avant elle, deux conditions indispensables pour des succès éclatants et durables: elle avait pour admirateurs toutes les femmes du monde et la bonne compagnie." L. Véron, *Mémoires d'un bourgeois de Paris: comprenant la fin de l'Empire, la Restauration, la Monarchie de Juillet jusqu'au rétablissement de l'Empire*, Tome 3 (Paris, Librairie nouvelle, 1857), 227-228.

A translation of this passage can also be found in V. Huckenpahler, "Confessions of an Opera Director: Chapters from the *Mémoires* of Dr. Louis Veron, Part II," *Dance Chronicle* 7, no. 2 (1984), 222.

64. Veroli, "Taglioni-mania. Les images de Marie Taglioni dans la culture visuelle de son époque," 177.

65. Madison U. Sowell, "Chronologie de la famille Taglioni. De la naissance de Filippo à la mort de Paul et Marie Taglioni," 185-225.