

After Hiking with Lili of the Valley
An Introduction to Marcel Pagnol
by
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Interwoven into daily life in the south of France, you will note a number of recurring themes: prevalent is talk of either the presence of or the anticipated arrival of the mistral, the wind that races down the Rhone Valley and creates clear blue skies after disrupting life with its gales; two other things, among many, that stand out: it is never too early for a glass of rosé, and the affection for writers that are true to their Provençal roots.

Over the centuries there have been countless writers who lived in Provence, the sunny part of France, 700 km south from Paris. Some were influenced by its charm and culture, staying perhaps for the weather; others were natives who lived their entire lives in the region.

In the 1400's François Petrarch lived and wrote his ode to Laura in what is still a remote town, Fontaine de Vaucluse. René Char was a hero of the French Resistance, a poet and is the favorite son of Isle sur la Sorgue. Frédéric Mistral, a 19th century poet and writer won a Nobel Prize for Literature. His life's work was preserving the Provençal language and his name adorns either a street or a square in nearly every town one visits in Provence.

However, it is Marcel Pagnol who is perhaps better known and more widely acclaimed than other authors and playwrights who touted the virtues of the region before his time. This should be no surprise perhaps, given the proximity of his work to our time, and the fact that he produced work in multiple artistic mediums. Pagnol's work touches the common person. His books, plays and films draw on the rich character of the port of Marseille and the hills and valleys of his youth, which lie just beyond the Phocaeen City, the nickname for Marseille. He employed themes of avarice and revenge, unwanted pregnancy, the attendant sacrifice that accompanies love and generational family dynamics throughout his art. Mention Pagnol's name to a French person living in or having lived in Provence, and you will invariably hear an enthusiastic endorsement of Pagnol's work and particularly his dedication *la vie Provençale* and the dialect of southern France.

Marcel Pagnol was born in Aubagne in 1895, then a small town just east of Marseille. He became one of the most well-known and successful playwrights, film makers and authors in 20th century France.

Pagnol's father, Joseph, was a school teacher in an era when teachers were provided housing as a part of their compensation. The home where Marcel was born is today a museum and sits just off the main square in Aubagne where the nearby streets remain little changed from Pagnol's time.

Le Garlaban, a massive hill that once served as a landmark for seaman from Marseille, looks down upon the square in the middle of Aubagne. The hills and valleys

beneath le Garlaban form the open scrubland of this region, called ‘garigues,’ which became Pagnol’s childhood playground.

It was in these hills that Marcel met a peasant boy called Lili when Joseph Pagnol and his brother in law rented a home in the hamlet of Bellons. Lili des Bellons schooled Pagnol and his younger brother Paul on life in the hills surrounding Marseille. They learned to trap birds and rabbits, came to appreciate the flora and fauna of the region and enjoyed as young boys the freedom of wandering the garigues during long summer holidays, Christmas vacation and eventually on weekends when the family came to their home in the hills. Pagnol returned to this region often during his life, but he waited fifty years to share with the world the childhood memories forged with Lili. Much success intervened.

Lili des Bellons

Lili was the nickname of David Magnan, the son of a farmer who lived a short distance from *la Bastide Neuve* – or new house - the moniker the Pagnol family gave to their rented summer home. Pagnol described his friend Lili as “a young peasant-boy, swarthy and with a fine Provençal face, black eyes and long girlish eyelashes.”¹ Throughout his writing, Pagnol speaks frequently with great affection when referencing his friend.

Lili and Marcel became constant companions. The peasant boy’s knowledge of the hills and valleys of the region intrigued Pagnol and his brother Paul. They were free to wander, setting snares to trap birds which they brought home to contribute to the family table. If the catch was bountiful they passed along their prey to be sold at the market in Aubagne or Allauch.

Lili also taught Marcel about the plant life of the region, the animals and species of birds and about the Provençal weather. Pagnol was fascinated by life in these hills. He wrote descriptively about the flora and the scent of the herbs such as lavender and rosemary that permeated the fresh country air.

The region is sunbaked in the summer; very hot with little rain. However when storms do roll in from the nearby sea they soak the land. In the era of Pagnol these rains filled cisterns relied upon for drinking water and irrigation, topics woven into his later writings. The adventures Pagnol catalogued of his exploits with Lili fill much of the first of his four volume memoirs that he waited to write until reaching his early 60’s. Those same hills the two boys roamed, often with Pagnol’s younger brother Paul in tow, are featured in Marcel Pagnol’s famous cinematic and literary works. Some of the movies were actually filmed in the area at Pagnol’s insistence, at great expense in the 1930’s.

¹ Pagnol, *My Father’s Glory*, p. 180

La vie de Pagnol

Long before he became a celebrated author, Pagnol was a product of the French education system. He won a scholarship to the lycée, or high school, which gave him access to a classical education.

At the outset of the Great War, Pagnol was inducted into the military. He was discharged in January, 1915 on the grounds that he was physically unfit for service. He returned to his studies and upon graduation followed in his father's footsteps becoming an English teacher, first in Marseille and then in other towns in southern France. He moved to Paris in 1922 where he taught and in his spare time wrote poems and dabbled in playwriting.

Pagnol always had an interest in writing. He started a literary magazine *Fortunio* at age 19. Living in Paris exposed Pagnol to friends in the literary and theater world, providing an outlet for his creativity. His career in theater was marked in the beginning like many, if not all, with a flop and the usual disappointments the arts world imposes on outsiders and newcomers. His break came in 1926, with his play *Jazz*. Pagnol left teaching the next year to devote full time to the theater and in 1928 his star rose with the production of *Topaze*.

Marius is the first piece of what is known as Pagnol's Marseille trilogy, which are some of his most famous works. It was the first of many of his plays, films and books set in his beloved Provence. *Marius* is the tale of a young man, living on the port of Marseille with his widowed father, César. Marius is in love with the sea and also with the beautiful Fanny, the daughter of a fishmonger. He is torn between the two. With Fanny's blessing Marius abandons Fanny, his father and Marseille to work on a sailing vessel for five years. He departs in the early morning, saying goodbye to only Fanny, who does not tell him that she is pregnant his child. Pagnol's play dwells on the angst of the father abandoned by his son and the shame Fanny has brought on her widowed mother. Fanny is rescued from being banished from her home by Panisse, César's wealthy friend who is forty years Fanny's senior, when Panisse marries Fanny and pretends the child is his own. *Marius* was an instant success in 1929.

Pagnol explained in an interview that it was the barker at the theater where *Marius* was running who suggested that he write a sequel. Two years later the story was continued in the play called *Fanny*. The trilogy was completed with *César* which came to the stage in 1936.

As a result of his successful plays Pagnol became a rich man at a young age. He had the habit of flaunting his play's earnings, sometimes publicly disputing published box office numbers when the figures published were deemed by him to be under reported. He claimed to have "pocketed 16,000,000 francs in royalties from *Topaze* alone by May 1930;" a pretty good year, the equivalent of about \$6,280,000 today.

Pagnol had the foresight to move from the theater to cinema at the dawn of the age of *cinéma parlant* - the talkie. Pagnol had seen one of the first talking movies in London in 1930 and recognized the potential. The introduction of talking pictures to the art world was

controversial at the time, as this new technology threatened the future of the theater. However, the signs that talking movies would change the entertainment industry were before Pagnol's eyes. Theater productions would come and go, while *The Jazz Singer* ran uninterrupted in Paris for the entirety of 1929. Pagnol noted that Maurice Chevalier's latest film at the time was seen by nearly as many people in eight weeks as attended performances of *Topaze* in two years. Recognizing the wave of the future, and of course the money to be made, theater owners and playwrights scurried to cinema and Pagnol was not left behind.

Controversies in the art world, as in the political arena during this time, were sometimes aired in the press. Celebrities and supporters of a certain genre would state competing opinions, sometimes harshly, which were published in the many newspapers and trade journals then available in Paris and other large cities. Pagnol used his status as one of France's most popular playwrights not to denounce *cinéma parlant*, but to tout the genre's superiority to theater and silent films. Pagnol entitled an article "Silent cinema is dead and the theater is dying" in a publication he founded in 1933 to spread the word for the film industry. This did not endear him to all of his peers in theater.

In the infant stage of the talking cinema industry, filmmakers were hungry for material. The more recent the theatrical production the better to set it to the screen. In 1930 Paramount invested 11 million dollars in a production facility 25km east of Paris at Joinville-le-Pont. While the studio believed *Marius* was not suitable for the American market due to "slowness in action, unsatisfactory romance and unhappy ending,"² Pagnol was nonetheless offered approximately \$20,000 for the rights. He refused the offer but was invited by Robert Kane, head of the studio, to spend time at the Joinville facility hoping Pagnol would reconsider. Pagnol took the opportunity to study every aspect of producing a movie.

Marcel Pagnol's growing understanding of the film industry coincided with Paramount's realization that adapting American movies to the French market was not successful. They needed home-grown stories and Pagnol clearly had control of several. Pagnol negotiated a deal with Paramount for the rights for *Marius* which included allowing him creative control and a percentage of ticket sales. Thus Pagnol, the successful playwright, embarked on his second career as a film maker.

Pagnol made over 20 films, the last one in 1955. He developed something of a troupe much like his theater productions, using some of the same actors and actresses in multiple films, several were major stars of the era. Pagnol filmed on location, at great expense in part due to the complication of using the new technology to record sound as he filmed. He used, for example, the port of Marseille as a set for his Marseille trilogy. Movies such as *Manon des Sources*, were filmed in the hills he roamed with Lili as a boy.

In 1946 he became the first filmmaker elected to L' Académie française, the guardian of the French language.

² Bowles, *Pagnol*, p. 61

Like others in the theater world, Pagnol's love life was interesting, if not complicated. He was married three times. He had two children with his last wife Jacqueline; and in his younger days three children out of wedlock, each with a different woman.

Pagnol died in 1974 and was survived by his wife Jacqueline, who starred in several of his films. She died in August of 2016.

Entering a New Field

There were a couple of things that initially attracted me to learn more about this man's life. I had read and enjoyed some of his books. I had watched several Pagnol movies. I was aware of his immense popularity among the people of Provence. I visited his home in Aubagne, sites in La Treille, as well as the Chateau de la Buzine about which I will tell you. I have walked a bit in the fields Marcel and Lili roamed. What motivated, or perhaps provoked, Pagnol to enter an entirely new field after accomplishing so much? What I discovered is that happenstance, and a confluence of events opened the door to another successful career for Pagnol at sixty years of age.

By 1955, Pagnol had already achieved acclaim as a playwright and film producer; he had owned his own film production company. He was a member of the *Académie française*, a wealthy celebrity and his work was famous in France and throughout the world. Yet he was on the cusp of achieving stunning success in yet another medium.

Pagnol sharing one of the great tales of his youth over lunch one afternoon resulted in his entrée to a career as an author. I wish to share an abbreviated version of this story with you, along with the circumstances that conspired to bring Pagnol to this new profession.

Marseille is oldest urban settlement in France. The population was around 500,000 in Pagnol's time; there are in excess of 850,000 residents today. It is different from France's largest city in many respects and the topography of the city of Marseille stands out in contrast to Paris to even a casual observer.

Marseille is hemmed in by the sea and mountains. The hills and valleys which collectively make up the city are dotted by separate villages and hamlets that fall under the administrative district of Marseille. Of course the distance between many of these once delineable villages have filled in over the past hundred years. East of the city's center and away from the coast sits the village of La Treille, an important place throughout the life of Marcel Pagnol. The terrace of the restaurant in the village of La Treille, named *le Cigallon*, looks over a verdant valley. Its patrons sip their café in this village, which is actually in the 11th *Arrondissement* of the city of Marseille, remote from the congestion of the port in the center of France's second largest city.

The area around la Treille featured large in the life of Pagnol. When he was ten, Pagnol's father and his uncle Jules announced that they had rented a villa in which they would spend their summer holiday. In this more civilized epoch, it meant the entire summer. Joseph would take flight from the city with his family, leaving promptly when school was out in June and returning to the city in September when classes commenced again. Pagnol

described the day the family settled into their home in the hills writing, “[t]here now began the most beautiful time of my life.”³

The trek to their summer villa required a combination of modes of transportation. In Pagnol’s time the city boasted steam powered trams from 1892 and there were electric trams from 1900. Pagnol and his family rode the tram with everything that they could possibly carry to the end of the line in a car he described as “a meteor of steel and iron”. From the end of the line it was required to walk the remaining distance, which meant navigating a steady, and in part moderately steep, incline to the villa. They covered the distance on foot from the tram stop to the villa in four hours and were exhausted upon arrival. You can drive this distance today in about ten minutes.

The route was about four kilometers as the crow flies, but the family was routed around four large estates, creating an enormous detour and more than doubling the distance. They carried their belongings, which included food and staples for their summer stay over the 9 km to their villa. As they walked along the walls of the massive estates which served to double their route. Joseph explained to his wife Augustine that ‘in the society of the future, all the chateaux would be hospitals, all the walls would be torn down, and all the roads would run straight as a bowstring.’⁴

This routine was recreated every July. Eventually Joseph found a way to spend the Christmas holidays in the *Bastide Neuve* and before long the Pagnol family was able to spend weekends at their rented villa. Thus, this ritual became a part of the family’s life.

The Canal de Marseille, then and now, provides water to the city. There is a narrow artery of the canal that ran through the four estates about which Joseph complained each time they walked around them on the way to their villa. A chance encounter between the family and one of Joseph’s former students produced, quite literally, the key to considerably shortening this journey around the estates from two and three-quarter hours to twenty-four minutes.

One April, as the family was beginning their then weekly journey along the circuitous route formed by the four estates, a man emerged from a gate along the canal. He locked it behind him. The canal keeper, called Bouzigue, recognized Joseph and thanked him for the trouble to which Joseph had gone to help Bouzigue receive his school certificate, which allowed him to secure his position as the caretaker of a portion of the canal. Bouzigue held something of an official position. He described it as: “I open and shut the regulators, check the flow...When I see a crack in the canal bank, or a lot of mud and silt, or a foot bridge that’s getting rickety, I jot it down and at night I draw up my report. When I see a dead dog floating I fish it out, and when I catch people either throwing their dirty water into the canal or bathing in it, I take their name and address and report them.”⁵ Bouzigue was what one might refer to as a ‘fonctionnaire’ a bureaucrat or civil servant. He possessed a title, a bit of authority and as we will see, the proper disposition to wield this power if properly provoked.

³ Pagnol, *My Father’s Glory*, p. 83

⁴ Pagnol, *My Father’s Glory*, p. 67

⁵ Pagnol, *Château de ma mère*, p. 276

Bouzigue was told of the Pagnol's destination and learned of the route around the estates Joseph was leading his wife and three small children. As gesture of thanks to his former teacher, he offered a solution for expediting the journey. The section of the canal that traversed the properties of the four chateaux created a direct route to the base of the hill leading to La Treille and their rented villa. There were gates which separated each property along the path of the canal, opened by the key in Bouzigue's hand. Joseph's former student proposed leading the family along this short cut through the properties. Joseph protested, they were trespassing and he was a schoolteacher up for promotion. What humiliation he would suffer if caught? Josephine and the children prevailed and Bouzigue guided them along the canal.

As one can imagine, this experience was well received by Augustine and the children. At the end of the shortened hike, Bouzigue produced an extra key and presented it as a gift to "Madame Joseph." Now this could become their normal route to the villa. Again the family prevailed, with the help of Bouzigue who opined that it was cruel to make the children march as if they were already in the Foreign Legion. Over Joseph's protestations Bouzigue stuffed the key into Joseph's pocket.

Joseph justified it by allowing Bouzigue to anoint him as something of a canal inspector. He could look closely at the structure as they walked through and report to Bouzigue shoddy workmanship in repairs made to the canal.

Joseph refused to use the key on their return trip at the end of the weekend. However, he spent his evenings the next week pouring over volumes of works on the subject of irrigation and canals. Now properly briefed on the workings of canals, the next week the family traversed the estates making use of the key. Joseph, as Pagnol described was "at peace with his conscience" as he was on these lands "not to cut short an over-long road, but to preserve the precious canal from rack and ruin, and to save Marseilles from drought, which would most certainly have been followed by cholera and the plague."⁶

The Pagnols incorporated the route along the canal into their journey and were not exhausted when arriving at their destination. Traversing the properties became an adventure. They kept low profiles and hurried through less they confront owners or caretakers and have to explain their trespass. One owner surprised them, befriended them and had his caretaker help carry their belongings across his property. At another chateau they were confronted by a farmer who charged them brandishing a pitch-fork. Out of earshot of the ancient owner of the estate, the farmer admonished the family to make it look good. He allowed them to "run for it" while his employer watched from afar as the trespassers appeared to be routed from the premises by the actually friendly farmer. Thereafter, the farmer established a signal using an open window to assist the Pagnols in planning the route of their future crossings outside the gaze of his cranky boss. He greeted them warmly, out of the sight of the owner, when the family passed through as the farmer tended a tomato patch.

⁶ Pagnol, *Château de ma mère*, p.290

They were however leery of the chateau tended by a besotted keeper and an aging mastiff. The Pagnols were passing through this property, the last of the four estates before re-entering the road, about to begin their summer vacation at the villa. As they approached the gate to exit, they found it secured with a chain and a padlock. As they struggled with the chain, a man dressed in a green uniform, wearing a képi and brandishing a revolver with a fierce looking dog straining the leash stepped from the bushes. He rummaged through their belongings and then confiscated the notebook in which Joseph had been jotting notes for Bouzigue about the state of the canal in an effort to legitimize their access to the shortcut. The keeper turned them around, forcing them to retrace their steps through the grounds of the other chateaux and assured Joseph he would report his trespass and illegal possession of the government key.

As the summer vacation began under this cloud Joseph sulked, concerned that he would not only lose the opportunity for a promotion but be dismissed from his position and throw the family into poverty. Joseph sunk further into despair when it became known to Joseph via the postman, bearer of not only the mail but also of local news and gossip, that the chateau's keeper was indeed preparing a report for the authorities.

The mood brightened however the day that Bouzigue made his way to the Pagnol villa unannounced. Joseph had written Bouzigue to tell him of the catastrophe and the impending disaster to his career that was sure to follow. Unbeknownst to Joseph, Bouzigue had enlisted the aid of two other employees of the canal to aid in the rescue of Joseph. The three officials, resplendent in their uniforms, confronted the keeper of the chateau who was perhaps holding the key to Joseph's future. As the keeper of the estate began to tell the officials of the Pagnol family's trespass and illegitimate use of the key, he was interrupted by the canal officials. They demanded to see the chain and padlock referring to it as "the evidence". They allowed that they were visiting to obtain the keeper's confession, citing 'Clause eighty-two of the Agreement' forbidding landowners from impeding official access to the canal by use of chain and padlock.

The canal officials carried their threat further, suggesting that it would be the landowner, not the caretaker, who would suffer a staggering fine for his keeper's transgression, interfering with Bouzigue's mobility along the canal. The bewildered caretaker was reminded that in the reign of Louis XIV he would have been sent to the galleys, but in this age it would only no doubt lead to his discharge. As Bouzigue bragged to Joseph about cowing the estate's keeper, he returned to him the notebook the keeper had confiscated. He further reported that the keeper's five page report, meant to be Joseph's undoing, was turned to 'confetti' by Bouzigue and carried away by the canal.

Bouzigue recanted the confrontation to Joseph multiple times throughout the evening in the course of which he drank freely from a bottle of *pernod*. As the bottle was drained, the versions of the tale were modified and the fierceness of Bouzigue's encounter and the terror instilled in the caretaker took on epic dimensions.

My Father's Glory/My Mother's Castle

Pagnol was an entertaining guest or host in his day; a raconteur who delighted in holding court and he included tales of his youth. In the spring of 1956 Pagnol shared lunch with Pierre and H el ene Lazareff. Pierre was the editor of a national daily paper and his wife served as the editor of *Elle Magazine*, then a weekly publication. Pagnol entertained, sharing this tale of the four chateaux and the near humiliation his father had suffered. By one account, Pagnol had barely finished telling his story when H el ene Lazareff asked him to put it to writing so that she could include it in her publication. Thereafter, she pestered him. Each time she telephoned asking for a draft, he promised to begin writing.

The magazine traditionally published a short story in its Christmas edition and the editor had promised readers that *Elle* would feature "The Childhood Memories of Marcel Pagnol." H el ene Lazareff phoned Pagnol several weeks before the publication's deadline to inquire of his progress. He replied that he had completed six pages. Excitedly, Mme Lazareff said she would send a courier to pick up the draft and hung up the phone before Pagnol could respond. An hour later a young courier arrived on his bicycle at Pagnol's home. He was greeted by Pagnol and announced that he had come to pick up the partial draft of the article. Pagnol told the courier that he was not quite finished with the story and had a few lines left to pen. He did not wish to trouble the messenger by making him wait, so Pagnol instructed him to tell Mme Lazareff he would come to the office in the morning with the story. In fact, Pagnol had not yet written a word.

The courier appealed to Pagnol, telling him that he had a wife and two children and that Madame would show him the door if he did not return with the six pages, as the magazine had put great stock in this piece. The courier told the author that he would wait in the garden and clean his bike as Pagnol finished his supposedly nearly completed work. Pagnol relented and told the messenger that he would need an hour or two. The messenger went to the garden and began cleaning his bike while Pagnol repaired to his study and wrote the first words of his childhood memories. This work would become immensely popular.

Pagnol's early version of the story of the four chateaux appeared in serial form in five installments of *Elle*. The reception by the readers of *Elle* was overwhelming and sales of the magazine skyrocketed on the power of Pagnol's stories about the family's exploits fifty years earlier.

Once Pagnol became immersed in the project he could not stop. The enthusiastic reception by the magazine's readership further encouraged him. What was originally to be a short piece swelled to a manuscript that became two books: *My Father's Glory and My Mother's Castle*. Ultimately, Pagnol's childhood memories filled two more books, the last published posthumously in 1979.

When asked how he recalled so vividly his childhood, he said in an interview "It is remarkable as we age we lose our memory, but it does not mean that we lose the memories. *Au contraire*, we lose the capacity of acquiring new memories, but the ones inscribed are closer than ever. I perfectly recall the day of my Baccalaureate, and what I ate in 1912, but

I don't know at all where I had lunch last week." ⁷ Pointing to his head he told the journalist, "The recent memories don't get engraved anymore; but the ones engraved on the disc come out in full force."⁸

These books are filled with details of events which occurred fifty year before being written. Bernard de Fallois, Pagnol's editor and friend, suggested that Pagnol appreciated that with the passage of time real people become characters. The author of a memoire, describing events witnessed long ago is afforded the leeway of a novelist in framing their work. Fallois quoted Pagnol's thoughts on these childhood memories about which he wrote. "It is not I who am the subject, but the child I used to be, and am no longer. He is a little fellow I once knew, who has melted into thin air, as birds do when they vanish, leaving no skeleton behind. And besides, he is not the hero of the book, but merely a witness to a series of very small incidents."⁹

Chateau de la Buzine

I have one last thing to share on the subject of the chateau where the Pagnol family was confronted by the angry keeper, causing much embarrassment to Joseph and instilling great fear in Pagnol's mother. In 1941, Pagnol desired to build a "Film City" in Provence for his production company. He tasked a real estate agent to locate a suitable property for the venture. Pagnol was in Paris when his agent called to tell him that he found a property but there were other prospective buyers; it was essential to close in a matter of hours or miss the opportunity. Pagnol purchased the property without seeing it.

A week later Pagnol, accompanied by some of his employees, set out to visit the new home of the studio. They arrived at a massive chateau, the drive lined with plane trees leading to a building with multiple turrets and thirty balconies. Pagnol went to the meadow behind the chateau where he intended to build the studio and noticed a hedgerow on top of an embankment. He raced down to find the canal of his childhood and looked back toward the structure, peering over the hedges. He then realized he had purchased the chateau where many years earlier the gatekeeper had confronted the family with his pistol and hostile dog. Years later he wrote, with vivid memory of his mother, "listening to the keeper's shouts and the dog's hoarse wheezing. Pallid, trembling, and forever inconsolable, she did not know she was at last safe at home, in her own castle, on the land of her son."¹⁰ Hence the name of the second volume of his memoirs, *Le Château de Ma Mère* – the chateau of my mother.

In the steps of Pagnol

Marcel Pagnol is to this day immensely popular in France, particularly in his native Provence. Some of his earlier films have been remade and are available at the public library

⁷ The Baccalaureate - or le Bac - is a seminal event in the career of a serious student in France. The score on le Bac will determine what career path will be open and at what institution to which they may be admitted.

⁸ Marcel Pagnol, *La vieillesse et les souvenirs* <http://www.ina.fr/video/I00015396/marcel-pagnol-la-vieillesse-et-les-souvenirs-video.html>

⁹ Fallois, *Marcel Pagnol and The Time of Love*, published in the 1994 Picador edition, p. 418

¹⁰ Pagnol, *Château de ma mère*, p. 342

or on Amazon. It is possible to view some of the older versions on You Tube. Obviously his books are in print and can be borrowed at the library or purchased.

If traveling in Provence, the Pagnol heritage is well represented and easy to find and enjoy. In Aubagne, there is a nice museum dedicated to the author in the home where he was born. The tourist office provides maps to Pagnol sites that dot the surrounding hills a short drive from the city.

The bar/restaurant in La Treille where Pagnol filmed his movie bearing the same name, Le Cigallon, is still serving. There are photos and artifacts of the production inside, which the manager will happily show you. There are marked trails through the garigues where he roamed with Paul and Lili and you can literally trace the footsteps of his youth. It is not difficult hiking and you will be rewarded with great vistas to photograph.

Conclusion

As an adult, Pagnol's brother Paul took to the garigues of their youth. He lived something of a nomadic life in the hills, tending goats. Pagnol visited him often bringing Paul goods from the city. Like their mother, Paul died prematurely at age 30.

And what became of Lili?

Reflecting on the occasion of Paul's internment in the small cemetery in La Treille Pagnol wrote:

“My dear Lili did not walk at my side as I accompanied him [Paul] to the little graveyard in La Treille, for he had been waiting for him there for years, under a carpet of immortelles humming with bees; during the war of 1914, in a black northern forest, a bullet in the forehead cut short his young life, and he had sunk, under the falling rain, on a tangle of chilly plants whose names he did not even know...”
Such is the life of a man, a few joys, quickly obliterated by unforgettable sorrows. There is no need to tell the children so.”¹¹

Lili was among the 2.5 million French who died in the Great War. He was killed near the end of the war, on July 23, 1918 in the Bois Planté, a woods near Virgny, while his regiment was defending Hill 240, during the second battle of the Marne. He was 20 years old.

¹¹ Pagnol, Château de ma mère, p. 339

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Information about Pagnol's life and career may be found on the website dedicated to him. It is in French and English.

<http://www.marcel-pagnol.com/>

For an account of the Second Battle of the Marne and the fate of Lili des Bellons see:

<http://mondedestef.over-blog.com/article-lili-des-bellons-56309840.html>

Continue reading The Lily Root by viewing the page 14 image or the full HTML and PDF versions at: www.aandc.gc.ca/kids in the Classroom resources section. ©Her Majesty the Queen in the Right of Canada, represented by Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, 2012. Done. 3,053 views. 0 faves. 0 comments. Taken on May 24, 2013. All rights reserved. The days with Lili are spent learning the names and ways of all the living things that share the valley. Then autumn comes, and school begins again, and Marcel must leave his beloved hills. The movie has a deliberate nostalgic tone. My Mother's Castle begins where My Father's Glory ended, after a brief look back. (It is best to see the films in order, even though this one is complete in itself.) The effect of the two films is a long, slow, subtle buildup to the enormous emotional payoff at the end of the second film, a moment when gratitude and regret come flowing into the heart of the narrator. The time is the earlier decades of this century. The hero, Marcel, is now thirteen or fourteen. Marcel Pagnol. Quite the same Wikipedia. Just better. How nice to see him! Congrats, Paul. You badmouthed me so often, that you got me expelled from the valley. Now, I'm stuck up there, freezing my ass up. Look!