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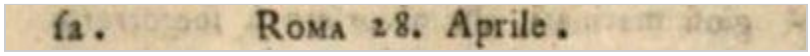
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Mozart’s reception in Rome (28 Apr 1770)

Dexter Edge

***Notizie del Mondo*, no. 36, Sat, 5 May 1770, 288**

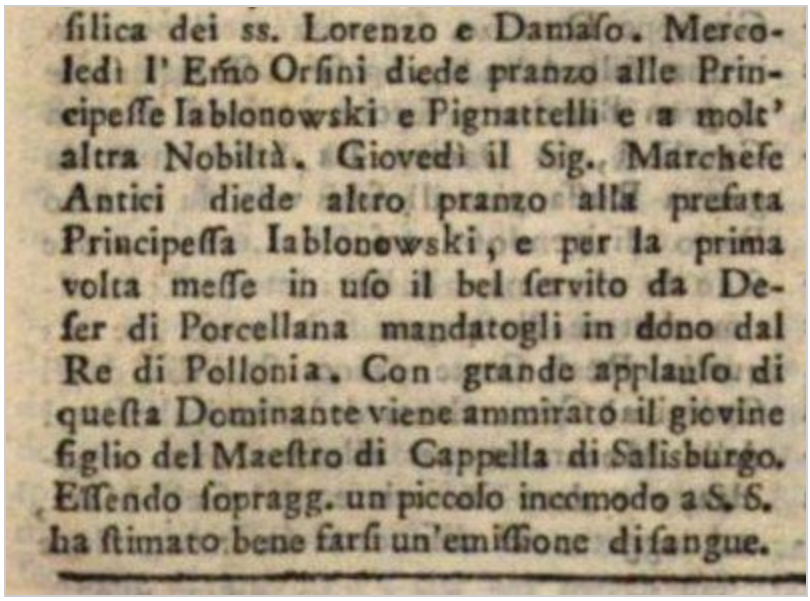
ROMA 28. Aprile.


fa. ROMA 28. Aprile.

[...]

Mercoledi l’Emo Orsini diede pranzo alle Principesse Iablonowski e Pignattelli e a molt’ altra Nobilità. Giovedì il Sig. Marchese Antici diede altro pranzo alla prefata Principessa Iablonowski, e per la prima volta messe in uso il bel servito di Deser di Porcellana mandatogli in dono dal Re di Pollonia. Con grande applauso di questa Dominante viene ammirato il giovine figlio del Maestro di Cappella di Salisburgo. Essendo sopragg. un piccolo incomodo a S. S. ha stimato bene farse un emissione de sangue.

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filica dei ss. Lorenzo e Damaſo. Mercoledì l' Emo Orſini diede pranzo alle Principeſſe Iablonowski e Pignattelli e a molt' altra Nobiltà. Giovedì il Sig. Marcheſe Antici diede altro pranzo alla prefata Principeſſa Iablonowski, e per la prima volta meſſe in uſo il bel ſervito da Deſer di Porcellana mandatogli in dono dal Re di Pollonia. Con grande applauſo di queſta Dominante viene ammirato il giovine figlio del Maeſtro di Cappella di Salisburgo. Eſſendo ſopragg. un piccolo incomodo a S. S. ha ſtimato bene farſi un'emiſſione di ſangue.

[translation:]

[...] Wednesday
His Eminence Orsini gave a dinner for
Princesses Jabłonowska and Pignatelli
and many other members of the nobility.
Thursday the Marchese Antici gave another
dinner for the aforesaid Princess Jabłonowska,
and for the first time used the beautiful porcelain
dessert service given to him by the King
of Poland. The young son of the Maestro
di Cappella in Salzburg has been received
in this capital city with great applause. His
Holiness having suffered a small indisposition,
it was thought best to let blood.

Commentary

Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart arrived in Rome around midday on 11 Apr 1770, Wednesday of Holy Week. That same afternoon they went to a performance of Allegri's *Miserere* by the Papal choir, as Leopold reported in a letter to his wife on Sat, 14 Apr (*Briefe*, i:333–35). He wrote that they had arrived in Rome armed with twenty letters of recommendation. (At least one other letter that Leopold probably did not know about had been sent directly to Prince Andrea Doria Pamphilj by Count Firmian in Milan; see our entry for 4 Apr 1770.) As Leopold explained, he and Wolfgang had not yet presented any of their letters because it was Holy Week, but they would start doing so on Easter Monday, 16 Apr.

In his next letter to his wife, on Sat, 21 Apr, Leopold wrote:

> [...] ie tiefer wir in Italien kamen, ie mehr wuchs die verwunderung. der Wolfg: bleibt mit seiner Wissenschaft auch nicht stehen, sondern wächst von tage zu tage, so daß die grösten kenner und Meister nicht worte genug finden ihre Bewunderung auszudrücken und an tag zu geben. Vor 2 tagen waren wir bey einem Neapolit: Prinzen St: Angelo. Gestern beym Ghigi, wo unter anderen der so genannte Re d'Inghilterra oder Pretendent, und der Secretario di Stato Cardinal Pallavicini zugegen waren. Wir werden bald Sr: Heilligkeit [*sic*] vorgeführt werden. [...] [*Briefe*, i:338]

> [...] The deeper into Italy we came, the greater grew the astonishment. Wolfgang does not at all remain stationary in his knowledge, but grows from day to day, so that the greatest connoisseurs and masters cannot find words sufficient to express and show their admiration. Two days ago we visited the Neapolitan Prince Sant'Angelo and yesterday Chigi, where among others were present the so-called King of England or Pretender, and the Secretary of State Cardinal Pallavicini. We will soon be presented to His Holiness. [...]

The references are to Prince Giulio di Sant'Angelo dei Lombardi (1751–1818), who had just turned 19 at the time of the Mozarts' visit (see Basso & Govi, 2006c), and Prince Sigismondo Chigi (1736–1793) and his wife Maria Flaminia, *née* Odescalchi (1736–1770; on the Chigis, see Basso & Govi, 2006a). The "Pretender" was Charles Edward Stuart (1720–1788), "Bonnie Prince Charlie," who had settled in Rome following the failure of his attempt to take the British throne in 1745 and 1746. The Cardinal was Lazzaro Opizio Pallavicini (1719–1785; see Govi, 2006). Leopold's "vor 2 tagen" refers to 19 Apr, and "Gestern" to 20 Apr. Although Leopold does not explicitly state that Wolfgang performed during either of these visits, the context suggests that he did. The visits almost certainly correspond, then, to a reference in Wolfgang's letter (in Italian) to his sister on Wed, 25 Apr 1770:

> in Due accademiae sonai, e Domani sonerò anchè in una. [*Briefe*, i:341]

> I played in two academies, and tomorrow I will also play in one.

That Wolfgang performed at the Palazzo Chigi on 20 Apr is confirmed by two letters written the day after the performance. On 21 Apr, Cardinal Pallavicini wrote to his distant cousin Count Gian-Luca Pallavicini-Centurione in Bologna, in response to a letter of recommendation the Count had written for the Mozarts:

> [...] ed ieri sera a mia intimazione il Principe Chigi ha fatto sonare il di Lei raccomandato.
> Io vi intervenni e non meno di tutti gli altri concorrenti ammirai l'incomparabile singolarità del sommo progresso in così tenera età fatto dal noto giovane nella

> difficile scienza ed esecuzione della musica.
> Veramente il detto giovane è portentoso. [...] [*Dokumente*, 107]

> [...] and yesterday evening at my suggestion Prince Chigi had the one that you recommended perform.
> I attended, and no less than all the others who were there I admired the incomparable singularity of the great progress made by the well-known youth at such a tender age in the difficult science and execution of music.
> Truly, the aforesaid youth is extraordinary. [...]

Baron Saint-Odile (see Basso & Govi, 2006b), who also attended the performance at Palazzo Chigi on 20 Apr, wrote to Count Pallavicini-Centurione the following day:

> Ieri sera ho sentito in Casa del Signor Principe Chigi il Giovane Mozart, che è un vero portento della natura, essendo stata da tutti della Conversazione, ammirata sommamente la sua eccellenza nella Musica. [...] [*Dokumente*, 108]

> Yesterday evening at the residence of Prince Chigi, I heard the young Mozart, who is a true prodigy of nature, his excellence in music having been admired immensely by everyone who attended the assembly. [...]

Thus Wolfgang certainly performed at the Palazzo Chigi on 20 Apr 1770, and given the associated context in Leopold's letter, there seems little reason to doubt that he performed at Prince Sant'Angelo's the previous day.

The report from *Notizie del Mondo* transcribed at the top of this page was discovered by Cliff Eisen. Wolfgang is not mentioned by name, but the reference to "il giovine figlio del Maestro di Cappella di Salisburgo" ("the young son of the Maestro di Cappella in Salzburg") is unequivocal.

Because Wolfgang, in his letter to his sister on 25 Apr, mentions that he will perform again "tomorrow" (that is, Thu, 26 Apr), and because the reference to Wolfgang in *Notizie del Mondo* follows immediately after a reference to an event on that same Thursday—a meal held by Marchese Tommaso Antici for the visiting Polish Princess Anna Paulina Jabłonowska—it is tempting to think that Wolfgang performed at Antici's. But that is probably incorrect. The report in *Notizie del Mondo* is a quick summary of notable news from Rome in the preceding week, with no necessary connection between one item and the next. This is clear, for example, from the unrelated item immediately following the reference to Mozart: "Essendo sopragg. un piccolo incomodo a S. S. ha stimato bene farse un emissione de sangue" ("His Holiness having suffered a small indisposition, it was thought best to let blood"). So no connection should be assumed between the meal at Antici's and the reference to Wolfgang. We also know from Leopold's letter to his wife on Sat, 28 Apr 1770, that they had, within the preceding day or so, been at Princess Barberini's, in the presence again of Cardinal Pallavicini and Charles Edward Stuart, as well as the visiting Prince Franz Xavier of Saxony. Although Leopold does not mention

the date of that visit, it seems likely that it was the Thursday performance that Wolfgang referred to in his letter.

Thus the reference to Wolfgang in *Notizie del Mondo* is most likely a general comment on his reception in Rome since his arrival: "Con grande applauso di questa Dominante viene ammirato il giovine figlio del Maestro di Cappella di Salisburgo" ("The young son of the Maestro di Cappella in Salzburg has been received in this capital city with great applause"). In this way, it is similar to a report from Rome under the dateline 2 May 1770 printed in the *Staats- und gelehrte Zeitung des Hamburgischen unpartheyischen Correspondenten* on 22 May:

> Es befindet sich seit einiger Zeit der Sohn des Salzburgischen Kapellmeisters allhier, welcher wegen seiner außerordentlichen und frühen Geschicklichkeit in der Musik von jedermann bewundert wird. [*Neue Folge*, 18]
>
> Present here for some time has been the son of the Salzburg kapellmeister, who has been admired by everyone for his extraordinary and early skill in music.

At least four more performances by Wolfgang in Rome can be documented with reasonable certainty before their departure for Naples on 8 May:

- In his letter of 28 Apr, Leopold writes that "tomorrow" (29 Apr) they will be going to an "accademia" (academy or concert) at the residence of Duke Giuseppe Maria Altemps. (On Altemps, see Satragni, 2006.)
- On Thu, 2 May, Wolfgang performed at the Collegium Germanicum et Hungaricum in Rome, along with the Salzburg bass singer Joseph Nikolaus Meißner. Wolfgang also played on the organ in the Collegium's church. (See Leopold's letter to his wife of Wed, 2 May 1770, *Briefe*, i:345; and the entry in the Collegium's diary for that date, *Neue Folge*, 17.)
- On Fri, 3 May, Wolfgang played at a "Madame Doria's," as reported in a letter of Count Kraft Ernst zu Oettingen-Wallerstein in a letter to his mother dated 5 May. (*Dokumente*, 110; see the discussion of this passage in our entry for 4 Apr 1770.)
- In another letter to his mother on 9 May, Count Oettingen-Wallerstein reports hearing Wolfgang again at the Venetian ambassador's on Tue, 7 May (*Dokumente*, 110).

Thus Wolfgang appears to have performed in Rome at least seven times during his first sojourn, on 19, 20, 26, and 29 Apr, and 2, 3, and 7 May. All of these performances took place at private functions.

Leopold and Wolfgang departed Rome on Wed, 8 May 1770, arriving in Naples on 14 May and remaining there until 25 Jun. They visited Rome again on their way north, from 27 Jun to 10 Jul 1770. It was during this second visit that Wolfgang received the Order of the Golden Spur from the Pope and had an audience with him on 8 Jul. One wonders whether the Pope's reported indisposition during the last week of Apr may have played a role in the Mozarts not having an audience with him during their first visit to Rome, as Leopold had expected, but only on 8 Jul after their return.

Notes (⇧)

We know from Leopold Mozart's letter of Sat, 28 Apr 1770 that he and Wolfgang visited the Maltese ambassador that day (*Briefe*, i:343). But Wolfgang may not have performed during this visit; at any rate, Count Oettigen-Wallerstein reports in a letter to his mother on 28 Apr that he saw Wolfgang (possibly at the ambassador's), but did not hear him play (*Dokumente*, 109). In his letter of 28 Apr, Leopold also mentions that on Monday (30 Apr), they would be dining with the Augustinians (*Briefe*, i:343). There is no evidence that Wolfgang performed at this event.

We wish to thank Cliff Eisen for his generosity in sharing this document with us. We are also grateful to Bruce Brown for his advice on points of translation.

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