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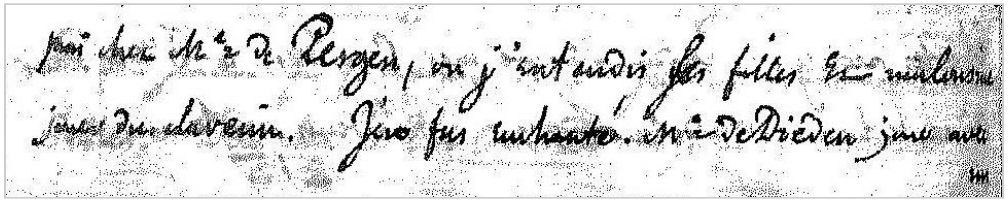
Joseph II on the Mozart-Clementi duel (addendum) (5 Dec 1782)

Dexter Edge

Vienna, Haus-. Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Kabinettarchiv, Nachlass Zinzendorf, Tagebücher 26 (Tagebuch 1782)

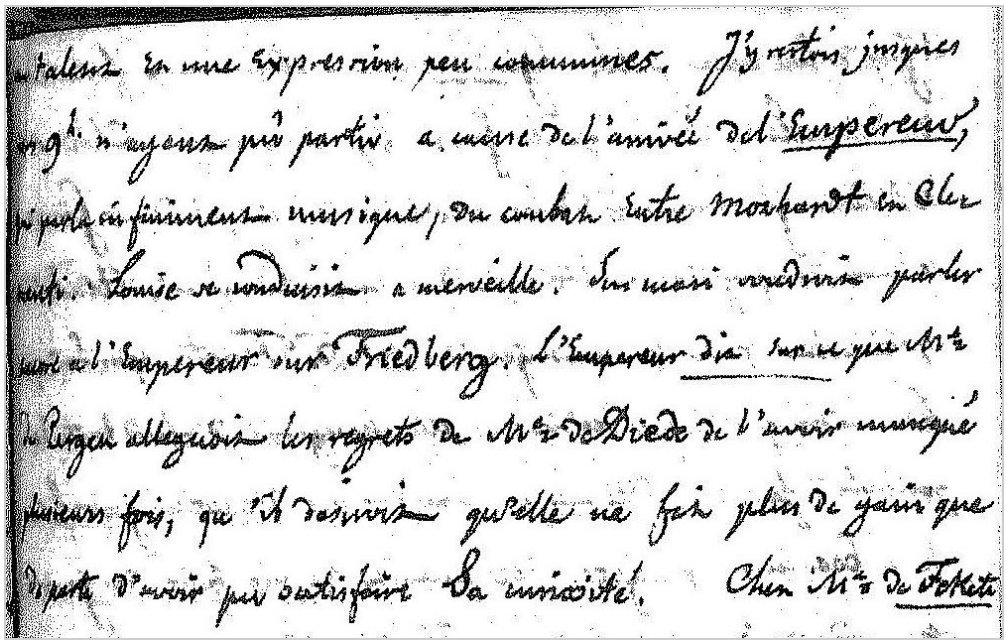
ᴝ. 5. Decembre. *[...]*

puis chez M:e de Pergen, ou j'entendis ses filles et ma Cousine
jouer du clavecin. J'en fus enchanté. M:e de Dieden joue avec



un talent et une expression peu communes. J'y restois jusques
[a] 9h. n'ayant pû partir a cause de l'arrivée de l'Empereur,
qui parla infiniment musique, du combat entre Mozhardt et Cle=
menti. Louise se conduisit a merveille. Son mari voudrait parler
encore a l'Empereur sur Friedberg. L'Empereur dit sur ce que M:e
de Pergen alleguoit les regrets de M:e de Diede de l'avoir manqué
plusieurs fois, qu'il desiroit qu'elle ne fit plus de gain que
de perte d'avoir pu satisfaire Sa curiosité.

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[translation:]

Then to Madame von Pergen's, where I heard her daughters and my cousin play the clavecin. I was enchanted. Madame von Diede plays with uncommon talent and expression. I stayed there until 9 pm, not being able to leave because of the arrival of the Emperor, who spoke endlessly about music, about the duel between Mozart and Clementi. Louise behaved marvelously. Her husband still wanted to speak to the Emperor about Friedberg. To Madame von Pergen's excuses for Madame de Diede's having missed him several times, the Emperor said that he could not wish that she had done more or less to satisfy her curiosity.

Commentary

This reference to Emperor Joseph II is one of the best known Mozart-related entries in the diaries of Count Karl von Zinzendorf. The emperor is talking about the Mozart-Clementi duel, nearly a year after it took place on 24 Dec 1781 (see our entry for that date). The sentence in blue above is given in *Dokumente* (184) and in corrected form in *Addenda* (40). It has generally been interpreted as if the emperor had something of a fixation on the event. Simon Keefe writes, for example:

> The contest clearly made an impression on Emperor Joseph; he was still talking about it (to Zinzendorf) almost a year later. [Keefe 2017, 45]

However, the surrounding context of Zinzendorf's entry provides a rather different view.

Zinzendorf had gone to Countess von Pergen's in search of his cousin, Baroness Louise Diede zum Fürstenstein, with whom he had fallen in love since her arrival in Vienna on 21 Nov 1782 (see our entry for 6 Dec 1782). Countess Philippine Gabriele Johanna Sophie von Pergen, née Baroness von Groschlag zu Dieburg, was the wife of Count Johann Anton Graf von Pergen (1725–1814), who held a variety of important government posts under Joseph II, but is best remembered today as the architect of Austria's police state under Franz II. The Pergens had three daughters, one of whom died in 1772. The surviving daughters, the ones Zinzendorf heard play the keyboard on 5 Dec 1782, were Marie Therese Josepha, who would have been around 19, and Maria Anna, who was one month shy of eight (see Wurzbach 1870). Louise von Diede was by all accounts a highly accomplished keyboard player. The next day, Zinzendorf reports hearing her play "very difficult" pieces by Mozart and Bach. In Rome in 1788, Goethe heard her play a concerto at the residence of a Roman senator (see our entry for 6 Dec 1782).

In the two weeks since her arrival, Louise had made quite an impression among the Viennese high aristocracy, but the emperor had not yet met her. He seems to have gone to Countess Pergen's specifically to seek her out, and although Zinzendorf is not entirely clear on the point, it's likely that Joseph heard her play. Zinzendorf does not mention specifically what she played on 5 Dec, but we know from his entry the following day that she had Mozart in her repertoire.

Thus it was meeting Louise and (probably) hearing her play that was Joseph's motivation for speaking "endlessly about music, about the duel between Mozart and Clementi." He was talking to an educated, charming, beautiful, and highly musical woman that he had just met, about a notable private musical event that he had hosted in Vienna, one that she would almost certainly not have known about.

Notes (⇧)

Dokumente and *Addenda* give "jusques vers 9h." The second word is illegible in the gutter of the online scan of Zinzendorf's diary, but "vers" is unidiomatic and redundant. We have given "jusques a". (Zinzendorf rarely added the accent to "à".)

We are grateful to Anne-Louise Luccarini for her help with questions of transcription and translation in Zinzendorf's diary entry, and to Janet Page for her comments and corrections.

Bibliography (⇧)

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