

## *Idomeneo* at Prince Auersperg's (Mar 1786)

Dexter Edge

*Staats-Relation derer neuesten europäischen Nachrichten und Begebenheiten*, 12 Apr 1786,  
unpaginated

[3]

### Vermischte Nachrichten.

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[4]

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[translation:]

#### Miscellaneous News.

(From Vienna, dated the 29th of last month)  
After several performances of the two popular operas *Alceste* and *Idomeneo* were given in February and March—to the greatest acclaim, both for the artful music and the magnificent sets—in the theater of Prince Johann Adam von Auersperg in the Josephstadt by some ladies and gentlemen for their own amusement and that of the public, the Prince—who is always intent on contributing to the pleasure of the entire public in this capital city in the most obliging manner—had performed on 26 March by the leading singers of the court opera, *Madame Storace* and Herr *Benucci*, an opera by the famous Herr Paisiello called *La serva padrona*. These two musical artists, long the favorites of the public here, also justified on this occasion the high expectation to which they entitle us; and Herr *Giornovich*, the universally admired virtuoso on the violin in the service of Her Russian Imperial Majesty, brought to its very apex, with a concerto he played with his rare artistry and equally exceptional grace during the intermission of the opera, the enchantment that the theater piece instilled in all listeners, and which gave new impetus to the gratitude of the public toward the

Prince, who seeks to augment his entertainments  
with such great expense and such great care.

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## Commentary

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## Introduction (↑)

Mozart’s *Idomeneo* was first performed on 29 Jan 1781 in Munich, where it had been commissioned as a carnival opera for the court theater. Only one other production of the opera is known during Mozart’s lifetime, at the theater of Prince Johann Adam Auersperg in Vienna in Mar 1786. Up to now, our knowledge of Auersperg’s production has been based on just four pieces of documentary evidence from the time and another from four decades later. These documents tell us relatively little: the last names of four of the principal performers, the date of one performance, and the fact it was at Auersperg’s. Mozart scholars have generally read more into this scant evidence than it warrants: it is often said or implied that *Idomeneo* was performed just once at Auersperg’s, that the performance was private, that the performance was probably unstaged, that Mozart directed the music, and that the opera was not well received. Yet the known documentary sources do not explicitly address any of these points except the last, and only one addresses the opera’s reception.

The new item transcribed above, published in the Regensburg newspaper *Staats-Relation derer neuesten europäischen Nachrichten und Begebenheiten* on 12 Apr 1786, is based on a report from a

correspondent in Vienna; a somewhat shorter version of the same report was published independently in the *Real-Zeitung* of Erlangen on 4 Apr. The report calls into question much of the received wisdom: it suggests that *Idomeneo* may have been performed more than once at Auersperg’s, that the performances may have been open to the public, that the opera was probably staged (or at least that it had sets), and that it was well received. (No known source mentions Mozart directing, which remains speculative.)

The present commentary reexamines Auersperg’s production of *Idomeneo* in light of the correspondent’s report, supplemented by documents, many of them newly uncovered, that elucidate the wider context of productions in Auersperg’s theater. Three other related documents on Mozart’s *Idomeneo* have separate entries on this site: a letter dated [23 Mar 1786](#) from Count Hugo von Hatzfeld (brother-in-law of Countess Hatzfeld, the Elettra of Auersperg’s production) to the theater director Gustav Friedrich Wilhelm Großmann; an anecdote from a book by Giuseppe Antonio Bridi (the probable *Idomeneo* in Auersperg’s production) on [Paisiello and \*Idomeneo\*](#); and Anton Reicha’s reminiscence of Countess Hatzfeld’s stunning performance in Bonn of Elettra’s “[Tutte nel cor vi sento](#).” Taken together, these documents and related discoveries about early manuscript sources of *Idomeneo* suggest new lines of inquiry into the early history of the opera’s distribution, reception, and influence.

### ***Idomeneo* between Munich and Auersperg (↑)**

*Idomeneo* was first performed in Munich on Mon, 29 Jan 1781. It remains unclear how many times the opera was performed there, but carnival operas were expensive to produce and were typically performed several times. Mozart left Munich on 12 Mar and went directly to Vienna to join the retinue of his employer, the Archbishop of Salzburg, arriving there on the 16th; soon after, he decided to remain in the imperial capital permanently in order to take advantage of the rich range of musical opportunities that Vienna offered.

Mozart evidently had the autograph score of *Idomeneo* with him when he came to Vienna, and initially entertained high hopes of having the opera produced there in some form. Already on 24 Mar 1781 he wrote to his father that he planned to “bang through” the opera with the Emperor (Mozart writes “durchPeitschen”; *Briefe*, iii:99), and during his first months in Vienna he played through the opera for several prominent people, including Count Rosenberg (the head of the court theaters), Baron Gottfried van Swieten, and Countess Thun, to whom he lent the autograph for a time (*Briefe*, iii:120–21, and 135). Mozart seems to have hoped that *Idomeneo* might be mounted, perhaps in a revised version in German, for the visit to Vienna at the end of 1781 of Grand Duke Paul of Russia and his wife Maria Fyodorovna (the so-called Count and Countess of the North; see Mozart’s letter to Leopold of 12 Sep 1781, *Briefe*, iii:157). But in the event, it was decided to revive several operas by Gluck for their visit, including *Iphigénie en Tauride* (in a new German translation), *Alceste* (in Italian), *Orfeo ed Euridice* (also apparently in Italian), and *Die Pilgrimme von Mekka* (a German version of *La rencontre imprévue*). Gluck was at that time Vienna’s most famous opera composer, and a production of *Idomeneo* for the

Russian visitors was probably never realistically in the cards. (On the visits to Vienna of the Count and Countess of the North, see our entry for [8 Oct 1782](#).)

However, Mozart did not abandon the idea of giving *Idomeneo* some sort of public hearing. On 23 Jan 1782 he wrote to his father that friends, including Countess Thun and the tenor Valentin Adamberger (soon to be Mozart's first Belmonte), had advised him to select the best numbers from *Idomeneo* and have them performed at a concert in the Burgtheater (*Briefe*, iii:193–94). Mozart did indeed give a concert that season in the Burgtheater, on 3 Mar, the third Sunday in Lent, and it is sometimes reported as fact that extracts from *Idomeneo* were performed at that concert (see, for example, *Dokumente*, 176); but we have no documentary confirmation that they were. We do know, however, that the following Lent, on 23 Mar 1783, Aloisia Lange sang Ilia's "Se il padre perdei" at Mozart's concert in the Burgtheater (*Briefe*, iii:261). Shortly after that concert, on 3 Apr 1783, Mozart sent the autograph of *Idomeneo* to Salzburg so that Leopold and Nannerl could become better acquainted with it (*Briefe*, iii:262). In a letter of 6 Dec 1783, Wolfgang asked Leopold to return the score, and he reminded his father of the request in a letter dated 24 Dec (*Briefe*, iii:295 and 299). This is the last reference to the opera in any of the family's correspondence during Mozart's lifetime, although Leopold evidently did eventually return the autograph to Wolfgang.

### Prince Auersperg's *Idomeneo* (↑)

Prior to the discovery of the correspondent's report under discussion here, only four pieces of contemporaneous documentary evidence were known on the production of *Idomeneo* at Prince Auersperg's in 1786. One of these, an item in Reichard's *Theater-Kalender* for 1787, simply mentions that the opera had recently been performed at Auersperg's, without providing any information about dates or cast:

[...] Wissen Sie daher, das man in ganz Wien nicht mehr als 4 Privattheater zählet, diese sind, bey Fürst Carl Auersperg, Graf Alheim, Graf Johann Esterhasy, und bey Herrn Lackenbauer; in dem ersten giebt man sowohl italienische als deutsche Opern, wie auch deutsche und französische Komödien; gespielt wird durch die erste Noblesse, zu Zeiten mit Beyziehung einer oder zweyer Akteurs oder Aktrizen, man gab da ohnlängst *il re Idomeneo. La Serva Patrona. L'ami de la Maison*. [...]

[*Theater-Kalender*, 1787, 96; *Neue Folge*, 56]

[...] Accordingly, you should know that not more than 4 private theatres can be counted in all of Vienna, those of Prince Carl Auersperg, Count

Altheim, Count Johann Esterhazy, and Herr Lackenbauer. Italian and German operas are given at the first, as well as German and French comedies. They are performed by the first nobility, at times with the participation of one or two actors or actresses. Recently *Idomeneo*, *La serva padrona* and *L’Ami de la maison* were given there. [...] [NMD, 44, translation amended]

The reference to “Carl” Auersperg is incorrect: it was Prince Karl Joseph’s younger brother Johann Adam who owned the theater and mounted productions. This is an early instance of a misidentification later made by Deutsch (*Dokumente*, 234; corrected in *Addenda*, 49), which still sometimes crops up in writing on *Idomeneo* (for examples, see the *Notes* below). The report in the *Staats-Relation* transcribed above correctly identifies [Prince Johann Adam von Auersperg](#) (1721–1795) as the owner of the palace and the theater. *L’ami de la maison* was a “comédie mêlée d’ariettes” with music by Grétry; this reference in the *Theater-Kalender* is currently the only known source for the claim that *L’ami de la maison* was ever performed at Auersperg’s.

Everything else that had previously been known about Auersperg’s production of *Idomeneo* was based on three other contemporaneous documents, supplemented by a passing reference in an article published in 1824.

The earliest is Mozart’s listing in his catalog of his own works of the two new numbers that he composed for Auersperg’s production: the duet “Spiegarti non poss’io,” K. 489, for Ilia and Idamante; and the *scena con rondò* “Non temer, amato bene,” K. 490, for Idamante, with solo violin obbligato. Both were entered under the date 10 Mar 1786.



Mozart’s entry for K. 489 and K. 490 in his Verzeichnüss, 6v–7r.  
([British Library, Zweig MS 63](#))

den 10:ten [März]

Ein Duetto zu meiner oper *Idomeneo*. für die Fr: von Puffendorf und Bar: Pulini.  
begleitung. 2 violini, 2 viole, 2 oboe, 2 fagotti, 2 Corni e Basso.

detto.

*Scena con Rondò* mit violin solo für Bar: Pulini und Graf Hatzfeldt in

die obenbemeldte oper. begleitung. 2 violini, 2 viole, 2 clarinetti,  
2 fagotti, 2 Corni e Basso.

These catalog entries are the basis for the identification of three of the performers in 1786: Baroness Anna von Pufendorf as Ilia, (probably) Baron Francesco Pollini as Idamante, and Mozart's friend Count August Clemens von Hatzfeld as violin soloist in K. 490. Mozart's catalog is in fact the only known source documenting the participation of Baron Pollini and Count Hatzfeld.

On 13 Mar 1786, the birthday of Emperor Joseph II, Count Zinzendorf wrote in his diary:

[Mon] 13. Mars. L'Empereur fait 45. ans. [...] a 10h. j'al-  
lois attendre Louise, qui revenoit de l'opera Idomenée de  
chez le P<sup>ce</sup>: auersperg. [...]

[Mon] 13 March. The Emperor is 45. [...] At 10 pm  
I went to visit Louise, who was returning from the opera  
*Idomeneo* at Prince Auersperg's. [...]

(On our transcriptions from Zinzendorf's diaries, see the *Notes* below.) Zinzendorf did not attend the performance himself; he merely mentions that his cousin and close friend Louise von Diede had attended. Based on Zinzendorf's diary entry, the performance of *Idomeneo* on 13 Mar 1786 has long been assumed to have been the only one at Auersperg's, although Zinzendorf does not explicitly say so.

The last of the previously known documentary sources from 1786 is an item published under the date 5 Apr in the Salzburg journal *Pfeffer und Salz*. The anonymous author is describing cultural life in Vienna during Lent:

[15]

[Wien]  
Am 5. April.  
Mit den Schauspielen wechseln musi=  
kalische Akademien ab, welche verschie=  
dene Virtuosen auf ihre eigene Faust  
und zu ihrem eigenen Besten geben.  
Unter diesen zeichnet sich Herr Mozart  
besonders aus. Er ist ungemein be=  
liebt, und sein Ausdruck verdient Be=  
wunderung[.] Er ist auch gefällig ge=  
nug, sich recht oft hören zu lassen. Sei=  
ne Ernte ist nicht auf die Fastenzeit

beschränkt, er thut es im Advent, und,  
wenn es sonst dem Publikum beliebt,  
auch im Sommer. Seine mit Accom=  
pagnement zu sehr überfüllte Opera,  
welche bey dem Fürsten Auersberg vom  
Adel gegeben wurde, hat nicht den  
Beifall erhalten, den man sonst seiner  
Kunst, wenn er sich auf dem Forte=  
piano hören lässt — zuklatschen muss.

Die Gräfin Hatzfeld, welche vor=  
trefflich singt, (und, ohne eben den

[16]

Verdiensten der Gräfin Buffendorf die  
beym F. Auersberg mitsang, zu nahe zu  
treten, unsere Storaze) fast übertrifft,  
hat Hr. Mozarten ein ansehnliches Ge=  
schenke gemacht. Wäre Herr Mozart  
reicher als die Gräfin, so wärs hier  
an ihm gewesen, Geschenke auszuthei=  
len: Denn seine Opera hat durch die  
Kunst der Gräfin, nicht sie durch die  
Opera in den Augen der Kenner gewon=  
nen.

Legen sie dieses Urtheil nicht un=  
recht aus, lieber Freund! Ich rede  
hier nicht von der Kunst Mozarts über=  
haupt, sondern nur allein von seiner  
Opera. [...]  
[Pfeffer und Salz, 1786, i; Dokumente, 236]

[translation:]

[Vienna]

5 April

Alternating with the plays are musical  
academies given by various virtuosi  
on their own initiative and for their own  
benefit. Among these Herr Mozart  
especially stands out. He is tremendously  
popular, and his expressiveness  
deserves admiration. He is also gracious  
enough to let himself be heard quite  
often. His harvest is not limited to

Lent; he also does this in Advent and, if so desired by the public, also in summer. His opera, too overladen with accompaniments, that was given by the nobility at Prince Auersperg’s, did not receive the acclaim that one must otherwise bestow upon his artistry when he performs on the fortepiano.

The Countess Hatzfeld, who sings splendidly, and (without wishing to disparage the merits of Countess [*sic*] Pufendorf, who also sang at Prince Auersperg’s) nearly surpasses our Storage, has given Herr Mozart a considerable gift. Were Herr Mozart richer than the Countess, it would be on him to dispense gifts: for his opera gained in the eyes of connoisseurs through her singing, not she through the opera.

Do not misinterpret this judgment, dear friend! I speak here not of Mozart’s art in general, but only of his opera. [...]

The reference here is to Countess Maria Anna Hortensia von Hatzfeld, wife of Count Clemens August Johann Nepomuk von Hatzfeld, half-brother of Count August Clemens, for whom Mozart wrote the violin solo in K. 490. Although the report in *Pfeffer und Salz* does not explicitly say so, Countess Hatzfeld evidently sang the role of Elettra in the production of *Idomeneo*, the only other female role in the opera besides Ilia, which (we know from Mozart’s catalog entry) was sung by Baroness (not “Countess”) Anna von Pufendorf. The writer is favorably comparing Countess Hatzfeld’s singing with that of [Nancy Storage](#) of the court opera, who on 1 May 1786 would create the role of Susanna in the premiere of Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*. Up to now, the negative assessment of *Idomeneo* in *Pfeffer und Salz* has been the only evidence of the reception of the opera in Vienna.

It is generally said in the Mozart literature that the role of *Idomeneo* in Auersperg’s production was sung by the young amateur tenor Giuseppe Antonio Bridi (1763–1836), but the source for the claim is seldom cited. It is an anonymous item in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, in the issue of 5 Nov 1824. The item concerns a Mozart monument in the garden of Bridi’s estate in Rovereto, and a small “temple of harmony” in the garden celebrating Bridi’s personal pantheon of composers, including Mozart (for more on Bridi’s temple and Mozart monuments see our entry on [Paisiello and \*Idomeneo\*](#)).

*Vermischte Nachrichten.* [...]

— Der Banquier

Jos. Ant. Bridi in Roveredo, der sich als junger

Mann in Wien befand und Mozarts grosser Freund war, auch in den Privatvorstellungen seines *Idomeneo* sang, hat diesem grossen Meister in seinem Garten ein Monument errichten lassen mit der Aufschrift: *Herrscher der Seele durch melodische Denkkraft. [...]* [*AmZ*, xxvi:6, col. 92, 5 Feb 1824]

*Miscellaneous News [...]*

— The banker

Joseph Anton Bridi in Rovereto, who was in Vienna as a young man and was a great friend of Mozart, and also sang in the private performances of his *Idomeneo*, has had a monument constructed in his garden to this great master with the inscription: *Sovereign of the Soul through the power of melodic thought. [...]*

Although this item was published thirty-eight years after the fact, we have no real reason to doubt that Bridi took part in the production of *Idomeneo* at Auersperg’s in 1786. Bridi had come to Vienna for his commercial education around 1781 and he spent a good part of his business career there (Falcone 1999, 252–53). He was a skilled amateur tenor known to have been active in private performances in Vienna, as well as at least one prominent public performance. Mozart, in a letter to Gottfried von Jacquin from Prague on 4 Nov 1787, refers to Bridi as a “good friend”:

Ich wollte meinen guten freunden | besonders bridi und ihnen :| wünschen, daß Sie nur einen einzigen Abend hier wären, um antheil an meinem vergnügen zu nehmen! [*Briefe*, iv: 58]

I would wish for my good friends (especially Bridi and you), that you were here only for a single evening in order to share my pleasure.

Although the item in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* does not specify which role Bridi sang in 1786, it was not Idamante, as that role was taken by “Baron Pulini” (probably Francesco Pollini; see below); and given that Bridi was a tenor, the role of *Idomeneo* is a strong possibility (although the lesser roles of Arbace and the High Priest of Neptune are also tenors). It is now generally accepted that the simplifications made to *Idomeneo*’s “Fuor del mar” in Mozart’s autograph, formerly thought to have been undertaken for Anton Raaff, who created the role in Munich 1781, were actually made for Auersperg’s production in 1786, and thus probably for Bridi (see the discussion in the *Notes* below).

## The correspondent’s report from Vienna (↑)

The correspondent’s report published in the *Staats-Relation* consists of just two long sentences. Both are 15 lines long in the original; the second consists of two independent clauses joined by a semicolon. The clotted syntax gives an impression of obsequious formality, as if the writer were

trying to flatter Prince Auersperg, who was born in 1721 and might well have expected to be complimented in the ornate style of an earlier age.

The correspondent’s report begins with a reference to “mehrere Vorstellungen” (“several performances”) of *Alceste* and *Idomeneo* at Auersperg’s in Feb and Mar 1786, with the clear implication that both operas were performed more than once. (As we shall see, *Alceste* was certainly Gluck’s celebrated version in Italian, although none of the known primary sources from the time name the composer.) Up to now, scholars seem universally to have assumed that the operas and plays produced at Auersperg’s were ordinarily performed just one time each—and it is true that only a single dated performance is documented for most of Auersperg’s known productions. But in nearly every case the documentation for these productions comes from a single source: Zinzendorf’s diary. That Zinzendorf did not attend or mention a particular production at Auersperg’s more than once does not necessarily imply that there was only one performance of that production.

Zinzendorf writes that he visited his cousin Louise von Diede after she returned from *Idomeneo* on 13 Mar 1786, but there is no reason to assume, simply because this is the only performance that Zinzendorf mentions, that it was the only performance. It is even possible that the performance of *Idomeneo* on the 13th was not the first. Mozart entered K. 489 and K. 490 into his catalog under the date 10 Mar 1786. He is known sometimes to have dated works in his catalog very shortly before first performances (he notoriously entered *Don Giovanni* into his catalog under the date 28 Oct 1787, the day before the premiere), so we cannot rule out the possibility that *Idomeneo* had already been performed at Auersperg’s on 11 or 12 Mar 1786. And there is no evident reason to assume that the opera had no further performances after 13 Mar. It is worth noting, too, that the story in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* about Bridi’s memorials refers to “Privatvorstellungen” [“private performances”] of *Idomeneo* in the plural. Although this story was published in 1824, it may well have been based on information provided by Bridi, who almost certainly had taken part in the production in 1786.

Auersperg’s production of Vincenzo Righini’s *Armida* is known to have been performed at least twice in 1782, although not back to back: Zinzendorf attended a performance on 23 Jul, and the opera was performed again at Auersperg’s on 11 Oct in honor of the visit of Grand Duke Paul of Russia and his wife. There is also clear if non-specific evidence for multiple performances of Salieri’s *Axur* at Auersperg’s in 1793 and 1794. The first dated reference to a performance is Zinzendorf’s diary entry for 18 Nov 1793 (see below); Zinzendorf did not attend, but he remarks that the production—and specifically Countess Hatzfeld’s performance as *Aspasia*—was the topic of conversation that night at the Russian ambassador’s. The *Wiener Theater-Almanach für das Jahr 1795* refers to repeated performances of the production in 1794:

[1]

*Nachricht  
von Privattheatern.*

[...]

[4]

Das zweyte hervorstehende Privattheater war im fürstlich Auerspergischen Hause. Heuer gab diese Gesellschaft zu wiederholten Mahlen die grosse Oper des Herrn Salieri, *Axur, Rè d'Ormus*. [...]

[*Wiener Theater-Almanach für das Jahr 1795*, 4]

*News  
of Private Theaters*

[...]

The second prominent private theater was in the house of Prince Auersperg. This year [1794] the company gave several repetitions of the great opera by Herr Salieri, *Axur re d'Ormus*.

(For more on this report, Auersperg's *Axur*, and Countess Hatzfeld's appearance as Aspasia, see our entry on her performance in Bonn of Elettra's "[Tutte nel cor vi sento](#)" from *Idomeneo*.)

Contemporaneous documents refer to Auersperg's theater as "private," and this is certainly true in the sense that the theater belonged to a private individual rather than to an institution, as did the Kärntnertortheater and Burgtheater, which belonged to the court. That Auersperg's theater was privately owned does not necessarily imply, however, that performances there were limited to a private audience.

The correspondent's report in the *Staats-Relation* uses the word "public" three times. In the first sentence, it states that Auersperg's productions are being presented "von einigen Damen und Cavaliers zu ihrer und des Publicums Erlustigung" ("by some ladies and gentlemen for their own amusement and that of the public"). Later in the same long first sentence, a phrase referring to Prince Auersperg uses the word again: "[der] Fürst, welcher zum Vergnügen des ganzen Publicums dieser Hauptstadt auf die gefälligste Art beyzutragen immer bedacht ist" ("the Prince, who is always intent on contributing to the pleasure of the entire public in this capital city in the most obliging manner"). The public is referred to again in the last sentence: "die Erkenntlichkeit des Publicums gegen den Herrn Fürsten" ("the gratitude of the public toward the Prince"). It must be kept in mind that the word "Publikum" in eighteenth-century Vienna did not necessarily imply "open to the public" in the modern sense. For example, the phrase "in publico" in court documents in the eighteenth century was sometimes used to refer to events (such as an "öffentliche Tafel") limited to an audience (albeit often a large one) consisting of invited nobility and guests. But the three references to the "public" in the report in the *Staats-Relation* sound to a modern ear very much as if Auersperg's productions were open to a wider audience.

Two brief reports on Auersperg's productions in 1786 refer to "tickets" ("Billets"). On 14 Feb 1786 the *Bayreuther Zeitung* published an item under the dateline "Vienna, 8 February":

Wien, vom 8 Februar.

Der hiesige hohe Adel spielte ohnlängst in dem Hotel des Herrn Fürst **Auersperg** eine Opera, wobey Se. Excellenz der Finanz-Ministre **Hatzfeld** das Orchester dirigirte, und dessen Gemahlin mit ihrer reizenden Stimme die Prima Donna zum allgemeinen Beyfall vorstellte. Man hatte Billets ausgetheilet, und es fanden sich eine Menge Zuschauer ein.

[*Bayreuther Zeitung*, no. 20, 14 Feb 1786, "119" (recte 127)]

Vienna, 8 February.

The high nobility here recently gave an opera in the mansion of Prince **Auersperg**, in which His Excellency Finance Minister **Hatzfeld** directed the orchestra, and his wife, with her charming voice, performed the prima donna role to general acclaim. Tickets were distributed, and a crowd of spectators attended.

And on 25 Mar 1786 the *Preßburger Zeitung* reported:

In dem fürstl. Auerspergischen Palais werden von der jungen Noblesse Komödien aufgeführt, und vorzüglich die Akzion der Gräfin von Hatzfeld, und des Hrn. Doktor Jacquinschen Sohns bewundert. Der Fürst läßt nach seiner angebohrnen Großmut die Zuhörer, denen Billets ertheilt werden, während den Komödien mit Erfrischungen versehen.

[*Preßburger Zeitung*, no. 24, Sat, 25 Mar, [2]]

In the palace of Prince Auersperg, comedies are performed by the young nobility; especially admired are Countess von Hatzfeld and the son of Doctor Jacquin. The Prince, out of his native generosity, has the audience, to whom tickets are issued, provided with refreshments during the comedies.

(The report in the *Bayreuther Zeitung* is discussed in more detail below; on the report in the *Preßburger Zeitung*, see the *Notes*.)

It is uncertain whether these reports imply that tickets to Auersperg’s productions were sold at something like a box office: the *Bayreuther Zeitung* refers to tickets being “ausgetheilet” (“distributed”) and the *Preßburger Zeitung* uses the related verb “ertheilt” (“issued”), both of which could be read to imply that tickets were distributed to invited guests, rather than sold to all comers. But taken together, the references to “public,” “tickets,” and a “crowd of spectators” strongly suggest that the performances in Auersperg’s theater (at least those in 1786) were open to the public in something like the modern sense.

Some writers have claimed that *Idomeneo* at Auersperg’s must have been a concert performance. In the preface to his edition of *Idomeneo* in the *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, Daniel Hertz writes: “Da diese Aufführung jedoch in die Fastenzeit fiel (März), war eine szenische Realisierung nicht möglich” (“However, since this performance was in Lent (March), a staged realization was not possible”; Hertz 1972, xvii). Similarly, Stanley Sadie, in his essay “Genesis of an operone” in the *Cambridge Opera Handbook on Idomeneo*, writes:

The work was given on 13 March in the theatre attached to the Auersperg Palace, almost certainly in concert form — acted and costumed stage performances were forbidden during Lent, and in any case the cast was amateur. [Sadie 1993, 45]

But the notion that staged performances were forbidden in Vienna during Lent in 1786 is mistaken. It was in 1786, in fact, that Joseph II began to relax such restrictions, and during Lent of that year the company of the court theater gave performances of German plays in the Kärntnertortheater on Sun, Mon, Tue, and Thu, with other days remaining open for concerts. (Regarding Mozart’s concert in the Kärntnertortheater that season, see our entry for [7 Apr 1786](#). The Burgtheater remained closed during most of Lent 1786, reopening for the concerts of the Tonkünstler-Societät on 8 and 9 Apr.)

That such a change in policy was in the works seems to have been known already by the beginning of that year. On 6 Jan 1786 the *Bayreuther Zeitung* published the following item from a correspondent in Vienna under the dateline 31 Dec:

Wien. vom 31 Dec.

[...]

Beym National=Theater wird künftig die ganze Fastenzeit durch gespielt werden biß zur Charwoche, wo die Theater geschlossen werden sollen.

[[Bayreuther Zeitung](#), Anhang to no. 3, Fri, 6 Jan 1786, 14]

Vienna, from 31 Dec.

[...]

In the future, the National Theater will continue

to perform throughout Lent until Holy Week, when the theater will be closed.

The new policy was explained in detail in a notice published in the *Wiener Zeitung* on 8 Mar 1786, six days after it had been put into effect:

Theaternachrichten.

Da während dieser Fastenzeit von dem k. k. Nationalhofschauspielern fünf Wochen lang allemal Sonntags, Montags, Diensttags und Donnerstags im k. k. Hoftheater beym Kärntnerthor Schauspiele gegeben werden sollen, so wurde Donnerstag den 2. März der Anfang gemacht, mit: dem Fährndrich, von Hr. Schröder, und dem eisernen [*sic*] Mann, vom Graf Brühl. Sonntag den 5. März ward ein neues Schauspiel in vier Aufzügen: Haß und Liebe, genannt, zum erstenmal aufgeführt, wovon der Verfasser noch unbekannt seyn will. — An den übrigen Tagen in jeder Woche werden in demselben Theater musikalische Akademien gegeben: die erste war zum Vortheil der *Sig. Coltellini*, und die zweyte für Herrn *Calvesi*, beyde Mitglieder von dem k. k. italiänischen Singspiele.

[*WZ*, no. 19, Wed, 8 Mar, Anhang, 510]

Theater news.

Because during this Lenten season plays are to be given in the court theater next to the Kärntnerthor for five weeks on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, this began on Thursday, 2 March, with *Der Fährndrich*, by Herr Schröder, and *Der eiserne Mann* by Count Brühl. On Sunday, 5 March, a new play in four acts called *Haß und Liebe* was performed for the first time, the author of which wishes still to remain unknown. — On the other days in each week musical academies will be given in the same theater: the first was for the benefit of *Signora Coltellini*, and the second for *Herr Calvesi*, both members of the imperial royal Italian opera.

The anonymous author of *Haß und Liebe* was [Christian Friedrich von Bonin](#). The concerts were given by soprano [Celeste Coltellini](#) and tenor [Vincenzo Calvesi](#), who had recently sung the roles of Mandina and Il Conte in the Viennese pasticcio of Bianchi's *La villanella rapita*; both

appeared in both ensembles that Mozart wrote for that production, the quartet “Dite almeno in che mancai,” K. 479, and the trio “Mandina amabile,” K. 480. (On that production, see our entries for [28 Nov 1785](#) and [12 Jan 1786](#).)

The change in policy was considered sufficiently newsworthy that the *Bayreuther Zeitung* noted the performance on Thu, 2 Mar 1786 (the second day of Lent that year)—although the correspondent suggests that the theater-going public in Vienna was underwhelmed by the change:

Wien, vom 3 März.

[...]

Gestern war also zum erstenmal in der Fastenzeit in unserer Monarchie im Nationaltheater Comödie, der Fähdrieh von Schröder. Da der Fasching noch manchen im Kopf und Füßen steckte, so war das Gedränge eben nicht so groß.

[*Bayreuther Zeitung*, no. 30, Thu, 9 Mar 1786]

Vienna, 3 March.

[...]

Yesterday, for the first time in Lent in our monarchy, there was a comedy in the National Theater, *Der Fähdrieh* by Schröder. Since carnival was still stuck in the heads and feet of many, the crowd was not all that large.

The alternation of plays and concerts in Lent is also noted at the beginning of the article in *Pfeffer und Salz* that refers to *Idomeneo*: “Mit den Schauspielen wechseln musikalische Akademien ab, welche verschiedene Virtuosen auf ihre eigene Faust und zu ihrem eigenen Besten geben” (“Alternating with the plays are musical academies given by various virtuosi on their own initiative and for their own benefit”; *Pfeffer und Salz*, 1786, i:15). So staged theatrical performances were not forbidden in Vienna during Lent in 1786. No operas were given by the court theater in Lent that year, probably because the opera company retained its traditional vacation then, not because operas were forbidden per se.

The report on Auersperg’s theater in the *Staats-Relation* refers to “prächtige Decorationen.” The French loan word “Dekoration” can refer to stage scenery, and it already had this meaning in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The entry for “[Dekoration](#)” in the *Goethe-Wörterbuch*, for example, reports that the word appears around 250 times in Goethe’s writings, the great majority referring to stage sets or scenery. So “prächtige Decorationen” in the *Staats-Relation* should almost certainly be translated as “magnificent sets,” and their magnificence is probably one of the motivations behind the reference at the end of the correspondent’s report to “viele Aufwände” (“great expense”).

We have documentary confirmation that sets were used in Auersperg’s production of Salieri’s *Axur* in 1793 and 1794. Giuseppe Voltiggi refers to these sets in a pamphlet published in 1793:

Bisogna vedere le sette  
decorazioni dal Galliari superbamente dipinte pel teatro  
del principe d’Auersberg, ove lo stesso *Axur* dalla No-  
bilità verrà rappresentato, onde poter apprezzare l’abilità  
del pittore nell’invenzione, nel disegno, nella dipintu-  
ra. [Voltiggi 1793, 23–24]

One needs to see the seven  
sets superbly painted by Galliari for the theater of Prince  
Auersperg, where the same *Axur* will be performed by the  
nobility, in order to appreciate the painter’s inventiveness,  
draftsmanship, and skill in painting.

The reference is to Gaspare Galliani (whose first name Voltiggi gives [elsewhere](#) in the book), the last prominent member of a famous family of set designers.

There is little evidence about costumes in Auersperg’s productions. Zinzendorf’s earliest reference to Auersperg’s theater, in his diary entry for 12 Aug 1780, mentions costumes and sets:

[Sat] 12. Aout. [...]

Le soir au  
theatre du P<sup>cc</sup>: auersperg au fauxbourg de la *Josephsstadt*, pour voir le  
ballet de la Jalousie reciproque. Jolis habillemens et jolis minois,  
une femme dansa en homme faite au tour, sans avoir rien de faux dans  
les culottes. Le Port de marseille, decoration qui réussit fort bien. [...]

[Sat] 12 August. [...]

In the evening  
to the theater of Prince Auersperg in the Josephstadt suburb to see  
the ballet *La jalousie reciproque*. Pretty costumes and pretty faces;  
a woman danced as a man, cut a splendid figure, without having  
anything fake in her trousers. The port of Marseille, scenery that  
succeeded very well. [...]

We do not know who performed the ballet, but it seems likely to have been members of the company of Franz Scherzer, for whom Auersperg had originally built the theater (see below). If so, this would have been a production by an established theatrical company, and thus not necessarily representative of Auersperg’s later productions with amateur casts.

In his descriptions of later productions, Zinzendorf alludes to costumes only once. On 5 Dec 1791 he writes:

[Mon] 5 Decembre. [...]

A 5<sup>h</sup> au Théâtre du P<sup>cc</sup>: auersberg ala *Josephs-Stadt*[.] Le spectacle ne commença qu'à 6h. <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>. J'étois enhaut, h. a. embas je ne sais si elle m'a vû. On representa *Liebhaber und Nebenbuhler in einer Person*. Les deux freres Palfy, Jean Eszterhasy et sa femme et les deux soeurs Lichnowsky jouerent dans la grande perfection. Le cadet Palfy fesoit le rôle du beaufrere du marechal ferrant si parfaitement deguisé qu'il etois impossible [de] le reconnoitre, tant il avoit l'air d'un vieux artisan. [...]

[Mon] 5 December. [...]

At 5 pm to the theater of Prince Auersperg in the Josephstadt. The play did not begin until 6:45. I was up high, H[enriette] A[uersperg] was down below, I don't know if she saw me. *Liebhaber und Nebenbuhler in einer Person* was performed. The two brothers Palfy, Johann Esterházy and his wife, and the two Lichnowsky sisters acted with great perfection. The younger Palfy played the role of the brother-in-law of the blacksmith so perfectly disguised that it was impossible to recognize him, he had so much the air of an old artisan. [...]

(*Liebhaber und Nebenbuhler in einer Person* was a play by Friedrich Wilhelm Ziegler that had premiered in the Burgtheater on 28 Sep 1790. The identification of "h. a." as "Henriette Auersperg" is from Link 1998, 389 and 224n49.) Although the evidence is thin, it seems likely that Auersperg's productions were costumed. One would think that *Axur* in 1793 and 1794, with its seven painted sets, certainly had costumes.

Up to now, our only evidence for the reception of *Idomeneo* at Auersperg's has been the patronizing comment in *Pfeffer und Salz*:

Seine mit Accom=  
pagnement zu sehr überfüllte Opera,  
welche bey dem Fürsten Auersberg vom  
Adel gegeben wurde, hat nicht den  
Beifall erhalten, den man sonst seiner  
Kunst, wenn er sich auf dem Forte=  
piano hören lässt — zuklatschen muss.  
[*Pfeffer und Salz*, 1786, i:15]

His opera, too overloaded  
with accompaniments, that was given by  
the nobility at Prince Auersperg's, did  
not receive the acclaim that one must  
otherwise bestow upon his artistry when  
he performs on the fortepiano.

This single comment has often been treated in the Mozart literature as proof that the general reception of the opera was at best lukewarm. Some writers have pushed this meager evidence even further. Michtner spins the comment in *Pfeffer und Salz* into a speculative fantasy, suggesting that the production of *Idomeneo* was part of a scheme to persuade the court and the leaders of the court opera that Mozart was a worthy composer of Italian opera, and that audience opinion on *Idomeneo* was strongly divided between Mozart's advocates among the aristocracy and his opponents (Michtner 1970, 206–7). This fantasy is taken up and further elaborated by Dietrich (1975, 58–59). But there is no known evidence to suggest that the comment in *Pfeffer und Salz* is anything other than the opinion of a single writer. The correspondent's report in the *Staats-Relation*, in contrast, refers to *Alceste* and *Idomeneo* as "beliebt" ("popular").

It is sometimes stated as fact in the secondary literature that Mozart directed the music in Auersperg's production of *Idomeneo* in 1786. Walter Szmolyan, for example, writes in his 1963 article on Auersperg's theater:

Am 13. März 1786 dirigierte Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart ... im Palaistheater seine für München geschriebene und dort am 29. Jänner 1781 uraufgeführte Oper "Idomeneo".  
[Szmolyan 1963, 556; see also 553]

On 13 March 1786, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart ... directed in the palace theater his opera *Idomeneo*, which was written for Munich and premiered there on 29 January 1781.

Similarly, Link writes:

According to Deutsch, Countess Hatzfeld sang the title role in *Alceste*, and Elettra in *Idomeneo*. She was joined in the latter by Madame Puffendorf as Ilia, the merchant, Giuseppe Antonio Bridi, as Idomeneo and Pulini (unidentified) [*sic*] as Idamante. Mozart conducted. [Link 1998, 200–201]

And Hertz writes in the third volume of his trilogy on the history of music of the Classical period:

The music of *Idomeneo* was not known widely outside of Munich and Vienna in the 1780s. In this case the transmitter was surely Countess Hatzfeld herself, for she had sung the role of Electra in the performance of *Idomeneo* under Mozart's direction in Vienna on 13 March 1786. [Hertz 2009, 695]

(Countess Hatzfeld as "transmitter" of *Idomeneo* refers to her performance at a concert in Bonn of Elettra's "Tutte nel cor vi sento"; see [our entry](#) on that performance.) But in fact there is no known evidence from the time that Mozart directed the performance, however plausible this may seem.

Some scholars may have been persuaded (in the absence of evidence) that Mozart directed the music of *Idomeneo* because (it has sometimes been claimed) Gluck personally led performances of

his *Iphigénie en Tauride* and *Alceste* in Auersperg’s theater the previous month, in Feb 1786. For example, Szmolyan writes:

Im Februar [1786] leitete Christoph Willibald Gluck ... im Auerspergschen Theater persönlich seine beide Opern “Iphigenie auf Tauris” und “Alceste” (letztere nach Zinzendorf am 12.2.) [Szmolyan 1963, 556]

In February [1786] Christoph Willibald Gluck ... personally led his two operas *Iphigenie auf Tauris* and *Alceste* in Auersperg’s theater (the latter according to Zinzendorf on 12 Feb).

Similarly, Hertz (1972, xviii)—while not mentioning *Iphigénie*—claims that Gluck directed *Alceste* at Auersperg’s.

But there is no evidence from the time that Gluck directed either *Iphigénie* or *Alceste* at Auersperg’s, and it is uncertain whether *Iphigénie* was given at Auersperg’s at all. Zinzendorf mentions only *Alceste* and he says nothing about Gluck in his diary entry for 12 Feb 1786:

[Sun] Septuagesima. 12. Fevrier. [...]

A 5<sup>h</sup> ½ chez le P<sup>cc</sup>:

adam auersperg. J’y rencontrais Erneste Kaunitz, et nous allames ensemble au parterre, ou d’abord il fesoit tres froid, il se remplit lentement et nous fumes assez mal entour[és]. L’opera d’alceste ne commença qu’a 6<sup>h</sup> ¾. Me. d’hazfeld née Zierotin joua ce role dans la grande perfection, surtout les airs Non vi turbate, no, [&c], et l’air du cri. admete est tres mediocre, et Ismene Melle: de heissenstein passable. Fini la soirée chez [Le] Prince Galitzin, ou il y avoit tres peu de monde a cause du souper de l’archiduchess chez Hazfeld [...]

[Sun] Septuagesima. 12 February [...]

At 5:30 pm at Prince

Adam Auersperg’s. I met Ernest Kaunitz there and we went together to the parterre, where it was very cold at first; it slowly filled and we were soon quite badly surrounded. The opera *Alceste* did not begin until 6:45. Madame de Hatzfeld née Zierotin played this role with great perfection, above all the arias “Non vi turbate, no, &c.” and the aria of the cry. Admete was very mediocre, and Ismene Mlle. de Heissenstein average. Finished the evening at Prince Galitzin’s, where there were very few people because of the supper for the Archduchess at Hatzfeld’s [...]

“Non vi turbate, no” is *Alceste’s* aria at the end of scene 2 of Act II of Gluck’s opera. The “l’air du cri” may have been *Alceste’s* “Ah per questo già stanco core” at the end of the Act II, where her cadential phrase in the fast section include a long high A flat moving up to an A natural on the word “pianto,” in the phrase “e lasciarli nel pianto così”—“and to leave [my children] weeping so”

(we are grateful to Bruce Brown for this point). It is, in fact, from Zinzendorf's references to these arias that we know it was Gluck's *Alceste* that was performed, not some other version. One wonders whether "tres mediocre" Admete might have been sung by Giuseppe Antonio Bridi or Francesco Pollini, both tenors and both of whom apparently sang in the production of *Idomeneo* at Auersperg's the following month. (Given the general high praise for Bridi's singing in subsequent years, Pollini—who became known as a pianist and composer, rather than a singer—seems more likely.)

The notion that *Iphigénie* and *Alceste* were performed at Auersperg's under Gluck's direction in 1786 can be traced back to Pohl and Teuber. But neither says unequivocally that Gluck directed the music at the performances. Pohl writes:

Wiederum bei Auersperg wurden im Febr. 1786 unter Gluck's eigener Überwachung aufgeführt "Iphigenia auf Tauris" und "Alceste". Erstere mit der Bernasconi, mit Adamberger und Kelly; letztere mit Gräfin Hatzfeld (Alceste) und Mlle. de Heißenstein (Ismene).<sup>14</sup> Mozart führte daselbst im folgenden Monat seinen *Idomeneo* auf [...]

[14] Zinzendorf notierte 12. Febr. *Me. d'Hatzfeld née Zierotin joua ce rôle (Alceste) dans la grande perfection*. Beide Vorstellungen sind auch in Kelly's *Reminiscences* (vol. I. p. 254) erwähnt. Von der Gräfin sagt er: *The [sic] was a charming woman, and full of talent*. [Pohl 1882, 162 and note 14]

Again at Auersperg's in Feb 1786, *Iphigenie auf Tauris* and *Alceste* were performed under Gluck's supervision. The first with Bernasconi, Adamberger, and Kelly; the latter with Countess Hatzfeld and Mlle. de Heissenstein.<sup>14</sup> In the following month Mozart performed his *Idomeneo* there [...]

[14] Zinzendorf note on 12 Feb: *Madame de Hatzfeld née Zierotin played this rôle [Alceste] with great perfection*. Both performances are also mentioned in Kelly's i (vol. 1, p. 254). Of the Countess he says: *She was a charming woman, and full of talent*.

Teuber writes nearly identically (although not citing Pohl):

[...] und im Februar 1786 führte man dort [im Auersperg-Palais] unter Oberleitung Altmeister Glucks dessen »Iphigenie auf Tauris« und »Alceste«, erstere mit der Bernasconi, Adamberger und O'Kelly, letztere mit der Gräfin Hatzfeld als Alceste und Comtesse Heissenstein als Issmene auf [...] [Teuber 1903, 74]

[...] and in February 1786 *Iphigenie auf Tauris* and *Alceste* were performed there [in the Auersperg Palace] under the general direction of the old master Gluck, the first with Bernasconi, Adamberger, and Kelly, the latter with Countess Hatzfeld as Alceste and Countess Heissenstein as Ismene [...]

Pohl's claim (and thus probably Teuber's) derives from a muddled passage in Kelly's *Reminiscences*:

[254]

A number of foreign Princes, among whom were the Duc de Deux Ponts, the Elector of Bavaria &c., with great retinues, came to visit the Emperor, who, upon this occasion, signified his wish to have two grand serious operas, both the composition of Chevalier Gluck;—“*L’Iphigenia in Tauride*,” and “*L’Alceste*,” produced under the direction of the composer; and gave orders that no expense should be spared to give them every effect.

Gluck was then living in Vienna, where he had retired, crowned with professional honours, and a splendid fortune, courted and caressed by all ranks, and in his seventy-fourth year.

*L’Iphigenia* was the first opera to be produced, and Gluck was to make his choice of the performers in it. Madame Bernasconi was one of the first serious singers of the day,—to her was appropriated the part of *Iphigenia*. The celebrated tenor, Adamberger, performed the part of *Orestes*, finely. To me was allotted the character of *Pylades*, which created no small envy among

[255]

those performers who thought themselves better entitled to the part than myself, and perhaps they were right;—however, I had it, and also the high gratification of being instructed in the part by the composer himself. [Kelly 1826, i:254–55]

This matches the descriptions given by Pohl and Teuber. But Kelly is actually discussing in this passage the singspiel company of the court theater, not theatrical productions at Auersperg’s. And there are problems with Kelly’s account. Neither the Elector of Bavaria, [Karl Theodor](#), nor the “Duc de Deux Ponts” ([Charles II August, Duke of Zweibrücken](#), Karl Theodor’s presumptive heir) are known to have visited Emperor Joseph II in Vienna. Gluck cannot have been 74 at the time of the performances because he died in 1787 at the age of 73. Kelly’s description actually sounds a great deal like the “Gluck revival” during the visits of the “Count and Countess of the North” in 1781–1782, in which *Iphigénie en Tauride* was given in German translation and *Alceste* was revived in the original Italian. Both casts featured Antonio Bernasconi (as *Iphigenie* and *Alceste*) and Valentin Adamberger (as *Oreste* and *Admeto*). But Michael Kelly cannot have taken part in either of these, because he did not arrive in Vienna to join the ensemble of the court theater until 1783. The final performance of *Iphigenie auf Tauris* in the court theater

during this period was on 7 Feb 1782, at least a year before Kelly's arrival. Bernasconi retired from the company of the court theater in 1783.

These several confusions and errors in Kelly's story make it difficult to identify exactly what performances he means. Perhaps we cannot not entirely rule out the possibility that Bernasconi came out of retirement to sing in *Iphigenie auf Tauris* with Adamberger and Kelly at Auersperg's in 1786, perhaps under Gluck's guidance. But it would seem odd that a performance by a cast of leading professionals of a major opera by Vienna's most internationally renowned opera composer would have escaped all notice in the contemporaneous press, or in private diaries or correspondence. In any case, Gluck's active participation as director in performances that year seems unlikely: he had a stroke in Paris in 1779 during the rehearsals of *Écho et Narcisse*, and had retired to Vienna; so it is not clear that his health would have permitted him to lead performances in Feb 1786 (he died in Nov 1787). The claim that Gluck's *Iphigénie* was performed at Auersperg's in 1786 must remain doubtful at best, and it seems unlikely that Gluck actively participated in a performance there that year.

At present only two references from the time are known regarding the direction of music in opera performances at Auersperg's. Both use the word "dirigiren" (to direct or conduct). One is the correspondent's report of 8 Feb 1786 quoted above from the *Bayreuther Zeitung*:

Der hiesige hohe Adel spielte ohnlängst in dem Hotel des Herrn Fürst **Auersperg** eine Opera, wobey Se. Excellenz der Finanz-Ministre **Hatzfeld** das Orchester dirigirte, und dessen Gemahlin mit ihrer reizenden Stimme die Prima Donna zum allgemeinen Beyfall vorstellte. [...]

[*Bayreuther Zeitung*, no. 20, 14 Feb 1786, "119" (recte 127)]

The high nobility here recently gave an opera in the mansion of Prince Auersperg, in which His Excellency Finance Minister Hatzfeld directed the orchestra, and his wife, with her charming voice, performed the prima donna role to general acclaim. [...]

This story is also somewhat muddled and raises questions of its own. "Finanz-Ministre Hatzfeld" seems to be a reference to [Carl Friedrich Anton, Count Hatzfeld zu Gleichen](#) (1718–1793), who was indeed a high financial official in the Viennese court. But he was not the husband of Countess Maria Anna Hortensia von Hatzfeld who sang in Auersperg's productions: she was married to Count Clemens August Johann Nepomuk von Hatzfeld, an official (but not a finance minister) in the electoral court in Bonn (on the Bonn Hatzfelds, see our entry on Countess Hatzfeld's performance of "[Tutte nel cor vi sento](#)" in Bonn). It is conceivable that the correspondent was simply confused by the abundance of Hatzfelds, and perhaps it was Countess Hatzfeld's actual husband Count Clemens August Johann Nepomuk who directed the

performance. But he is not otherwise known to have been musically active, so this is speculative at best. It seems more plausible that Countess Hatzfeld's brother-in-law Count August Clement, the violinist for whom Mozart wrote the solo violin part in K. 490, might have directed the performance, and the correspondent was simply mistaken about his relationship to the Countess. We can at least be reasonably sure that August Clement was in Vienna before the dateline of the correspondent's report (see below), and he was evidently a fine musician, so he might well have led the orchestra as concertmaster, although there is no other known evidence of him directing orchestras. But on the current evidence, we simply cannot be sure which Count Hatzfeld the correspondent to the *Bayreuther Zeitung* meant.

This report in the *Bayreuther Zeitung* is of interest for yet another reason: the dateline precedes the earliest documented performance at Auersperg's in 1786, *Alceste* on 12 Feb. Thus it seems likely that there was at least one otherwise undocumented opera performance at Auersperg's that year before 12 Feb. Unfortunately the correspondent does not tell us the title of the opera. It might have been an earlier performance of *Alceste* (in which we know that Countess Hatzfeld sang). If Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* was in fact given at Auersperg's in 1786 (although the evidence for this is tenuous), it might have been that opera. Or it might even have been *L'ami de maison*, mentioned in the *Theater-Kalender* for 1787 as having been performed at Auersperg's—although this last possibility seems unlikely, given that the correspondent to the *Bayreuther Zeitung* refers to an "opera", whereas *L'ami de la maison* was a "comédie mêlée d'ariettes" (a play with songs). On balance, *Alceste* seems the most likely, provided that we are willing to discard the assumption that Auersperg's productions were performed just once. The notion that *Alceste* was performed more than once at Auersperg's is consistent with the reference to "mehrere Vorstellungen" in the correspondent's report in the *Staats-Relation*.

The last documented performance of an opera at Auersperg's was Salieri's *Axur*, apparently given several times in 1793 and 1794 with Countess Hatzfeld in the role of Aspasia. Although Zinzendorf is not known to have attended a performance, he reports that the production was the topic of conversation when he dined at the Russian ambassador's on 18 Nov 1793:

[Mon] 18. Novembre. [...]

Dinée chez l'Amb. de Russie [...]

On parle beaucoup de

l'opera d'Axur, qui se joue au Théâtre du P<sup>ce</sup>: auersberg  
par Me: de Hatzfeld [...]

18 November. [...]

Dined at the Russian ambassador's [...]

There was much discussion of  
the opera *Axur*, which was played at the theater of Prince  
Auersperg by Madame de Hatzfeld. [...]

Zinzendorf does not explicitly say that the opera had been performed that day; if it was, we do not know whether it was the first performance. We can safely say, however, that *Axur* had been performed at Auersperg’s by 18 Nov 1793.

According to an entry in Schönfeld’s *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag* (1796), the music in Auersperg’s production of *Axur* was directed by [Count Johann Ferdinand von Kuefstein](#) (1752–1818):

Kuefstein, Graf. Dieser ganz vorzügliche Freund und Beschützer der schönen Künste, und vorzüglich der Tonkunst, ist einer unserer ersten Violinspieler, in Betracht der Kunst und des Gefühls. Außerdem hat er auch eine besondere Stärke im Dirigiren, welches er bey Aufführung des *Axur* im fürstl. Auerspergischen Pallaste wahrhaft bewiesen hat.  
[Schönfeld 1796, 38]

Kuefstein, Count. This most excellent friend and protector of the fine arts, and especially music, is one of our leading violinists, in regard to art and feeling. In addition he also has a special strength in directing, which he truly proved at the performance of *Axur* in the princely Auersperg palace.

That Schönfeld refers to the amateur Count Kuefstein “directing” the orchestra as a violinist lends circumstantial support to the notion that violinist Count August Clemens von Hatzfeld could have directed the performance of the unnamed opera (perhaps *Alceste*) at Auersperg’s in 1786 as mentioned in the *Bayreuther Zeitung*. And whether or not Mozart was at the keyboard, Count August Clemens might well also have led the orchestra from the violins in Auersperg’s production of *Idomeneo*.

## Auersperg’s theater (↑)

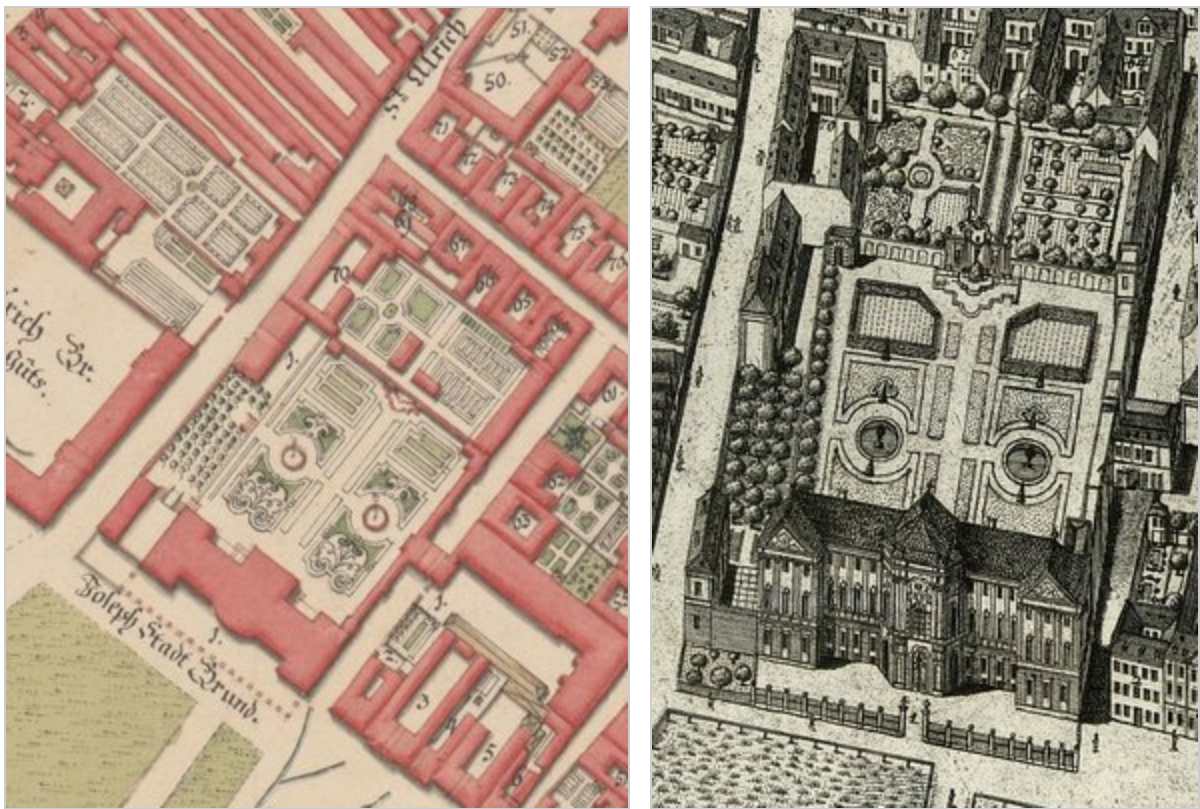
In Oct 1777 Prince Johann Adam Auersperg bought a palace in the Josephstadt suburb of Vienna. The palace, which still exists, was built early in the eighteenth century; at that time it faced onto the glacis in the general direction of the Burgtor. In the middle decades of the century it was known as the Palais Rofrano, after Marchese Hieronymus Capece di Rofrano, who had purchased it in 1721. Upon his death in 1724, it passed into the possession of his son Peter, and upon Peter’s death in 1732 into the possession of Peter’s sister Maria Theresia, who became Countess Kinsky upon her marriage to Count Leopold Ferdinand Kinsky in 1734. Countess

Kinsky in turn rented the palace for many years to [Prince Joseph Friedrich von Sachsen-Hildburghausen](#), whose household maintained a famous musical establishment in the 1750s and 1760s. After the palace was purchased by Prince Auersperg, it became known as the Palais Auersperg. (On the history of the palace, see Szmolyan 1963, note 7)



Vienna, Palais Auersperg  
([Wikimedia Commons](#))

Adjoining the property of the palace on the garden side was the house “Zum heiligen Petrus”, Josephstadt no. 70<sup>1</sup>, facing onto what was then Rofranogasse (sometimes spelled “Rouveranigasse,” today Lerchenfelderstraße); this house also had a garden that shared a border with the rear of the garden of the Palais Auersperg. No. 70 included an additional building at the far end of the garden from the main house, bordering on what was then Schwibbogengasse (today Trautsonngasse).



Palais Kinsky (from 1779, Palais Auersperg)

(left) Joseph Anton Nagel, *Grundriß der Kayserlich-Königlichen Residenz-Stadt Wien, Ihrer Vorstädte und deren anstossenden Orte* (1770–1773, detail); (right) Joseph Daniel von Huber, *Scenographie oder Geometrisch Perspect. Abbildung der Kais.-König. Haupt u. Residenz Stadt Wien* (1769–1773, detail). The building at the far end of the garden of no. 70 on the unmarked street (Schwibbogengasse) running to the right of the palace is the apparent location of Auersperg's theater.

In the early eighteenth century, this property belonged to the merchant Johann Georg Bauernfeind (1658–1721); he is said to have made a hall available to traveling theater companies; the hall thus became known as the “Bauernfeindischer Saal” (Szmolyan 1963, 553). The theatrical company of Franz Scherzer seems to have begun performing in the Bauernfeindischer Saal in 1776 (Gugitz 1925, 274); at any rate, the Viennese *Realzeitung* of **20 Aug 1776** notes that Scherzer's company is performing in the Josephstadt, although the venue is not mentioned. But the company's residency in the Bauernfeindischer Saal is attested by a Viennese city directory in 1779:

In der Josephstadt auf dem Bauern=  
feindischen Saal spielet die Scherzerische  
Gesellschaft deutscher Schauspieler. Ihr  
Anführer giebt sich viele Mühe, und soviel

es seine Kräfte erlauben, vergnügt er eine grosse Anzahl von Zuschauern mit Opereten, Lust= Trauerspielen und Balletten.

[Gemeinnütziges Schema der kaiserl. königl. Haupt= und Residenzstadt Wien... im Jahre 1779 (unpaginated)]

The Scherzer company of German actors performs in the Josephstadt in the Bauernfeindischer Saal. Its leader takes great pains, and insofar as his forces permit, he entertains a large number of spectators with operettas, plays, tragedies, and ballets.

By 1778, the entire property of no. 70 in the Josephstadt belonged to Regina Stumphius.

70 Wiener Vorstadt, Josephstadt.							
Haus No.	Haus-Eigenthümer.	Condition	Gassen.	Schilder.	Grund-Obrigkeit.	Pfarre.	Bez. Aufseher.
67	Dorothea Wittin	Wittwe	Lange Gassen.	schwarze Adler an der Mauer	Gmein. Stadt Wien	P f a r r e n.	Joh. Pösch, wohnt in der Josephstadt No. 67. hat den ganzen Grund.
68	Martin Schneider	Dratzjehermesser		goldene Sonn			
69	Michael Kreuzer	Pfamentierermesser	Neuverani Gassen.	braune Hirsch			
70	Regina Stumphiusin			St. Petrus			
71	Georg Sutter	Salanterie Schlosser		goldene Adler			
72	Katharina Mällnerin			goldene Kreuz			
73	Joseph Ubertl	burg. Dratzjehermesser		weisse Rose			
74	Wolfgang Reisinger	Seidenstrumpfwirkermeister		goldne Weintraub.			
75	Elisabetha Schneiderin		Lange Gassen.	2. gelbe Löwen			
76	Severinus Schäffler	Edpurgus		goldene Köpfel			
77	Heinrich Pöhl	burgel. Hutermesser		weisse Weissen			
78	Johann Mich. Kern	Wirtz		Stadt Wien			
79	Maria Anne Gründoldin			goldene Stern			
80	Joseph Döbler	Fleischhackermeister					
81	Joseph Holzhauser	urgerl. Harsfischer		kleine H. Dreifalt.			
82	Franz Reßner	wollene Strumpfwirkermeister		Reichsadler			

Franz de Ponty, *Verzeichniß der in der Kaiserl. Königl. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien, sammt dazu gehörigen Vorstädten, und Gründen, befindlichen numerirten Häusern derselben Eigenthümern, und deren Conditionen, Schilderen, Gassen, Grund-Obrigkeiten, Pfarreyen, und derzeit Bezirksaufsehern : auf das genaueste nach denen Grundbüchern entworfen*  
(Wienbibliothek)

On 29 Dec 1778, just a little over a year after buying the palace, Prince Auersperg signed a contract to purchase the property from Frau Stumphius for 12,000 gulden (Szmolyan 1963, 553 and note 1). Scherzer's company seems to have continued to give performances there through the early months of 1781. A [theater almanac](#) published by the company's prompter, Franz Vaßbach, gives a detailed calendar of the company's performances from 18 Apr to 15 Dec 1779. Most notably, on 11 Jul 1779 Scherzer's company gave the Viennese premiere of Brandes and Benda's melodrama *Ariadne auf Naxos*. It was a hit: the company performed *Ariadne* six times in July

and twenty times in all by the end of the year. (*Ariadne auf Naxos* was first performed by the Viennese court theater on 4 Jan 1780.)



Franz Vaßbach, *Theater=Almanach der Franz Scherzerrischen deutschen Schauspieler= Gesellschaft in sonstige Nannten Bauernfeindisch. Saale in der Josephst.*

Title page, and page showing the premiere of *Ariadne auf Naxos* on 11 Jul 1779.

(ÖNB)

From a reference in the *Wiener Theater-Almanach* for 1794 (57), we know that the role of Ariadne in Scherzer's production was taken by Mademoiselle Wilhelmine Dorn (later Wilhelmine Rivolla), a member of the court theater company from 1776 to 1778, and again from 1785 to 1813 (Alth & Obzyna 1979, ii:228). Scherzer's company was nothing if not ambitious, attempting in 1779 such heavyweight pieces as Möller's tragedy *Graf von Walltron* and, in December of that year, *Macbeth*.

The *Theater-Kalender* for 1780 reports that Prince Auersperg built a theater for Scherzer's company, evidently in 1779, the first year of the prince's ownership of Josephstadt no. 70:

In der Josephstadt haben der Fürst Auersberg der Scherzerischen Gesellschaft ein neues Komödienhaus bauen lassen; es ist gleichsam eine Schule für angehende Schauspieler, und auch einige Liebhaber treten zur Uebung auf. Der Rath Schmidt ist der Direktor.

[*Theater-Kalender*, 1780, 95]

In the Josephstadt,  
Prince Auersperg has built a new theater for  
the Scherzer company; it is, as it were, a school  
for budding actors, and some amateurs also  
appear there for practice. Counselor Schmidt  
is the director.

“Der Rath Schmidt” (also identified as the director in [Vaßbach’s almanac](#) for 1779) may have been Johann Friedrich Schmidt, who [corresponded with Gustav Friedrich Wilhelm Großmann](#) about theatrical matters around this time.

Whether Auersperg’s “new theater” was a renovation of the Bauernfeindischer Saal or a new construction remains unclear. Following Deutsch (*Dokumente*, 234) and Szmolyan (1963), it has long been assumed in the secondary literature that the theater was a renovation of the Bauernfeindischer Saal and that this hall was in the house facing onto Rofranogasse. However, Hans Rotter pointed out already in 1918 (although he did not cite a source) that the hall (and thus the theater) was actually at the other end of the property, on Schwibbogengasse, today Trautsongasse (see Rotter 1918, 454–55; also Faber 2000, 168). The Josephstadt tax records for 1787–1788 show that this is correct: Walter Brauneis found that they include the entry: “In der Schwibbogengasse / Zu ebener Erde / Das Theater, welches nicht verlassen wird, und derzeit leer nebst einem Holzkeller” (“In Schwibbogengasse on the ground floor the theater, which is not rented and is currently empty, along with a wood cellar”; Brauneis 2004, 91n5, and 2012, 374n5, quoting Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Steueramt B 34/25, Steuerbücher der Gemeinde Josephstadt [1787/88], 160v). Thus the theater was apparently in the building at the far end of the garden as shown in the Nagel and Huber maps.

A travel guide for Vienna from 1797 mentions that one could enter Auersperg’s theater via the Temple of the Flora in the palace garden:

Der Fürst Adam Auerspergische  
Pallast.

In der Josephstadt, ist mit außerordent=lichem Geschmacke eingerichtet.—Besonders sehenswert ist der Wintergarten, und der Tempel der Göttinn Flora, durch den man in das niedliche Haustheater kommt.

[[Neuester wienerischer Wegweiser \(1797\)](#), 170]

The Palace of Prince Adam Auersperg  
In the Josephstadt is constructed with  
exceptional taste.—Especially worth seeing  
is the Winter Garden, and the Temple of the  
Goddess Flora, through which one comes  
into the pretty house theater.

(One wonders whether the Temple of Flora may have been the edifice with the statue in the middle of the back wall of the palace garden on Huber's map. Biba [1968, 217] reproduces an engraving of a performance at Auersperg's in Jan 1791 of Weigl's cantata *Flora e Minerva*. What appears to be the statue of Flora is at the right of the image. On this performance, see below.)

Wherever Auersperg's theater was located, it cannot have been large. The website of the city of Vienna allows historical maps of the city to be [laid over a modern map](#). In their printed versions, these overlays include a scale in meters that can be used estimate the dimensions of the historical buildings on Nagel's map.



Detail from Nagel's map of the Palais Auersperg and the property no. 70 behind, overlaid on a modern map. The apparent location of Auersperg's theater is indicated in red.

The house at no. 70 facing onto Rofranogasse and the building at the other end of the garden along Schwibbogengasse both measured around 40 meters along their street sides, and the building on Schwibbogengasse was no more than 10 meters (around 33 feet) deep (the house on Rofranogasse and its wings were even narrower). If Auersperg's theater was indeed in the building on Schwibbogengasse, it seems unlikely that the building's entire length would have been used for the theater; at any rate, we can perhaps estimate that the auditorium would have been no more than roughly 10 x 20 meters (around 33 x 66 feet) This footprint is considerably smaller than the old Burgtheater on Michaelerplatz, which itself was quite intimate by modern standards. (Rotter, again not citing a source, states that the building as a whole was 529 square meters, somewhat larger than the dimensions given here; see Rotter 1918, 454).

Count Zinzendorf, who attended events at Auersperg’s theater several times over the years, gives occasional hints about the theater’s layout. He speaks at least three times of watching from a “loge” (box): on 23 Jul 1782, at a performance of Righini’s *Armida*; on 26 Mar 1787, at a performance of the original instrumental version of Joseph Haydn’s *Seven Last Words* (Link 1998, 290); and again at a performance of two plays and a ballet for the visiting King and Queen of Naples on 27 Dec 1790 (Link 1998, 367). In his entry for 5 Dec 1791 (quoted above) Zinzendorf notes that he was seated “enhaut” (up high) whereas Henriette Auersperg was “embas” (“down below”). At the performance of Gluck’s *Alceste* on 12 Feb 1786, he writes of being in the “parterre” (ground floor). Taken together, these references suggest that Auersperg’s theater had boxes and that it had at least two levels for the audience: a ground floor and an upper tier. On 12 Feb 1786 Zinzendorf writes that he and his companion were “assez mal entourés” in the parterre, perhaps suggesting that they were standing, as was the practice in the parterre of some theaters at the time (his “mal” suggests that he was not pleased with the social level of those surrounding them, perhaps another hint that the performances were open to a public beyond just invited nobility). On the currently available evidence, any estimate of the capacity of Auersperg’s theater remains speculative, but it is unlikely to have held more than a few hundred spectators.

Also in his diary entry for 12 Feb 1786 Zinzendorf notes that he arrived at 5:30 pm, an hour and a quarter before the performance began—suggesting that he expected it to be well attended and wanted to be sure to get a place—and he writes that it was initially “tres froid” (very cold). We currently know nothing about the heating (if any) in Auersperg’s theater, but if the theater was indeed in the building on Schwibbogengasse, which seems not to have been a residence, it is unlikely to have been heated when it was not being used. From the temperatures for the week of 7–13 Feb published in the *Wiener Zeitung*, we can see that there had been a cold snap, with the temperature falling to 0 °Réaumur (0 °Celsius or 32 °Fahrenheit) on the night of 9 Feb and the morning of 10 Feb. On the day of the performance of *Alceste*, the temperature had been 1⅓ °Ré (1.67 °C or 35 °F) at 8 am, warming to just 4½ °Re (5.6 °C or 42 °F) by 3 pm. So it is not surprising that Zinzendorf would have found the theater cold at 5:30 pm. (Regarding the Réaumur temperature scale, see our entry for [5 Oct 1791](#) and the discussion of the Viennese temperatures in the week of the premiere of *Die Zauberflöte*; see also the Réaumur temperature converter [here](#).)

W i e n.  
Meteorologische Beobachtungen  
auf der K. K. Sternwarte.  
Vom 7. bis 14. Februar.

Barometerstand.						
Edge	8 Uhr früh		3 u. nachm.		10 Uhr abend	
Den.	Zoll	Lin.	Zoll	Lin.	Zoll	Lin.
7	27	9	27	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	27	6
8	27	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	27	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	27	6
9	27	5	27	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	27	8
10	27	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	27	10	27	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
11	27	6	27	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	27	9 $\frac{3}{4}$
12	27	11	27	8	27	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
13	27	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	27	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	28	1 $\frac{1}{2}$

Reaumur'scher Thermometerstand.						
	Grad		Grad		Grad	
	ober	o	ober	o	ober	o
7	6	---	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	---	2	---
8	4	---	6	---	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	---
9	3	---	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	---	0	---
10	0	---	3	---	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	---
11	5	---	5	---	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	---
12	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	---	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	---	5	---
13	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	---	5	---	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	---

Richtung des Windes.						
	7		8		9	
	S. W. B. fl.	Süd klein.	S. W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.
	S. W. B. fl.	West stark.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.
	West klein.	West klein.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.
	---	Süd klein.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.
	West stark.	West stark.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.
	Windstill.	Windstill.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.
	West stark.	West stark.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.	W. B. fl.

WZ, no. 13, Wed, 15 Feb 1786, Anhang, 345

The last documented performance in Auersperg's theater was *Axur* on (or before) 18 Nov 1793, although the production seems to have received additional performances in 1794. On 25 Nov 1793, a little over a month after his aunt Marie Antoinette had been guillotined, Emperor Franz II, under the influence of his minister of police [Count Pergen](#), decreed that middle-class citizens and bureaucrats were no longer to be permitted to give private theatricals (Hadamowsky 1994, 580). While this did not directly apply to the private performances of the nobility, the emperor's (and Pergen's) dim view of private theater in general as a potential breeding ground of sedition and revolutionary sentiment probably dampened the general enthusiasm for private theater in Vienna.

Prince Johann Adam Auersperg died on 11 Nov 1795. According to Brauneis, his theater was dismantled in 1802 (Brauneis 2012, 376; no source cited).

### Auersperg's productions (↑)

At present we have documentary evidence for 16 dated performances in Auersperg's theater in the years from 1780 to 1793. (See the table below; Scherzer's performances in 1779 are not included because we do not know whether these took place in the "new theater" that Auersperg built around that time.) Three of these dated performances were probably not productions organized by Auersperg. A ballet on 12 Aug 1780, recorded in Zinzendorf's diary, seems almost certainly to have been a production by Scherzer's company. And on 18 Jan 1790 the phantasmagorist Phylidor ([Philidor](#)) rented or was allowed to use Auersperg's theater to perform

for a private audience; he followed up with an announced week of public performances in the Josephstadt beginning on 20 Apr 1790. (His announcement does not specify the venue, but it seems likely again to have been Auersperg’s theater. Only the performance on 20 Apr is included in the table below.)

The other 13 dated performances in Auersperg’s theater were the prince’s own productions, most featuring young amateur performers from the first and second aristocracy. Righini’s *Armida* on 23 Jul and 11 Oct 1782 is the only production for which we currently have two exact dates of performance. But Zinzendorf’s diary is our sole source for ten of the performances in the table, and his attendance at (or reference to) a single performance of a production does not imply that only a single performance took place. It is clear that Salieri’s *Axur* was performed several times at Auersperg’s in 1793 and 1794. And as we have seen, the correspondent’s report published in the *Staats-Relation* implies that Auersperg’s productions of *Alceste* and *Idomeneo* in 1786 were both performed more than once.

Date	Day	Event	Type	Source(s)
1780-08-12	Sat	<i>La jalousie reciproque</i>	ballet	Zinzendorf
1782-02-23	Sat	<i>Piramo e Tisbe</i> (Rauzzini)	cantata	Zinzendorf
1782-07-11	Tue	<i>Armida</i> (Righini)	opera	Zinzendorf
1782-10-11	Fri	<i>Armida</i> (Righini)	opera	<i>Gazzetta universale</i> , <i>Wiener Zeitung</i>
1784-04-24	Sat	<i>Les deux billets</i> <i>L’indiscret</i> <i>Le bon ménage</i>	plays	Zinzendorf (Link 1998, 223–24)
1786-02-12	Sun	<i>Alceste</i> (Gluck)	opera	Zinzendorf (Link 1998, 264)
1786-03-13	Mon	<i>Idomeneo</i> (Mozart)	opera	Zinzendorf (Link 1998, 267)
1786-03-26	Sun	<i>La serva padrona</i> (Paisiello)	opera	Zinzendorf (Link 1998, 268), <i>Staats-Relation</i> , etc.
1787-03-26	Mon	<i>Seven Last Words</i>	concert	Zinzendorf (Link 1998, 290)
1788-03-09	Sun	<i>La Partie de chasse de Henri IV</i> (Charles Collé)	play?	Zinzendorf (Link 1998, 313)
1790-01-18	Mon	Herr Phylidor, phantasmagoria	magic	<i>Wiener Zeitung</i>
1790-04-20	Tue	Herr Phylidor, phantasmagoria	magic	<i>Wiener Zeitung</i>
1790-12-27	Mon	<i>Die Familie</i> (Gemmingen) <i>Der vernünftige Narr</i> (Schröder) Ballet	plays, ballet	Zinzendorf (Link 1998, 367)
1791-01-17	Mon	French comedy	play	Da Ponte, <i>Preßburger Zeitung</i>
1791-12-05	Mon	<i>Liebhaber und Nebenbuhler in einer Person</i> (Ziegler)	play	Zinzendorf (Link 1998, 389)

Date	Day	Event	Type	Source(s)
1792-02-28	Tue	<i>Verbrechen aus Ehrsucht</i> (Iffland)	play	Zinzendorf (Link 1998, 396)
1793-11-18	Mon	<i>Axur</i> (Salieri)	opera	Zinzendorf, <i>Wiener Theater- Almanach</i> (1794 & 1795)

On 17 Jan 1791 Prince Auersperg held an elaborate event in honor of the visiting King and Queen of Naples; the event is best known for the performance of Joseph Weigl’s cantata *Flora e Minerva*, on a text by Lorenzo da Ponte (Biba 1968). In his memoir, Da Ponte gives a detailed description of the performance of the cantata, which evidently took place after dark outside in the palace garden at the Temple of Flora (Da Ponte 1829, 115–17; Da Ponte 2000, 168–70). The title page of the printed full score specifies the date and the occasion.



ÖNB, M.S. 27148

According to the “Personaggi” printed in the full score, the soloists were Adriana Ferrarese and Dorothea Bussani of the court opera as Flora and Minerva; the cantata is scored for full orchestra. Fortunately for the audience, the temperature that evening was relatively mild for January (although by no means warm); according to the *Wiener Zeitung* (no. 6, Wed, 19 Jan 1791, 150), the temperature reached a high of 10½ °Ré (around 13 °C or 56 °F) at 3 pm on 17 Jan, cooling to 6 °Ré (7.5 °C or 45.5 °F) by 10 pm.

Da Ponte mentions in passing that Auersperg's palace also included "un bel Teatrino, in cui dovea rappresentarsi una Commediola" ("a beautiful little theater in which a comedy was to be performed"; [Da Ponte 1829, 115](#); [Da Ponte 2000, 168–69](#)). According to a brief notice in the *Preßburger Zeitung*, the play was a French comedy performed by "gentlemen and ladies":

Oesterreich.

Wien, den 17. Jäner. [...]

Gestern war bey Hofe Ball und  
Heute giebt der Fürst v. Auersperg in  
seinem Hotel ein glänzendes Fest, bey  
welchen großes Concert, dann franzö=  
sische Komödie von Cavaliers und Da=  
men, und endlich Dinee, Soupée,  
Ball und Illumination für die erhabe=  
nen Gäste gehalten wird.

[[Preßburger Zeitung](#), no. 6, Wed, 19 Jan 1791, 51]

Austria.

Vienna, 17 January. [...]

Yesterday there was a ball at  
court and today Prince von Auersperg  
is giving a brilliant fête in his mansion,  
at which will be a grand concert, then  
a French comedy given by gentlemen  
and ladies, and finally dinner, supper,  
a ball, and illuminations for the exalted  
guests.

So it seems that a French comedy was performed by an amateur cast in Auersperg's theater on 17 Jan 1791 as part of the event honoring the King and Queen of Naples. The exact location of two other dated events at Auersperg's is unknown, so these are not listed in the table. One may have had music and the other certainly did. On 8 Feb 1785 (Shrove Tuesday that year) Zinzendorf records in his diary that he attended *Die schöne Wienerin* in the Burgtheater and ended his evening (and his carnival season) at Madame Reischach's, "le P<sup>cc</sup> Auersperg ne m'ayant point invité a sa fête" ("Prince Auersperg not having invited me to his fête"; [Link 1998, 241](#)); that is, unfortunately all we know at present about that particular event at Auersperg's. On 9 Jan 1791 Auersperg hosted the visiting King and Queen of Naples; Zinzendorf noted in his diary that "le roi chantera et M<sup>elle</sup> Ployer jouera du clavessin" ("the king will sing and Mademoiselle Ployer will play the keyboard"; see the facsimile of Zinzendorf's entry in [Edge 1996, 91](#), and the transcription of the entry in [Link 1998, 369](#)). Zinzendorf does not specify the location, but the king's participation makes it seem unlikely to have been Auersperg's theater.

Two other performances are alluded to in reports from the time, but without specific dates: as we have seen, there seems to have been a performance of an opera at Auersperg’s in 1786 at some point before 8 Feb; and the French “comédie mêlée d’ariettes” *L’ami de la maison* is said also to have been performed at Auersperg’s in 1786, although at present we do not know precisely when.

### The cast of Auersperg’s *Idomeneo* (↑)

The casting of the four principal roles in Auersperg’s production of *Idomeneo* is known with reasonable (if not absolute) certainty. Elettra was without question sung by Countess Maria Anna Hortensia von Hatzfeld and Idomeneo was very likely sung by the young Italian businessman Giuseppe Antonio Bridi. (On Countess Hatzfeld, see our entry on her performance of “[Tutte nel cor vi sento](#)” in Bonn; on Bridi, see our entry for [Paisiello and \*Idomeneo\*](#).) Bridi, born on 1 Feb 1763, had just recently turned 23, and Countess Hatzfeld, born in 1750, would have been 35 or 36—the oldest of the principals. From Mozart’s catalog and the review in *Pfeffer und Salz*, we know that Ilia was sung by Baroness Anna von Pufendorf, and as we shall see, it now seems reasonably certain that the “Baron Pulini” who sang Idamante was Baron Francesco von Pollini from Laibach (Ljubljana). At present we do not know who sang the smaller roles of Arbace, the High Priest of Neptune, or the Voice of Neptune, nor do we know who sang in the chorus.

Baroness Anna von Pufendorf (née Posch, c. 1757–7 Apr 1843) was the wife of Reichshofrat Konrad Friderich von Pufendorf (1743–1822). She would have been 28 or 29 at the time of Auersperg’s *Idomeneo*. Her name appears frequently (as “Puffendorf”) in Zinzendorf’s diaries, most often as an actress in the amateur performances of plays given by the nobility, but also occasionally as a singer. On 21 Mar 1784 Zinzendorf attended a performance at Prince Lichtenstein’s of *Piramo e Tisbe*, in which Baroness Pufendorf and Countess Hatzfeld sang the principal soprano roles: “Ensuite M<sup>es</sup> de Hatzfeld et de Puffendorf executerent a ravir l’opera Italien Pyrame et Tisbé” (“Then Mesdames de Hatzfeld and de Pufendorf ravishingly performed the Italian opera *Piramo e Tisbe*”; Link 1998, 221). And on 27 Feb 1792, Pufendorf performed the role of Marton in *Renaud d’Ast*, a *comédie mêlée d’ariettes*, with music by Dalayrac (Link 1998, 395–96). Of Pufendorf’s singing and musicianship Schönfeld writes in the *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag*:

Puffendorf, Baronesse von, Gemahlinn  
des Hrn. Reichshofraths. Mit wahrem Ver=  
gnügen hört man dieser liebenswürdigen Da=  
me zu, wenn sie im vollen Affekte ihres fei=  
nen Gefühls singt. Ihre Stimme ist zwar  
nicht sonderlich stark, aber ihre Manieren,  
ihr Vortrag, ihr Geschmack, ihre Empfindung  
sind hinreißend. Dabei ist sie eine begeister=  
te Freundinn der Musik, nicht zwar allein  
der laufenden Modestücken, oder der soge=

nannten *Morceau du jour*, wie bei vielen Dilettanten gewöhnlich ist, sondern auch der alten und ernsthaftesten Stücken. Choralkirchenmusik und Fuggen singt sie mit dem größten Vergnügen mit. Es versteht sich hieraus, daß sie sehr gut und geläufig liest, und richtig intonirt. [Schönfeld 1796, 49]

Pufendorf, Baroness von, wife of the Herr Reichsthofrat. One hears this amiable lady with pleasure when she sings with the full passion of her fine feeling. To be sure, her voice is not especially strong, but her embellishments, execution, taste, and sensibility are enchanting. She is also an enthusiastic friend of music, not just of the currently fashionable pieces, or the so-called *morceau du jour*, as is common with many dilettantes, but also old and serious pieces. She takes the greatest pleasure in singing choral church music and fugues. It goes without saying that she reads very well and fluently, with correct intonation.

Schönfeld also includes a short article on her weekly private musical gatherings, in which Bridi is named as a regular participant:

Frau Baronesse von Buffendorf, hat wö= chentlich eine musikalische Gesellschaft, welche einen vortrefflichen Zweck hat, nämlich den, sich je länger, je mehr durch Studium zu befestigen. Diese Gesellschaft ist geschlossen, und enthält nur bloß diejenigen Personen, welche mitsingen, denn es ist nichts als Gesang und Klavier daselbst; die Stücke sind aber meistens Fugen, Chöre und Kirchenmusik. Die Theilnehmer sind, außer der Frau Baronesse selbst, die Baronesse Walterskirchen, Henikstein, Bridi, Raphael, Schwingelfeld &c. — lauter kernhafte Musikfreunde. [Schönfeld 1796, 69–70]

Frau Baroness von Pufendorf has a weekly musical gathering with an admirable goal, namely to strengthen through long study. This gathering is closed, and includes only those

people who take part in singing, for it is nothing but song and keyboard there; the pieces are, however, mostly fugues, choruses, and church music. The participants are, in addition to the Frau Baroness herself, the Baroness Walterskirchen, Henikstein, Bridi, Raphael, Schwingelfeld &c. — all solid music lovers.

Baroness Pufendorf was a subscriber to Mozart’s academies in the Trattnerhof in Mar 1784 (*Briefe*, iii:306), and in 1795 she was a [subscriber to Beethoven’s opus 1](#).

Mozart writes in his catalog that the part of Idamante in K. 489 and K. 490 was written for “Bar[on] Pulini.” The identity of this singer was long uncertain. In a letter to Lorenz Hagenauer sent from Vienna on 30 Jan 1768, Leopold Mozart refers to a “Sgr: *Polini*” as an *opera buffa* singer in Vienna (*Briefe*, i:258); he seems to have meant Antonio Pulini, whom Zechmeister identifies as having been in the casts of two *opere buffe* performed in the Burgtheater in Vienna in 1767 (Zechmeister 1971, 281 and 288). The commentary to Leopold’s letter in *Briefe* (v:188) states as fact that this singer is identical with Wolfgang’s “Baron Pulini” in 1786, but offers no evidence for the claim, which seems unlikely on a number of grounds (for one thing, there is no reason to think Antonio Pulini was a baron). In any case, this identification was not generally adopted by Mozart scholars, and Baron Pulini remained otherwise unidentified in the Mozart literature into the 1990s. No identification of Baron Pulini is offered in the Cambridge Opera Handbook on *Idomeneo* (Rushton 1993), and Link still refers to him as “unidentified” in 1998 (Link 1998, 201).

Yet surprisingly, a second and ultimately more plausible identification of Baron Pulini was made as early as 1847 (albeit indirectly), in a brief obituary published in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* of the pianist and composer Francesco Pollini:

Mailand. [...]

Verwichenen September starb hier einer der ausgezeichnetsten und erste Clavierspieler Italiens, *Francesco Pollini*, geboren zu Laibach 1763 [*sic*], und Schüler *Mozart’s*, der für ihn ein Rondo mit Violinsolo schrieb, wie das im gedruckten Verzeichnisse der M’schen Compositionen zu lesen ist. Auf der ganzen Erde sind bekannt und verbreitet die (antisyphilitischen) Acque di Pollini, Eaux de Pollini, die noch bis heute ein Arcanum sind und ihm hübsche Summen einbrachten. Ausser seinem vortrefflichen Spiele à la Mozart, Hummel, Clementi, war er ein guter Componist, von dem nicht wenig für Pianoforte und Gesang gedruckt ist. Seine vortreffliche Pianoforteschool ist noch jetzt im Mailänder Conservatorium und anderen italienischen Musikinstitu-

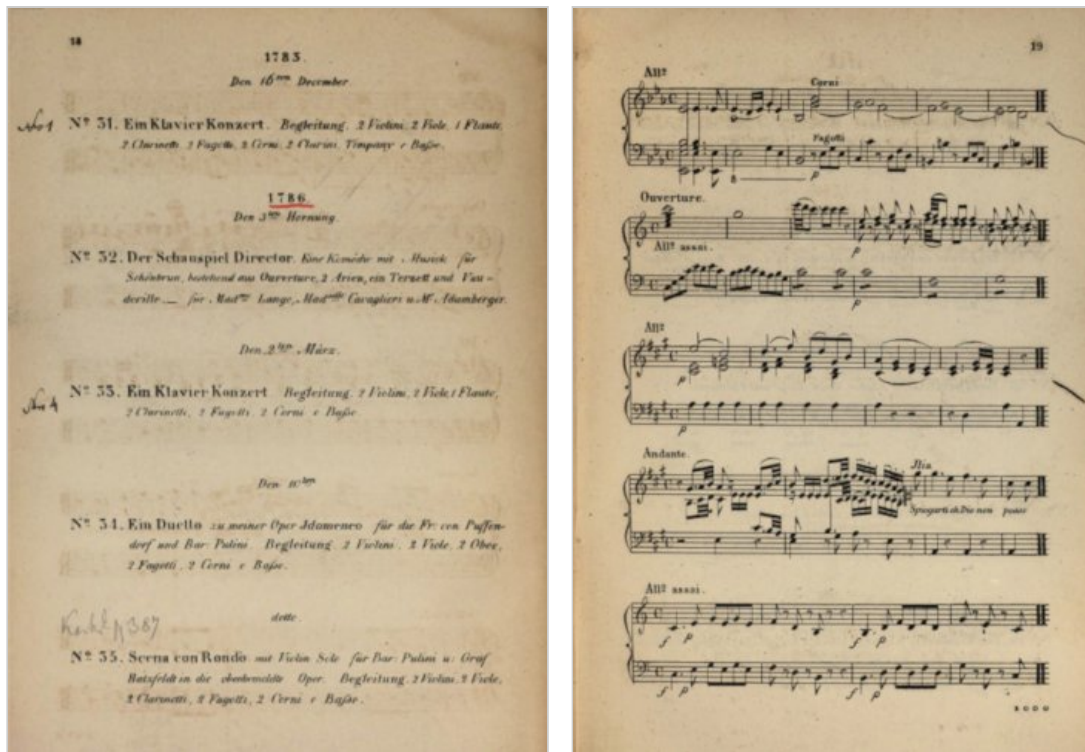
ten als Lehrbuch vorgeschrieben. Die grossen Künsteleien der heutigen Pianofortevirtuosen finden sich längst in *Pollini*’s sogenannten Studii, und man kann ihn ohne Weiteres als ihren eigentlichen Erfinder betrachten.

[*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 21 Apr 1847, col. 268]

Milan. [...]

Last September died here one of the most distinguished and foremost pianists in Italy, *Francesco Pollini*, born in Laibach in 1763 [*sic*], and a student of *Mozart*’s, who wrote for him a rondo with violin solo, as one can read in the printed catalog of *Mozart*’s compositions. The (antisyphilitic) *Acque di Pollini, Eaux de Pollini* is known around the world; it is still a secret formula and brought him a tidy sum. Apart from his excellent playing à la *Mozart*, *Hummel*, and *Clementi*, he was also a good composer, no small number of whose works for piano and voice have been printed. His excellent piano method is still used today as a textbook in the Milan Conservatory and other Italian music institutes. The great tricks of today’s piano virtuosi can already be found in *Pollini*’s so-called *Studii*, and he can without question be considered their inventor.

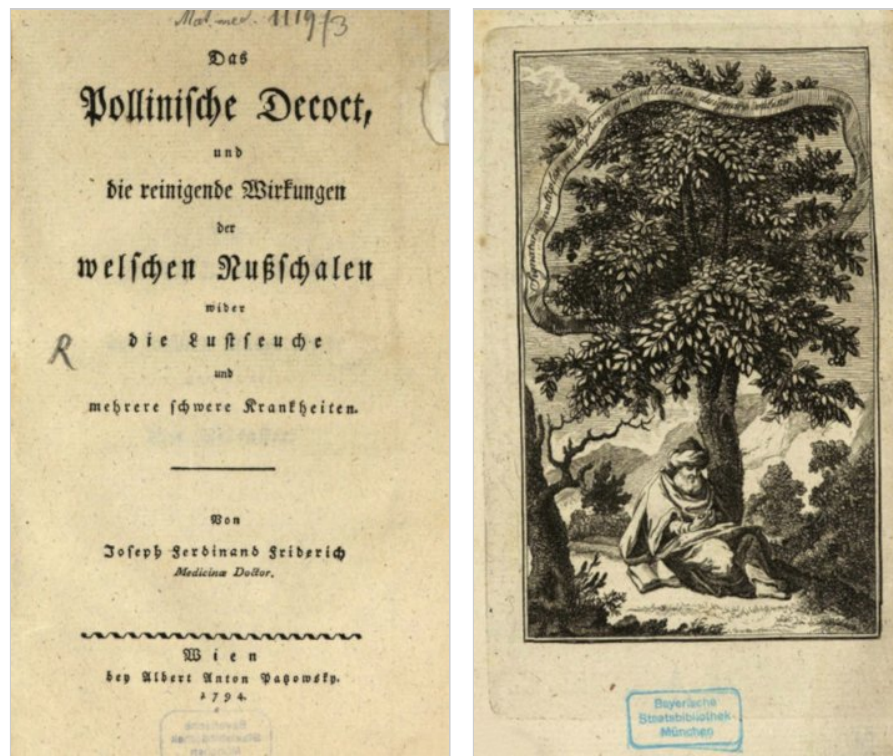
The reference in this obituary may be to one of the printed editions of *Mozart*’s own thematic catalog issued by *André* in 1805 and 1828; both transcribe *Mozart*’s entry for K. 490 as “Scena con Rondò mit Violin Solo für Bar: Pulini und Graf Hatzfeldt.” In any case, K. 490 is the only vocal work in *Mozart*’s oeuvre to which the phrase “Rondo mit Violinsolo” could possibly refer, and it is the only one with that designation in *Mozart*’s catalog.



Johann Anton André, *W. A. Mozart's thematischer Catalog, wie er solchen vom 9. Februar 1784. bis zum 15. November 1791 eigenhändig geschrieben hat, nebst einem erläuternden Vorbericht*. Offenbach: Johann André [1828], 18–19 (BSB)

While there is still no documentary evidence from the time of Auersperg’s *Idomeneo* to verify the identification, circumstantial evidence makes it very likely that Francesco Pollini was Mozart’s Idamante in the 1786 production.

Franciscus [Franz, Francesco] de Paula Joannes Pollini was born on 26 Mar 1762 in Laibach (today Ljubljana) in what was then the Habsburg [Duchy of Carniola](#) (Herzogtum Krain, now the central portion of Slovenia; on Pollini’s biography, see principally Klemenčič 1992 and 1995, and Biggi Parodi 1996). Thus the documented performance of Mozart’s *Idomeneo* in Vienna on 13 Mar 1786 took place just 13 days before Francesco’s 24th birthday. His family, of Italian heritage, had lived in Laibach for several generations. His father was Johann Chrysostomus Georg Pollini (1721–1786), a medical doctor famous for his syphilis treatment, “das Pollinische Decoct” (Pollini’s decoction), a secret formula based on earlier antisyphilitic potions, supplemented by walnut shells (see [Krbavčič 2016](#)).



Joseph Ferdinand Friderich, *Das Pollinische Decoct, und die reinigende Wirkungen der welschen Nußschalen wider die Lustseuche und mehrere schwere Krankheiten*.  
Vienna: Albert Anton Paßowsky, 1794, title page and frontispiece.

(BSB)

The fame of Johann Chrysostomus was such that he was ennobled by Empress Maria Theresia in 1779 (a facsimile of his patent of nobility is given in Klemenčič 1992, 85, and Klemenčič 1995, 147), and (apparently) elevated to the rank of hereditary Freyherr in 1784 (Costa 1863, 52), which gave him and his son the right to the title of Baron. According to current research, Francesco was the fifth and last child of Johann Chrystostomus and his second wife, Maria Elisabetha Posarelli; Francesco's older full siblings were all girls (see the family tree on Geneanet [here](#)). Two children are known from Francesco's father's first marriage, one girl and one boy. The date of death of Francesco's half-brother Felix Joseph (b. 1741) is unknown, but Francesco was named universal heir in his father's will of 19 Oct 1786 (Klemenčič 1995, 149; Biggi Parodi 1996, 334). Johann Chrysostomus died on 7 Nov 1786, and Francesco thereby apparently inherited, along with the family house in Ljubljana, the secret formula for Pollini's decoction.

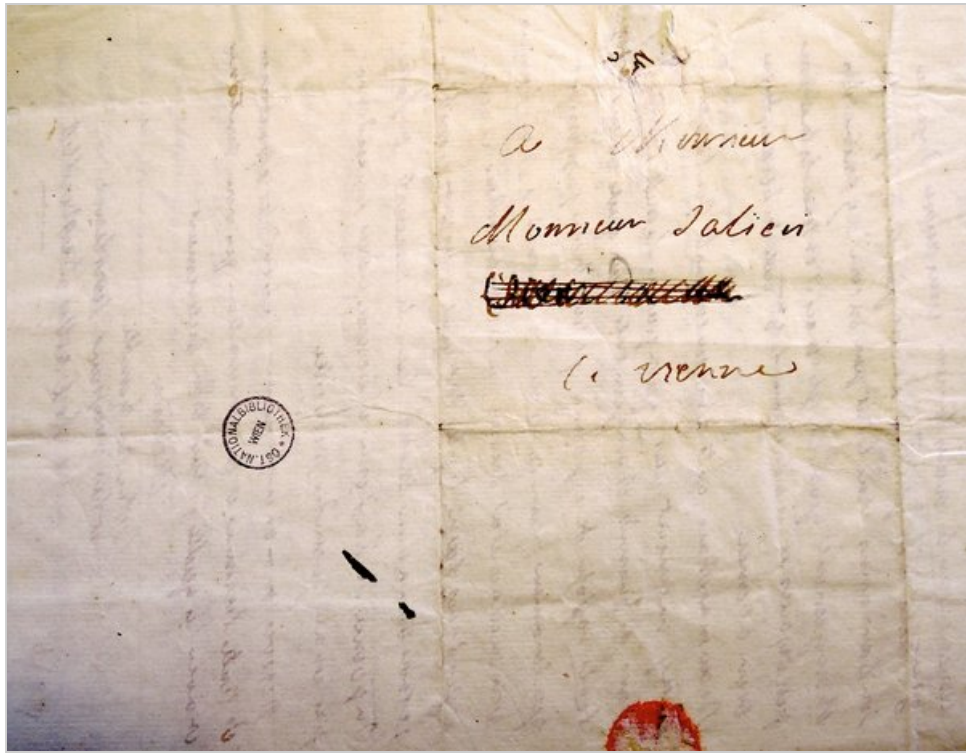
Little reliable is known of Francesco's early life. Costa (1863, transcribed in the *Appendix* below) gives a colorful account, much of which has not yet been independently verified. According to Costa, the son of Dr. Pollini (Costa does not give the son's first name) was handsome, master of several languages, skilled in drawing (Costa's article is actually about two volumes of crayon portraits by Pollini), and a virtuoso on the violin and as a singer. Through these skills and qualities, and by virtue of his title, he insinuated himself into high social circles everywhere he went, but he chronically spent more money than he received from home. He is said to have run up unpaid debts of 100,000 livres in Paris, but was saved from arrest through the intervention of

a cardinal with whose niece he had been romantically involved. Costa writes that Pollini distinguished himself in amateur theatricals in Laibach in both German and Slovenian, and that he later appeared as an opera singer in Verona, Bologna, Milan, Rome, Turin, and Naples, where he married a singer.

It seems likely that Costa, in claiming that Pollini sang opera professionally, mistook Antonio Pulini for Francesco. At any rate, over the span from 1765 to 1785, Antonio Pulini (the singer to whom Leopold Mozart referred in 1768) is known to have sung in operas in all the cities Costa mentions, as well as Venice, Vienna (1766–1768), Modena, Trieste, Reggio, Parma, Crema, Novi, Pavia, and Vicenza (Sartori 1990–94, [vii]:540). At present we have no idea whether Costa’s story about Pollini, the cardinal’s niece, and the 100,000 livre debt is true, and there is no known document from the time referring to Francesco playing the violin.

In a letter dated 28 Dec 1782, Francesco’s father wrote to Prince Alberigo di Belgiojoso that in the coming spring: “mio figlio si marita con una signora della corte di Milan, una vienese [*sic*] e vedova giovane” (“my son is marrying a lady of the court in Milan, a young Viennese widow”; Biggi Parodi 1996, 344). We currently know nothing more about this planned marriage.

Pollini is also mentioned in an undated letter from the author and librettist [Du Roullet](#) in Paris to Salieri in Vienna:



je vous suis obligé Monsieur Monsieur Salieri  
 de la commission que vous m'avez procurée  
 de M<sup>re</sup> le Baron de Pollini et me parait votre  
 aimable lettre et me de la même manière et moi  
 nous l'avons le comté de votre honneur pour lequel  
 vous et pour lui-même je vous prie de me donner  
 quelques renseignements sur lui par vos amiche  
 sur ce qu'il fait car  
 notre de butant dont je parle beaucoup  
 à M<sup>re</sup> et cher ami Gluck est tellement et onate  
 elle ne chantent pas une seule audition que le buty  
 mais elle promet de chanter moi-même quelle a avec  
 une fois celle vous et une conversation admirable  
 elle a de but dans l'opéra de la cécité elle  
 a joué et parlé avec plus de sensibilité plus  
 de vérité j'aimerais mieux que M<sup>re</sup> haberty cela  
 est d'autant plus heureux que peut espérer que  
 l'opéra de M<sup>re</sup> haberty sera un succès plus raisonnable  
 8/34-1

le noble que le de butant a chanté et joué  
 le morceau dit ces ces deux Briqueux m'ont  
 donné un grand plaisir. on voulait quelle le j'ayant  
 la semaine précédente, mais par regret que  
 le noble étoit trop fort pour en faire le 2<sup>e</sup>  
 noble de butant que je crois qu'il faut que  
 les butants n'ont pas plus de butant maître  
 de butant et ne pas lui donner la double fatigue  
 de l'opéra et de l'opéra de butant et de la cravate  
 on a tenu une observation juste et a été de butant  
 quelle j'aurais mieux en noble on même deux  
 avant de jouer celui de Danagde qui doit compléter  
 l'opéra de butant cela m'a donné le plaisir de Danagde  
 a la fin de novembre ou dans décembre et ce que  
 je voulais. votre part bien et adieu et de butant  
 m'aurait le de butant finit et prêt pour la  
 l'opéra de butant. de quelle l'opéra on a été de butant  
 l'opéra de butant pour la fin et ce que pour vous  
 que vous par par.  
 nous avons vu Monsieur Salieri le 2<sup>e</sup> acte et le de butant  
 on a été de butant je suis en prison de butant de la voir

[cover:]

A Monsieur [sic]  
 Monsieur Salieri  
 [cancelled line, illegible]  
 A Vienne

[1]

je vous suis obligé mon cher Monsieur Salieri  
de la conoisanse que vous m[']avés procurée  
de Mr Le Baron de pollini il me paroît un tres  
aimable homme et Me De la Menardiere et moy  
nous l[']avons acueilli de notre mieux par raport  
a vous et pour lui meme je vous prie de me donner  
quelques renseignements sur lui sur sa famille  
sur ce qu[']il fait ici

notre debutant dont je parle beaucoup  
a Mr et cher ami Gluck est re ellement [i.e., réellement] etonante  
elle ne chante pas encore aussi bien que St huberty  
mais elle promet de chanter mieux qu[']elle et avec  
unne tres belle voix et unne prononciation admirable  
elle a debuté dans chimene de Sacchini elle  
a joué ce Role avec plus de sensibilité plus  
de verité infiniment mieux que St huberty cela  
est d[']autant plus heureux qu[']on peut esperer que  
Dorenavant St huberty sera un peu plus raisonnable.

[2]

Le Role que la debutante chante et joue  
le mieux, dit on, cest celui D'hipermnestre  
dans vos Danaïdes. on vouloit quelle le jouat  
la semaine prochenne [...]  
[ÖNB, Handschriftensammlung, 8/34-1]

[translation:]

[cover:]

To Monsieur  
Monsieur Salieri  
in Vienna

[1]

I am obliged to you my dear Monsieur Salieri  
for having introduced to me Monsieur Le Baron  
de Pollini. He seems to me an amiable man and  
Madame De La Menardière and I have welcomed  
him as best we could. With regard to yourself and  
also for his sake, I ask you to give me some  
details about him, about his family, about

what he is doing here.

Our debutante, of whom I spoke a great deal to my dear friend Monsieur Gluck, is truly astonishing. She does not yet sing as well as Saint-Huberty, but she promises to sing better than her, and with a very beautiful voice and admirable pronunciation. She debuted in Sacchini's *Chimène*. She played this role with more sensibility, more truth, infinitely better than Saint-Huberty. This is all the more fortunate, as one can hope that from now on Saint-Huberty will be a little more reasonable.

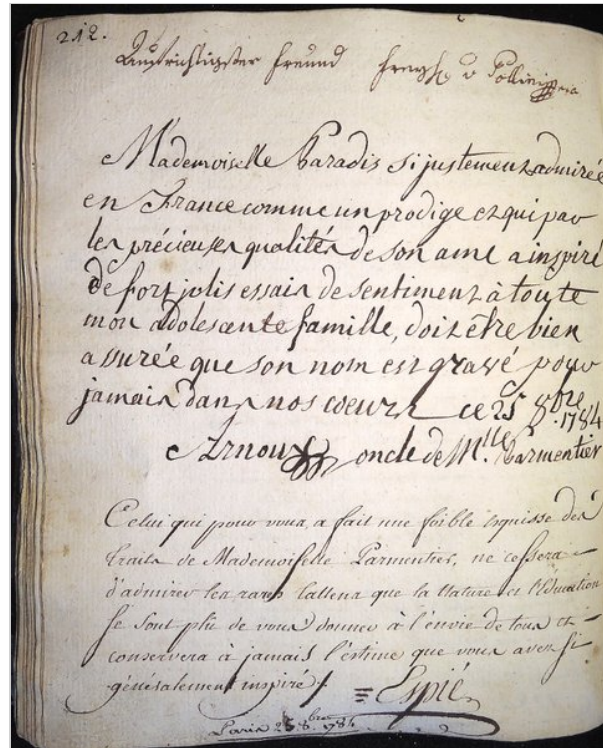
[2]

The role that the debutante sings and plays the best, it is said, is that of Hypermnestre in your *Danaïdes*. They wanted her to perform it next week [...]

Du Roullet was the librettist for Gluck's *Alceste* and *Iphigénie en Aulide*, and co-translator and adaptor, with Ludwig Theodor Tschudi, of the libretto for Salieri's *Les Danaïdes*, which had premiered in Paris on 26 Apr 1784 (on the background of *Les Danaïdes*, see Rice 1998, 309ff). The "debutante" in Du Roullet's letter is [Anne Cameroy](#) (later Anne Chéron) who performed under the name "Mademoiselle Dozon"; the singer with whom she is being compared is the leading soprano of the Paris Opéra at that time, Antoinette Saint-Huberty, who had sung the title role in the premiere of Sacchini's *Chimène* on 16 Nov 1783, and the role of Hypermnestre in the premiere of *Les Danaïdes*. Dozon, who was around 17 at the time of her debut, had been discovered by Gossec and given a rigorous preparation in Paris by the best teachers. According to Fétis (1837, iii:112), she made her debut as Chimène on 17 Sep 1784; because Du Roullet's letter was written after her debut, that date is a *terminus post quem* for the letter. Dozon made a tremendous splash in her initial appearances: following a short stop-press insertion into the *Mercur de France* on 25 Sep 1784 (literally "after this article had gone to press"), the journal gives Dozon a glowing six-page review in its issue of 16 Oct, and it follows up on 27 Nov with a review of her second role, Armide in Sacchini's *Renald*. (In the letter to Salieri quoted above, Du Roullet goes on to explain how he persuaded the directorate not to have Dozon sing Hypermnestre as a second role, arguing that it was too demanding for a new singer, who should have more stage experience before tackling it). A [long report](#) in Grimm's *Correspondance littéraire* on her appearance as Armide nearly exhausts the author's stock of French superlatives; it opens: "On ne se rappelle pas d'avoir jamais vu sur notre théâtre lyrique un début plus brillant, plus applaudi, plus fait pour l'être que celui de la demoiselle Dozon" ("One cannot recall ever having seen on our lyric stage a debut more brilliant, more applauded, and more worthy of it than Mademoiselle Dozon").

Du Rouillet’s letter thus places Francesco Pollini in Paris after 17 Sep 1784. A second document confirms Pollini’s presence in Paris in the fall of 1784: his brief entry in the *Stammbuch* (album) of the blind pianist Maria Theresia Paradis. Although Pollini’s entry is undated, it appears between two dated entries from Oct 1784, at a time when Paradis was in Paris: the entry preceding Pollini’s is by Gluck’s friend Franz Kruthoffer (19 Oct) and the entry following Pollini’s is by “Arnoux oncle de Mlle. Parmentier” (25 Oct). Pollini himself wrote simply:

Aufrichstiger Freund      Freyh[err] v Pollini <sub>mpia</sub>

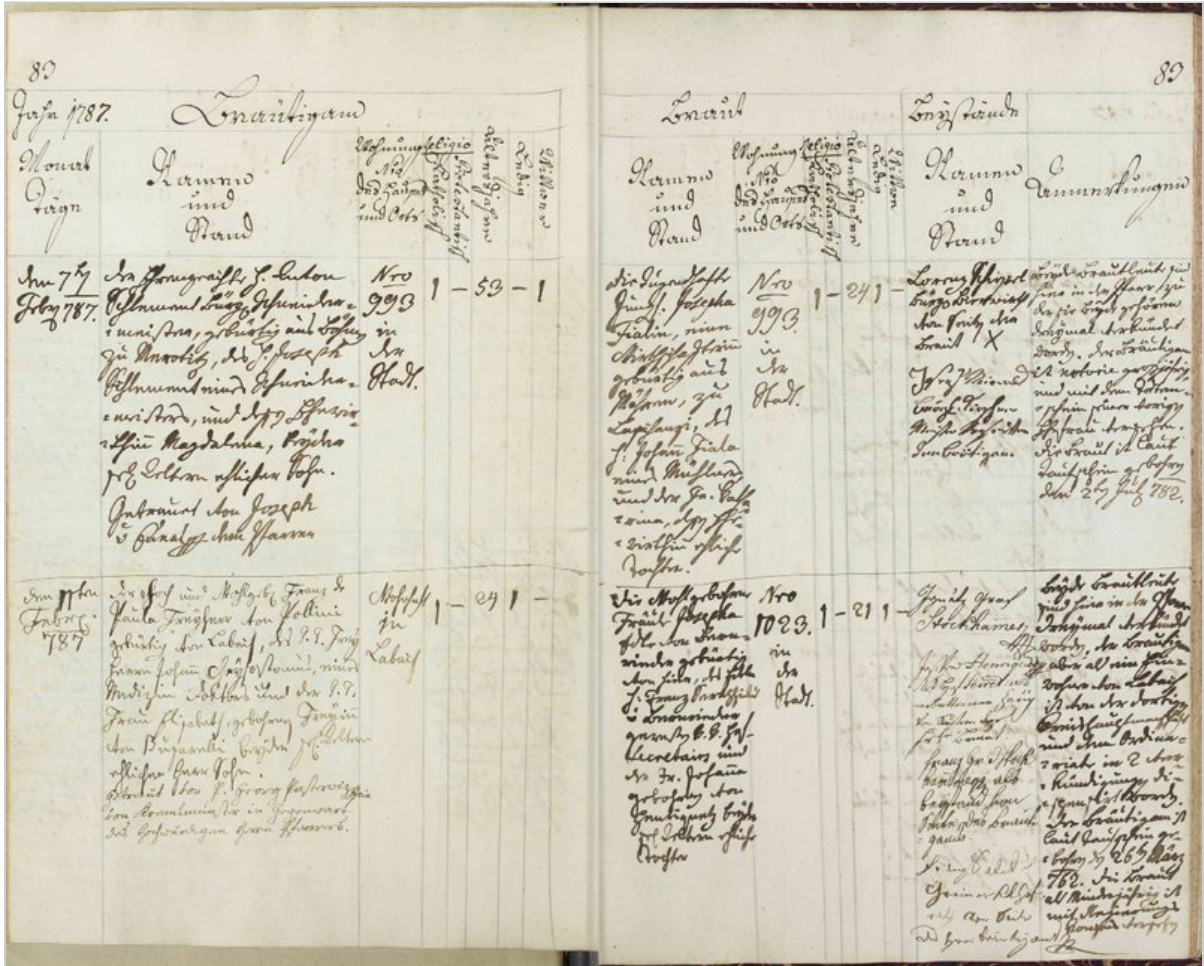


Wienbibliothek Handschriftensammlung, H.I.N.-92659, 212  
(photo: Michael Lorenz)

So we can place Pollini in Paris around Sep–Oct 1784. Salieri himself had recently been in Paris to prepare for the premiere of *Les Danaïdes*, arriving around 5 Jan 1784 and returning to Vienna no later than 20 Jul that same year (for documentation of these dates, see Angermüller 2000, i:237–38 and i:282–85, respectively.) Whether Pollini first met Salieri in Vienna or Paris is unclear from Du Rouillet’s letter, which seems consistent with either possibility. At any rate, the letter by itself cannot serve as sufficient evidence to place Pollini in Vienna before his sojourn in Paris. It does confirm that Pollini was in Paris, as Costa claims (Costa 1863, 52); but the rest of Costa’s story about the 100,000 livres and the cardinal’s niece remains undocumented.

On 10 Feb 1787, three months after his father’s death, Baron Franz de Paula von Pollini from Laibach married 21-year-old Josepha von Bernrieder in the church of St. Augustine in Vienna. The officiant at the marriage was, by dispensation, the Benedictine father and composer [Georg Pasterwiz](#) of Kremsmünster, at that time living in Vienna in the Kremsmünsterhof, no. 1023,

which also happens to be the house number given in the marriage entry for Josepha von Bernrieder. One of the witnesses for the bride was Franz Sales von Greiner, father of the pianist, writer, and memorist [Caroline Pichler](#). The marriage entry does not refer to Josepha as a widow, so she is unlikely to have been the woman referred to in the letter of Francesco's father at the end of 1782.



(Lower entry on page) The marriage of Baron Franz de Paula von Pollini and Josepha von Bernrieder

Vienna, St. Augustin, Trauungsbuch, 02-01,2, 83

The other witnesses to the marriage in 1787 included Count Ignatz von Stockhammer, who three weeks later in the same church married Josepha von Bernrieder's sister Maria Anna ([St. Augustin, Trauungsbuch 02-01,2, 85](#)); and Joseph von Henriquez, Josepha's uncle on her mother's side (see the record for the marriage on 22 May 1759 of Josepha's parents, Franz von Bernrieder and Johanna Michaela von Henriquez, at which Joseph von Henriquez was also a witness, [St. Stephan, Trauungsbuch, 02-059, 177v](#)). To our knowledge, this marriage record is the earliest known document that unequivocally places Pollini in Vienna.

At present, nothing else is known about Francesco and Josepha's life together, apart from a somewhat vague entry in the *Taschenbuch für den weiblichen Adel in Wien* of 1788:

Pollini, Baronesse v.  
Josepha

Gemahlin des Hn. Fr.  
lebt von eig. Mitt.

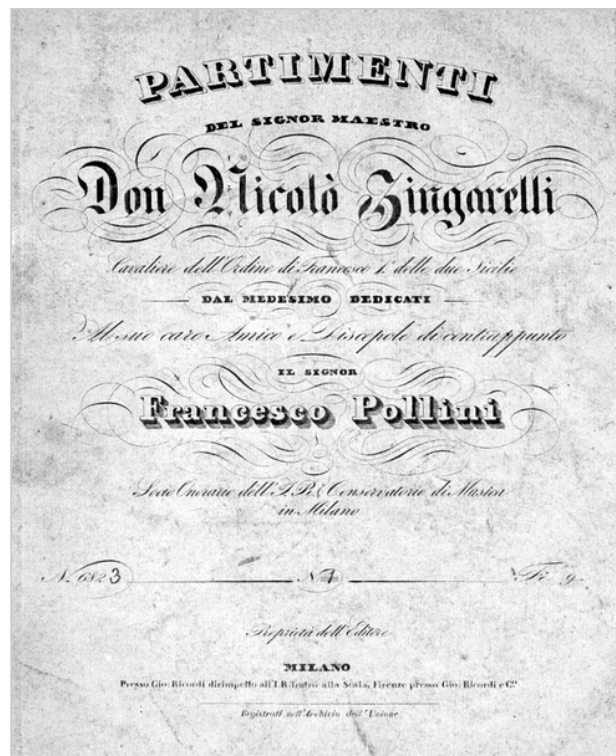
1021

Familie u. Taufnamen	Karakter	H. N.
Plumekron, v. The- refia	des Hn. Maximilian, k. k. Landraths Gem.	831
Pöck, Freyin von, Ma- ria Anna	k. k. Hofraths Ge- mahlin	598
Pöck, von, Francisca — Paulina	Hofagentens Wittwe Fräulein Tochter	768
— Philippina	—	—
Podenthall, von, Apo- tonia	des Hn. Jos. Julius, k. k. Hofraths Gem.	812
Podenthall, von, Ma- ria Anna	des Hn. Joh. Alexan- der, k. k. Hofr. Gem.	812
— Appolonia	Fräulein Tochter	—
Pog, von, Eleonora	k. k. Kapellmeisters Wittwe	890
— Johanna	Fräulein Tochter	—
Pohas, von, Josepha	des Hn. Joh. k. k. Nitt- meisters Gemahlin	982
Pofheim und Warten- berg, Gr. v. Josepha	des Hn. Grafens Fran- Ludwig, Gemahlin	477
Pollender, von, Maria Anna	des Hn. Karl, k. k. u. ö. Regierungs-Of- fiziant. Gemahlin	937
Pollini, Baronesse v. Josepha	Gemahlin des Hn. Fr. lebt von eig. Mitt.	1021
Pollrini, Gräfin von, Karolina	Wittwe	1087
Polja, v. gebor. von Gruber, Regina	des Hn. Ludwig, k. k. Bankhofstouc. Gr.	780

*Taschenbuch für den weiblichen Adel in Wien* (1788), 104

Here it is said that Baroness Pollini “Gemahlin des H[errn] Fr[anz], lebt von eig[enen] Mitt[eln]” (“wife of Herr Franz, lives on her own resources”; “1021” is her address in Vienna). The implication is currently unknown. It may mean that she was living on her own inheritance; it is conceivable that Francesco was already underwater financially—as we have seen, Costa refers to young Pollini living far beyond his means, and he later did indeed go bankrupt, as one can trace through several legal notices from Laibach published in the *Wiener Zeitung* in 1800 and 1801 (for details, see the *Notes* below).

But by the time of the bankruptcy, Francesco was long gone from Vienna. He appears to have settled in Milan around 1792 (see Biggi Parodi 1996, 334), and it seems fairly well established that he studied counterpoint there with the eminent composer [Niccolò Zingarelli](#) before the latter left his position as *maestro di cappella* at the cathedral in Milan in 1794 to take up a similar post in Loreto. Pollini’s study and friendship with Zingarelli is attested in the dedication of Zingarelli’s *Partimenti* of 1834: “Al suo caro amico e Discepolo di contrappunto il signor Francesco Pollini” (“To his dear friend and student of counterpoint, Signor Francesco Pollini”).



(British Library)

Francesco married the amateur harpist Maria Gasparini in Milan in 1798 (Biggi Parodi 1996, 334). His marriage in 1798 implies that his Viennese wife Josepha had died, but the date and location of her death is currently unknown (she seems not to have died in Vienna).

In the *Wiener Zeitung* on 26 May 1787, Francesco advertised his father's famous secret decoction:

Nachricht.

Franz Freyherr von Pollini aus Laybach macht hiemit öffentlich bekannt: daß er das von seinem verstorbenen, durch viele Jahre mit gutem Erfolge ausgeübte geheim gehaltene Mittel wider die Lustseuche besitze, und unter der Anleitung seines Vaters nicht nur allein die ächte Zubereitung dieses Mittels, sondern auch den eigentlichen Gebrauch desselben in allen Fällen erlernt habe, folglich die nämliche nützliche Dienstleistung fortzusetzen im Stande sey. Im Fall nun jemand ihm dieses bewährte *Arcanum Antivenereum* abzulösen willens wäre, so könnte er sich auch hiezu desto bereitwilliger finden, als ihm zum Verkauf diese Geheimnisse von Sr. Majestät dem Kaiser die Erlaubniß ertheilt worden ist. Um die eigentlichen Bedingnisse der

Ablösung zu erfahren, haben sich die Kauf=  
lustige mit ihm selbst ins Einvernehmen zu  
setzen, die auswärtigen Liebhaber aber wer=  
den ersucht, ihrer Briefe an ihn hieher nach  
Wien zu adressiren.

[WZ, no. 42, Sat, 26 May 1787, 1263]

Notice.

Franz Baron von Pollini from Laibach  
makes hereby publicly known that he  
possesses the secret remedy against  
venereal diseases that his late [father]  
applied with good success over many years,  
and that he learned under his father's  
instruction not only the genuine preparation  
of this remedy, but also the actual use of  
same for all cases, and is consequently in  
a position to continue the same useful  
service. In case someone would now be  
willing to acquire from him this time-tested  
*Arcanum Antivenereum*, he could also  
find himself all the more amenable, as he  
has been given permission by His Majesty  
the Emperor to sell this secret. To learn the  
actual conditions of this acquisition, prospective  
buyers should consult with him directly;  
interested parties elsewhere are requested  
to address their letters to him here in Vienna.

It is perhaps not too fanciful to detect an undercurrent of financial desperation in this rather awkward advertisement.

On 4 Nov 1787, Francesco (signing himself "Baron Pollini") wrote to Prince Belgiojoso from Vienna informing him that Francesco's father had died (Biggi Parodi 1996, 344). And in a letter from Vienna dated 30 Jun 1788, Francesco wrote to the prince:

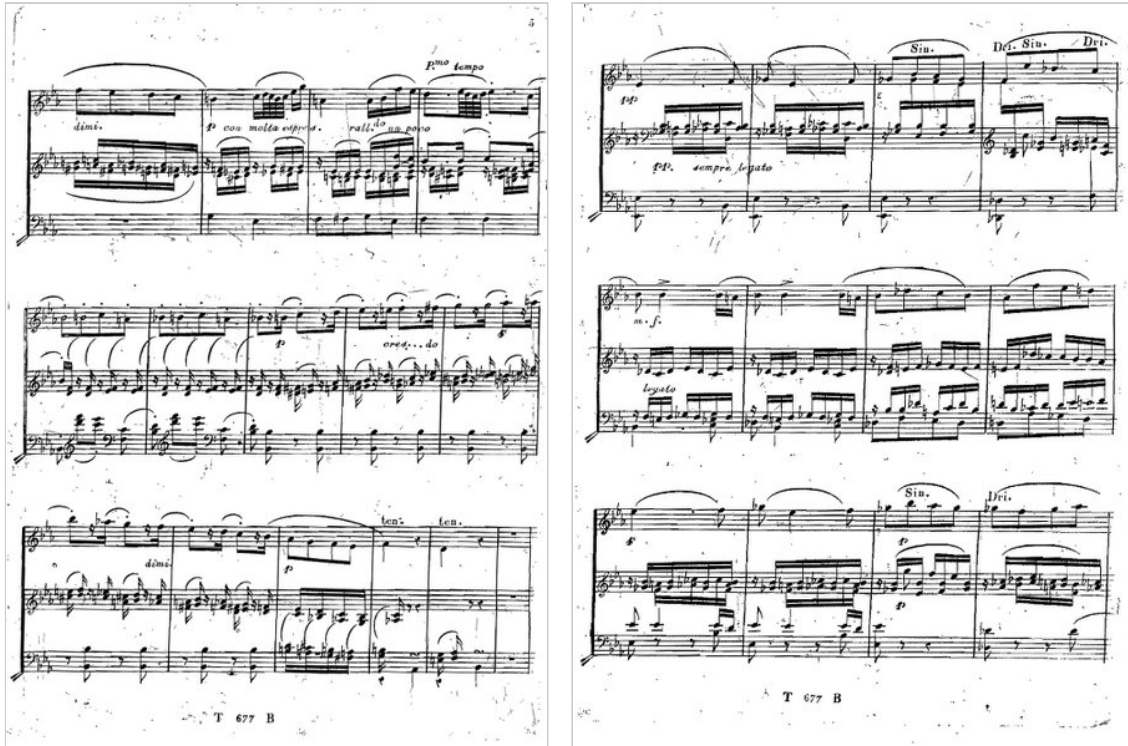
Sono maritato con una giovine e non lo dovrei dire, ma siccome amo la verità,  
bastantemente bella moglie, ho la volontà, già che sono giovine ancora, di provar un po' la  
mia fortuna e vorrei intraprendere un viaggio, o solo, o piuttosto ancora con mia moglie.  
[Biggi Parodi 1996, 344]

I have married a young woman and I should not say it, but given that I love the truth, a  
beautiful enough woman. I have the desire, while I am still young, to try my luck a bit, and I  
want to undertake a trip, whether alone, or better still with my wife.

At present this is the latest known dated documentary reference to Francesco in Vienna. If he did undertake a trip with his young wife, it might explain why her death seems not to be in the Viennese records. If she was with him when he settled in Milan, she may have died there.

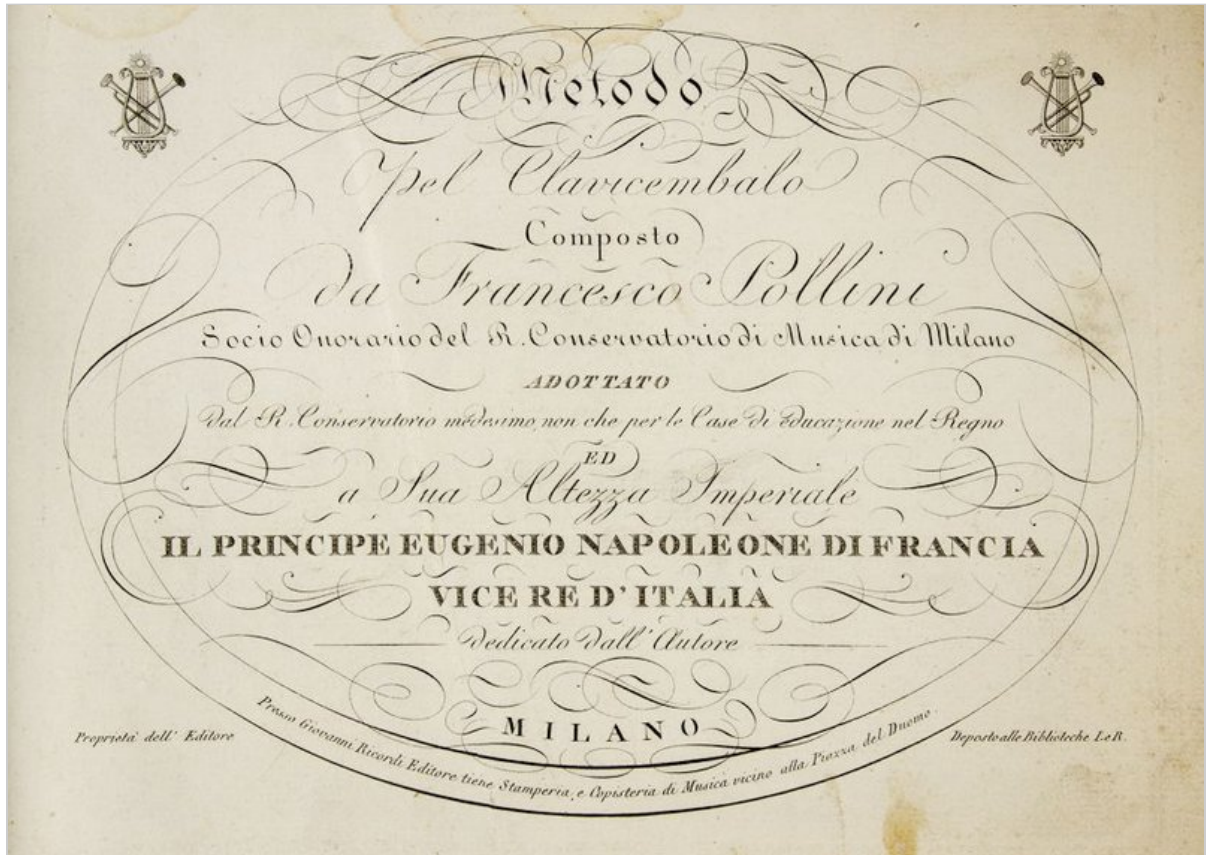
After settling in Milan around 1792, Francesco Pollini (who is not known to have used his title or “von” after this point) gradually became established as a well-known pianist, private piano teacher, and composer. Biggi Parodi (1996, 357–62) lists 71 editions published during his lifetime of his music and pedagogical works, and many other works survive in manuscript (see the works list in Biggi Parodi 2015). Relatively little of his music is currently available digitally, but there are indications of a growing interest in his piano music, a [CD of which](#) was released by Tactus in 2007, performed by Costantino Mastroprimiano.

Pollini’s obituary in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* notes: “Die grossen Künsteleien der heutigen Pianofortevirtuosen finden sich längst in *Pollini*’s sogenannten Studii, und man kann ihn ohne Weiteres als ihren eigentlichen Erfinder betrachten” (“The great tricks of today’s piano virtuosi can already be found in *Pollini*’s so-called Studies, and he can without question be considered their inventor”). An example is Pollini’s *Una de’ Trentadue Esercizi per Clavicembalo Fatti in forma di Toccata*, op. 42, dedicated to Meyerbeer, and published by Ricordi in 1820. The piece (for solo piano) is written on three staves; its complex and ingenious distribution of inner parts between the hands and hand crossings create an early example of a “[three-hand effect](#),” of the sort later made famous by Thalberg and Liszt.



(IMSLP)

Pollini's piano method was first published by Ricordi in 1808 and in a second edition in 1834; the title page reads "Metodo pel Clavicembalo Composto da Francesco Pollini, Socio Onorario del R. Conservatorio di Musica di Milano, adottato del R. Conservatorio medesimo non che per le Case di educazione nel Regno..." ("Method for the Keyboard, composed by Francesco Pollini, Honorary member of the Royal Conservatory in Milan, adopted by the same Royal Conservatory as well as by other educational institutions in the Kingdom").



The 25-year-old composer Vincenzo Bellini (who had studied with Zingarelli in Naples) came to Milan in Apr 1827 to begin work on an opera commissioned by La Scala; the result was *Il pirata*, which premiered on 27 Oct 1827. The young composer soon became acquainted with Pollini, who was then 65, and the two became close friends. When Bellini fell seriously ill upon returning to Milan after the premiere of *I Capuleti e Montecchi* in Venice in 1830, the Pollinis took him into their home while he recovered; Bellini referred to the Pollinis in a letter to Vincenzo Ferlito as "[questa] buona famiglia che mia ama piú che un figlio" ("this good family that loves me more than a son"; letter of 21 May 1830, quoted in Biggi Parodi 1996, 349). Bellini showed his appreciation by dedicating to Francesco the first edition of the piano score of *La sonnambula* in 1831.



([Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe](#))

Francesco Pollini died on 17 Sep 1846 in Milan at the age of 84. The short obituary in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in Apr 1847 became the starting point for a longer obituary in the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* on 26 May 1847.



Gazzetta musicale di Milano, 26 May 1847

The reference to Pollini as dedicatee of Mozart's rondo with violin (albeit described incorrectly as "un rondo pour piano et violon") also appears in the entry on him in the second edition of Fétis' *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (1864, vii:91).

The case for the identification of Francesco Pollini as Mozart's "Baron Pulini" can be quickly summarized. It has been claimed that Pollini settled in Vienna by 1783 (Angermüller 2000, i: 279n1, and Biggi Parodi 2015), but it is not clear that there is documentary evidence to support this; he did, however, know Salieri by 1784. On 10 Feb 1787 Pollini married a Viennese woman, Josepha von Bernrieder, in St. Augustin's in Vienna, and other documents place him in Vienna later that year and in 1788. We currently have no evidence that Pollini was in Vienna in Mar 1786, but neither do we have evidence of him being anywhere else. He was certainly a baron, whereas Antonio Pulini, the only other candidate, was not. Although Pollini is not otherwise documented as a singer, he was evidently a highly talented musician, and it is not difficult to believe that he would have jumped at the chance to sing in a production of Mozart's opera with a young amateur cast in 1786. Klemenčič (1995, 150) makes the intriguing suggestion that Pollini might have been introduced to the circle of Prince Auersperg because of the Auersperg family's historical roots in Slovenia (the former [Burg Auersperg](#) is around 25 km southeast of Ljubljana), but at present there is no evidence to support this idea.

Be that as it may, other documents attest to Pollini's contacts in Viennese musical circles. He knew Salieri by 1784, and that acquaintance and his introduction to Du Roulet suggest he might well also have met Gluck at some point. Further evidence comes from the entry for Pollini's marriage in Vienna in 1787: the officiant at his wedding was the composer Georg Pasterwiz, and

one of the bride's witnesses was Franz Sales von Greiner, whose daughter Caroline was a brilliant pianist and certainly acquainted with Mozart.

All in all, then, it seems likely, although not proven, that it was Francesco who sang the role of Idamante in the production of *Idomeneo* in Auersperg's theater in 1786, and for whom Mozart composed K. 489 and K. 490, the new numbers for that production. That Mozart wrote "Pulini" in his catalog rather than "Pollini" is perhaps not surprising, as he might easily have aurally mistaken the back vowel /ɔ/ in "Pollini" for /ʊ/ (in writing "Pulini", Mozart is unlikely to have intended /u:/); in any case, Mozart may have thought that the name he heard spoken in 1786 was the same as the name "Pulini" he remembered having heard and perhaps seen on posters in Vienna in 1768. (The coincidence in spelling is not compelling evidence for claiming "Baron Pulini" was Antonio Pulini, who has essentially nothing else in his favor.)

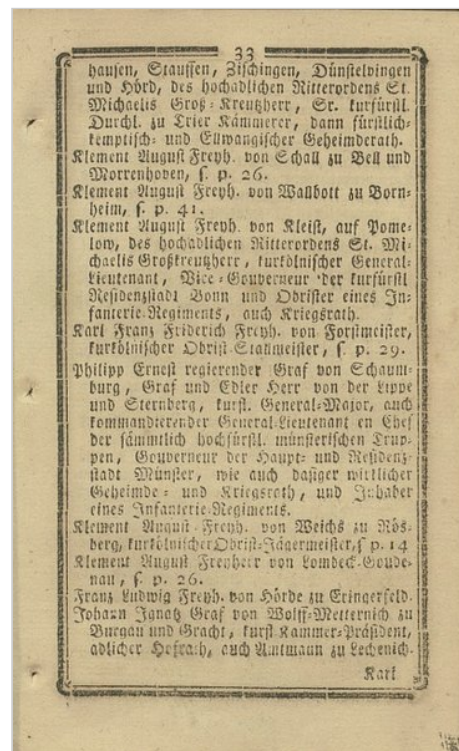
There is no known evidence that Francesco Pollini was Mozart's student, as claimed in the obituary in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* and the many subsequent references derived from it. On the other hand, the possibility cannot be ruled out.

It is said that Pollini met Mozart's younger son, Wolfgang Amadeus Jr. (Franz Xaver) on 22 Sep 1820 (Biggi Parodi 1996, 341, no source cited), and he dedicated to Wolfgang Jr. his *Preludio cantabile e rondò per piano-forte*, op. 44, published in 1822. Klemenčič (1995, 150) cites two works by Pollini incorporating themes from Mozart: a set of variations for piano based on Cherubino's arietta from *Figaro* ("Voi che sapete"); and the first of Pollini's *Sei canzonette*, which (according to Klemenčič) incorporates the theme from the slow movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto in C minor, K. 491. As Klemenčič points out, both of these works by Mozart date from around the time of Auersperg's *Idomeneo* in 1786. If Pollini was indeed in Vienna in 1786, he almost certainly would have heard *Figaro* in the theater (it premiered on 1 May), and he might well have attended Mozart's concert in the Kärntnertortheater on 7 Apr 1786 at which K. 491 is thought to have been premiered (on the location of that concert, usually said to have taken place in the Burgtheater, see our entry for [7 Apr 1786](#)).

It is sometimes stated confidently in the secondary literature that the orchestra for Auersperg's *Idomeneo* in 1786 consisted entirely or partly of professional players (see for example Hertz 2009, 139, and Keefe 2017, 311, citing Link 1998, 200–201). Although it is plausible that Auersperg hired professional orchestral musicians for his opera productions, we currently have no evidence that he did. It must be remembered, too, that there were many capable instrumentalists among the Viennese nobility and upwardly mobile middle class (as documented, for example, in [Schönfeld 1796](#)), so it is entirely possible that some or all of the orchestral players might have been amateurs. This seems all the more likely if the orchestras were sometimes led by an amateur concertmaster, such as Count Kuefstein or Count August Clemens von Hatzfeld.

## August Clemens von Hatzfeld (↑)

Mozart composed the solo violin part of the *scena con rondò* “Non temer, amato bene,” K. 490, for Count August Clemens von Hatzfeld, half-brother of Count Clemens August Johann Nepomuk von Hatzfeld, the husband of Countess Maria Anna Hortensia von Hatzfeld, who sang the role of Elettra in 1786. August Clemens was born on 10 Nov 1754 in Bonn, the oldest child from the second marriage of his father, Count Carl Ferdinand (1712–1766). His mother was Maria Anna, née Baroness von Venningen, and his godfather was the Elector of Cologne at the time of his birth, [Clemens August von Bayern](#) (1700–1761), who lent his names to an extraordinary number of aristocrats born during his reign who later had positions in the electoral court.



*Kurkölnischer Hof=Kalender auf das Schaltjahr 1784, 33*

August Clemens von Hatzfeld was intended for the clergy; he was named a canon of the cathedral in Eichstätt on 6 Jun 1769 and ordained on 26 Nov 1775 (the following biographical summary is based principally on Schmid 1955). During much of the 1770s he studied law in Mainz, although apparently without ever taking a degree. Schmid speculates that August Clemens may have studied violin in Mainz with Georg Anton Kreusser (1746–1810), concertmaster of the electoral orchestra. An obituary for August Clemens in the *Magazin der Musik* (see below) also mentions that he was a close musical friend of “Beeke,” probably [Ignaz von Beecke](#) (1733–1803), head of music at the court of Wallerstein.

When Baron Johann Anton von Zehmen became prince-bishop of Eichstätt in 1781, August Clemens became his designated successor, with more freedom to leave Eichstätt on “pilgrimages” and cures. It is difficult to avoid the impression that August Clemens took every opportunity to escape from Eichstätt and was more devoted to music than to the religious life. Early in 1784 he took a cure in Wiesbaden, near Mainz; one suspects musical life in Mainz was on a considerably higher level than it was in Eichstätt, and thus more attractive to him. He also had three brothers in Mainz, all with musical interests. Hugo Franz von Hatzfeld (1755–1830), his next younger brother, was a canon of the cathedral in Worms, not far from Mainz; he was a good amateur tenor, and even composed a little (on Hugo Franz, see our entry for [23 Mar 1786](#)). Their next younger brother Franz Ludwig (1756–1827) was an official in the electoral court in Mainz and intendant of court music from around 1788 until the invasion of the French in 1792 (Münster 2001, 93–94). He became head of the family upon the death of Count Clemens August Johann Nepomuk in 1794, and in 1803 he was elevated to the status of prince (*Fürst*). The youngest Hatzfeld brother Maximilian (1764–1824), a canon of the cathedral in Mainz, was also an enthusiastic amateur musician. Their elder half sister [Sophia von Coudenhoven](#) (1747–1825), née von Hatzfeld, sister of Clemens August Nepomuk Johann, was a member of the inner circle of her cousin, the Elector of Mainz, Prince Friedrich Karl Joseph von Erthal, and she was an important figure in theatrical and musical life at court and in the city (on Sophia, see the *Notes* to our entry on “[Tutte nel cor vi sento](#)” in [Bonn](#)).

August Clemens became so closely associated with Mainz that Gerber wrote in the first edition of his *Lexikon*:

**Hatzfeld** (August Graf von) Domherr zu Eichstätt, war einer der stärksten Dilettantin auf der Violine, und hielt sich meistens am Churfürstl. Mainzischen Hofe auf [...]  
[[Gerber 1790, col. 604](#)]

**Hatzfeld** (August Count von) Canon in Eichstätt, was one of the strongest dilettantes on the violin, and resided mainly at the Electoral court in Mainz [...]

Schmid writes that August Clemens visited Bonn and Cologne in the autumns of 1781, 1783, and 1785 (Schmid 1955, 18). In 1783 he took a trip to Paris, where he became a friend and pupil of the violinist [Pierre Vachon](#) (1738–1803).

We do not know when August Clemens first visited Vienna or when he became acquainted with Mozart. Zinzendorf notes in his diary that he heard August Clemens play at Countess Thun’s in Nov 1785. (Countess Maria Anna Hortensia von Hatzfeld was also in Vienna in late Nov 1785;

see [our entry on her](#).) The diary entry is currently the earliest known reference to August Clemens in Vienna:

[Wed] 23. Novembre. [...]

Dela chez M<sup>e</sup> de  
Thun, ou on avoit arrangé un joli petit theatre dans son chambre  
chambre [*sic*] de compagnie. Clary, les Roombek, Louis Starh. Caroline Thun  
et un homme du Prince Galizin jouerent la Serenade, puis le  
Chanoine Hatzfeld joua du violon admirablement plusieurs  
airs Ecossois, dont l’un qu’on nommé Tweedside, me plut da=  
vantage [...]

[Wed] 23 November. [1785] [...]

Then to Madame de  
Thun’s, where a small pretty theater had been erected in the salon.  
Clary, the Rumbekes, Louis Starhemberg, Caroline Thun and a man  
of Prince Galitzin’s played *La sérénade*, then the canon Hatzfeld  
admirably played on the violin several Scottish airs, of which the one  
called “[Tweedside](#)” especially pleased me. [...]

On 17 Jan 1786 August Clemens was granted permission by the cathedral chapter in Eichstätt to make a “pilgrimage” to the Mariahilfer Kirche in Vienna (Schmid 1955, 22). One suspects the Count was drawn more by Viennese musical life than by the [Gnadenbild of Maria and the infant Jesus](#) that was the ostensible goal of pilgrims. It was during this pilgrimage that he participated in the production of *Idomeneo* at Prince Auersperg’s in Mar 1786; as we have suggested, it is possible that he acted as concertmaster for that performance, and perhaps also for the production of Gluck’s *Alceste* the previous month.

August Clemens returned to Eichstätt in early Apr 1786, and petitioned for a status (*Freiprübende*) that would permit him to live somewhere other than Eichstätt; it was his stated intention to settle in Vienna (Schmid 1955, 23). In his letter to Gustav Friedrich Wilhelm Großmann from Mainz on [23 Mar 1786](#), Hugo von Hatzfeld wrote that August Clemens had recently taken his “entire stockpile of music” (“gantzen Vorrath von musick”) with him to Vienna, suggesting that he may have already decided to settle there. He was granted the new status on 17 Dec 1786; sadly, he died in Düsseldorf on 30 Jan 1787, the day before the decision was made known. He had just recently turned 32.

In his last surviving letter to his father, dated 4 Apr 1787, Wolfgang refers to the death of August Clemens:

Ich habe ihnen in dem briefe |: so die storace eingepackt hat :| schon über diesen Punkt |: bey gelegenheit des traurigen Todfalls Meines liebsten besten Freundes grafen von Hatzfeld |:| meine Denckungsart erklärt — er war eben 31 Jahre alt; wie ich — ich bedaure *ihn* nicht — aber wohl herzlich mich und alle die welche ihn so genau kannten wie ich. [*Briefe*, iv:41]

I have already written to you (in the letter that Storace brought with her) my manner of thinking on this point, on the occasion of the sad death of my dearest and best friend Count Hatzfeld — he was just 31 years old, as I am — I do not feel sorry for *him* — but rather quite sincerely for myself and for all who knew him as well as I did.

It is the only reference to August Clemens in Mozart's surviving correspondence.

In 1787 the *Magazin der Musik* published a long obituary of August Clemens, possibly written by Christian Gottlob Neefe (the obituary is signed "S. N.").

2) Bonn, den 14ten Febr. 1787.) Der zu frühe Tod des Grafen August von Hatzfeld, Domherrn zu Eichstädt, verdient in ihren Blättern angezeigt zu werden. Er war der Aelteste von sechs Geschwistern aus der zweite Ehe, und besaß Alles, was an dieses irdischen Loben fesseln kann: Jugend, Schönheit, Rang, Einkünfte, Talente, Verstand und ein vortreffliches Herz. [...]

2) Bonn, 14 Feb 1787. The too-early death of Count August von Hatzfeld, cathedral canon in Eichstädt, deserves to be noted in your pages. He was the oldest of six siblings from the second marriage, and possessed everything that can bring praise in this earthly realm: youth, beauty, rank, income, talent, understanding, and a splendid heart. [...]

After a sad description of Hatzfeld's final illness and his farewells to his friends, the obituary continues:

Des Seeligen musikalisches Talent war unter Männern seines Standes vielleicht das einzige seiner Art. Das Instrument, auf welchem er es mehr als jeder andere von gleichem Rang zur Vollkommenheit brachte, war die Violine. Beeke und Vachon waren seine liebsten und vertrautesten Kunstfreunde. Letztern lernte er in Paris kennen, und Talent, Genie und Kunstgefühl fesselte beide bald unzertrennlich an einander. Aus Ueberzeugung und Sympathie studirte er die Spielart seines Freundes Vachon, und machte sie sich ganz eigen. Seine Hauptstücke bestanden im Vortrag des Quadro; mit Concertspielen gab er sich weniger ab, wiewohl er es nicht ganz vernachlässigte.

In Wien machte er Bekanntschaft und Freundschaft mit **Mozart**. Hier studirte und spielte er unter Anleitung des Autors selbst dessen berühmten Quadros, und verschwierte sich so mit dem Geiste ihres Componisten, daß derselbe sein Meisterstück fast von keinem andern mehr hören

wollte. Ungefähr zwei Monate vor seinem Tode hörte ich sie von ihm mit einer Genauigkeit und Innigkeit vortragen, daß er sich die Bewunderung jedes Kenners erwarb, und aller Herzen bezauberte. [...]

[*Magazin der Musik*, ii/2:1380–84]

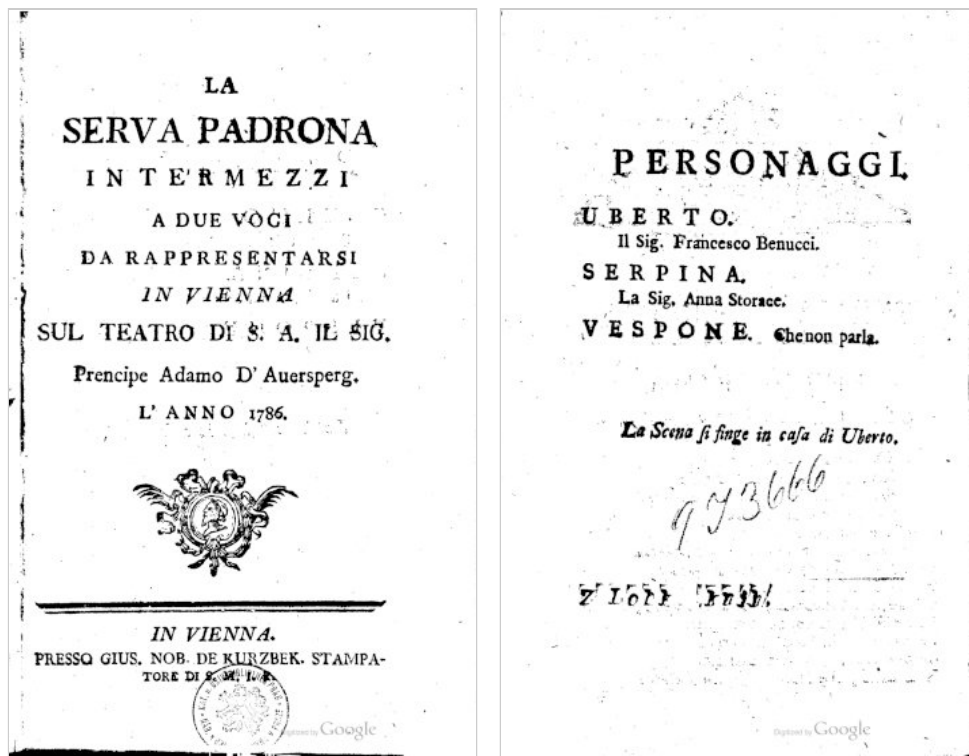
The musical talent of the departed was perhaps unique of its kind among men of his standing. The instrument which he brought to greater perfection than anyone of similar rank was the violin. Beecke and Vachon were his best and closest artistic companions. He became acquainted with the latter in Paris, and talent, genius, and feeling for art soon made the two inseparable. From conviction and sympathy he studied his friend Vachon’s manner of playing, and made it entirely his own. His greatest strength lay in the performance of quartets; he devoted himself less to playing concertos, although he did not completely neglect it.

In Vienna he made the acquaintance of **Mozart** and became his friend. Here he studied and played under the direction of the author himself his famous quartets, and became so closely joined to the spirit of the composer, that the latter preferred to hear his masterpiece played by almost no one else. Around two months before his death I heard him play them with a precision and intimacy that won him the admiration of every connoisseur and enchanted every heart.

(This document is not in *Dokumente* or *Neue Folge*.) It is likely that the writer is referring to Mozart’s “Haydn” quartets; the implication is that August Clemens performed these in Bonn late in 1786. Schmid suggests that August Clemens may thereby have played a crucial role in bringing these works to the attention of young Beethoven, and perhaps even in motivating Beethoven’s first trip to Vienna in 1787.

### *La serva padrona* and *Giornovichi* (↑)

The main topic of the correspondent’s report in the *Staats-Relation* is not *Idomeneo* or *Alceste* (which are mentioned in passing), but rather the performance at Auersperg’s on Sun, 26 Mar 1786 of Paisiello’s *La serva padrona*, with court opera singers Nancy Storce and Francesco Benucci as Serpina and Uberto. A printed libretto from that production survives in the National Library of the Czech Republic.



(Google Books)

Zinzendorf attended, writing in his diary:

[Sun] Laetare. 26. Mars. [...]

Dela chez le P<sup>cc</sup>: Starhemberg

puis chez M<sup>c</sup>: de Starhemberg qui souffre de la coqueluche.  
A l'opera la Serva padrona musique nouvelle de Paisiello au lieu de  
l'ancienne de Pergolese. Benucci et la Storace jouerent comme des  
anges, il y a de jolis morceaux. Giornovich qui Louise ne voit  
pas fort, joua un Concert du violon avec beaucoup de grace et  
de douceur. Je me trouvois a coté de Me: d'auersperg et de sa  
bellesoeur, et devant Me de Rothenhahn. [...]

[Sun] Laetare. 26 March. [...]

Then to Prince Starhemberg's,

and then to Madame Starhemberg, who is suffering from whooping  
cough. To the opera *La serva padrona*, new music by Paisiello in place  
of the old by Pergolesi. Benucci and La Storace performed like  
angels; there are some pretty pieces. Giornovich, whom Louise  
could hardly see[?], played a concerto on the violin with much grace and  
sweetness. I found myself beside Madame d'Auersperg and her  
sister-in-law, and in front of Madame de Rottenhahn. [...]

(Zechmeister documents performances of Pergolesi's version of *La serva padrona* in Vienna in 1765 and, in German, on 6 Jan 1770; see Zechmeister 1971, 496 and 518. Zinzendorf, who had

lived in Vienna since 1761, might well have known Pergolesi’s work from one of those earlier productions.)

**Giovanni Giornovichi** (1747–1804)—“Cernovichi” in the correspondent’s report—was one of the leading solo violinists of the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and a significant composer for his instrument. In 1786 he was on tour after three years in the service of Catherine the Great in St. Petersburg. Zinzendorf records in his diary that Louise had heard Giornovichi (“Jarnovich”) at Countess Thun’s on 21 Mar, and Zinzendorf himself attended the violinist’s concert in the Kärntnertortheater on 22 Mar (Morrow 1989, 262; Link 1998, 268).

## Conclusion (↑)

The correspondent’s report from Vienna published in the *Staats-Relation* of Regensburg and the *Real-Zeitung* of Erlangen calls into question much of the received narrative about Prince Auersperg’s production of Mozart’s *Idomeneo* in 1786: it suggests that the opera may have been performed more than once, that the performances may have been open to the public in something like the modern sense, that it may have been staged, and that it was well received. While the report does not provide conclusive evidence for any of these points, it prompts a thorough reconsideration of the unwarranted assumptions about them in previous writing on the production.

It is entirely possible, of course, that different productions in Auersperg’s theater had different characteristics. It may be, for example, that *Alceste* and *Idomeneo* in 1786 were performed more than once, but that *La serva padrona*—which featured two of the most prominent professional singers from the court opera, Benucci and Storace—was not. Perhaps Auersperg’s operas of 1786 were open to the public (as contemporaneous references to “tickets” imply), but performances of plays in his theater by aristocratic amateurs typically were not. It is not difficult to think of other possibilities and alternatives. However, on the current state of evidence, we simply cannot answer with certainty such questions about any particular production at Auersperg’s. One of the principal goals of this commentary has been to serve as a reminder that we did not already know the answers to these questions for any of his productions, including *Idomeneo* in 1786.

Auersperg produced (at least) three operas in his theater in the first months of 1786: Gluck’s *Alceste*, Mozart’s *Idomeneo*, and Paisiello’s *La serva padrona*. Yet operas were a relative rarity among the documented productions in Auersperg’s theater: the only others currently known are Righini’s *Armida* in 1782 and Salieri’s *Axur* in 1793. Otherwise, so far as we can tell, the prince and his mainly amateur casts seem to have stuck to French and German plays. Why did Auersperg produce at least three operas back-to-back in 1786?

We cannot yet give a definitive answer to this question, but three factors may have played a role:

- The visit to Vienna of the emperor's sister [Archduchess Maria Christina](#) and her husband [Prince Albert von Sachsen-Teschen](#), at that time co-governors of the Austrian Netherlands. The couple arrived on 12 Jan 1786, and they remained in the city until 20 Mar, apart from a day trip to Preßburg on 20 Feb and short excursions at the beginning of March—Albert to Bohemia from 1 to 9 Mar to review the regiment that bore his name, and Maria Christina to Bruck an der Mur from 5 to 8 Mar for a rendezvous with her sister, [Archduchess Maria Anna](#), an abbess in Klagenfurt. The Viennese sojourn of Maria Christina and Albert in 1786 was the occasion for the festivities at Schönbrunn on 7 Feb for which Joseph II commissioned *Der Schauspieldirektor* from Mozart and *Prima la musica e poi le parole* from Salieri.

One might expect the visit of Maria Christina and Albert to have been the social event of the season in Vienna. But in contrast to, say, the visits in 1781 and 1782 of Grand Duke Paul of Russia and his wife, whose daily activities were reported at length in the *Wiener Zeitung* (see our entry for [8 Oct 1782](#)), those of Maria Christina and Albert were, with the exception of the festivities at Schönbrunn, largely ignored in the *Wiener Zeitung*, and at present we know little about what they did.

The documented performances of Gluck's *Alceste* (on 12 Feb, just five days after the festivities at Schönbrunn) and Mozart's *Idomeneo* (on 13 Mar) took place while Maria Christina and Albert were in Vienna. Zinzendorf, who attended *Alceste*, does not mention their presence, but his diary entry for that day goes on to say: "fini la soirée chez [Le] [Prince Galitzin](#), ou il y avoit tres peu de monde a cause du souper de l'archiduchess chez Hatzfeld [...]" ("Finished the evening at [Prince Galitzin](#)'s, where there were very few people because of the supper for the Archduchess at Hatzfeld's [...]"). The reference here must be to Archduchess Maria Christina (no other archduchess was in Vienna at the time); and if Zinzendorf is referring to the Viennese lodgings of Countess Hatzfeld (rather than those of the court official Count Hatzfeld zu Gleichen), then it seems likely that the archduchess (perhaps with Albert) had attended *Alceste* at Auersperg's, and that Countess Hatzfeld's supper was something like an after-party following her performance. Thus the visit of Maria Christina and Albert might well have been Auersperg's motivation for mounting the production. At present, we cannot say whether the couple might also have attended *Idomeneo* on 13 Mar, but the possibility cannot be ruled out.

Maria Christina and Albert left Vienna on 20 Mar, and were no longer in town at the time of the performance of Paisiello's *La serva padrona* on 26 Mar, so Auersperg probably did not organize that production on their account.

- In spite of the change of policy regarding theatrical performances in Lent, no operas were performed in the Viennese court theaters in Lent 1786. The documented performance of *Alceste* at Auersperg's on 12 Feb did not take place in Lent, but rather during carnival season. However, the documented performances of *Idomeneo* and *La serva padrona* did take place in Lent (Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, fell on 1 Mar in 1786, and Easter on 16 Apr). As we have seen, plays were performed by the ensemble of the court theater in the Kärntnertortheater during the first five weeks of Lent that year; indeed, plays were performed in the Kärntnertortheater on the days of the documented opera performances at Auersperg's in Lent: a double bill of *Die zwey schlaflosen Nächte* and *Die Versuchung* on 13 Mar, and Schröder's *Der Ring* on 26 Mar. But Lent 1786 was a dry season

for opera lovers in Vienna, who would have appreciated the opportunity to hear two works at Auersperg’s that were outside the regular operatic fare of the court theaters.

- Auersperg’s opera productions in 1786 may have been motivated in part by the availability of singers, particularly Countess Hatzfeld, the shining star of the amateur operatic scene in Vienna at that time, but who lived in Bonn and visited Vienna relatively infrequently. Her presence might well have been sufficient motivation to mount operas with major roles for her, such as *Alceste* and *Idomeneo*. Indeed, she might have suggested them.

Because 13 Mar 1786 was the 45th birthday of Emperor Joseph II, Hertz (2009, 130–31) suggests that Joseph probably attended the performance of *Idomeneo* at Auersperg’s on that date, and this in turn might seem to suggest (although Hertz does not say so) that the production was mounted in honor of the emperor’s birthday. However, there is no known evidence that Joseph attended the performance on 13 Mar, and given that he generally discouraged public celebration of his birthday (see the discussion in the *Notes* below), it is unlikely that the production of *Idomeneo* was mounted on his account.

We know very little about Mozart’s interactions with any members of the Auersperg family. In Mozart’s surviving correspondence, the name “Auersperg” appears only in the list that Wolfgang sent to Leopold on 20 Mar 1784 of subscribers to his series of concerts in the Trattnerhof. Five Auerspergs appear on the list:

Princeße d’Auersperg  
Prince charles d’Auersperg [...]

Comte charles d’Auersperg [...]

Comte Wilhelm d’Auersperg [...]

Prince Adam d’Auersperg [...]  
[*Briefe*, iii:305]

The couple at the head of the list were Prince [Fürst] Karl Joseph Anton von Auersperg (1720–1800), the reigning prince, and his wife Maria Josepha Rosalia, née Trautson (1724–1792). “Prince Adam” was Prince Karl’s next younger brother, who produced Mozart’s *Idomeneo* in his theater in the Josephstadt in 1786. “Comte Wilhelm” was Count Wilhelm von Auersperg (1749–1822), Prince Karl’s oldest surviving son and heir to his title. “Comte charles” was likely Count Karl von Auersperg (1750–1822), Prince Karl’s second surviving son. (On the identities and family relationships of the Auerspergs, see [this modern genealogy](#) and [this handbook](#) of nobility from 1794.)

The only other known document connecting Mozart with any Auersperg is a letter of Sat, 6 Jan 1787 written by “Prince d’Auersperg” to Count Vincenz Waldstein in Prague (Volek & Bittner 1991, 6). The letter opens by introducing Mozart, whom the prince asks Waldstein to take under his protection. (Mozart had been invited to Prague to attend a production of *Le nozze di Figaro*.

Mozart and Constanze left Vienna on 8 Jan 1787; see our entry for [18 Jan 1787](#).) The letter begins:

Vienne ce 6. Jan

Monsieur  
vous connoissant pour un juge  
competant de la musique, je  
vous prie de prendre sous votre  
protection Mon[sieur] de Mozard Maitre  
de Clavecin de notre capitale  
qui aura l'honneur de ce [sic] presenter  
a Prague. il est inutile de  
faire son eloge, il seroit meme  
de trop vu que cette [sic] homme  
est connu de sa réputation  
établie [...]

votre ami Pr: d'Auers[perg]

[facsimile in Volek & Bittner 1991, 26, our transcription]

Vienna, 6 Jan

Monsieur  
Knowing you to be a skilled  
judge of music, I ask you to  
take under your protection  
Monsieur de Mozard, master  
of the keyboard in our capital,  
who will have the honor of  
performing in Prague. It is  
unnecessary to sing his praises,  
it would even be superfluous  
given that this man is known  
from his established reputation [...]

your friend, Prince Auersperg

The commentary to this letter in *Neue Folge* (50) states that it was probably written by Prince Johann Adam, but there is no evident reason to assume that Johann Adam wrote the letter simply because he produced *Idomeneo* in his theater in 1786; if the letter was written by Johann Adam, it could even be seen as odd that it refers to Mozart only as a pianist, and not as a composer. The recipient, Count Vincenz von Waldstein, was in fact the father of Prince Karl Joseph's daughter-in-law Leopoldine, wife of the Prince's oldest son Wilhelm. (For the marriage from the Waldstein side, see [here](#), where Leopoldine is listed as the second child of Count Vincenz; for the Auersperg side, see [here](#), where Wilhelm is B2.) While this relationship does not rule out the possibility that the letter might have been written by Prince Johann Adam, Prince Karl Joseph seems the more likely possibility.

That Prince Auersperg (whichever one it may have been) refers to “Monsieur de Mozart,” with the French “de,” implying nobility, is of particular interest in light of the research of Michael Lorenz (2013) showing that Mozart’s name is preceded by the noble “v:” or “von” in several Viennese official records from the 1780s. (The justification for the “von” was that Wolfgang had been awarded the Order of the Golden Spur by Pope Clement XIV in 1770.)

In the course of research for this commentary, three other documents about *Idomeneo* have come to light, all connected in various ways to performers in the 1786 production. All have separate entries on this site.

- In a small book published in 1827, Giuseppe Antonio Bridi, Mozart’s probable *Idomeneo* in 1786, relates that when Paisiello was in Vienna in 1784 for the first production of his opera *Il re Teodoro in Venezia*, he asked Mozart to borrow the score of *Idomeneo* for study. Bridi then points to a passage in Paisiello’s opera *Pirro* (1787) which seems to be modeled on (what Bridi took to be) a novel effect in *Idomeneo*, in scene 14 of Act II, when Elettra sings a few lines over the strains of a march approaching from the distance. A similar scene does indeed appear in *Pirro*, at the end of scene 9 in Act II, in which Pirro sings at somewhat more length over a march approaching from the distance (see our entry on [Bridi’s anecdote](#)).
- On 23 Mar 1786, just ten days after the documented performance of *Idomeneo* in Vienna, Countess Hatzfeld’s brother-in-law, Count Hugo von Hatzfeld in Mainz, responded to a (now lost) query from theater director [Gustav Friedrich Wilhelm Großmann](#) regarding Mozart’s *Idomeneo* (on Hugo’s letter, see our entry for [23 Mar 1786](#)). Hugo writes that his brother “August” (meaning the violinist August Clemens, rather than their half-brother Clemens August) had just taken a score of *Idomeneo* to Vienna, along with the rest of his music. Hugo suggests that Großmann inquire with the music dealer Nikolaus Simrock in Bonn; he states that Simrock is in contact with Count Karl Franz Nesselrode in Düsseldorf, and Hugo knows for certain that Count Nesselrode possesses a score of *Idomeneo*.

This is almost certainly the surviving so-called “Nesselrode score,” today in the music collection of the Austrian National Library ([Mus. Hs. 4709](#)). The Nesselrode score is such an accurate reproduction of Mozart’s autograph that Daniel Hertz, editor of the opera for the *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, used it as a stand-in for acts I and II of the autograph, which were still missing when Hertz was editing the opera (Hertz 1972, here esp. xxiii). The Nesselrode score had not previously been dated, but Hugo von Hatzfeld’s letter shows that it existed by Mar 1786. It seems likely to have been produced by copyists in Simrock’s shop in Bonn; as it happens, the first edition of the opera in full score was issued by Simrock in 1805, suggesting that he may have kept a reference copy in the interim.

- Among manuscript notes for additions to his memoir, the composer and music theorist [Anton Reicha](#) relates an anecdote about Countess Hatzfeld singing Elettra’s “Tutte nel cor vi sento” at a concert in Bonn. Reicha states that he and his friend Ludwig van Beethoven, both teenagers at the time, were so bowled over by the performance that they could think of nothing else for days. Reicha does not date the performance, but on contextual grounds it seems likely to have taken place at some point in the years 1785 to 1789 (see our entry on [Reicha’s anecdote](#)).

These documents in turn shed new light on the distribution and reception of *Idomeneo* during Mozart’s lifetime. The opera was long thought not to have been distributed or performed at all

beyond the first production in Munich and the production in Vienna in 1786. Countess Hatzfeld's performance in Bonn is now the earliest known performance of any part of the opera outside of Munich or Vienna. We also now know that there was at least one full copyist score of the opera in existence, the Nesselrode score, dating from no later than Mar 1786; and assuming that the Nesselrode score came from Simrock, it seems likely that Simrock kept a reference score of the opera, so there would have been at least two. Hugo von Hatzfeld's letter and Reicha's anecdote also hint at the important role played by Countess Hatzfeld and her brother-in-law August Clemens in the early distribution of the opera. Bridi's anecdote about Paisiello suggests that at least one major contemporary of Mozart was influenced by the music of *Idomeneo*. And this is not the only case of such influence during Mozart's lifetime.

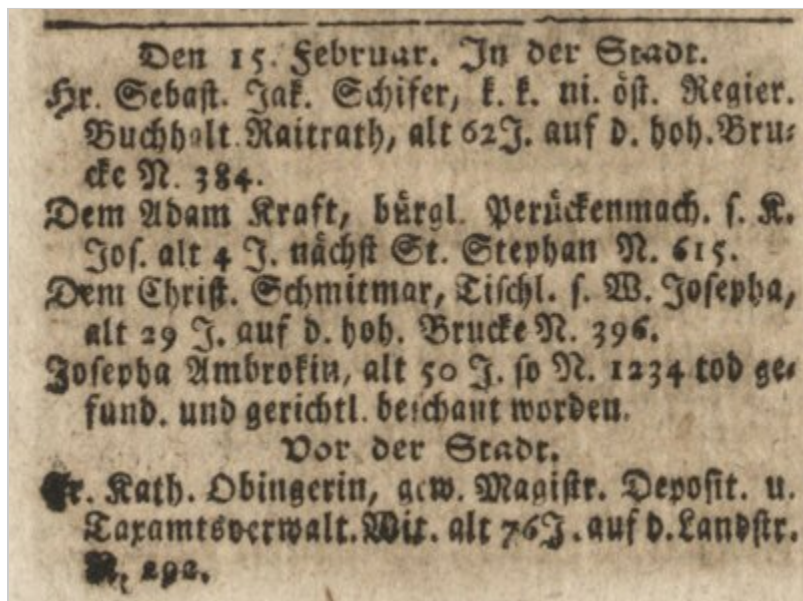
Mozart's nearly exact contemporary, the composer [Joseph Martin Kraus](#) (1756-1792), made an arrangement of the march in Act I of *Idomeneo* (no. 8) for a procession of King Gustav III of Sweden in Stockholm in Mar 1789 (Van Boer 2004, 88). How Kraus got his hands on Mozart's music is unclear; Van Boer suggests that Kraus met Mozart when Kraus was visiting Vienna from Apr to Oct 1783, and that he might have acquired a copy of the march then (Van Boer 2004, 88). But Van Boer overlooks the fact that this is precisely the period when the autograph of *Idomeneo* was in Salzburg with Leopold: Wolfgang had sent the autograph of the opera to Salzburg on 3 Apr 1783, and he asked Leopold twice in Dec 1783 to return it (implying that he still did not have it by that point). So in all likelihood, the autograph of *Idomeneo* was not in Vienna at any point when Kraus was in the city. We cannot rule out the possibility that someone in Vienna might have had a copy of the score that Kraus might have seen, but this is purely speculative. On the other hand, we now know that Kraus could have acquired the music from another source at some later time, perhaps from Simrock in Bonn.

The production of *Idomeneo* at Auersperg's in 1786 did not take place in isolation from other events in Mozart's life. The period from Oct 1785 to the premiere of *Figaro* on 1 May 1786 was an astonishingly productive one for Mozart: in that span he completed the Piano Quartet in G minor, K. 478; the two ensembles (K. 479 and K. 480) for the pasticcio of Bianchi's *La villanella rapita*; the Masonic Funeral Music, K. 477, as well as two other Masonic songs (K. 483 and K. 484); the Sonata for Violin and Piano, K. 481; the Piano Concertos K. 482, 488, and 491; *Der Schauspieldirektor* (K. 486); and of course *Le nozze di Figaro*. Mozart also appeared several times as a performer during that period: in a concert at a Masonic lodge on 15 Dec 1785, at the concert of the Tonkünstler-Societät on 22 Dec, and in his own benefit concert in the Kärntnertortheater on [7 Apr 1786](#).

Viennese public and private entertainments continued their usual rich menu of offerings in the first months of 1786, with daily performances in the Burgtheater and Kärntnertortheater (as well as suburban theaters), supplemented by many public and private balls during carnival. To gain some concept of the variety, we need only note that on the evening of 12 Feb 1786, the date of the documented performance of Gluck's *Alceste* at Auersperg's, Jünger's play *Verstand und Leichtsinn* was performed in the Burgtheater, and *Röschen und Colas*, a German adaptation of Monsigny's *Rose et Colas*, was performed in the Kärntnertortheater. In 1786, the company of the

court theater continued for the first time ever to perform in Lent. As we have seen, Prince Johann Adam Auersperg mounted at least two other productions in his theater in addition to *Idomeneo* in the first months of 1786. And 7 Feb saw the premiere of *Der Schauspieldirektor* and *Prima la musica e poi le parole* in the Orangerie at Schönbrunn for Archduchess Maria Christina, Prince Albert von Sachsen-Teschen, Joseph II, and a glittering invited audience of the high nobility.

But the public event in Vienna during this period with the largest audience by at least an order of magnitude took place on 10 Mar 1786, three days before the documented performance of *Idomeneo* at Auersperg's: the gruesome execution of Franz de Paula von Zahlheim for the gruesome murder of Josepha Amprok (Ampruk). Zahlheim, who was 33, had known 50-year-old Amprok for several years; a year and half prior to the murder he had promised to marry her, knowing that she had substantial assets. (Information about the crime comes from Zahlheim's own testimony, summarized in the death sentence handed down by the courts, given in full in [Brabbée 1870, 68–70.](#)) Amprok nursed Zahlheim when he became ill on 23 Jan 1786, staying overnight in his apartment for several nights. On 28 Jan, Zahlheim took her keys, went to her apartment, and stole 1700 fl of debentures and around 140 fl in cash. The following day, when she asked to borrow some earthen pots that he had in his attic, he killed her there, severing her esophagus, trachea, and the major blood vessels of her neck with a sharp knife; severe wounds in her hands were probably sustained when she tried to fend off the attack. He stuffed her body into a market crate in his attic, where it was found only on 14 Feb, seventeen days later.



Notice of the death of Josepha Amprok, Zahlheim's victim  
[WZ, no. 15, Wed, 22 Feb 1786, 404](#)

In 1786, the medieval methods of execution still specified under the reign of Empress Maria Theresia technically remained on the books, but under Joseph II, death sentences were routinely commuted, and there had been no execution during his reign up to this point (the death penalty was finally abolished under new rules for punishment published in Apr 1787; see [Bodi 1977, 288](#)). Zahlheim thus had every expectation that his death sentence would not actually be carried

out. However, on 6 Mar Joseph (to the shock and dismay of many) decreed that, because he saw no mitigating circumstances in the brutal crime, the execution should go forward exactly as described by the court. On 10 Mar, the judgement was read to Zahlheim in Hoher Markt, and he was put onto the wagon to be taken to the traditional place of execution, the Rabenstein in the glacis between the city wall and the suburb of Rossau. While still in Hoher Markt his right breast was pinched with red-hot tongs; when the wagon reached Freyung his left breast was similarly pinched; the wagon then proceeded to the Rabenstein, where Zahlheim was broken on the wheel and his body hung for display. (A scan of the judgement is available [online](#) at the site of the Wienbibliothek.)

A sad but little noticed event took place in the palace of Prince Johann Adam Auersperg around 28 Feb, when a long-time employee of the prince shot himself to death in his room in the palace. This suicide left no trace in the *Wiener Zeitung*, but was reported independently in the *Preßburger Zeitung* and the *Bayreuther Zeitung*. The correspondent to the *Preßburger Zeitung* aims at a suspenseful narrative:

#### Wien

##### Aus Privatbriefen, vom 4 März.

[...]

In dem fürstlich Adam Auersbergischen Hause ereignete sich am vorigen Dienstage eine tragische Begebenheit. Kein Haus allhier hat den Ruhm, daß Dienstleute bey einem Herrn einen Himmel von Zufriedenheit darin bewohnen, in dem Grade als das Haus dieses liebenswürdigen Fürsten. Er betrachtet und behandelt alle seine Diener als Freunde. Wer hätte es vermuthen sollen? Ein Schuß geschah in seinem Hotel. Der Fürst befahl sogleich, daß man in das Gewehrbehältniß und in die Zimmer der Jagdbedienten schauen sollte. Dort war alles in Ordnung. Also auch in andere Zimmer. Alle waren offen, rein von Luft, aber jene des Sekretärs war verschlossen; man roch Pulverdampf, man pochte an die Thüre. Niemand meldete sich innwärts [*sic*]. Mann ließ die Thür eröffnen, und fand einen der Sekrätäre, der es zu bewohnen hatte, todt auf der Erde, und die Pistole, mit der er sich erschossen hatte, neben ihm liegen.

[*Preßburger Zeitung*, no. 22, Sat, 18 Mar 1786, 3]

#### Vienna

##### From private letters of 4 March

[...]

There was a tragic event in the house of Prince Adam Auersperg this past Tuesday. No house here has the reputation that servants live in such a heaven of happiness to the degree that they do in the house of this gracious Prince. He looks on and treats all of his servants as friends. Who would have imagined? A shot rang out in his mansion. The Prince immediately ordered that the gun room and the room of the huntsmen should be inspected. All there was in order. Thus also in other rooms. All were open, fresh with air, but that of a secretary was closed up; there was the smell of gunsmoke; they knocked on the door. No answer came from within. The door was opened and they found one of the secretaries, whose quarters these were, dead on the floor, and the pistol with which he had shot himself lying next to him.

The date of the correspondent's letter, Sat, 4 Mar, indicates that "this past Tuesday" would have been 28 Feb, around halfway between the documented performances of *Alceste* and *Idomeneo* in Auersperg's theater. The report in the *Bayreuther Zeitung* is more succinct and less colorful, but provides additional details:

**Wien**, vom 3 März.

[...]

Vor drey Tagen erschöß sich der alte Kammerdiener des **Fürst Auersperg** mit zwey Pistolen. Er machte vorher seine Rechnungen, und da ergibt es sich, daß ein Abgang von einigen hundert Gulden sich befindet, worüber er nicht Red und Antwort geben wollte. Es war ein Franzoß, der im Dienst grau geworden war.

[*Bayreuther Zeitung*, no. 30, Thu, 9 Mar, 190]

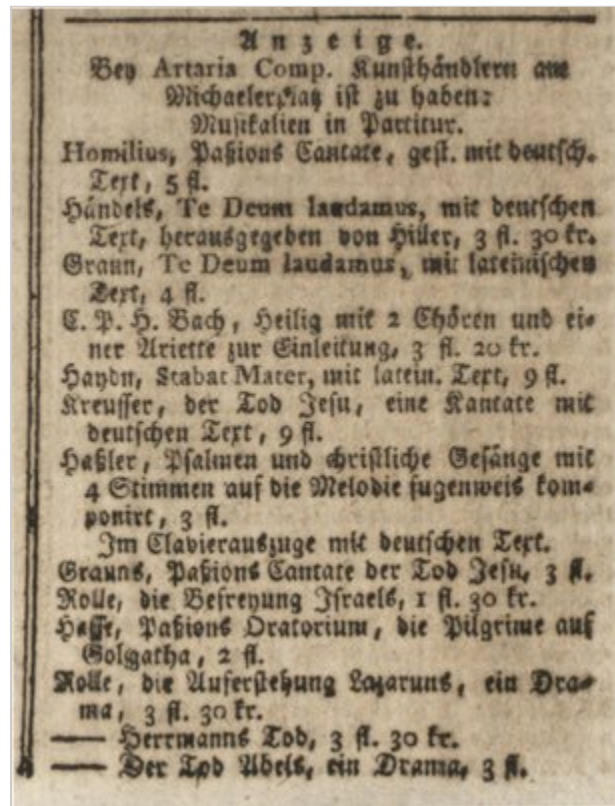
**Vienna**, 3 March.

[...]

Three days ago the old valet of **Prince Auersperg** shot himself to death with two pistols. He had just calculated his accounts and it turned out that there was a shortfall of several hundred gulden, which he did not want to have to answer for. He was a Frenchman who had grown gray in service.

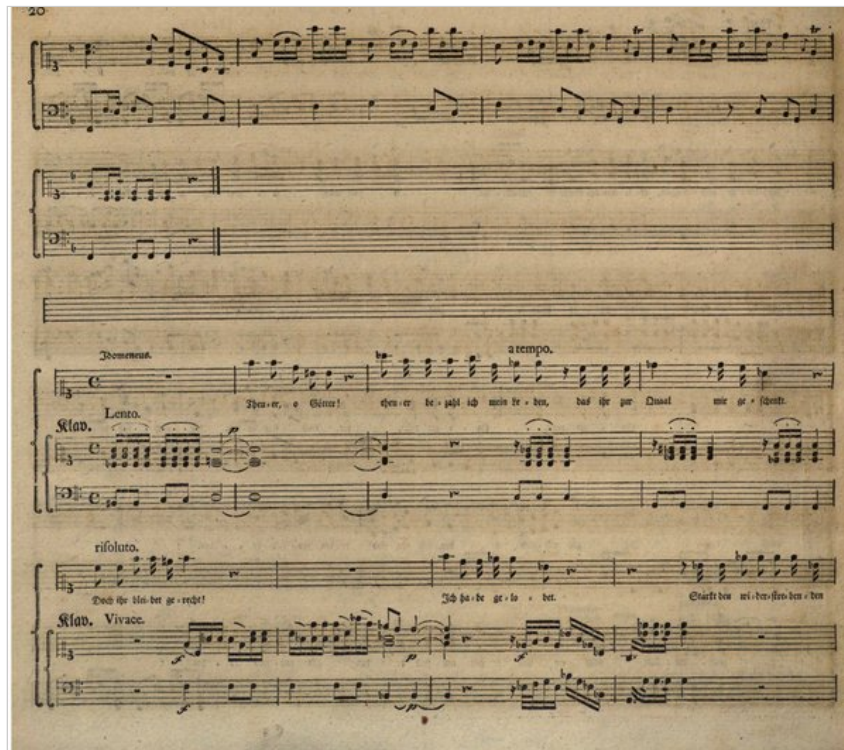
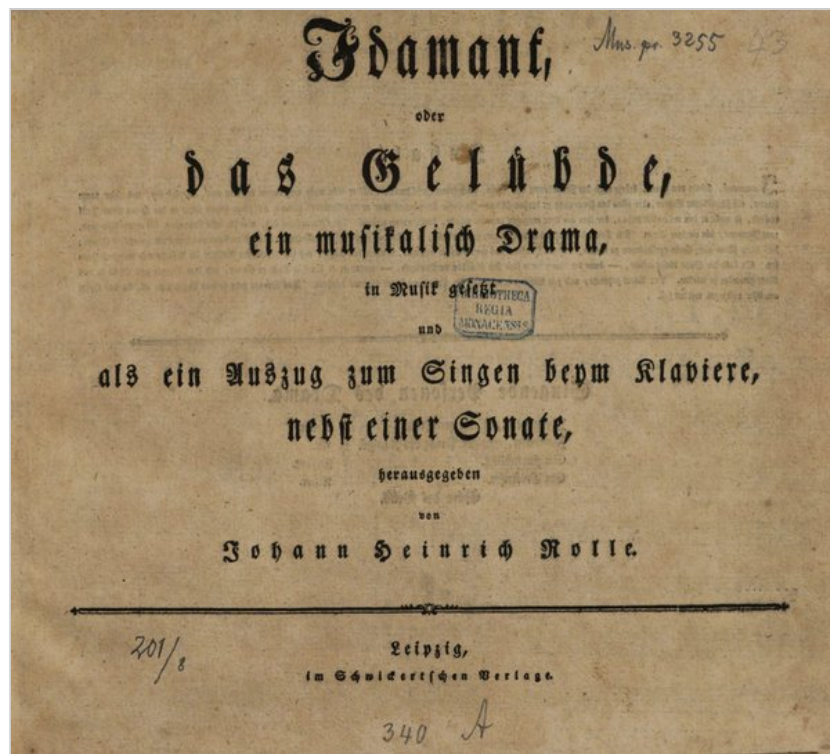
There is no reason to think that Mozart knew of this or that it had any effect on the preparations for the production of *Idomeneo*, but it does add a touch of pathos to our sense of the wider context.

By an odd coincidence, on 8 Mar 1786, just five days before the performance of *Idomeneo* at Auersperg's, Artaria advertised in the *Wiener Zeitung* Schwickert's printed edition of *Idamant, oder das Gelübde*, a "musical drama" in German for singers and piano by [Johann Heinrich Rolle](#), who had just recently died in Magdeburg on 29 Dec 1785. Rolle's more modest work (only 50 pages in piano score) has, in addition to a "chorus of the people," just four solo roles: Idomeneus (a tenor, as in Mozart), Idamant (an alto), "Ein Fremdling" (soprano), and "Ein Cretenser" (tenor).



— Idamante, oder das Gelübde, ein Drama, 2 fl. 30 kr.  
— Abraham auf Moria, ein Drama, 3 fl.  
Haydn, Stabat Mater, 3 fl.  
Fernalers:  
Moses Handbuch für Orgelspieler, 51 kr.  
Lanz, Logenlieder fürs Clavier, 51 kr.  
Kriegler, Anleitung zum Clavier, für musikalische Lehrstunden, 1 fl. 30 kr.  
Mozart, gründliche Violin-Schule, 3 fl.  
Quanzens, Anweisung die Flöte Travers zu spielen, 3 fl. 30 kr.  
Lohseins, Clavierschule, 2 fl.

WZ, no. 19, Wed, 8 Mar 1786, 515-16



Johann Heinrich Rolle, *Idamant, oder das Gelübde*, title page and p. 20  
(BSB)

The four principal cast members in Auersperg's production of Mozart's *Idomeneo*, all still relatively young in 1786, lived well into the nineteenth century. The oldest of the principals, Countess Hatzfeld (Elettra) died on 31 Dec 1813 (the place is unknown) at the age of 63; Giuseppe Antonio Bridi (probably Idomeneo) died of cholera in Rovereto at the age of 73 on

8 Aug 1836 (Falcone 1999, 255); Baroness Anna von Pufendorf (Ilia) died in Vienna on 7 Apr 1843 at the age of 86; and Francesco Pollini (probably Idamante) died in Milan on 17 Sep 1846 at the age of 84. So far as we know, no Mozart enthusiast during the first half of the nineteenth century thought to interview any of them.

It is fascinating to realize that Pollini, the man who was probably Mozart’s Idamante in Vienna in 1786, became the dedicatee of Bellini’s *La sonnambula* 45 years later, in 1831.

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## Notes (↑)

The correspondent’s report from Vienna about events in Auersperg’s theater in 1786 was published in at least two slightly different versions. We have chosen as the primary version the longer of the two, published in the Regensburg newspaper *Staats-Relation der neuesten Europäischen Nachrichten und Begebenheiten* on 12 Apr 1786 (with a dateline of 29 Mar), as it probably reflects more fully what the correspondent wrote. A somewhat shorter version of the same report was published eight days earlier on 4 Apr in the *Real-Zeitung* of Erlangen. The version in the *Real-Zeitung* was discovered by DE, and the version in the *Staats-Relation* by John Rice, to whom we are extremely grateful. The version in the *Real-Zeitung* was found on Google Books with a search on “opern”; a search on “idomenee” also finds it, and both search terms also find the version of the report in the *Staats-Relation*. Mozart’s name does not appear in either version.

The version in the *Real-Zeitung* reads:

[228]

Vermischte Nachrichten.

[229]

[...]

Nachdem im Februar und März auf dem Theater des Hrn. Fürsten Johann Adam von Auersperg in der Josephstadt von einigen Damen und Kavaliers zu ihrer und des Publikums Belustigung mehrere Vorstellungen der zwo beliebten Opern Alceste und Idomenee mit grösstem Beifall gegeben worden, ließ der Hr. Fürst, der auf alle Art das Vergnügen des Publikums zu befördern sucht, am 26sten März auch von der ersten Sängerin der k. k. Hofoper, Mad. Storace, und dem eben so trefflichen Sänger, Hrn. Benuci *[sic]*, die Oper *la Serua Padrona* des berühmten Hrn. Paesiello aufführen. Diese Tonkünstler, die schon lange die Lieblinge des Wiener Publikums sind, erfüllten auch bei dieser Gelegenheit die grosse Erwartung, zu der sie berechneten, und Hr. Cernovichi *[sic]*, dieser mit Recht allgemein bewunderte Virtuos auf der Geige, der in russisch kaiserlichen

Diensten steht, brachte durch ein Konzert, das er während der Abtheilung der Oper mit seiner seltenen Kunst spielte, das Entzücken aufs äuserste, welches dieses Schauspiel allen Zuhörern einflößte, so wie es auch die Erkenntlichkeit des Publikums gegen den Hrn. Fürsten aufs neue belebt hat. — [...] [*Real-Zeitung* (Erlangen), no. 27, 4 Apr 1786]

This version omits the reference to the date of the correspondent’s letter (29 Mar 1786, just three days after the performance of *La serva padrona*); it also omits the phrases “sowol in Ansehung der künstlichen Musik, als der prächtigen Decorationen” (in reference to the reception of *Alceste* and *Idomeneo*) and “der seine Ergötzlichkeiten mit so vielen Aufwande und so vieler Sorgfalt zu versucht” (in regard to Prince Auersperg’s outlay on his theatrical productions). The reference to “Decorationen” in the version in the *Staats-Relation* is particularly important, as it is our strongest evidence that Auersperg’s productions in 1786 were staged. There are several other inconsequential differences between the two versions in syntax, wording, and spelling.

We have distinguished carefully in this commentary between a “production” at Auersperg’s (not implying any particular number of performances) and a “performance” (implying one).

There are two very minor errors in the *Neue Folge* transcription of the report on Viennese private theaters in the *Theater-Kalender* for 1787, both probably unconscious corrections to modern spelling: *Neue Folge* has “daß man sie ...” (the original has “das”) and “Esterhazy” (the original has “Esterhasy”). We have amended the translation of this passage in *NMD* to read “first nobility” (“erste Noblesse”); “first” is omitted in *NMD*, but the distinction between first and second nobility was socially important in eighteenth-century Vienna. On the other hand, not all of the amateur performers in Auersperg’s productions were members of the first nobility, as the article in the *Theater-Kalender* claims (Bridi is an example).

The error of identifying Prince Karl Joseph von Auersperg as the owner of the palace and theater in the Josephstadt, rather than his brother Prince Johann Adam, dates back to the report in the *Theater-Kalender* of 1787. Because the error appears in *Dokumente* (234)—even though it is corrected in *Addenda* (49)—it still crops up in modern writing with surprising frequency. The error is repeated, for example, in the preface to the NMA edition of *Idomeneo* (Hartz 1972, xvii), Klemenčič (1995, 148), and Biggi Parodi (1996, 343).

All of the longer quotations from Zinzendorf’s diary in this commentary have been newly transcribed from images of the original pages (we are grateful to Michael Lorenz for acquiring these images); those falling within Link’s chronological range have been checked against her transcriptions (Link 1998). We have followed our usual practice of giving a relatively diplomatic transcription (for example, we preserve line breaks and superscripts, which Link does not); in a few cases we have added portions of a passage that Link has omitted. Link’s transcriptions are generally quite accurate, but three small errors are noted below.

To identify days of the week, Zinzendorf uses the symbols for the [seven traditional elements](#), which were in turn associated with the seven days of the week (for example, the symbol for the metal mercury ☿ was associated both with the planet and with the name of the day of the week, “mercredi” in French).

Zinzendorf’s symbols for the day of the week are represented in our transcriptions by the abbreviated day name in square brackets (e.g. “[Wed]”). Italics are used in our transcriptions from Zinzendorf to indicate German *Kurrentschrift*.

Although our transcriptions from Zinzendorf are scattered throughout the commentary above, notes on them are grouped together here in chronological order.

- Sat, 12 Aug 1780 (not in Link)

This passage from Zinzendorf notes what was apparently his first visit to Auersperg’s theater, built the previous year. Gugitz seems to have been the first to publish a transcription of this passage (Gugitz 1925, 472n25); however, he gives the wrong date for the entry, 11 Aug 1781. This incorrect date is repeated by Szmolyan (1963, 556), Dietrich (1975, 72), and Brauneis (2004, 91, and 2012, 375), who evidently did not look at the original. The correct date is in Klingenstein (2009, iii:710).

Gugitz gives “une femme dansa en homme faite en tour”, and this reading has been copied by other writers (it is also in Klingenstein, who transcribed the passage independently). The correct reading is almost certainly “faite au tour,” a standard French expression, which “faite en tour” is not.

- Tue, 23 Jul 1782

On this date Zinzendorf attended a performance at Auersperg’s of Righini’s *Armida*, with Countess Hatzfeld in the title role. We refer to this entry in the present commentary but do not transcribe it; for a transcription, see our entry on Countess Hatzfeld’s performance in Bonn of Elettra’s “[Tutte nel cor vi sento](#).”

- Fri, 11 Oct 1782

Righini’s *Armida* was given again in Auersperg’s theater on this date, this time in honor of the return visit to Vienna of the “Count and Countess of the North,” Grand Duke Paul of Russia and his wife. The performance took place just three days after the performance of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in the Burgtheater, with Mozart directing the music, a performance that the distinguished visitors also attended.

The performance of *Armida* at Auersperg’s on this date is documented by a report in the *Gazzetta universale* (no. 86, [Sat, 26 Oct 1782](#)):

[692]

G E R M A N I A

VIENNA 14. Ottobre.

[...]

Nel dì 11. poi S. M. Cesarea  
con tutta la nobile Comitativa si trasferì  
al Palazzo del Principe Adamo d’Aversperg,  
nel di cui Teatro godettero di

un’ Opera Italiana intitolata l’ Armida,  
cantata dai primarj Cavalieri, e Dame  
della Corte. Il Palazzo predetto con tut-  
ti i suoi quartieri era sfarzosamente il-  
luminato tanto dentro che fuori a cera  
con un gusto particolare. [...]

[692]

G E R M A N Y

VIENNA, 14 October.

[...]

Then on the 11th His Imperial  
Majesty, along with a party of all the nobles,  
went to the palace of Prince Adam von  
Auersperg, in whose theater they enjoyed  
an Italian opera entitled *Armida*, sung  
by the first lords and ladies of the court.  
The aforesaid palace with all of its rooms  
was brilliantly illuminated both inside and  
out by wax [candles] in exquisite taste. [...]

Zinzendorf mentions the event, but did not attend, and he does not give the title of the opera. He writes that he stayed home that evening and read in *The Odyssey*.

- Sun, 12 Feb 1786 (Link 1998, 264)

Zinzendorf records attending *Alceste* at Auersperg’s, with Countess Hatzfeld in the title role. The date of the performance, the identification of the opera, and the sentence referring to Countess Hatzfeld are in Pohl (1882, 162n14). Link includes the entire passage on Zinzendorf’s visit to the theater. We have added the beginning of the following sentence about the Archduchess and the supper at Hatzfeld’s, which is not in Link. Link incorrectly has “J’y **recontrois** Erneste Kaunitz”; Zinzendorf writes “**ren**controis.” Link gives “[deheissenstein?],” but there is no question about the name, apart from what looks like a superfluous dot for an ‘i’ that is not actually present. Pohl gives “Heißenstein” and Teuber (1903, 74) gives “Heissenstein.”

- Mon, 13 Mar 1786 (*Dokumente*, 234, corrected in *Addenda*, 49; Link 1998, 267)

In his transcription from Zinzendorf’s diary entry for 13 Mar 1786, Deutsch incorrectly has “a 10<sup>h</sup> **je dois** attendre *Louise*.” This error was corrected in *Addenda* to “a 10<sup>h</sup> **j’allois** attendre *Louise*” and the passage is also given correctly in Link.

- Sun, 26 Mar 1786 (Edge 1992, 150–51; Link 1998, 268)

Link gives the passage from “A l’opera la *Serva padrona*...” We have added the preceding sentence: “Dela chez le P<sup>ce</sup>: Starhemberg puis chez M<sup>ce</sup>: de Starhemberg qui souffre dela coqueluche.” Edge (1992) gives “Louise ne **veut** pas fort,” but the correct reading is almost certainly “voit.” Link gives “Pergolesi” where Zinzendorf actually writes “Pergolese”.

Giornovich’s performance of a violin concerto in the interval of the performance of *La serva padrona* at Auersperg’s on 26 Mar 1786 is not listed in the Viennese concert calendar in Morrow (1989). The reference to it in Zinzendorf’s diary is given in Edge (1992), although the place of performance is said there to be unknown (Zinzendorf does not mention it). That the performance took place at Auersperg’s is confirmed by the reports in the *Staats-Relation* and the *Real-Zeitung* of Erlangen, and by the surviving libretto from the performance.

- Sun, 9 Jan 1791 (facsimile in Edge 1996, 91; transcribed in Link 1998, 369)

Only a short extract from Zinzendorf’s entry on this day is given in the commentary above: “le roi chantera et M<sup>lle</sup> Ployer jouera du clavessin”. Link’s transcription of Zinzendorf’s full passage on this event has a minor but significant error in an earlier sentence: she gives “Les Majestés napolitaines partiront le 14. ou 15. mais” [May], but Zinzendorf actually writes “14. ou 15. mars” [March]. The King and Queen of Naples in fact left Vienna on Mon, 14 Mar (see the report in *WZ*, no. 22, Wed, 16 Mar 1791, 657).

- Mon, 5 Dec 1791 (Link 1998, 389)

Zinzendorf writes the abbreviation “h. a.” in his entry on the performance at Auersperg’s theater of Ziegler’s *Liebhaber und Nebenbuhler in einer Person* on this date. Link (1998, 389) expands the abbreviation as “h[enriette] a[uersberg]” [*sic*]. Elsewhere (224n49), Link identifies “Zinzendorf’s Henrietta” as Maria Josepha von Auersperg, née Lobkowitz, wife of Count Karl von Auersperg, son of Prince Karl Joseph, although the grounds for this identification are not immediately clear. The second daughter of Count Wilhelm von Auersperg was named Henriette Anna (b. 1778), but she apparently died in 1787 (see C2 in [this genealogy](#)), and cannot have been meant here.

- Mon, 18 Nov 1793

Zinzendorf’s reference to the performance of *Axur* at Auersperg’s is not in Link, as it falls outside of her chronological scope. So far as we are aware, the passage is transcribed here for the first time. Michtner (1970, 249) mentions the performance and gives the correct date, citing the *Wiener Theater-Almanach für das Jahr 1794*, but the *Almanach* does not actually give the date. Michtner almost certainly took the date from Zinzendorf’s diary, but he fails to cite it.

Zinzendorf begins his diary entry for 13 Mar 1786 (the date of the performance of *Idomeneo*) by noting that it was the emperor’s birthday. Hartz writes: “The event took place on Monday 13 March, a date of some significance to the imperial family as it was the 45th birthday of Joseph II, and so noted by Zinzendorf, who did not attend. It would be surprising if the emperor himself were not present” (Hartz 2009, 130–31). In fact, there is no reason to think that Joseph attended the performance of *Idomeneo*. Joseph generally abhorred traditional court pomp and ceremony of the kind he had grown up with under the reign of his mother Maria Theresia (at least until the death of her consort Emperor Francis Stephen in 1765). So Joseph avoided any public celebration of his birthday. There is no mention of Joseph’s birthday in the *Wiener Zeitung* in 1786 apart from a reference to an event commemorating it in nearby Preßburg.

Short reports in newspapers elsewhere stress that Joseph celebrated his birthday in 1786 with as little public notice as possible. A report from Vienna dated 14 Mar 1786 published in the *Bayreuther Zeitung* reads:

**Wien**, vom 14 März.

Gestern war der Geburtstag Sr. Majestät des Kaysers, wo Sie 45 Jahre zurückgelegt haben; Und ob zwar keine Feyerlichkeiten waren, indem der Monarch keine Glückwünsche anzunehmen pflegen; so brannten doch in Geheim viele Lob und Dank=Opfer mit aufsteigenden feurigen Wünschen um die fernere Erhaltung des weisen Landesvaters, welches mehr fruchten mag, als der bezahlte Weihrauch gedungener Hof=Poeten, deren es hierorts keine giebt.

[*Bayreuther Zeitung*, no. 34, Anhang, 20 Mar 1786, 223–24]

**Vienna**, 14 March.

Yesterday was the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor, who has put 45 years behind him; and although there were indeed no celebrations, because it is the monarch's custom not to receive congratulations; even so, much praise and thanksgiving burns in secret with increasingly fervent wishes for the continued preservation of the wise father of our land, which may bear more fruit than the purchased incense of hired court poets, of which there are none hereabouts.

Similarly, a short notice in the *Gazzetta universale* in Florence (the home of Joseph's brother Leopold) reads:

G E R M A N I A

VIENNA 16. Marzo.

Essendosi nel dì 13. celebrato il giorno di nascita del nostro Augusto Monarca, venne il tutto effettuato senza alcuna pompa, e si limitò Cesare a ricevere soltanto i complimenti dei Principi della Famiglia.

[*Gazzetta universale*, no. 25, 28 Mar 1786, 195]

G E R M A N Y

VIENNA 16 March.

Having celebrated on the 13th the birthday of our august monarch, this

passed without any sort of pomp,  
and the emperor limited himself to  
receiving only the compliments of  
the immediate family.

This sounds like a man who did not generally go the theater on his birthday (if he had, an ovation would have been unavoidable). In any case, Joseph is known to have attended only one performance in Auersperg’s theater, on 11 Oct 1782, when Righini’s *Armida* was given in honor of the visit of Grand Duke Paul of Russia and his wife.

Deutsch makes two silent corrections in his transcription of the article in *Pfeffer und Salz* that mentions *Idomeneo*. In the original, the closing paren for “(und, ohne eben den Verdiensten der Gräfin Buffendorf...” is incorrectly placed after “Storaze,” which creates a semantic muddle; Deutsch has silently moved the closing paren to its proper position, after “zu nahe zu treten,” and he has silently corrected the erroneous “Gräfin” (Countess) in that same passage to “Baronin” (Baroness). However, Deutsch does not correct the placement of the opening paren, which the sense of the passage dictates should actually come after “und,” not before. Our transcription of the original is literal, but our translation reflects the presumably intended placement of the parentheses.

The report in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* of Feb 1824 mentioning Bridi’s participation in the production of *Idomeneo* in 1786 is cited but not transcribed in the first edition of Jahn’s Mozart biography (Jahn 1856–1859, iv:561n12). The same report appeared in English in *The Harmonicon* in Jun 1824 (xviii: 118–19).

Mozart’s revisions to Idomeno’s aria “Fuor del mar” are written on a single bifolium of paper-type Tyson 80, currently inserted into the autograph of Act 2 between folios 29 and 30 of the original version. The revised passages are labeled with the letters “A” to “H” linking them to the places where these changes should be made in the original version. (In the Packard facsimile of the autograph of *Idomeneo*, Mozart 2006, the bifolium with revisions is on 255–58 of vol. 2; the verso of the second leaf is blank. For the position of the bifolium, see the foliation diagram in Mozart 2006, iii:104.) Mozart used around 240 leaves of paper-type 80 between Dec 1785 and Mar 1786 (see Edge 2001, Table 3.1, 426). It is the principal paper-type in the concertos K. 482, K. 488, and K. 491, there is a quantity of it in the autograph of *Le nozze di Figaro*, and most importantly for the present context, it is the paper-type used in the autographs of the two new numbers, K. 489 and K. 490, that Mozart wrote for the production of *Idomeneo* in 1786. Thus it is certain that the revisions to “Fuor del mar” date from this same time, and were intended for the *Idomeneo* of that production, very likely Giuseppe Antonio Bridi.

The report in the *Bayreuther Zeitung* mentioning the distribution of tickets for Auersperg’s opera production (no. 20, 14 Feb 1786) also appeared in the *Augsburgische Ordinari Postzeitung* (no. 45, 23 Feb 1786) under the dateline “Wien, den 18 Febr.” The article in the *Preßburger Zeitung* mentioning the distribution of tickets for Auersperg’s theater (no. 24, Sat, 25 Mar 1786) refers to the participation of Countess Hatzfeld and “des Hrn. Doktor Jacquinischen Sohns” (“of the son of Herr Dr. Jacquin”). “Doktor Jacquin” was the eminent botanist and chemist [Nikolaus Joseph von Jacquin](#). It is tempting to think that the reference here is to his son, Mozart’s close friend Gottfried von Jacquin (1767–1792); but

Nikolaus had another son, [Joseph Franz von Jacquin](#) (1766–1839), who likewise became an eminent botanist and chemist. So we cannot be sure which son is meant, although Gottfried remains an attractive possibility, given his evident interest in the arts. At present, no other evidence is known of either son appearing in amateur Viennese theatricals. The name "Jacquin" does not appear in any of Zinzendorf's reports of such theatricals in the years 1783 to 1792, the period covered by Link (1998), nor does the name appear in Morrow's concert calendar index (Morrow 1989). For more on Gottfried von Jacquin and Countess Hatzfeld, see our entry on her performance of "[Tutte nel cor vi sento](#)."

Although the change of policy regarding theatrical performances in the court theaters during Lent 1786 was clearly stated in the *Wiener Zeitung* on [8 Mar 1786](#), six days after it had been put into effect, earlier reports in newspapers elsewhere promulgated a variety of rumors about the coming change that ultimately proved to be incorrect. For example, in its issue of 16 Feb 1786, the *Bayreuther Zeitung* published the following report from Vienna under the dateline 10 Feb:

[131]

Wien, vom 10 Febr [...]

Mit unserm National=Theater soll eine neue Schöpfung vor sich gehen. Ich muß ihnen doch alles wieder erzählen, was man hier öffentlich spricht. Erstlich bleibt es festgesetzt und ausgemacht, daß wir die ganze Fastenzeit hindurch deutsche Opern haben werden, welche mit musicalischen Academien abwechseln sollen. Dafür haben die Italiänischen Sänger und Sänginnen Vacanz, und in den heißen Hundstagen werden wir bloß wälsche Opern haben, damit unsere deutschen Schauspieler ausruhen, auch allenfalls verreisen können. Sodann sagt man, daß die Gebrüdere **Stephanie** in Ruhestand versetzt, und mit dem ganzen Gehalt jubiliert werden würden. Folglich kämen sie von der Direction weg, welches schon lange von Schauspielern und Autoren gewünscht worden. Hr. **Schröder** aus Hamburg wäre neuerdings hieher beruffen worden, und würde die Direction bekommen; hätte auch den Ruf angenommen. Hr. **Reinecke** ist gleichfalls engagiert und ausserdem werden wir eine Schauspielerin vom Auslande bekommen, die uns die noch unvergeßliche Dsllle. **Jacquet** ersetzen werde. Die Ober=Direction über das ganze Theater erhielt der Freyherr von **Swieten**,

[132]

weil der Graf **Rosenberg** diesen mühsamen  
Posten nicht länger zu begleiten [*sic*] wünsche. Welche herrliche Aussichten für den physischen, und  
moralischen Zustand unserer Schaubühne, die  
nach diesen Voraussetzungen gewiß die erste in  
Deutschland werden dürfte, da die Besoldun=  
gen schon die auswärtigen übertreffen, und je=  
des gute Subjectum auf eine Pension in alten  
Tagen sich Rechnung machen darf.

[*Bayreuther Zeitung*, no. 21, 10 Feb 1786, 131–32]

[translation:]

Vienna, 10 Febr. [...]

A new formation is said to be underway at  
our Nationaltheater. But I must again tell you  
everything that is being publicly talked about here.  
Firstly it remains fixed and agreed that we will  
have German operas throughout all of Lent, which  
will alternate with musical academies. Thus the male  
and female Italian singers will have their vacation and  
we will have nothing but Italian opera in the hot dog  
days, so that our German actors can rest or travel  
if need be. Then it is said that the **Stephanie** brothers  
will retire, with their full salary. Consequently they  
would be removed from the directorate, as long wished  
by the actors and authors. Herr **Schröder** in Hamburg  
is to be recalled here, and given the directorship; and  
he has accepted. Herr **Reinecke** has likewise been  
engaged and in addition we will have an actress from  
abroad who will replace for us the still unforgettable  
Mademoiselle **Jacquet**. The general direction of the  
entire theater is being given to Baron van **Swieten**,  
because Count **Rosenberg** no longer wishes to occupy  
this onerous position. What magnificent prospects for  
the physical and moral condition of our stages, which  
with these prerequisites will certainly become the leading  
stages in Germany, as the salaries already surpass  
those elsewhere, and every good subject can count  
on having a pension in old age.

Most of this turned out to be incorrect. Schröder and Reinecke did not come, Rosenberg remained in his position, German plays (not German operas) were given four days a week for the first five weeks of Lent, with German and Italian operas both resuming at the beginning of the new season after Easter. But it is

nevertheless interesting to see the rumors that were in circulation, however inaccurate these may have been. One wonders how Mozart’s relations with the court theater might have played out differently during the last years of his life had the theater been under the general direction of his patron Baron van Swieten, rather than Count Rosenberg.

Walther Brauneis’s 2012 article on “Gesellschaftstheater” is essentially a reprint (without the illustrations) of Brauneis 2004, and contains no new material relevant to Auersperg’s productions.

The *Lust-Reisen durch Bayern* (1792, apparently not currently available online) contains a detailed description of the festivities at Auersperg’s on 17 Jan 1791, when Weigl’s *Flora e Minerva* was performed. The description does not mention the French comedy reported in the *Preßburger Zeitung*, but it does mention optical displays given in Auersperg’s theater:

Bey diesem Festin haben im fürstlichen Theater die berühmten Optiker Pierre und Gabriel ihre schönen Vorstellungen produziret, worunter die Aussichten der Stadt Neapel und der kennbarsten Paläste zu Neapel den vorzüglichsten Gegenstand ausmachten, auch war das Portal des Palastes bei dieser Gelegenheit bis zum Ausgange der Hauptstiege mit viel tausend Lampen beleuchtet. [transcribed in Biba 1968, 221]

At this festival the famous optical artists Pierre and Gabriel produced their beautiful displays, among which the views of the city of Naples and the most distinctive palaces in Naples made the most splendid subjects; the principal entry to the palace was also illuminated on this occasion with many thousand lamps, up to the exit from the main staircase.

Biba’s article also reproduces a contemporaneous engraving of the performance of *Flora e Minerva* (Biba 1968, 216), and transcribes an entry from the diary of Wenzel Müller regarding the performances at Auersperg’s on 27 Dec 1790 (Biba 1968, 214).

Unfortunately, it would digress too far to describe here Phylidor’s phantasmagoria in Auersperg’s theater in 1790. His private performance there for the nobility on 18 Jan 1790 is referred to in a notice in the *Wiener Zeitung*—ostensibly placed by local supporters, but one suspects actually by Phylidor himself—urging him to repeat his performances for the public (no. 9, Sat, 30 Jan 1790, 245). Any hopes that Phylidor may have had for a quick reprise were interrupted by the death of Joseph II on 20 Feb 1790 and the subsequent period of public mourning. A detailed description of Phylidor’s performance in January was printed in the *Wiener Zeitung* on 13 Mar (no. 21, Sat, 13 Mar 1790, 645); again one suspects that Phylidor himself placed this notice in order to stir up public interest. (Most of the notice from 13 Mar is transcribed in Brauneis 2004, 91–92n9).



([Wikimedia Commons](#))

Phylidor’s advertisement for a week of performances in the Josephstadt (possibly in Auersperg’s theater) was published in the *Wiener Zeitung* on 17 Apr 1790 (no. 31, Sat, 17 Apr 1790, 997).

Konrad Friderich von Pufendorf, the husband of Anna von Pufendorf, Mozart’s *Ilia* in Auersperg’s production of *Idomeneo*, is listed among the emperor’s imperial Hofräte in the *Hof= und Staats Schematismus von Jahr 1785* (163, bottom). Her death on 7 Apr 1843 at age 86 is recorded in the *WZ*, no. 101, Tue, 11 Apr 1843, 793.

The early biography of Francesco Pollini, Mozart’s probable *Idamante* in 1786, has been little studied, and many basic facts remain unknown. The first page of the 1779 patent of nobility of Francesco’s father Johann Chrysostomus is reproduced in facsimile in [Klemenčič 1992](#) (85) and [Klemenčič 1995](#) (Fig. 4, 147). The facsimile shows that the patent gave Johann Chrysostomus the right to use the predicate “Edler von”. To our knowledge, only [Costa \(1863, 52\)](#) mentions the subsequent elevation of Johann Chrysostomus to hereditary baron (Freyherr) in 1784, which would have given Francesco the right to call himself Baron (which he indeed did, as we have seen in several documents dating from 1784 and after). Finding primary documentation of the conferment of barony is one obvious desideratum for future scholarship on Pollini.

Our transcription of Du Rouillet’s letter to Salieri in 1784 was made independently of Angermüller’s (2000, i:278–79), and differs from it in numerous details. Of these, the most important is Angermüller’s failure to read “debutant” [*sic*] in the first line of the second paragraph (Angermüller gives “de batart [batourt?]”). The word is crucial to the dating of the letter; in context (as explained in the commentary

above), it is clear that the “debutante” to whom Du Rouillet is referring is Anne Cameroy, who performed under the name “Mademoiselle Dozon” and made her debut as an opera singer in a performance of Sacchini’s *Chimène* on 17 Sep 1784. Du Rouillet refers to her debut as having already taken place, so 17 Sep 1784 is a *terminus post quem* for Du Rouillet’s letter. Angermüller dates the letter “ca. Ende Mai 1784.”

In his first footnote to Du Rouillet’s letter, Angermüller correctly identifies “Le Baron de pollini” in the first sentence as Francesco Pollini. Angermüller writes: “[Pollini] kommt 1783 nach Wien ... 1790 studiert er in Mailand bei Zingarelli” (“[Pollini] comes to Vienna in 1783 ... In 1790 he studies with Zingarelli in in Milan”). No documentary evidence is provided for either date, and we are unaware of any such evidence; none is cited in the principal articles that touch on Pollini’s early life (Klemenčič 1992 and 1995; Biggi Parodi 1996). Biggi Parodi (1996, 334) carefully argues, based on documentary and contextual evidence, that Pollini was likely in Milan by 1792, but she does not say anything in that article about him having been in Milan by 1790. In her *Grove* article on Pollini, on the other hand, perhaps echoing Angermüller, Biggi Parodi writes: “From the spring of 1783 he lived in Vienna ... About 1790 he settled in Milan”, but she cites no documentary evidence for either date (Biggi Parodi 2015). Oddly, her article on Pollini in *MGG Online* (Biggi Parodi 2016) says nothing about him being in Vienna in 1783. So far as we are aware, the earliest known document unequivocally placing Pollini in Vienna is the record of his marriage in the church of St. Augustine on 10 Feb 1787.

The date of Pollini’s marriage in Vienna was already known from an archival record in Ljubljana (Klemenčič 1992, 88); however, the record of the marriage from the church of St. Augustine in Vienna, giving the name of the officiant (Georg Pasterwiz) and the names of the witnesses (including Franz Sales von Greiner), was previously unknown.

Official notices of Pollini’s unpaid debts were published in the *Wiener Zeitung* on [5 Mar 1800](#) and [24 Jan 1801](#). An official notice from Laibach (Ljubljana) on bankruptcy proceedings against him was published in the *Wiener Zeitung* on [2 May 1801](#) and [9 May 1801](#).

A book on Johann Chrysostomus Pollini’s antiveneral decoction was published in Vienna in the 1790s by medical doctor Joseph Ferdinand Friderich under the title *Das Pollinische Decoct, und die reinigende Wirkungen der welschen Nußschalen wider die Lustseuche und mehrere schwere Krankheiten (Pollini’s Decoction and the Purging Effects of Italian Nutshells against Infections of Concupiscence and Several Severe Diseases)*. Most modern writers on Pollini’s decoction cite the second edition of Friderich’s book ([Vienna: Franz Joseph Rötzel, 1798](#)); however, the first edition is also now readily available online from several sources, including Google Books ([Vienna: Albers Anton Pakosky, 1794](#)).

Link (1998, 268, n. 127), following Sartori, has a slight error in the transcription of the title page of the Auersperg libretto for *La serva padrona*: the original has “P**r**incipe Adamo d’Auersperg” which Sartori corrected (probably unconsciously) to “p**r**incipe”.

There has been some confusion over the identity of the five Auerspergs in Mozart’s list of subscribers to his concerts in the Trattnerhof in 1784 (*Briefe*, iii:305). In particular, the commentary to the list in *Briefe* (vi: 167–77) incorrectly identifies “Prince Charles d’Auersperg” as Karl von Auersperg, the second surviving son of the reigning prince, Karl Joseph. But Mozart’s reference here is certainly to Prince Karl Joseph himself,

not to his son; Mozart lists the son Karl separately (and with the correct title) as “Comte Charles d’Auersperg.” The latter is identified in the commentary to *Briefe* as if he were a different person than Karl Joseph’s son Karl.

Our transcription of the letter from Prince Auersperg to Count Vincenz Waldstein differs in several details from the transcriptions given in Volek & Bittner (1991, 6) and *Neue Folge* (50), which also differ slightly from each other. Both transcriptions silently (and perhaps unconsciously) correct Auersperg’s “connoissant” in the first line to “connoissant”, and his “il seroit” to “il serait.” Both incorrectly give “la réputation” where Auersperg actually writes “sa réputation.” Volek & Bittner correctly retain Auersperg’s phonetic spelling “ce presenter,” which *Neue Folge* silently changes to “se.” The only substantive error in the portion of the letter we have quoted above concerns the third word of the eighth line on the first page, which *Neue Folge* gives as “claque[?]” and Volek & Bittner give as “claque (éloge)”. The correct reading is almost certainly “eloge” (without accent).

An earlier version of portions of this commentary was read at the Seventh Kent Invitational Conference on Historical Musicology at Kent State University, Sat, 28 Apr 2018. DE is grateful to the attendees for their feedback.

Our special thanks to Steven Whiting and Bruce Brown for their many contributions to this commentary, particularly regarding transcriptions, translations, and interpretations of the manuscript sources in French. John Rice brought to our attention and translated the reference in Voltiggi to sets in Auersperg’s production of *Axur*. We are tremendously grateful to Michael Lorenz for acquiring images of Du Roullet’s letter and the passages from Zinzendorf’s diary, for tracking down the correct date of Zinzendorf’s diary entry for 12 Aug 1780, and for bringing to our attention Pollini’s entry in the *Stammbuch* of Maria Theresia Paradis; Lorenz also clarified for us the sources and prior literature on the location of Auersperg’s theater and the relationships between the Bernrieders and the Stockhammers in Pollini’s marriage entry. Whiting, Brown, and Rice cheerfully answered innumerable other questions and made valuable comments on the final draft and the transcriptions. Our thanks also to Aleš Krbavčič, Ian Allan, and Michel Noiray for their answers to specific queries.

## Appendix: Costa’s biography of Francesco Pollini (↑)

From the report of the monthly meeting of the Historisches Verein für Krain, 13 Aug 1863 ([Mittheilungen des historischen Vereines für Krain, vol. 18, Aug 1863, 52](#)).

We reproduce here only the biographical portion of Costa’s paper, which as a whole concerns two volumes of crayon portraits attributed to Francesco Pollini. We omit the first introductory paragraph on the

importance of such portraits for an age before photography, and Costa's final select list of some of the notable people whose portraits are in the collection.

[...]

Im vorigen Jahrhunderte lebte in Laibach der *Med.* Dr. Johann Chrysost. Pollini als Arzt und k. k. Physicus, welcher sich mit dem noch jetzt seinen Namen führenden Decocte wider die Lustseuche (*Decoctum Pollini*) viel Geld und Ruhm erwarb, 1779 in den Ritterstand mit dem Prädicate "Edler von" und 1784 sogar zum Freiherrn erhoben wurde. Ueber sein als Arcanum behandeltes Decoctum, welches einen europäischen Ruf erhielt, erschien ein eigenes Werk, und zwar 1798 in zweiter Auflage, von Josef Ferdinand Fridrich, Medicinā=Doctor, unter dem Titel: "Das Pollinische Decoct und die reinigende Wirkungen der welschen Nußschalen wider die Lustseuche und mehrere schwere Krankheiten. Wien, bei Franz Josef Rötzel \*)." Dr. Pollini hatte einen Sohn, welcher sich durch männliche Schönheit, seines Benehmen und die Kenntniß mehrerer Sprachen, wie auch in schönen Künsten, vorzüglich im Zeichnen und durch Virtuosität auf der Violine und im Gesange auszeichnete. Mit diesen geselligen Eigenschaften ausgestattet, begab er sich auf Reisen und war in der Fremde wie in der Heimat als guter Gesellschafter und schöner Mann gern gesehen. Als der Träger eines berühmten freiherrlichen Namens standen ihm allenthalben alle Kreise offen, in denen er sich mit zahlreichen Empfehlungsbriefen und mittelst seiner hervortretenden Eigenschaften einführte; das aber erheischte viel Geld, und zwar mehr, als er davon vom Hause aus hatte, wiewohl ihn sein vermöglicher Vater reichlich ausstattete. Unser junger Herr v. Pollini verwickelte sich in Paris so sehr in Schulden, daß er dort wegen 100.000 Liver, die er nicht bezahlen konnte, in den Schuldenarrest kam. Pollini hatte in Paris mit der Nichte eines Cardinals eine Liaison angeknüpft, und ehe die Rimesse aus Laibach zur Bezahlung seiner Schulden durch die damaligen Wechsler v. Weitenhüller und Freih. v. Zois von Laibach nach Paris gelangte, wurde er vom Onkel Cardinal bereits aus dem Schuldenarreste befreit; Herr v. Pollini wurde aber mit den 100.000 Liver und was er sonst noch von seinem mittlerweile verstorbenen Vater ererbt hatte (darunter das schöne Haus Nr. 34 am alten Markte zu Laibach) bald fertig, so daß über sein Vermögen der Concurus ausbrach. Pollini, der als Dandy von Laibach, an der Spitze der damaligen hiesigen Dilettanten=Gesellschaft im deutschen und krainischen Schau= und Lustspiel und als ausgezeichnete Sänger auftrat, verließ Laibach, wohin er in Folge des Todes seines Vaters kam, bald wieder und ging nach Italien, wo er in Verona, Bologna, Mailand, Rom, Turin und Neapel als Opersänger auftrat. In Neapel vermählte er sich mit einer Sängerin. Aus seinem Nachlasse in Laibach kam dem Verfasser dieser Zeilen vom Masse=Curator durch Familienbande das Recept des eigentlichen Pollinischen Decoctes, welches von jenem im obgedachten Werke abweicht, und das Porträten=Album des Pollini Sohn zu. [...]

\*) In der von unserem Vereine veröffentlichten, höchst interessanten "*Marcus Pochlin Bibliotheca Carnioliae*" ist S. 76 zu lesen: "*Pollini (Joan. Chrysost.) comuniter Paulini Medic. Doctor Labaci et alibi celebris: a) Neu vermehrte heilsame Dreck=Apotheke, wie nämlich mit Koth und Urin fast alle, ja auch die schwersten, geistigen (?) Krankheiten in= und äußerlich glücklich curirt werden. 2 Thle. Frankf. 1748, in 8. quo anno prima editio facta sit, ignoro. b) Examinatio omnium per Carnioliam existentium thermarum, acidularum et sanitati conducentium aquarum. M. S. et alia.*"

The first book mentioned in the footnote, the *Neu=Vermehrte Heilsame Dreck=Apotheke*, is not by Johann Chrysostomus Pollini; an [edition published in Frankfurt in 1692](#) (30 years before Johann Chrysostomus was born) identifies the author as "Kristian Frantz Paullini".

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