**Röckel, August** (b. Graz, 1 Dec. 1814; d. Budapest, 18 July 1876), conductor, composer, pamphleteer; son of tenor, Joseph Röckel. Assisted Rossini at the Paris Théâtre Italien before assuming positions in Bamberg, Weimar, and finally Dresden (1843-9) as assistant to Wagner. Röckel withdrew his 1839 opera, *Farinelli*, accepted for Dresden performance, as unworthy compared to Wagner’s work. Dismissed for subversion, Röckel edited the socialist *Volksblätter*, to which Wagner contributed. Following the Dresden uprising, Röckel received a death sentence, commuted. Prison correspondence adds greatly to understanding of the *Ring*. Wagner’s letter of 25/26 January 1854 presents Wotan (Wodan) rising to the tragic heights of willing his own destruction, a fundamental “pessimistic” shift in his conception. After release from prison in 1862, Röckel edited newspapers in Coburg, Frankfurt, Munich, and Vienna, and joined August Bebel’s *Verband Deutscher Arbeitervereine*. Friendship faltered during the later 1860s: Wagner held Röckel responsible for dissemination of rumors concerning the relationship with Cosima.

MARK BERRY

See also: Politics, Revolution

August Röckel, *Sachsens Erhebung und das Zuchthaus in Waldheim* (Adelmann: Frankfurt/M, 1865).