

# ANCIENT GROOVE MUSIC

## MATCHING A PLATE ENGRAVING

Before the days of digital printing using notation software, most printed music was created by engraving a metal plate. This was a laborious and highly skilled process — which also had to be done in reverse!

Henle Verlag, the well known German music publisher, sells their old metal plates, which they now no longer need as the image has been digital scanned or the page re-engraved. I recently bought one, for curiosity's sake.

I managed to identify the music — Liszt's *Second Petrarch Sonnet* — and by luck, the page is available on Henle's website as a sample of the score. This page is a direct print of the image from the engraved plate.

Having found the printed page, I decided to see if I could match the page as closely as possible using Dorico notation software. This is a very useful exercise, both for gaining familiarity with the software, and for gaining understanding about laying-out of music notation on the page.

Henle's original engraving and my attempt to match it are presented on the next two pages.

There are two deliberate differences: Henle's current print has a different page number from that of the original plate; and Henle uses a bracketed number to enumerate the *next full bar* on the system, rather than the current partial bar, if broken over two systems. These could be copied, if wanted. Minor differences in the design of the font symbols are also evident.

Hand engravers can usually get more notation on the page vertically. They will make note stems very short, and place things very close together: sometimes even on top of each other. Numerals for bar numbers and fingerings are very small. Without extensive manual adjustments, it is very difficult to match the vertical layout of hand engraving using notation software, which uses consistent stem lengths and keeps fixed offset distances between objects.

Conversely, notation software tend to be much more efficient horizontally than traditional engraving, getting more music onto each system, because of the more complex calculations it can make.

A scanned image of the actual metal plate is shown on the last page. The image has been mirror-flipped, in order to show the music the right way round. Every item on the plate has been either stamped (notes, clefs, text) or cut (beams, slurs) into the metal.

Printing has been disabled, as the last page will use a LOT of toner/ink!

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London, 2024



8  
4 3 5 4 3 5 4 3 5 4 3 5 4 3  
2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1

63

1 2 1 1 1 2 1 3 3

*dim.* *perdendo 3*

(64)

*rallent.* *un poco più lento accentuato assai* *f*

3 \* 3 \* 3 \* 3 \*

66

*Adagio* *a tempo*

4 1 3 2

69

4 2 1 2

72

5 2 1 2 3 1 2

75

*smorzando* 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 3