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Count Firmian responds to Count Marulli regarding Mozart (4 Apr 1770)

Dexter Edge and Christopher J. Salmon

Letter from Count Carlo Firmian to Count Giacomo Marulli in Bologna
Private collection

Ill.^mo^ Sig.^re^ Sig.^re^ e P[ad]rone Col[endissi]mo

I termini di singolar gentilezza, co’ quali V.S. Illma meco s’esprime nella stima.^ma^ sua de’ 28. dello scaduto, e la bontà da lei dimostrata ai miei raccomandati Mozart richieg= =gono ch’io le ne renda i più vivi ringraziamenti, accertandola del sincero desiderio, che nodrisco di mostrarle la viva mia riconoscenza, e di darle realmente a conoscere la verità di que’ sentimenti, che mi costituiscono quale mi protesto di essere colla maggiore considerazione

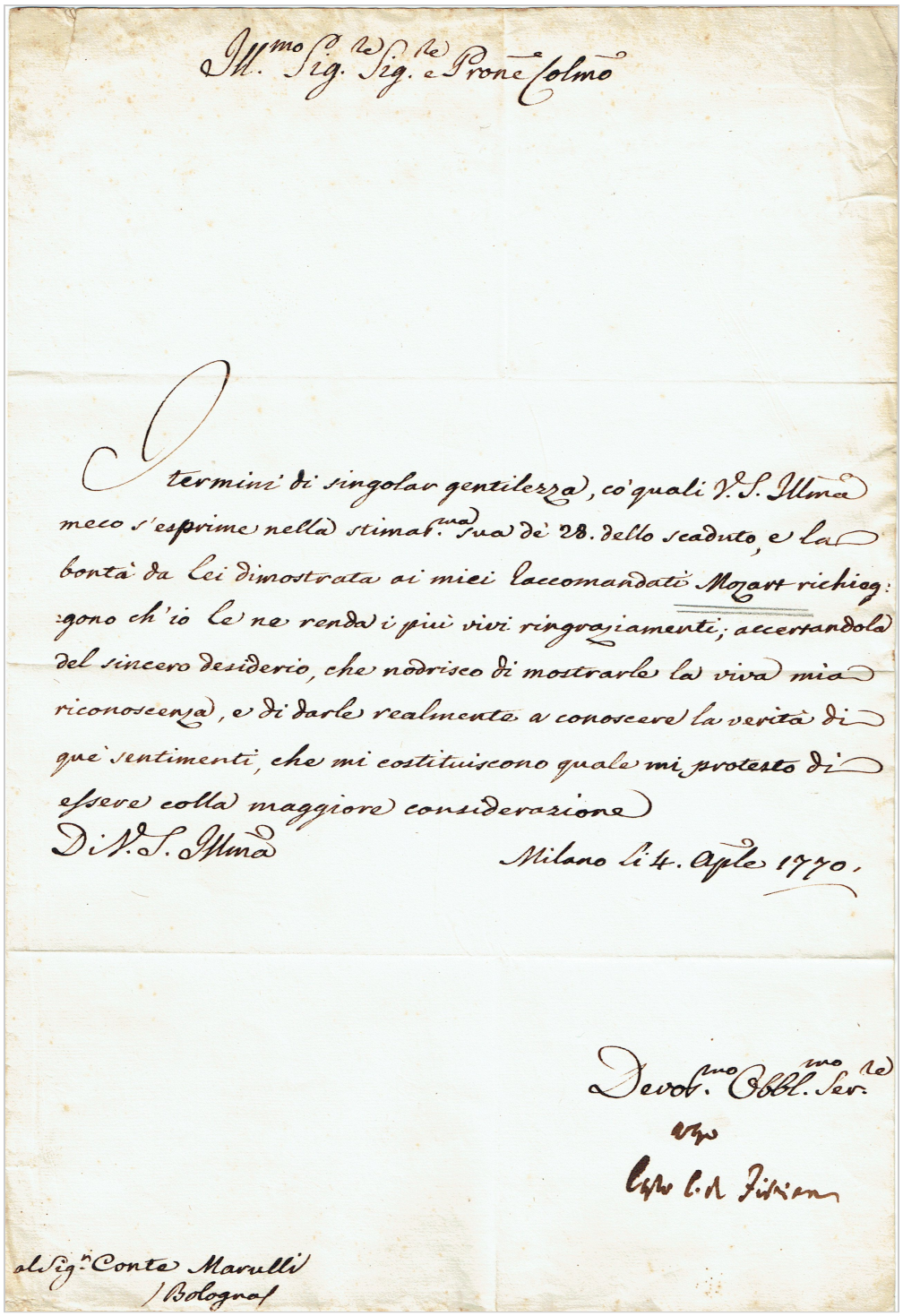
Di V.S. Illma

Milano li 4. Ap[ri]le 1770.

Devot.^mo^ Obbl.^mo^ Ser.^re^
v[os]tro
Conte C. d. Firmian

al Sig.^e^ Conte Marulli
/Bologna/

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Ill.mo Sig.r Sig.r e Pron.e Colmo

Termini di singolar gentilezza, co'quali V.S. Illma meco s'esprime nella stimat.ma sua de' 28. dello scaduto, e la bontà da Lei dimostrata ai miei Raccomandati Mozart richiedono ch'io Le ne renda i più vivi ringraziamenti; accertandola del sincero desiderio, che nodrisco di mostrarle la viva mia riconoscenza, e di darle realmente a conoscere la verità di que' sentimenti, che mi costituiscono quale mi protesto di essere colla maggiore considerazione

Di V.S. Illma

Milano li 4. Aprile 1770.

Devot.mo Obbl.mo Ser.re

Agn.o C.te Firmian

al Sig.r Conte Marulli
/Bologna/

[translation:]

Most Eminent and Highly Respected Lord

The terms of singular courtesy with which Your Eminence expressed himself to me in your esteemed letter of the 28th of last month, and the generosity shown by you to those I recommended, the Mozarts, require that I express to you my

deepest thanks, assuring you of the sincere wish that I nourish to show you my deepest gratitude, and to have you truly know the truth of these feelings, which represent my declaration to be, with highest consideration,
Your Eminence's Milan, 4 April 1770.

Most Devoted and Obliged Servant
Your
Count C[arlo] di Firmian

To Count Marulli
/Bologna/

Commentary

Leopold and Wolfgang left Milan on 15 Mar 1770. They had been in the city just over seven weeks, during which time Wolfgang had been taken under the wing of Count Carlo di Firmian. (On Firmian and Mozart, see our first entry for 4 Apr 1770). Following brief stops in Parma and Modena, father and son arrived in Bologna on 24 Mar, remaining there for five days. They had with them a letter of recommendation from Firmian to Count Gian Luca Pallavicini-Centurione, who presented Mozart at a concert in his residence on 26 Mar. This letter and concert have long been known to Mozart scholars (*Dokumente*, 100–101; on Pallavicini, see our entry for 27 Dec 1769).

The Mozarts evidently also had with them a letter of recommendation from Fimian to Count Giacomo Marulli (1729–1799). Although this letter of recommendation is lost, its existence is implied by the newly discovered letter transcribed above: Firmian's response to Marulli's (lost) reply of 28 Mar to Firmian's (lost) original letter of recommendation.

Marulli's name appears in Leopold's travel notes for Bologna directly after his entry for Pallavicini and Pallavicini's household:

> S: E: C: Ballavicini Sgr[a] Consorte, figlio, e figlia Maritata *[...]*
> C: Marulli e la Sig[a] Conteßa *[...]* [*Briefe*, i:330]
>
> His Excellency Count Pallavicini, His wife, son, and married daughter *[...]*
> Count Marulli and the Countess *[...]*

Marulli's wife ("la Signora Contessa") was Countess Camilla Boccadiferro-Marulli, whom Giacomo had married on 30 Apr 1752. Camilla was the daughter of Maria Caterina Fava Ghislieri and her first husband Count Camillo Boccadiferro, who had died in 1734. Count Gian Luca Pallavicini was Maria Caterina's third husband; thus Camilla's mother is the "Sgr[a] Consorte" in Leopold's entry. Maria Caterina's other daughter with Count Boccadiferro (thus Camilla's sister) was Countess Girolama Boccadiferro-Legnani Ferri, probably the "figlia

Maritata" in Leopold's entry. (On the Boccadiferros, see the genealogy here; on Camilla and Girolama, see also Caracciolo 2006a and 2006b.) Marulli's name appears nowhere else in the Mozart family correspondence and its appearance in Firmian's letter above is its first in any other Mozart document.

Marulli seems to have received no scholarly attention. The most detailed biography we have found is the amateur website *Nobili Napoletani* (not updated since 2007), on the page "Famiglia Marulli," our principal source here.

Giacomo Marulli was born on 6 Feb 1729 in Barletta in Apulia, the son of Count Troiano Marulli (1685–1755). Giacomo is said to have been brought to Bologna at the age of 11 by his great uncle, Field Marshal Count Francesco Saverio Marulli (1675–1751). Young Marulli was educated in Bologna and eventually made Francesco Saverio's heir, on the condition that he marry a suitable girl from Bologna—which he did in 1752: Camilla Boccadiferro (see this poem in honor of their marriage). The couple had no children. During his lifetime Giacomo acquired a variety of titles, including imperial chamberlain and Knight of the Military order of St. Stephan. In 1767, Archduke Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany (and brother of Emperor Joseph II), named Giacomo his representative to the papal legations in Bologna, Ferrara, and Romagna (see the report in the *Wienerisches Diarium* on 9 May 1767). Following a life that left relatively little public imprint, Giacomo Marulli died in Venice on 12 Sep 1799 at the age of 70.

The few references we have found to Marulli nearly all pertain to his status as a person in Bologna with connections to the imperial family. Casanova, escaping a difficult situation in Florence, sought out Marulli in Bologna at the end of 1770 to convey a message to Grand Duke Leopold:

> *[…]* Je suis parti de Florence moins riche d'une centaine de sequins ; je n'avais fait aucune dépense, j'y ai enfin vécu en sage. Je me suis arrêté à la première poste de l'État du pape, et l'avant-dernier jour de l'an je suis arrivé à Bologne allant me loger à l'auberge de S.^{t} Marc. Je suis d'abord allé faire une visite au comte Marulli qui était chargé d'affaires de Florence pour le prier d'écrire à S. A. R. que partout où je me trouverais dans tout le reste de ma vie je célébrais ses vertus.
>
> Il crut que je ne parlais pas comme je pensais, car il avait reçu une lettre qui l'informait de toute l'affaire : mais je lui ai dit que s'il savait tout il verrait que les obligations que j'avais à S. A. R. étaient essentielles. Il m'assura qu'il écrirait au prince de quelle façon je parlais de lui. [Casanova 2018, 1017]

[translation:]

> *[…]* I departed Florence less rich by around 100 sequins; I had not had any expenses, at least I had lived frugally. I stopped at the first post of the Papal States and on the next-to-last day of the year arrived in Bologna, going to lodge at the inn of St. Marco. I first went to pay a visit to Count Marulli, who was chargé d'affaires for Florence, to beg him to write to His Royal Highness that wherever I found myself for the rest of my life I would celebrate his virtues.

> He thought that I was not saying what I thought, for he had received a letter that informed him of the whole affair: but I told him that if he knew everything, he would see that the obligations I had to His Royal Highness were essential. He assured me that he would write to the prince of the manner in which I spoke of him.

As we know from Leopold's travel notes, the Mozarts also lodged at St. Marco when they returned to Bologna between Jul and Oct 1770. They departed Bologna on 13 Oct, just two and a half months before Casanova's arrival; this must count as one of history's more notable near misses.

Marulli's name occasionally appears in reports of visits to Bologna by members of the imperial family. In 1775, Joseph II made a whirlwind trip to Croatia and northern Italy, traveling (in Italy at least) incognito as Count Falkenstein, which allowed him to avoid the pomp and ceremony of an official state visit. He blew through Bologna on 27 Jun:

> BOLOGNA 27. Giugno
> *[...]*
> Jeri verso il mezzogiorno passò di qui S. M. l'Imperatore in strettissim. incognito sotto nome di Conte Falchenstein, e dopo aver pranzato nella solita Locanda Imperiale del Pellegrino ripartì immediatemente alla volta di Ferrara per imbarcarsi sul Pò, e passare per acqua a Mestre. Non ha quì veduto alcuno. Solamente il Conte Marulli Ministro di S. A. R. il Gran-Duca Toscana, e Vice-Protettore per la Regia Imperiale Corre di Vienna nel nazione Alemanna ebbe l'onore di essere accolto dalla M. S. e di farle la sua corte *[...]*
> [*Notizie del mondo*, no. 52, Sat, 2 Jul 1775, 413]

[translation:]

> BOLOGNA 27 June.
> *[...]*
> Yesterday around midday, His Majesty the Emperor passed very quickly through here, traveling in strictest incognito under the name of Count Falkenstein, and after having dined at the usual Imperial Inn of Pellegrino, he departed again immediately for Ferrara to embark on the Po and to travel by water to Mestre. He did not see anyone. Only Count Marulli, Minister of His Royal

Highness the Grand Duke of Tuscany and Vice-Protector of the Royal Imperial Court of Vienna in the German Nation had the honor to be received by His Majesty and to pay him his court. *[...]*

Marulli was one of the beneficiaries of the lavish generosity of Archduke Maximilian Franz during the archduke's brief visit to Bologna in Oct 1775:

BOLOGNA 25. Ottobre

Il Real Arciduca Massimiliano si è degnato di far passare al Sig. Carlo Borsini dell'Imperiale Albergo del Pellegrino per le particolari attenzioni praticategli zecchini cento in regalo, oltre d' averlo generosamente soddisfatto.

Lunedì mattina questo Principe partì per Modena dopo aver godute le Feste accennate nel passato Ordinario, e con aver lasciato alla sala del Sig. Cardinale zecchini 20.; alla sala di S. E. Marulli zecchini 50.; alla sala del Vice-Legato zecchini 20.; alla Specula zecchini 100.; alla Galleria Sampieri zecchini 6.; ai Poveri zecchini 20.; a S. E. Marulli, Quaranta Legnani, e Quaranta Barbazza una tabacchiera d'oro per ciascuno[.] Al Maestro di Posta di Bologna un orologio d'oro con sua catena, e al Sig. Antonio Filippo Fenzi di Firenze un anello di brillanti &c.

[*Notizie del mondo*, no. 86, Sat, 28 Oct 1775, 626]

[translation:]

BOLOGNA 25 October

Royal Archduke Maximilian condescended to have given to Signor Carlo Borsini of the Imperial Inn of Pellegrino a present of one hundred zecchini for the special attentions shown to him, as well as for having generously satisfied him.

Monday morning this Prince left for Modena after having enjoyed the celebrations mentioned in the last *Ordinario*, and having left at the entrance hall of the Signor Cardinal 20 zecchini; at the entrance hall of His

> Excellency Marulli 50 zecchini; at the entrance hall of the Vice Legate 20 zecchini; at the Specola [observatory] 100 zecchini; at the Sampieri Gallery 6 zecchini; for the poor, 20 zecchini; to His Excellency Marulli, Quaranta Legnani, and Quaranta Barbazza, a gold snuffbox for each. To the postmaster of Bologna a gold watch with its chain, and to Signor Antonio Filippo Fenzi of Florence a diamond ring, etc.

("Quaranta" here seems to be another term for "Senator"; the Bolognese senate originally had forty members, although since 1590 the official number had been fifty. The references are probably to Count Girolamo Legnani Ferri (1721–1805), the husband of Girolama Boccadiferro, and to Marchese [Andrea?] Barbazza. Both Legnani and Barbazza were senators in Bologna.)

It may be that Firmian recommended the Mozarts to Marulli simply because Marulli was the highest imperial official in Bologna (at that time under papal control), and it may be that the Mozarts met Marulli only at Pallavicini's concert on 26 Mar 1770. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that Marulli might have received them at his residence and perhaps even had Mozart perform there. There are hints that Marulli had an interest in music. On 9 Jan 1776 he held a concert for Archduchess Maria Christina and Prince Albert:

> BOLOGNA 13. Gennajo.
> Arrivarono quì la sera del dì 8., co-
> me si accennò, verso la mezza notte le
> LL. AA. RR. Arciduchessa Cristina, e
> Duca Alberto. Tutto il giorno susseguen-
> te del martedì l'impiegarono nel vedere
> le rarità della Città, cioè le Chiese di
> S. Pietro, S. Petronio, S. Salvadore, S.
> Paolo, e S. Giovanni in Monte, le Scuo-
> le, la Galleria Sampieri, S. Michele in Bo-
> sco, gli Archi della Madonne di S. Luca,
> e l'Istituto. Di prima sera furono a un
> piccolo concerto di Musica in casa di
> Sua Eccelleza il Sig. Conte Marulli *[...]*
> [*Notizie del mondo*, no. 5, Tue, 16 Jan 1776, 38]

[translation:]

> BOLOGNA 13 January.
> As reported, on the evening of the
> 8th around midnight, Their Royal High-
> nesses Archduchess Christina, and Duke
> Albert arrived here. They made use of the

> whole of the following day, Tuesday, to see the rarities of the city, namely the churches of San Pietro, San Petronio, San Salvadore, San Paolo, and San Giovanni in Monte, the Schools, the Sampieri Gallery, San Michele in Bosco, the Sanctuary of the Madonna di San Luca, and the Institute. In the afternoon they went to a little concert at the house of His Excellency Count Marulli *[...]*

That same evening they made stops at the theater *and* the opera buffa. (The couple were in Italy to visit Maria Christina's brother Grand Duke Leopold in Florence; see Wolf 1863, chapter 3.)

Six letters addressed to Marulli are found among the letters in Padre Martini's collection in the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale in Bologna; all are using Marulli as a go-between with Martini. Four letters, all from 1777, are written by Domenico Caracciolo (1717–1789), ambassador of the Neapolitan court in Paris from 1771 to 1781 (Schnoebelen 1979, letters 948, 952, 954, and 955). In the first, dated 10 Mar 1777, Caracciolo asks Marulli to ask Martini and the secretary of the Accademia Filarmonica in Bologna to write letters in favor of Piccinni and Italian music, and thus against Gluck. Caracciolo reiterates the request in a letter to Marulli on 19 May 1777, then in a letter dated 2 Jun 1777 complains that Martini and the secretary of the Accademia are leaving him to defend Italian music in Paris by himself. Caracciolo's letter of 23 Jun 1777 responds to a lost letter from Marulli; in it, Caracciolo writes that Martini and the secretary "are mistaken in thinking that the Gluckists are allied with the French" (Schnoebelen 1979, summary of letter 955). The other two letters addressed to Marulli in Martini's collection are both from Prince Kaunitz in Vienna, both from early 1783; they have to do with sending the third volume of Martini's *Storia della musica* to Kaunitz, who will present it to Emperor Joseph (Schnoebelen 1979, letters 2571 and 2572).

During his trip to Italy in 1783, Joseph II wrote to Count Rosenberg on 18 Dec from Bologna regarding the quality of the local singers, mentioning that he had spoken to Marulli:

> *[...]*
> Nous voici dans le Centre des Virtuosi à Boulogne, tout le monde se plaint du petit nombre des bons sujets et même M. Marulli veut mettre au rang des bonnes chanteuses la Mandini. [Payer von Thurn 1920, 37]
>
> [...]
> Here we are in the center of virtuosi in Bologna, and everyone complains of the small number of good candidates, and even M. Marulli wants to place La Mandini in the ranks of good singers.

(The reference is to Maria Mandini, a not particularly distinguished singer who had made her debut with the court theater in Vienna in May 1783, and later created the role of Marcellina in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*.)

None of this proves that Firmian recommended the Mozarts to Marulli because of the latter's musical interests, but it may have been a factor.

Notes (⇧)

Firmian's response to Marulli carries the same date, 4 Apr 1770, as Firmian's letter of recommendation to Prince Doria Pamphilj in Rome (see our entry for that letter). However, the letter to Marulli is not written by the same hand as the letter to Prince Doria Pamphilj; we have suggested the hand in that letter may be Leopold Troger's, one of Firmian's secretaries; the letter to Marulli, seems to have been written by another of Firmian's secretaries, probably the same one who wrote Firmian's letter of 9 Jan 1771 recommending the Mozarts to Count Lascaris di Catellar in Turin.

The commentary in *Briefe* (v:242–43) to Leopold's travel notes correctly identifies the Boccadiferro sisters, their mother, and their relationships to Pallavicini, but makes no attempt to identify Marulli.

The biography of Marulli at *Nobili Napoletani* states that Marulli attended three concerts by Mozart: the one at Pallavicini's palace in Bologna on 26 Mar 1770, and then later that year a concert at Pallavicini's summer home outside the city and another at his palace in the city. These claims seem to be merely speculative, based on the Marulli family's connection with Pallavicini. All are plausible and indeed it seems likely that Marulli attended the concert on 26 Mar; but at present there seems to be no documentary evidence for his attendance at the others.

We are grateful to Bruce Brown and Janet Page for their comments, and to Steven Whiting for clarifying the travels of Archduke Max Franz in the 1770s.

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