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Countess Antonia von Lodron to Count Wolkenstein (29 Nov 1772)

Dexter Edge

Archivio provinciale di Bolzano, Archivio Wolkenstein-Trostburg, fondo Toblino, n. 409/2

[facsimile of the complete letter here]

[1]

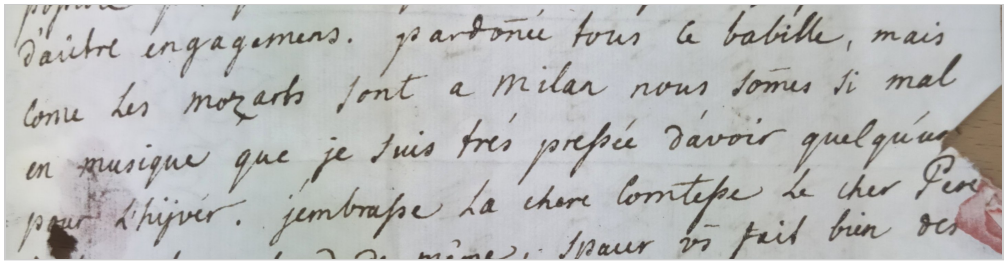
Salzbourg le 29 9bre
1772

Monsieur mon trés chèr fils!
[...]

[3]

pardon[n]ée tous le babille, mais
come [sic] les Mozarts sont a Milan nous som[m]es si mal
en musique que je suis trés pressée d'avoir quelqu'un
pour l'hÿver. *[...]*

Mon cher fils!
votre tres obeissante
servante & fidelle mere
Lodron née D'arco$_{mpia}$



[translation:]

Salzburg, 29 Nov
1772

Monsieur my very dear son!
[...]

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Pardon all the prattle, but as
the Mozarts are in Milan, we are so weak in music
that I am very pressed to have someone for
the winter. *[...]*

My dear son!

Your very obedient
servant & faithful mother
Lodron née d'Arco$_{mpia}$

Commentary

This reference to the Mozarts, in a letter from Countess Antonia von Lodron in Salzburg to Count Pio Fedele von Wolkenstein in Trent, was discovered by Clemente Lunelli (Lunelli 1982, 418–19; 1989, 520). It is the last of three references to the Mozarts in letters to Wolkenstein, all discovered by Lunelli: the others are discussed in our entries for 9 Nov 1771 (a letter from Count Cajetan von Rogendorf referring to i) and 2 Jan 1772 (a letter from violinist Francesco Galoardi, who visited the Mozarts in Salzburg).

Countess Antonia von Lodron, née von Arco (1738–1780), was the second wife of Count Ernst Maria von Lodron (1716–1779) in Salzburg (see our entries for 11 Dec 1769 and 27 Dec 1769). She was an avid musician and music-lover: Wolfgang later composed his "Lodron" divertimenti for her name-day (13 Jun) in 1776 (K. 247, with the March, K. 248) and 1777 (K. 287), and he wrote his "Lodron" Concerto in F Major for Three Keyboards, K. 242 (1776) for her and her daughters Maria Aloysia and Maria Josepha. On 14 Jul 1771, Count Wolkenstein married Maria Maximiliana von Lodron (1751–1808), Count Ernst Maria's daughter from his first marriage. Thus Countess Antonia was the stepmother of Wolkenstein's wife. (On Wolkenstein's biography, see our entry for 9 Nov 1771.)

The countess's letter of 29 Nov 1772 is part of a longer exchange with Wolkenstein. She had evidently inquired in an earlier letter whether he could recommend a good violinist who would be willing to come to Salzburg for a period of time. As she makes clear in the passage transcribed above, she was having difficulty finding musicians for her family's domestic music-making during the coming winter, as the Mozarts were currently away from Salzburg. Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart had left Salzburg on 24 Oct 1772 for Milan for the rehearsals and premiere of Wolfgang's *Lucio Silla*. They returned to Salzburg on 13 Mar 1773, having been gone for around four and half months.

In a (lost) letter of 24 Nov 1772, Wolkenstein had apparently suggested violinist Giacomo Tranquillini, about whom little is known. Countess Antonia's letter of 29 Nov responds to this idea. She writes that Tranquillini could be given the title of "secretary" in their household, including board and a small salary in local currency. If he were content to remain in Salzburg for a

couple of years, he might even reasonably hope for a place in the court orchestra, given that “Seÿtl” is likely to die soon and several other violinists in the orchestra are old. (Violinist and Hofkonzertmeister Ferdinand Seidel did in fact die on 22 Apr 1773; Hintermaier 1972, 403.) If Tranquillini might wish to make a tour of Germany (“allemagne”), she and her husband would be happy to have him stay with them, as they both like music, and Tranquillini could perhaps impart something of the Italian taste to “Sigerl”—their son Sigmund Johann Nepomuk Aloys Joseph von Lodron (1759–1779). If Tranquillini is agreeable, he ought to leave on the next coach, and she will reimburse his travel expenses. So far as we know, nothing came of this offer, and Tranquillini did not go to Salzburg.

Countess Antonia’s letter is remarkable for its warmth and informality, in marked contrast to the formal rhetoric of the letters of recommendation that the Mozarts acquired during their first trip to Italy. Although the countess mentions the Mozarts only in passing in her letter of 29 Nov 1772, their absence from Salzburg seems to have been her primary motive in searching for a violinist. In any case, the letter shows that already in the early 1770s she considered Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart essential to her family’s domestic musical life. And she was apparently not the only one—at the close of her letter, she writes:

> Spaur v[ous] fait bien des
> complimens, il est toute aussi pressée *[sic]* que moi pour
> avoir un bon violon ici.
>
> Spaur also sends you his
> best regards, he is just as pressed as I am to have
> a good violinist here.

The reference is probably to Count Ignaz Joseph von Spaur (1727–1779), an amateur cellist who was also close to the Mozarts.

Notes (⇧)

Lunelli gives two slightly different transcriptions of the passage referring to the Mozarts in the countess’s letter, both slightly incorrect. In his article from 1982 he writes:

> Mais come les Mozarts sont a Milan nous sommes sì mal en musique
> que je suis trés prescé davoir quelquus [sic] pour l’hyver.
> [Lunelli 1982, 419]

In his article from 1989, he gives:

> mai *[sic]* comme le Mozart *[sic]* sont a’ Milan nous sommes si mal en musique
> que je suis trés pressee davoir quelqu’un pour l’hyver.
> [Lunelli 1989, 520]

Parvopassu (2006, 676) cites this passage based on Lunelli’s 1989 transcription, which incorrectly suggests that the countess is referring to just one Mozart.

In both transcriptions, Lunelli omits the first phrase, “pardonnée tous le babille”.

We are grateful to the Archivio provinciale di Bolzano for permission to publish the image of Countess Lodron’s letter. We would also like to thank Anne-Louise Luccarini for her helpful comments on a draft of this entry and for her identification of Countess Antonia’s “Sigerl”; Stefano Frega for his generosity in obtaining the image of the countess’s letter and his help with the research; and Janet Page for her comments and corrections.

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Credit: Clemente Lunelli

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