Citation:

Printed: Thu, 19 Nov 2026

Edge, Dexter, and Stefano Frega. 2020. "Count Georg von Arco's letter of recommendation for the Mozarts (11 Dec 1769)." In: *Mozart: New Documents*, edited by Dexter Edge and David Black. First published 29 Apr 2020; updated 18 May 2020. [direct link]

Count Georg von Arco's letter of recommendation for the Mozarts (11 Dec 1769)

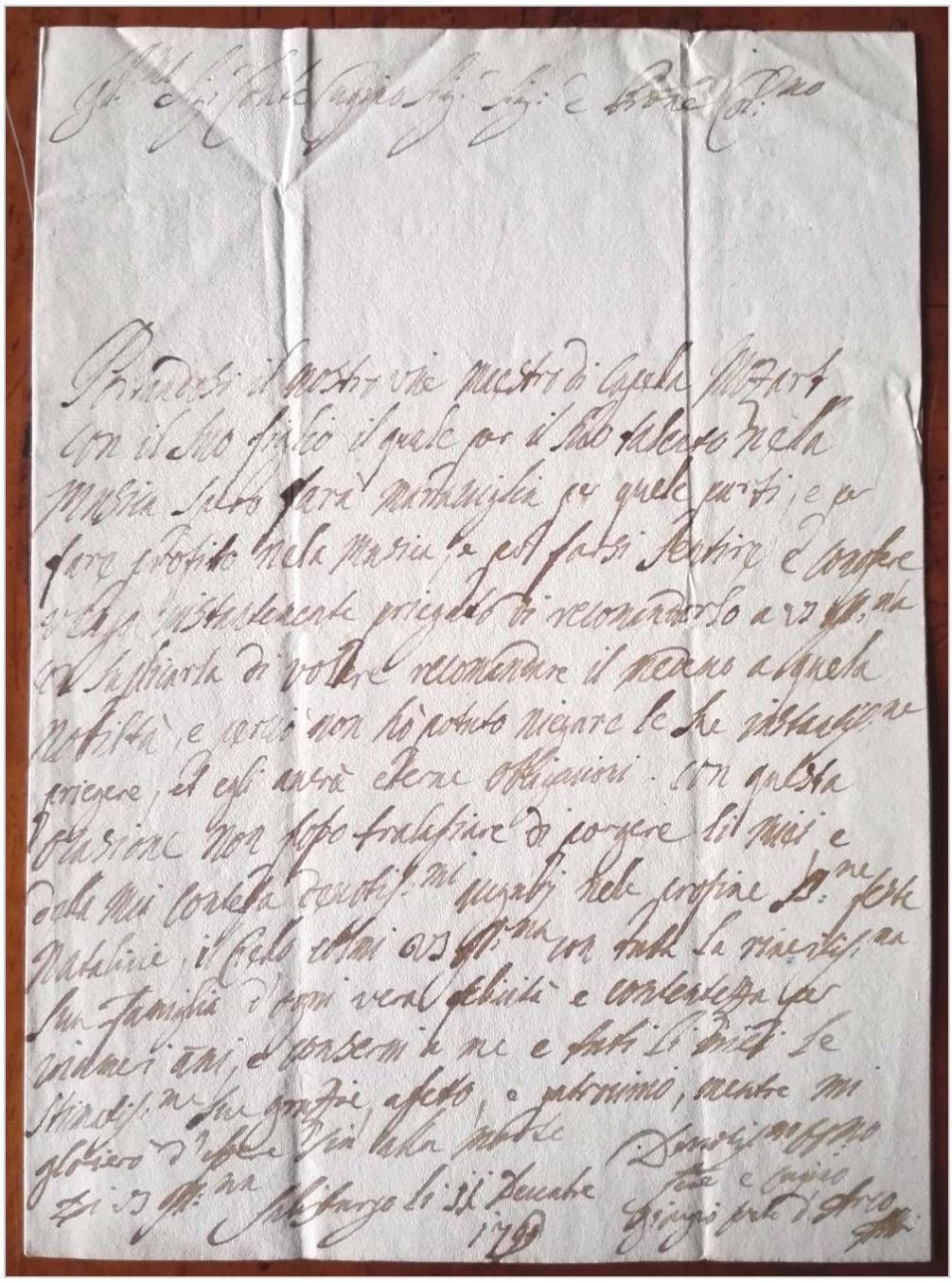
Dexter Edge and Stefano Frega

Mantua, Archivio Arco Chieppio Ardizzoni (AACA), busta 2 fascicolo 3

Ill.^{mo} Sig:^{r} Conte Cugino Sig.^{r} Sig:^{r} e P[ad]rone Col[endissi]mo

Portandosi il nostro vice maestro di Capella Mozart
con il suo figlio il quale per il suo talento nella
musica spero farà maraviglia per quel[l]e parti, e per
fare profitto nel[l]a musica, e per farsi sentire e conos[c]ere
vengo instantemente priegato di recomandarlo a vs. Ill:^{ma}
con suplicarla di volere recomendare il mede[si]mo a quela
Nobiltà, e perciò non hò potuto niegare le sue instantis[si]:^{me}
priegere, et egli averà etterne obligazioni. con questa
orazione non posso tralas[c]iare di porgere li miei, e
della mia Contessa devotis[si]:^{mi} augurj nelle pros[s]ime SS:^{me} feste
Natalicie, il Ciello colmi vs Ill:^{ma} con tutta la riveritis[si]:^{ma}
sua Famiglia d'ogni vera felicità e contentezza per
in[n]umeri a[n]ni, e conservi a me e tu[t]i li miei le
stimatis[si]:^{me} sue grazzie, affetto, e patrocinio, mentre mi
glorierò d'essere sin alla morte
Di vs Ill:^{ma} Devotis[si]mo Ob[bligatissi]^{mo}
Salisburgo li 11 Decenbre se[rvito]re e cugino
1769 giorgio conte d'Arco$_{mpia}$

Mozart: New Documents by Dexter Edge & David Black
is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License



[translation:]

Most Illustrious Signor Count Cousin, Lord and Master, Most Worshipful,

As our deputy Kapellmeister Mozart is about to
travel with his son (whose talent in music I hope
will evoke marvel in your regions), in order for him to
gain proficiency in music and to become heard and
known, I have been earnestly requested to recommend
him to your most illustrious lordship, entreating that you
may recommend same to the nobility there; thus I could

not decline his most earnest requests, and he will be
obliged forever. On this occasion I cannot omit to extend
my and my countess's most devout wishes for the
forthcoming most holy Christmas festivals; may Heaven
replenish your most illustrious lordship and all your most
worthy family with every true happiness and contentment
for innumerable years, and may He preserve for me and
all of mine your most esteemed graces, affection, and
patronage, while I will boast to be as long as I live

Your most illustrious lordship's most devout and indebted
servant and cousin,

Salzburg, 11 December 1769

Giorgio Count d'Arco$_{mpia}$

Commentary

This letter of recommendation, dated 11 Dec 1769, is the earliest of several new or little-known documents on our site from the time of Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart's three trips to Italy in the early 1770s. The letter was written by Count Johann Georg Anton Felix von Arco in Salzburg to his second cousin Count Francesco Eugenio d'Arco in Mantua. It is the earliest letter of recommendation for the Mozarts known to survive from the period of the Italian trips. The letter is today in the Arco family archive in Mantua; it was first published by Emilio Fario in 1956, in his *Incontro di Mozart con Mantova* (Fario 1956, 8). A version of Fario's transcription of Arco's letter is included in *Briefe*, in the commentary to Leopold's letter from Mantua on 11 Jan 1770 (v:220–21). However, the letter is not in *Dokumente* or *Neue Folge*, and remains little known. Previous transcriptions have not been quite complete or correct, and the letter is published here in facsimile for the first time, with a complete new transcription from the original. (For a comparison with existing transcriptions, see the *Notes* below.)

Leopold and Wolfgang left Salzburg on their first trip to Italy on 13 Dec 1769, two days after the date of Count Georg's letter. Following brief stays in Innsbruck and Rovereto—where they obtained a letter of recommendation from Count Domenico Antonio di Lodron to Count Gian Luca Pallavicini in Bologna (see our entry for 27 Dec 1769)—the Mozarts arrived in Verona, remaining there from 27 Dec 1769 to 10 Jan 1770. Wolfgang performed in a concert at the Accademia filarmonica there and had his portrait painted (see our entries for 5 Jan 1770 and 8 Jan 1770). On 10 Jan the Mozarts continued on to Mantua, a trip of around 40 km by road, arriving late that same afternoon.

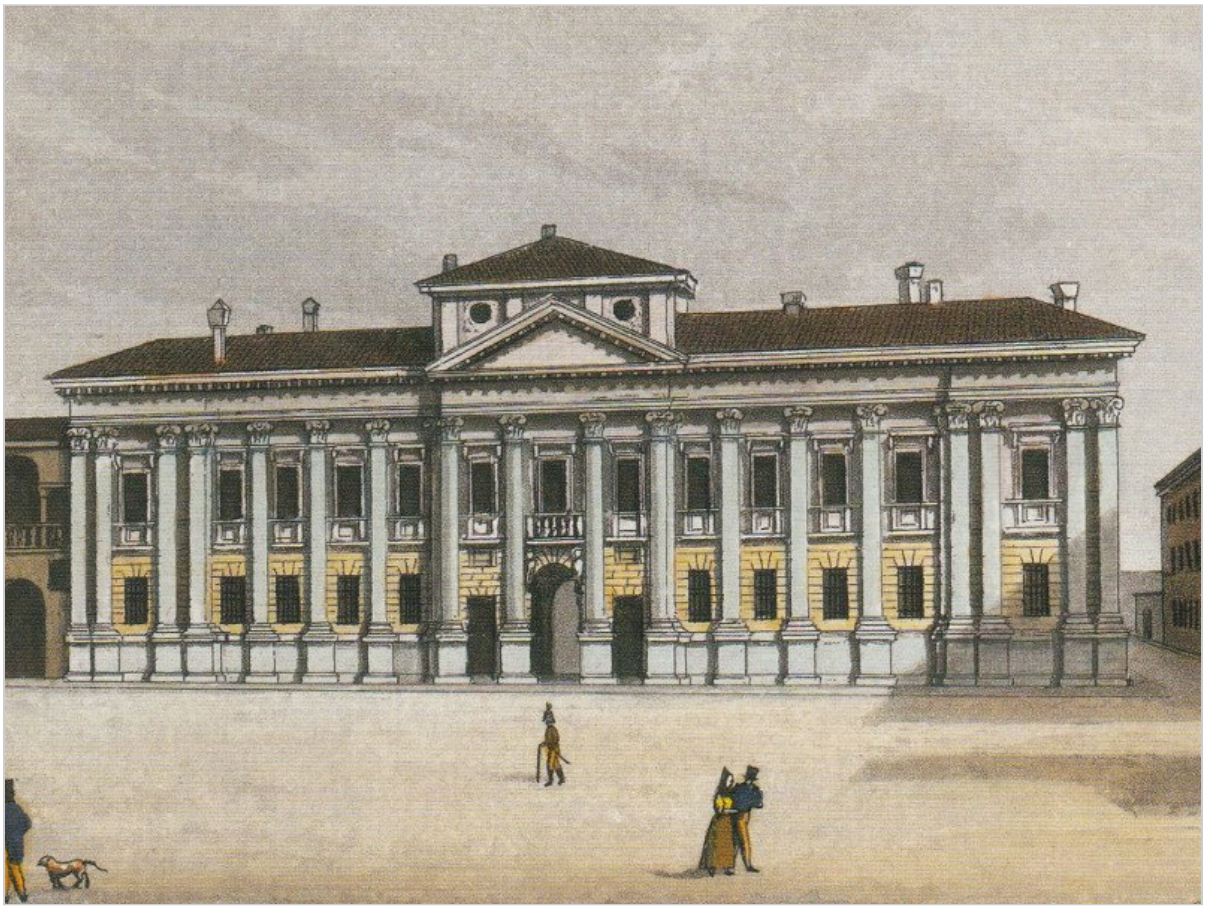
In a letter to his wife the following day, Leopold writes that just one hour after arriving in Mantua they went to hear an opera at the Regio Ducale Teatro (*Briefe*, i:303); Wolfgang describes the performance, of Hasse's *Demetrio*, in some detail in his letter to Nannerl from Milan dated 26 Jan (*Briefe*, i:309–10). The next day, 11 Jan, Leopold and Wolfgang attempted to visit Fürst

(Prince) Michael II von Thurn und Taxis (Michele II delle Torre e Tassis, 1722–1789), whose third wife, Countess Johanna *née* von Lodron (b. 1735), was a sister of Count Ernst Maria von Lodron in Salzburg; Count Lodron's second wife, Countess Antonia *née* von Arco, was in turn a daughter of Count Georg von Arco, whose letter of recommendation the Mozarts had with them. Because of these Salzburg connections to Prince Michael's wife, Leopold probably (and not unreasonably) thought that the princely couple in Mantua would be happy to receive them.

> heut [11 Jan] ware bey T: H: Fürsten v Taxis, er war aber nicht zu Hause, und Se: gnädige Dame hatte so nothwendig Briefe zu schreiben, daß sie uns ihre LandsLeute nicht sprechen kunte. *[...]* Morgen sind wir mittags bey Tit: H: Grafen Francesco Eugenio Comte d'Arco eingeladen *[...]*
> [*Briefe*, i:303]

> Today [11 Jan] went to the titular Herr Fürst von Taxis, but he wasn't home, and His Gracious Lady had so urgently to write letters, that she could not speak to us, her countrymen. *[...]* Tomorrow [12 Jan] at midday we are invited to visit titular Herr Count Francesco Eugenio d'Arco *[...]*

Wolfgang and Leopold visited the Arcos in their palace in Mantua, which survives.



Facade of the Palazzo d'Arco (1829)



Facade of the Palazzo d'Arco today
(Wikimedia Commons)

Leopold, in a letter to his wife written in Milan on 26 Jan 1770, mentions the warm and cordial reception given them by the Arcos, contrasting it with the demeaning snub from Prince Michael and his wife when Wolfgang and Leopold made a second attempt to visit on the morning of 12 Jan:

> Ich zweifle nicht es werden unterdessen einige Nachrichten so wohl von Roveredo, als von Verona und Mantova nach Salzb: gekommen seyn. Melde, nebst meiner unterthänigsten Empfehlung, bey Sr: Exc: Grafen und Gräfin v Arco, daß wir in dem Gräfl: Eugenio Arcoischen hause in Mantua alle Gnaden und Höflichkeiten empf: haben. Hingegen haben wir nicht das Glück gehabt bey H: Fürsten von Taxis zur audienz zu kommen. *[...]* [*Briefe*, i:306]

[translation:]

> I have no doubt that in the meantime some news will have arrived in Salzburg from Rovereto, as well as from Verona and Mantua. Convey to His Excellency Count and Countess von Arco, along with my most humble compliments, that we were received most graciously and courteously in the house of Count Eugenio Arco in Mantua. In contrast we did not have the good fortune to obtain an audience with Prince von Taxis. *[...]*

He goes on to describe at some length their attempt to see the prince and his wife: Leopold and Wolfgang went again to their residence in the morning, found that the couple had gone to church (12 Jan was a Friday), went to the church to try to catch them there, and when that failed, followed the prince's carriage home on foot, only to be told by an embarrassed servant that the prince did not wish to see them.

Later in the same letter, Leopold names the Arcos in a long list of the people who had received them warmly on their journey so far:

> Ich kann dich versichern, daß noch an iedem Orte die Liebsten Leute gefunden habe, und aller Orten fanden wir unsere besondern Leute, die bis den letzten Augenblick unserer Abreise bey uns waren, und alle ihre Kräften angewandt uns den Aufenthalt angenehm zu machen. Also war z: E: *[...]* Dann in *Mantua* das Graf Arcoische Hauß *[...]* [*Briefe*, i:307]
>
> I can assure you that we have found the most lovely people everywhere, and everywhere we found our special people, who were with us until the last moment before our departure and who made every effort to make our stay pleasant. Thus for example: *[...]* Then Count Arco's house in *Mantua [...]*

In his travel notes Leopold lists the members of the Arco family they met in Mantua:

> Sgr. Comte d'Arco, sua Sig^{ra}, il suo Sgn:, Figlio e sua Sig^{ra}: una Conteßa di Canoßa. un suo piccolo figlio. [*Briefe*, i:305]
>
> Signor Count d'Arco, his wife, his son and his wife (a Countess di Canossa), and his little son.

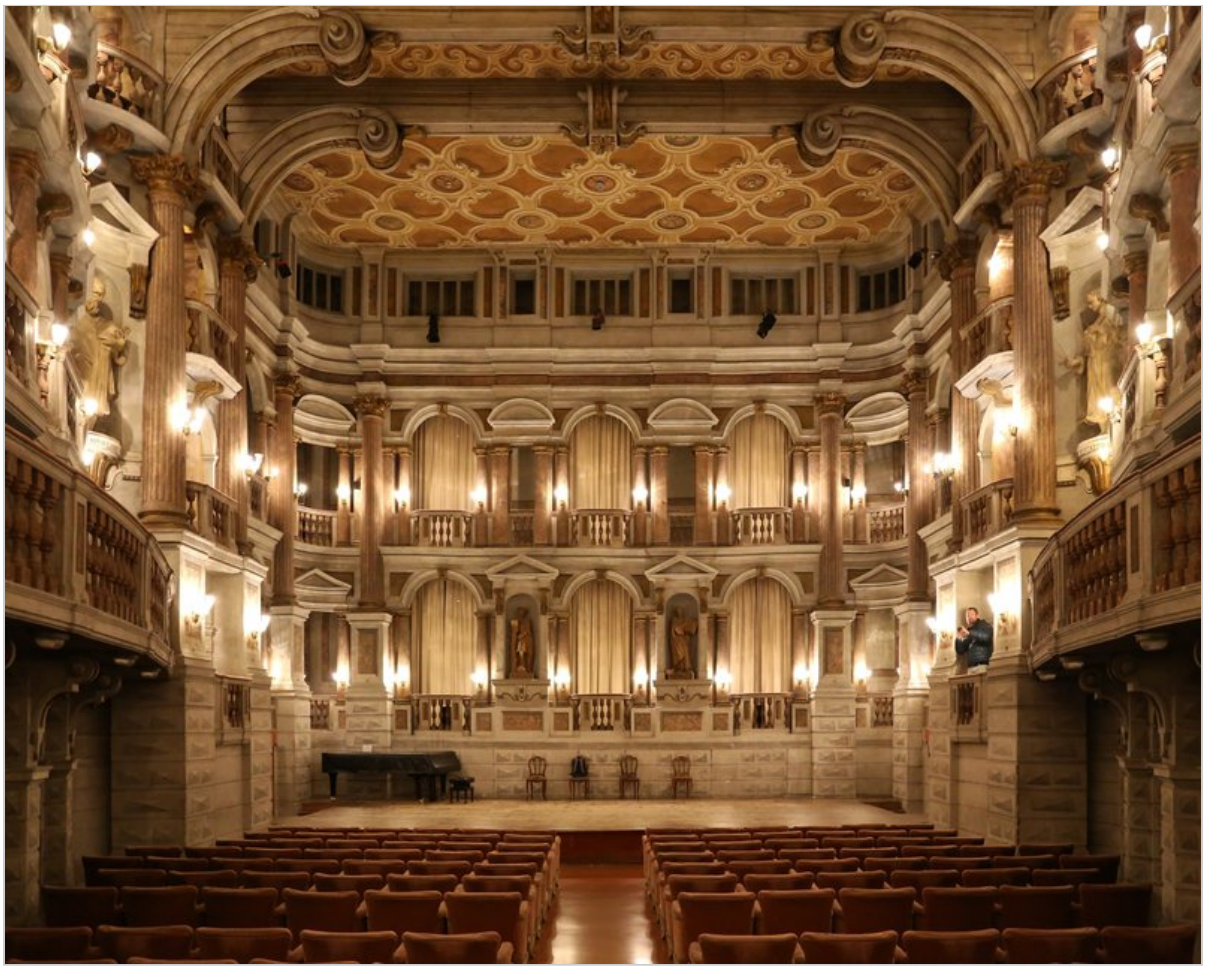
The references are to Count Francesco Eugenio d'Arco; his wife Countess Teresa Ardizzoni *née* di Pomà; their son Count Giovanni Battista [or Giambattista] Gherardo (1739–1791), who became an important writer on political economy; the latter's wife Matilda, daughter of the marchese Carlo Canossa of Verona; and their young son Francesco Alberto (b. 1765), who later became *podestà* of Mantua (Basso 2006, 484).

On 16 Jan Wolfgang appeared in a concert at the Teatro scientifico dell'accademia (today the Teatro Bibiena) in Mantua. It was his second concert in Italy—the first had been in Verona—and the Mantua concert was arguably his first in Italy that can be called public: Leopold explains in his letter of 26 Jan that the audience in Verona had been limited to the nobility, whereas the audience in Mantua was more socially diverse:

> du must aber wissen, daß weder diese accademia in Mantua, noch die in Verona fürs Geld gemacht wird; sondern alles gehet frey hinein. in Verona nur die Nobleße, weil es von ihnen nur allein unterhalten wird: in Mantua aber, Nobleße, Militaire und ansehnliche Bürgerschaft; weil es von Sr: Mayst. der Kayserin eine Stiftung hat. [*Briefe*, i:307]
>
> But you must know that neither the academy in Mantua nor the one in Verona were given for money; rather everyone had free entry. In Verona only the nobility, because it is supported by them alone; in Mantua, however, nobility, military, and respectable citizens, because it has an endowment from Her Majesty the Empress.

The organization that gave the concert in Mantua, the Reale Accademia di Scienze, Lettere e Arti, was an amalgamation of several previously existing academies: the Accademia degli invaghiti, founded in 1562, which had produced Monteverdi's *Orfeo* in 1607; the Accademia degli timidi (founded around 1605); the Accademia di pittura, scultura ed achitettura (Accademia Teresiana),

founded in 1753; and the Accademia filarmonica (Schenk 1955, 4–6). The magnificent theater in which the concert took place had just recently been renovated by Antonio Galli-Bibiena, and had reopened with a concert on 3 Dec 1769.





Interior of the Teatro Bibiena, Mantua
(Wikimedia Commons)

(See also the extraordinary virtual tour of the theater on Google Arts & Culture here.)

The concert began with the first two movements of a symphony by Wolfgang and ended with the symphony's finale. Wolfgang performed in seven of the remaining twelve items on the program (see *Dokumente*, 96–97). The concert was also described at length in the *Gazzetta di Mantua* on 19 Jan (*Dokumente*, 97–98).



MANTOVA 19. *Gennajo.*

La ſera di Martedì ſcorſo, 16. del corrente, nel Teatro della Reale Accademia, ſi fece anzi tempo l'Accademia pubblica Filarmonica del meſe, per cogliere opportunamente l'occaſione del paſſaggio, che di qui ha fatto l'incomparabile giovanetto Sig. Wolfango Amadeo Mozart, a motivo eſpreſſo di dar luogo a queſta Città di ammirare il portentoſo talento, e la maeſtria ſtraordinaria, ch'egli in età di 13. anni poſſiede nella Muſica. Lo ſcrivere a tavolino, come i migliori Maeſtri ſanno, a quante parti concertate, o obbligate di canto, e di ſuono ſi vuole, è per lui così leggier coſa, che ſa ciò fare egualmente ſul grevecembalo anche all'improvviſo. Nella ſera predetta, oltre alle ſinfonie d'aprimento, e finale, ch'erano di compoſizion ſua, egli, alla preſenza degl' illuſtri Perſonaggi, che qui preſiedono in ogni ordine di Governo Politico, Militare, ed Eccleſiaſtico, di tutta la Nobiltà, e Cittadinanza, e del Corpo dell'Accademia ſteſſa, e fra una ſcelta unione di Dilettanti Accademici, e de' Profeſſori dell' Accademia, eſeguì concerti, e ſonate di gravecembalo all' improvviſo con variazioni giuſtiſſime, e con ripetizione d' una ſonata in diverſo tuono. Cantò improvviſamente un'aria intera, ſopra nuove da lui mai non vedute parole, dandole i debiti accompagnamenti. Improvviſò due ſonate ſopra due motivi ſucceſſivamente indicatigli ſul violino dal Direttore d'orcheſtra, accoppiandoli leggiadramente nella ſeconda amendue. Concertò una ſinfonia con tutte le parti ſopra una ſola parte di violino propoſtagli all'improvviſo. E quel che è più da ſtimare, compoſe, e ad un tempo eſeguì pure all'improvviſo una fuga ſopra un ſemplice tema, che gli ſi preſentò, e la conduſſe ad un sì magiſtrale collegamento armonico di tutte le parti, e la ſciolſe sì francamente, che ne rimaſero gl' Intendenti ſtorditi; e queſte operazioni tutte egli eſeguì ſul gravecembalo. Finalmente ſuonò anche a meraviglia bene una parte di violino di un Trio di un famoſo Autore. In varie pruove private, che poi gli hanno dato i noſtri Maeſtri, e Profeſſori di muſica, in que' pochi giorni, che ſi è qui trattenuto, eſſi non han temuto di troppo dire, affermando, che lor parea nato queſto Giovine a confondere i più eſperti nell'arte; il qual ſentimento conformaſi ottimamente con quello di un riſpettabile Letterato Veroneſe, ſcritto al Segretario di queſta noſtra Accademia Filarmonica, nell'atto di raccomandargli eſſo Sig. Wolfango; cioè, ch' egli *è il miracolo della muſica, ed uno di quegli ſcherzi, onde la Natura fa naſcere i Ferracina ad umiliare i Matematici, e le Catille ad avvilire i Poeti.* Egli intanto fa ora il giro dell' *Italia* col Sig. Leopoldo, ſuo Padre, che è anch' egli un uom di talento, ed un riputato Maeſtro di Cappella; ed hanno amendue di che far maravigliare l'Italico ſuolo, che pure è la vera ſede del buon guſto ſpecialmente in queſta materia. L' Accademia dunque è riuſcita brillantiſſima, e di tutta ſoddisfazione, eſſendo in oltre ſtata intrecciata di due arie, ed un duetto, e di due concerti, uno di violino, l'altro d' oboè, eſeguiti da queſti Profeſſori: coſe tutte della maggiore ſquiſitezza, e perfezione.

Report on Mozart's concert in Mantua on 16 Jan 1770
Gazzetta di Mantova, no. 3, Fri, 19 Jan 1770 [4]

In his letter of 26 Jan Leopold describes the enthusiasm of the Mantua audience:

> Die Menge der Menschen, — — das zuruffen, klatschen, Lermen, und Bravo über Bravo, — kurz, das allgemeine Zuruffen, und die Bewunderung so die Zuhörer zeigten kann ich dir nicht genug beschreiben. [*Briefe*, i:306]
>
> The crowd of people — — the acclamations, applause, noise, and bravo after bravo — in short, the general acclaim and the admiration shown by the audience, I cannot sufficiently describe for you.

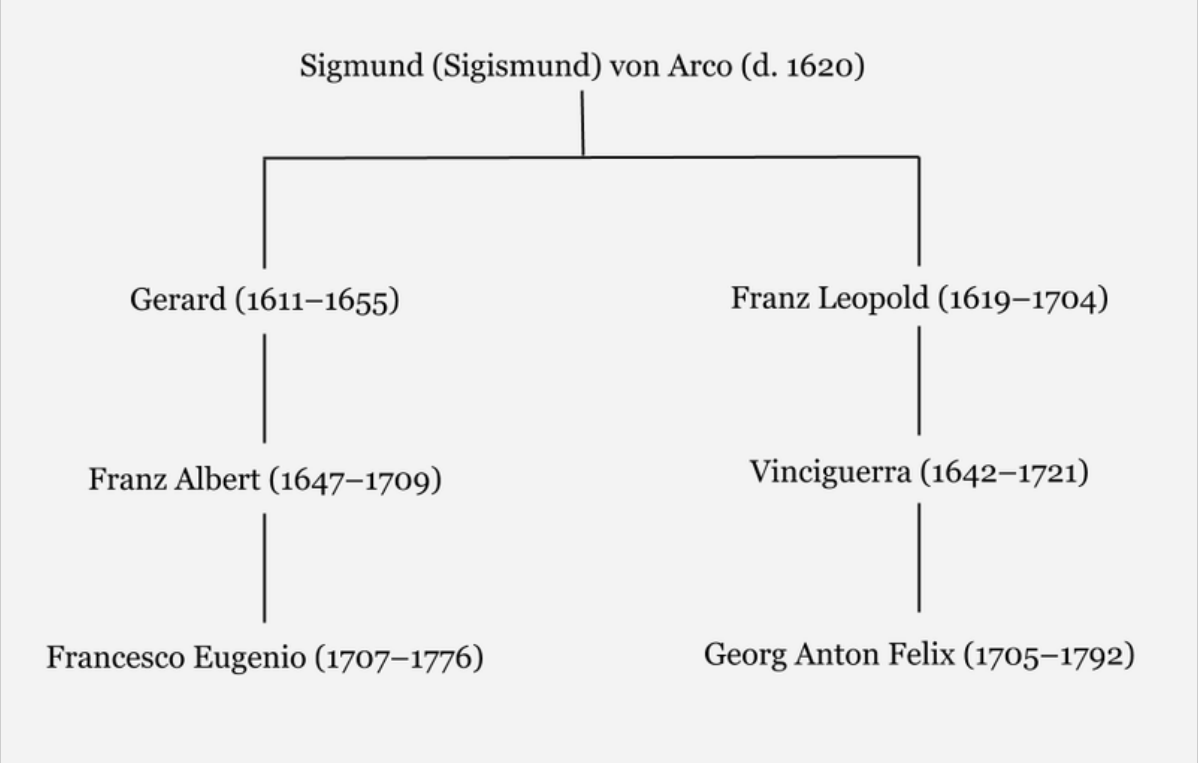
Although the Mozarts were not paid for Wolfgang's appearance in Mantua, Leopold writes that they received a poem in Wolfgang's honor written by a Signora Sartoretti (Margherita, according to Basso 2006, 400; the full poem is in *Dokumente*, 98–99). Enclosed with the poem was "eine Medaille von 4 Duccatten" (a medal of 4 ducats; *Briefe*, i:307).

The Mozarts left Mantua on 19 Jan 1770. Following a brief layover in Cremona on 20 Jan, where they heard Hasse's *La clemenza di Tito*, they proceeded to Milan, arriving on 23 Jan.

The Arcos

Count Johann Georg Anton Felix von Arco (1705–1792) and Count Francesco Eugenio d'Arco (1707–1776) had a common great-grandfather, Count Sigmund von Arco (Sigismund,

Sigismondo, d. 1620), so they were second cousins and they were also very close in age. (On sources for the genealogy of the Arco family, see the *Notes* below.) Count Georg had studied at the university in Salzburg, becoming a canon at the cathedral there at age 21, but he resigned this position because his line of the Arco family was in danger of dying out (Schuler 1984, 22). He remained in Salzburg, however, becoming the first of his line to settle there. Count Francesco Eugenio received part of his education in Salzburg (Basso 2006, 484), and would have known his cousin personally from that time.



Count Francesco Eugenio became the founder of the Mantuan branch of the Arco family, having inherited through his mother the assets of Count Chieppo, whose line had died out. Count Francesco Eugenio consequently relocated to Mantua in 1740 (Schuler 1984, 20). At the time of the Mozarts' visit in Jan 1770, his son Count Giovanni Battista Gherardo was one of the six "direttori pro tempore" of the Reale accademia in Mantua (Schenk 1955, 8). It seems reasonable to suppose that the Mozarts' cordial connection with the Arcos in Mantua, mediated by Count Georg's letter of recommendation, played a role in facilitating Wolfgang's appearance on short notice at a concert of the Reale accademia.

The Mantua Arcos appear just once more in the correspondence of the Mozart family. Leopold refers indirectly to Count Giovanni Battista in his letter from Milan of 3 Feb 1770:

> Ich habe nichts zu sagen, als daß [here begins a very long sequence of "daß" clauses]
>
> *[...]* daß ich dieser Täge wieder etwas in den Zeitungen gefunden habe, wie sie uns in Bozolo ordentl: fürgebasst haben, und auch von der Geschicklichkeit T: des H: Gr: v Arco unterm

> Artickel *Mantua* etwas zu finden ist, welches du, nebst meiner unterth: Empfehlung, Sr: E: Gr: von Arco zeigen sollest *[...]* [*Briefe*, i:311–12]
>
> I have nothing to say except that *[...]*
>
> *[...]* that today I again found something in the newspapers, as they tracked us right through Bozolo, and also there is something under the article *Mantua* about the skill of the titular Herr Count von Arco; you should show this, with my humble compliments, to His Excellency Count [Georg] von Arco *[...]*

Leopold's first reference is to a report in the *Gazzetta di Mantova* on 26 Jan about the Mozarts' brief stop in Bozolo on 19 Jan (*Dokumente*, 99–100). The second reference is to the first paragraph of the same article (not included in *Dokumente*), on Count Giovanni Battista's reading of a dissertation on jurisprudence and political philosophy:

> Jeri, nella Sala Accademica, vi fu la mensuale
> Sessione, in cui Sig. Don Giambattista d'Arco
> Conte del Sacro Romano Imperio, Ciamberlano del-
> le Loro Maestà, ed Accademico Votante, recitò
> una dotta, e veramente profonda Dissertazione, trat-
> ta da' principj della Giurisprudenza, e della più
> sublime politica Filosofia. *[...]*
> [Gazzetta di Mantova, 26 Jan 1770 [4]]
>
> Yesterday [25 Jan] in the Sala Accademica the monthly meeting took place, at which Signor Don Giambattista d'Arco, Count of the Holy Roman Empire, chamberlain to Their Majesties, and voting member of the academy, delivered a learned and truly profound dissertation on the principles of jurisprudence and the most sublime political philosophy. *[...]*

One supposes that this dissertation may have been the basis of his first book, *Dell' armonia politico–economica tra la città ed il suo territorio* (1772), a work that was republished in 1804 as part of series of reprints of works by "classic" writers on political economy (see the *Notes* below).

After reentering secular life, Count Georg von Arco became an important figure at the court in Salzburg. From 30 Nov 1750 he was Oberstkämmerer, and in 1786, in his early eighties, he was named Obersthofmeister. In 1731 Count Georg married his second wife, Countess Maria Josepha Viktoria *née* von Hardegg (b. 1710). The couple became among the most important supporters of the Mozarts among the upper aristocracy in Salzburg in the 1760s and 1770s. The Mozarts were in contact with Count Georg's family from at least the time of their departure on their European tour in 1763; the contact may initially have been through Rosalia Joly (Joli, 1726–1788), who had been a chambermaid to Countess Maria Josepha Viktoria from at least 1754 (*Briefe*, v:74). The earliest reference in the Mozart family correspondence to Joly, who

became a close family friend (usually referred to as "Sallerl"), is in Leopold's letter to Lorenz Hagenauer from Frankfurt on 13 Aug 1763:

> Die Jungfrau Rosalia Joli Cammerkätzchen bey Ihrer Excellenz Gräfin v Arco, hat mir versprochen mit der gräfin Van Eyck wegen eines Quartiers in Paris zu sprechen, und mir, durch Sie, Nachricht zu geben. Bitte, so bald es möglich ist mit ihr zu sprechen, und mir in ihrem ersten Schreiben davon Nachricht zu geben. [*Briefe*, i:87]
>
> The spinster Rosalia Joly, chambermaid to Her Excellency Countess von Arco, promised me to speak with Countess Van Eyck regarding lodgings in Paris, and to send me news through you. Please speak with her as soon as possible, and give me news about this in your next letter.

The references here are to Count Georg's wife, Countess Maria Josepha Viktoria von Arco, and their daughter Countess Maria Anna Josephina Felicitas (1743–1764), who since 1761 had been married to the Bavarian ambassador in Paris, Count Maximilian Emanuel Franz van Eyck (1711–1777; on Van Eyck, see the *Notes* below). Joly evidently succeeded in intermediating accommodations for the Mozarts, because they did in fact stay in Van Eyck's residence in Paris, the Hôtel de Beauvais. However, the young Countess van Eyck *née* von Arco died on 6 Feb 1764, and Leopold relocated his family to different lodgings out of concern that their continued presence might aggravate Count van Eyck's depression following his wife's death, as they would remind him of her home town (see Leopold's letter to Hagenauer of 4 Mar 1764, *Briefe*, i:133ff; see also our entry for 9 Apr 1764).

Count Georg von Arco was later a supporter of the Mozarts at court in Salzburg. His advocacy is most vividly illustrated in Leopold's letter of 29 Dec 1777 to his wife and son in Mannheim, in which he reports at length on Count Arco's heated conversation with Count Franz Joseph von Starhemberg, following the unexpected death of cathedral organist Anton Cajetan Adlgasser on 21 Dec 1777, and the urgent need to replace him. Count Arco expresses his irritation that Wolfgang, who would have been the obvious choice, had been so badly treated in Salzburg that he had left the city to seek his musical fortune elsewhere.

> Graf Starnberg war bey gr: Arco ihn in der Aderlasse zu besuchen. die Rede fiel auf Adlgassers Todt: *Gr: Arco*. Nun seyd ihr angesetzt, nicht wahr? — der junge Mozart würde euch nun gute dienste gethann haben. *gr: Starnberg*. ja, es ist die wahrheit, er hätte sich wohl noch gedulten können. *gr: Arco*, wie, gedulten? das ist zum lachen! wer hätte diesen gähen fall vorsehen können — — und wenn auch — was würdet ihr ihm wohl *zu seinen geschissenen — f* dazu gegeben haben. Es ist sein Glück das er weg ist! man ist lange genug abscheulich mit ihm umgegangen. *Gr: Starnbg*. ja, das muß ich bekennen, er ist zu sehr misshandelt worden: es muß doch iedermann bekennen, daß er der stärkste Clavierist in Europa ist. Er hätte sich aber ia doch noch gedulten können. *Gr: Arco in voller Hitze!* ia scheissen! Es geht ihm ganz gut in Manheim, da hat er eine gute Gesellschaft gefunden mit welcher er nach Paris geht, diesen bekommt ihr nimmer, es geschieht euch recht! mit dem Hagenauer wird es euch auch so ergehen. *Gr.: Starnbg:* dieser wird itzt auf das neue Jahr einen Gehalt bekommen. *Gr: Arko.* das wird was rechtes werden: und wenn auch; so habt ihr ihn lange genug herumgefoppt, und bey der Nase herumgezogen, dann fiel die Rede

> von mir — wo graf Starnberg behauptete, daß er glaubte *es wäre niemand zu finden, der mehr geschicklichkeit hätte im Lection=geben, als ich*. du wirst bemerken, daß gr: Arco immer sagte: ihr = den gr: Starnberg und Compagnie mit dazu nahm, um den Fürsten nicht nennen zu därffen, und dadurch par politique die Schuld auf die Herzens Conferenzen über der Prücken zu legen. *[...]* [*Briefe*, ii:209–10]

[translation:]

> Count Starhemberg was at Count Arco's to visit him during his blood-letting. The conversation came to Adlgasser's death. *Count Arco*: Now you all are in a fix, no? — Young Mozart would have been of good use to you. *Count Starhemberg*: Yes, that's the truth, he could well have been more patient. *Count Arco*: How so, patient? That's laughable! Who could have foreseen this unexpected event — — and even if one had — how much would you all have added *to his bloody — gulden*? He's lucky that he's gone! He was treated abominably here long enough. *Count Starhemberg*: Yes, I have to admit that he was greatly abused here: but everyone must admit that he is the best clavier player in Europe. But he could have been more patient. *Count Arco very heatedly*: Well, shit on that! He's doing very well in Mannheim, where he has found a good company with whom he is going to Paris, you all will never have him back, it serves you right! The same thing will happen to you with Hagenauer. *Count Starhemberg*: He will now receive a stipend in the New Year. *Count Arco: Then something will be put right: and even so, you all taunted him for so long and led him around* by the nose. Then the conversation came to me—where Count Starhemberg declared that *it would be impossible to find anyone who had greater skill in giving lessons than I do*. You will notice that Count Arco always says "ihr" [plural, "you all"] = Count Starhemberg and company, in order not to have to name the Prince [Colloredo], thereby diplomatically laying the blame squarely where it belongs, at the heart of the matter.

(The blank in Arco's reported "zu seinen geschissenen — f" refers to Wolfgang's salary of 150 fl in Salzburg as Konzertmeister.) In his letter of 27 Aug 1778 to Wolfgang in Paris, Leopold mentions that Count Arco is among those who fear that Leopold will permanently leave Salzburg to join his son (*Briefe*, ii:454).

Of Count Georg von Arco's dozen children, three played significant roles in Wolfgang's life. His daughter Maria Anna (1743–1764), as Countess vanEyck, provided the Mozarts their first accommodations in Paris in 1763 and 1764. Count Georg's daughter Antonia (1738–1780) became the second wife of Count Ernst Maria von Lodron; Wolfgang composed his "Lodron: divertimenti for Countess Antonia's name-day (13 Jun) in 1776 (K. 247 with the March, K. 248) and 1777 (K. 287); his Concerto in F Major for Three Keyboards, K. 242 (1776), was written for Countess Antonia von Lodron and her daughters Maria Aloysia and Maria Josepha. Notoriously, it was Count Georg's son Karl Joseph Maria Felix (1743–1830), Oberstküchenmeister to the Salzburg court, who (according to Wolfgang) kicked Mozart in the behind on 8 Jun 1781 in Vienna, thus casting an unfairly negative light on the Arco name in the Mozart literature.

Count Georg von Arco died on 2 Sep 1792 in Salzburg at the age of 87, ten months after Mozart.

Notes (⇧)

Count Georg von Arco’s letter is relatively difficult to transcribe: it gives the impression of having been written in haste, the width and darkness of the pen strokes vary considerably (one can often see where the count has redipped his pen), and his spelling is sometimes nonstandard. It is unlikely that the count was a native speaker of Italian: he was born in Vienna, was not a member an Italian line of the Arcos, and spent his entire adult life in Salzburg. In at least two cases, his spelling seems to be influenced by German: he writes “Natalicie” instead of “Natalizie” (as given in previously published transcriptions): from the standpoint of a German speaker, a ‘c’ in that position would have been pronounced /ts/, just as ‘z’ would be pronounced in standard Italian. Count Arco’s omission of the ‘h’ in “preg[h]iere” also suggests a German speaker, who might well have forgotten that ‘h’ is necessary in Italian to make the ‘g’ hard (German has only a hard ‘g’). His “recomendare” (instead of “raccomandare”) may come from confusion with French.

Count Arco’s double ‘l’s and double ‘t’s are often difficult to distinguish from single letters: characteristic examples are “quele”/”quelle” in line 3 of the main text, and “tuti”/”tutti” in the third-to-last line of the main text. Where there is any doubt about the count’s intended pelling of words with double consonants, we have used the standard spelling, giving the second letter in brackets. Another peculiarity of the count’s spelling is the omission of the syllable ‘si’, most notably in “mede[si]mo” in line 6, but also in superlative abbreviations, as in “instantis[si]:me” and “riveritis[si]:ma”, among others. The count’s three instances of overline to indicate abbreviations have been expanded in square brackets (“P[ad]rone”, “an[n]i”, “se[rvito]re”). Our transcription here is a synthesis of transcriptions made independently by Carlo Vitali, Bruce Brown, and DE. So far as we know, our transcription is the first since Fario to be based on an examination of the original letter.

Edge & Frega 2020	Fario 1956
Ill.[mo] Sig:[r] Conte Cugino Sig.[r] Sig:$_r$ e P[ad]rone Col[endissi]mo Portandosi il nostro vice maestro di Capella Mozart con il suo figlio il quale per il suo talento nella musica spero farà maraviglia per quel[l]e parti, e per fare profitto nel[l]a musica, e per farsi sentire e conos[c]ere vengo instantemente priegato di recomandarlo a vs. Ill:[ma] con suplicarla di volere recomendare il mede[si]mo a quel[l]a Nobiltà, e perciò non hò potuto niegare le sue instantis[si]:[me] priegere, et egli averà etterne obligazioni. con questa orazione non posso tralas[c]iare di porgere li miei, e della mia Contessa devotis[si]:[mi] augurj nelle pros[s]ime SS:[me] feste Natalicie, il Ciello colmi vs Ill:[ma] con tutta la riveritis[si]:[ma] sua Famiglia d'ogni vera felicità e contentezza per in[n]umeri a[n]ni, e conservi a me e tu[t]i li miei le stimatis[si]:[me] sue grazzie, affetto, e patrocinio, mentre mi glorierò d'essere sin alla morte Di vs Ill:ma Devotis[si]mo Ob[bligatissi]mo Salisburgo li 11 Decenbre se[rvito]re e cugino 1769 giorgio conte d'Arco$_{mpia}$	Illustrissimo Signor Conte Cugino, Padre Colendissimo, Portandosi il nostro Vice Maestro di Cappella Mozart con il suo figlio il quale per il suo talento nella musica spero farà maraviglia pe' quelle parti, e per fare profitto ne la musica, e per farsi sentire emconoscere vengo instantemente priegato di recomandarlo a V. S. Ill.ma con suplicarla di voler raccomandare il predetto a quela Nobiltà e perciò non ho potuto niegare le sue istantissime prieghere — et egli avrà eterne obligazioni. Con questa orazione non posso tralasciare di porgere li miei e la mia Contessa devotissimi auguri nelle prossime Santissime Feste Natalizie [...] Giorgio Conte D'Arco

The portion in blue in shown above is omitted by Fario, and is consequently absent from all previous published versions of the letter’s text. Fario has “Padre” instead of “Padrone” in the salutation (a significant difference, given that Count Francesco Eugenio was neither a cleric nor Count Georg’s father), and Farios’s “predetto” seems to have been simply a guess for the admittedly non-obvious “mede[si]mo”. Basso (2006, 62) copies Fario’s transcription, but has accidentally omitted the phrase “e per fare profitto ne la musica”; this version is also given by Eisen et al. (2011a, note 3), who provide an English translation (2011b, note 3).

The transcription of Arco’s letter in *Briefe* (v:220–21, commentary to Leopold’s letter to his wife of 11 Jan 1770) is evidently copied from Fario, and there is no indication that the editors of *Briefe* examined the original letter. Oddly, however, there are several discrepancies between Fario’s transcription and the one in *Briefe*. Apparent errors of copying in *Briefe* are shown in red below, and “corrections” (made without consulting the original) are shown in green:

> Illustrissimo Signor Conte Cugino,
>
> Padre Colendissimo,
>
> Portandosi il nostro Vice Maestro di Cap~~p~~ella Mozart con il suo figlio il quale per il suo

> talento nella musica spero farà meraviglia per quelle parti, e per fare profitto no la musica, e per farsi sentire e conoscere vengo instantemente priegato di recommandarlo a V. S. Ill.ma con suplicarla di voler raccomandare il predetto a quela Nobiltà, e per ciò non ho potuto niegare le sue istantissime prieghere — et egli avrá eterne obligazioni. Con questa orazione non posso tralasciare di porgereli miei e della mia Contessa devotissimi auguri nelle prossime Santissime Feste Natalizie
>
> Giorgio Conte d'Arco

Count Georg von Arco's letter of recommendation is not included in Angermüller & Geffray, *Mozarts Reisen in Italien* (1994). Ammerer (2005, 19) refers to the letter, but does not include its text.

The Arco family can be traced back to the 12th century in Trent, subsequently splitting into several branches over the centuries. In spite of the complexities of Arco family history, the relationship between Count Georg and Count Francesco Eugenio is straightforward, as the family tree in the *Commentary* above shows. We have not been able to see Erwein von Aretin's unpublished typescript history of the Arco family, or Count Karl Anton von Arco's rare *Chronik der Grafen des Heil[igen] Röm[ischen] Reichs von und zu Arco genannt Bogen* (Graz, 1886). Our discussion here is based principally on a collation of the articles "Arco (Adelsgeschlecht)" from German Wikipedia and Heinz Schuler's "Die Herren und Grafen von Arco und ihre Beziehungen zu den Mozarts. Anmerkungen zu Mozart-Briefen" (1984), which are not always in perfect agreement in every detail. We have also consulted the helpful but very incomplete genealogies of Sigmund (Sigismund) d'Arco here and here.

The first edition of Giovanni Battista Gherardo d'Arco's treatise *Dell'armonia politico-economica tra la città e il suo territorio* (1772) appears not to be available online. The book was republished in 1804 in the series *Scrittori classici italiani di economia politica*; that version is online.



SCRITTORI CLASSICI

ITALIANI

DI

ECONOMIA POLITICA.

WIEN

PARTE MODERNA

TOMO XXX.

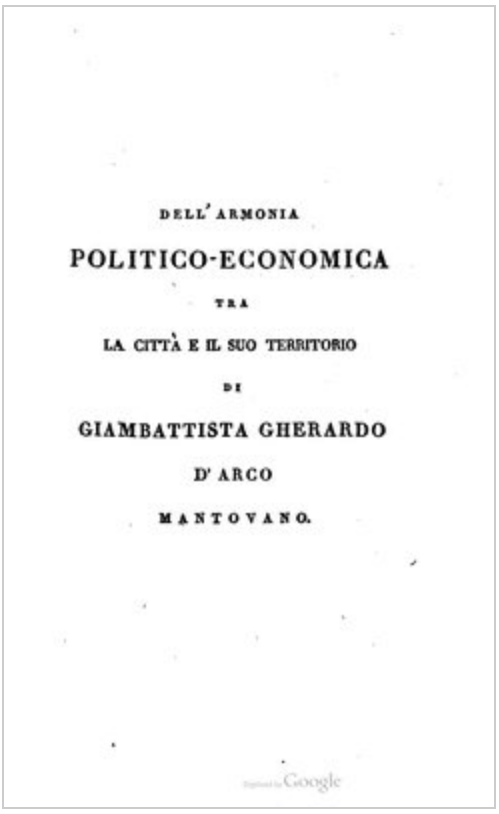
MILANO

Nella Stamperia e Fonderia di G. G. DESTEFANIS

a S. Zeno, N.° 554.

MDCCCIV.

Digitized by Google



DELL' ARMONIA

POLITICO-ECONOMICA

TRA

LA CITTÀ E IL SUO TERRITORIO

DI

GIAMBATTISTA GHERARDO

D' ARCO

MANTOVANO.

Digitized by Google

Prince Michael II von Thurn und Taxis (Michele II delle Torre e Tassis, 1722–1789) was the grandson of Prince Michele I di Tassis (d. ca. 1711; see line B in this family tree). According to the *Neues Genealogisches Reichs= und Staats=Handbuch auf das Jahr 1796* (i:366), he was general postmaster for Rome, in keeping with Thurn und Taxis family tradition. He married three times: first Countess Maria Aloysia Duham de Martigny (1717–1760); then Countess Maria Theresia *née* von Lodron (1733–1764), a sister of Count Ernst Maria von Lodron in Salzburg; and finally in 1766 Theresia's younger sister Maria Johanna *née* von Lodron (b. 1735), who snubbed the Mozarts twice during their visit to Mantua in Jan 1770.

Count Maximilian Emanuel Franz (François) van Eyck (d'Eick, Van der Eycken, 1711–1777), the French ambassador for the Bavarian Electoral court, has received little attention from Mozart scholars. Helpful starting places are the short biographies in *Calendrier des princes et de la noblesse de France ... pour l'année 1764* (345); Feller, *Dictionnaire historique* (8th ed., 1836, vii:520); and the *Gothaisches genealogisches Taschenbuch der Gräflichen Häuser* (vol. 42, 1869, 1077). A short obituary of his first wife, Countess Maria Anna Josephina Felicitas *née* von Arco is included in *Fortgesetzte Neue Genealogisch=Historisch Nachrichten von den Vornehmsten Begebenheiten, welche sich an den Europäischen Höften zutragen* ... (78. Theil, 1768); she died on 6 Feb 1764 when the Mozarts were lodging at the couple's residence in Paris. The count did not wait long to remarry: according to this short biography, on 1 Oct 1764 he married Countess Anna Josephine Antonie von Koenigsfeld. The count, not otherwise known as a womanizer, is said to have had a week-long affair in Feb 1753 with the dancer and notorious courtesan Marie-Anne Deschamps (G. Capon & R. Yve-Plessis, *Fille d'Opera, vendeuse d'amour. Histoire de Mlle Deschamps (1730–1764)*, 1906, 49). We have not yet had the opportunity to see the article on Van Eyck in Antoine F. Frangulis, ed., *Dictionnaire diplomatique* (1953), v:326.

We are grateful to Silvia Tosetti of the Museo di Palazzo d'Arco for her help in locating Count Arco's letter of recommendation and for providing an image of it; Carlo Vitali and Bruce Brown for their independent transcriptions of Arco's difficult handwriting; Carlo Vitali for his literal translation of the letter, which provided a framework for our translation; Janet Page, Bruce Brown, and Steven Whiting for their comments on a draft of this commentary; Evan Baker for pointing us to the beautiful virtual tour of the Teatro Bibiena; and Michael Lorenz for his answers to particular questions. Our special thanks to Catherine Sprague, who first brought to our attention Basso's splendid *I Mozart in Italia* (2006) and the little-known Mozart documents that it contains.

Bibliography (⇧)

Ammerer, Gerhard. 2005. "Arco, Familie der Grafen von." In: *Salzburger Mozart Lexikon*. Edited by Gerhard Ammerer and Rudolph Angermüller, with Andrea Blöchkl-Küstner. Bad Honnef: K. H. Bock.

Angermüller, Rudolph, and Geneviève Geffray. 1994. *Mozarts Reisen in Italien*. Photography by Vera von Glasner-Ostenwall. Bad Honnef: Verlag K. H. Beck.

Basso, Alberto. 2006. *I Mozart in Italia. Cronistoria dei viaggi, documenti, lettere, dizionario dei luoghi e delle persone*. [Rome:] Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia.

Breitinger, Friedrich. 1941. "Jungfer Tanzmeister Mitzerl und Joli Sallerl, zwei angebliche Liebchen Mozarts." In: *Neues Mozart-Jahrbuch* [1. Jahrgang], 39–48. Regensburg.

Eisen, Cliff et al. 2011a. *Con le Parole di Mozart*. Lettera 155. Version 1.0, published by HRI Online. ISBN 9780955787676.

————. 2011b. *In Mozart's Words*, Letter 155. Version 1.0, published by HRI Online. ISBN 9780955787676.

Fario, Emilio. 1956. *Incontro di Mozart con Mantova. Rievocazione storica del socio accademico*. Mantua: Accademia Virgiliana.

Halliwell, Ruth. 1998. *The Mozart Family: Four Lives in a Social Context*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Neues Genealogisches Reichs= und Staats=Handbuch auf das Jahr 1796. 1796. Vol.1. Frankfurt am Main: Varrentrapp und Wenner.

Schenk, Erich. 1955. "Mozart in Mantua," *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 22 (1955), 1–29.

Schuler, Heinz. 1984. "Die Herren und Grafen von Arco und ihre Beziehungen zu den Mozarts. Anmerkungen zu Mozart-Briefen." *Mitteilungen der internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum* (1984) nos. 1–4: 19–34.

Credit: Emilio Fario

Authors: Dexter Edge, Stefano Frega

Link(s): NA

Search Term: NA

Source Library: Mantua, Archivio Arco Chieppio Ardizzoni

Categories: Biography

First Published: Wed, 29 Apr 2020

Updated: Mon, 18 May 2020

Citation:

> Edge, Dexter, and Stefano Frega. 2020. “Count Georg von Arco’s letter of recommendation for the Mozarts (11 Dec 1769).” In: *Mozart: New Documents*, edited by Dexter Edge and David Black. First published 29 Apr 2020; updated 18 May 2020. [direct link]