



letter no. 10

Verdi always accorded this renowned librettist unusual respect (unlike his treatment of Piave and Solera), using elaborate titles on the address panels (e.g. "Sig<sup>r</sup> Salvatore Cammarano illustre poeta melodrammatico al Teatro S. Carlo Napoli"). Verdi's unusual respect for his collaborator and his willingness for him to undertake his most cherished project, *King Lear*, add a new and special dimension to this important correspondence which will fascinate all Verdi scholars and admirers for many years to come.

#### THE AUTOGRAPH LETTERS: ALL UNPUBLISHED UNLESS INDICATED

ALZIRA (Naples, Teatro San Carlo, 12 August 1845)

1) *Bologna, 10 November 1844, THE EARLIEST VERDI LETTER TO CAMMARANO TO HAVE SURVIVED*—about possible plots for their forthcoming opera at the San Carlo Naples [*Alzira*], asking Cammarano to consider them, since he is sure that anything the librettist felt suitable he would like too, asking whether an opera based on [the novel] *Marco Visconti* could contain a part suitable for the soprano Eugenia Tadolini, and urging him to consider whether the three leading characters are suited to the available singers ("...lo le raccomando tanto che i tre caratteri principali sieno addattati ai tre artisti che devono eseguire: quando questi sono (come si suol dire) ben vestiti l'esito è per metà assicurato..."), 1 page, small 4to, autograph address panel to verso ("III<sup>o</sup> Sig<sup>r</sup> Salvatore Cammarano, celebre poeta melodrammatico"), (postmarked "...Nov. 1844"), somewhat affected by damp, with staining and a few tears, some paper-loss affecting a few words, a few discreet annotations

UNRECORDED: not in the "Carteggio Verdi-Camarano" or the "Copialettere". Mossa has shown that the letter long thought to be the first in fact dates from 1845. The surviving correspondence between composer and librettist on *Alzira* is very scanty.

2) *Milan, 8 March [1845]*—Verdi acknowledges receipt of the opening of Cammarano's libretto, which could not be bettered, expressing his curiosity about how the drama will "catch fire", enquiring about the number of acts and the general direction of the libretto, assuring him that he will compose the end of the Prologue and the choruses as Cammarano has indicated, and asking if he could omit the use of the off-stage band ("... Ho ricevuto il principio del primo atto. La poesia non può essere migliore: non vedo l'ora di vedere dopo come incalzerà l'azione..."), 1 page, 8vo (c.20.5 x 13.5cm), Milan, "8 Marzo 1844" [but 1845], integral autograph address leaf (postmarked "1845"), discreet annotations: "l'Alzira" and "1845", creasing at folds

3) *Milan, 3 April 1845*—Verdi praises the novel form of Cammarano's text for the duet in Act 1, but points out that the librettist has yet to send him the overall scenario, number of acts and cast-list, assures him that he will do everything in his power to engage Tadolini for the title role, and asks him confidentially whether delaying the opera might give him a better chance of securing her services ("...Fatemi intanto sapere, se domandando io amichevole all' Impresa di potrarre l'opera e d'aver così la Tadolini, potrei ottenerne. Ditemi anche se siete di parere che faccia questo. Questi sono segreti fra me e voi, ed accertatevi che so mantenere un segreto..."), 1 page, 8vo, integral autograph address-leaf, postmarked, some creasing and staining