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A Masonic musical academy in Vienna (12 Jan 1788)

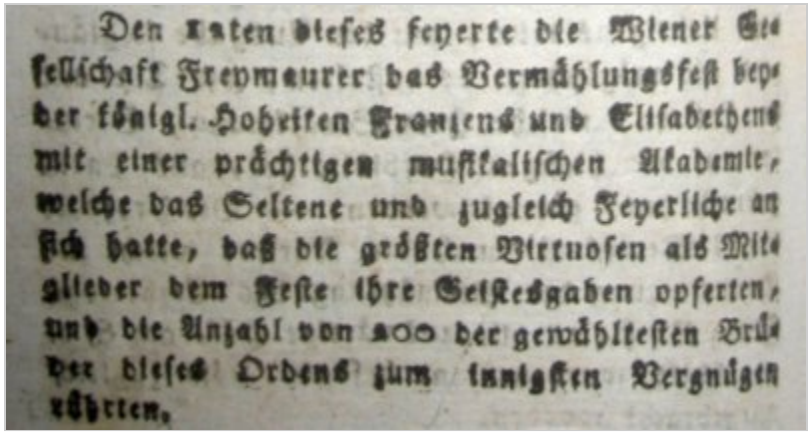
David Black

***Auszug* vi:422, Thu, 31 Jan 1788 (*Prager Oberpostamtszeitung*, 8)**

c) Wien den 19 Jenner. *[...]*


c) Wien den 19 Jenner. Ein lustiger Kopf

Den 12ten dieses feyerte die Wiener Ge= sellschaft Freymaurer das Vermählungsfest bey= der königl. Hoheiten Franzens und Elisabethens mit einer prächtigen musikalischen Akademie, welche das Seltene und zugleich Feyerliche an sich hatte, daß die größten Virtuosen als Mit= glieder dem Feste ihre Geistesgaben opferten, und die Anzahl von 200 der gewählteſten Brü= der dieses Ordens zum innigsten Vergnügen rührten.


Den 12ten dieſes feyerte die Wiener Ge ſellſchaft Freymaurer das Vermählungsfeſt bey der königl. Hoheiten Franzens und Eliſabethens mit einer prächtigen muſikaliſchen Akademie, welche das Seltene und zugleich Feyerliche an ſich hatte, daß die größten Virtuoſen als Mit glieder dem Feſte ihre Geiſtesgaben opferten, und die Anzahl von 200 der gewählteſten Brü der dieſes Ordens zum innigſten Vergnügen rührten.

[translation:]

c) Vienna, 19 January *[...]*

[...]

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On the 12th of this *[month]* the Viennese society of Masons celebrated the marriage of the two Royal Highnesses Franz and Elisabeth with a magnificent musical academy, which had both the rarity and distinction that the greatest virtuosi, as members, offered their talents to the celebration and moved the 200 most select brothers of this order to the most profound pleasure.

Commentary

On 6 Jan 1788 Archduke Francis married Elisabeth of Württemberg at the Imperial Court Chapel in the Hofburg. The wedding was an occasion for celebration throughout Vienna; the principal musical event was the premiere of Salieri’s *Axur, re d'Ormus* on 8 Jan. Mozart is not mentioned by name in this report of a Masonic musical academy on 12 Jan 1788, but given his association with the craft and prominence as a “Virtuoso” it is likely that he took part. The venue for the academy is not given but it was presumably the lodge *Zur gekrönten Hoffnung*, located in the house *Zum silbernen Hut* on Bauernmarkt.

The source of this item, the *Auszug aus aller europäischen Zeitungen* was, as it name suggests, a journal digest of European newspapers published in Vienna from 1786–1798. The reports are organised by country, with news about the "kaiserliche königliche Staaten" always appearing first, and occasionally featuring original items about Vienna. As a footnote to each item, the *Auszug* helpfully gives the source newspaper and issue number, which has allowed us to track down the original article in a number of cases. The founder and first editor, Karl Franz Guolfinger Ritter von Steinsberg (c. 1757–1806) seems to have taken a particular interest in music, and the *Auszug* is a valuable source for quotations from otherwise lost newspapers. It is itself very rare, and the only complete copy survives today in the Moravian National Library in Brno (*pace* Brauneis 1991, 165, which describes the Wienbibliothek’s incomplete holdings of the *Auszug* as unica). The existence of the Brno exemplar was first noted in Gugitz and Schlossar (1923, 546).

This item is also quoted in *Das Wienerblättchen*, 30 Jan 1788, 384–85. It was first noted independently if rather idiosyncratically in Autexier (1984, 17, in French translation with no source given) and then Autexier ([2014], 218).

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