

Wolfgang Amadé

# Mozart

original text in Italian

by Luca Bianchini

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free translation

by Robert Newman

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## CHAPTER II

### PART FOUR

#### The Marquis of Ligniville

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ALLEGED TEACHINGS OF LIGNIVILLE

«Usual admission to the Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna was obtained through examination and entry was of three kinds, 'Composer', 'Singer' or 'Musician', which determined if the applicant was in possession of the required standards of learning such as appropriate knowledge, of judgement, skill and dexterity. For those, however, who wanted to obtain honorary membership of the Academy as a 'Composer' and who, like Ligniville, were living 'extra locum' (ie not resident in Bologna) it was sufficient to produce a declaration from the Chapel Master of the town where they were ordinarily resident, testifying to the candidate's ability, and to attach to this declaration a composition written as the applicant wished, asking censors of the Academy for their considered opinion on its contents. Ligniville followed this procedure and a few months later (August 2, 1758), sent his composition, which was favourably evaluated with the unanimous approval of the board, allowing him to be admitted to the Academy in the category of Composer».<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Duccio Peri, "Il Marchese Eugenio de Ligniville. Sovrintendente alla musica della Real Camera e Cappella", in "Philomusica, Rivista del Dipartimento di filologia musicale", Pavia 2006, vol.5 n.1.

From our assessment of young Mozart's music it is clear that neither the work known today as 'Cibavit' [...] K.44, nor the 'Miserere' K.85, nor the 'Quaerite' [...] K.86, nor even the enigmatic 5 Canons (K.89a) (all of which were copied from title pages of books on Music History earlier compiled by Padre Martini of Bologna), show any evidence for Amadeus Mozart having attended the teaching school of Martini himself. Since this is a fact the hunt has been on for the legendary musical teacher of the same young Mozart. The glaring gap in his education needing to be filled if he is to be seen as the composer of those many works that are today attributed to him. So the search has been abandoned on Martini and has gone elsewhere. Without which the entire structure collapses in absurdity.

Musicologists who examined early Mozart in detail have however searched in vain for details of Wolfgang's alleged musical teaching (in respect of theory and composition) but have, during the course of exhaustive enquiries, found another school-type musical piece, this being a 'Stabat Mater', which Mozart would have been required to write in the form of a three part Canon. This curious piece attracts our attention and it proceeds by imitation. The historical events related this particular work (which is certainly referred to in letters of Leopold Mozart and whose creation coincides with their first visit to Florence has emerged as being a candidate for yet another search). The details of which, for the convenience of readers I provide here with a brief description, these to be followed by several comments and details of the history of that particular work.

But let's start with dates and events that are related to Mozart's first visit to Italy -.

1770

Thursday, March 29<sup>th</sup>

The Mozarts depart from Bologna to Florence, about one hundred kilometres away.

Friday, March 30<sup>th</sup>

From Montecarelli (?) they arrive in Florence during that evening and stay at the inn known as the 'Black Eagle', near the Theatre of Solleciti. That same night an academy of singing was held at the home of English resident Lord George Cowper, but Mozart did not participate in it. At that Cowper academy Thomas Linley, an English student of the renowned violinist Pietro Nardini, is known to have played.

Saturday, March 31

Wolfgang fell ill and again did not participate at another concert that was held at the house of Cowper.

Sunday, April 1

On this day the Mozarts visit Franz Xaver Wolfgang Count Orsini-Rosenberg. They also attend a mass at the Palazzo Pitti and are received in audience by Pietro Leopoldo, Grand Duke of Tuscany, third-born son of Maria Theresa of Austria and Francis of Lorraine, who was to later become Emperor Leopold II.<sup>2</sup>

Monday, April 2

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<sup>2</sup> Mozart will experience serious economic difficulties after the death of Emperor Joseph II, who was his admirer and Lorenzo da Ponte's admirer also (with the support of Freemasonry). His successor, Leopold II (Emperor from 1790) dismissed the librettist who had favoured Mozart for the court theater, assigning Antonio Salieri to the post of Chapel Master. Amadeus has since then very little chance to compose other works for the court. Mozart, first as a child, then as a mature man, had certainly not produced a great impression on Leopold II.

In the afternoon of April 2nd Leopold and Wolfgang visit soprano Manzuoli. This occurring in the evening, perhaps (though we will consider that now in some detail) Wolfgang is said to have played with celebrated violinist Peter Nardini for a feast held at the Villa Poggio Imperiale, the summer residence of the Grand Duke. Its Director of Music, the Marquis of Ligniville, is described by Leopold as an expert in counterpoint, is also said to have musically examined young Mozart, making him perform (so he says) 'the most difficult' fugues.

### Tuesday, April 3

The Mozarts meet again sopranoist Manzuoli, and that evening go, perhaps, to the home of Maria Maddalena Morelli-Fernandez, improviser and poet (a lady who will shortly be more famously known as 'Corilla Olympica'<sup>3</sup> when she becomes a member of the Arcadia Society). It seems that it was in her home they first made the acquaintance of Thomas Linley, Nardini's pupil, an English violinist, and child prodigy.

The following text, or the part which is of relevance to us has been taken from a letter Leopold Mozart sent to his wife in Salzburg dated the same day. (For the reliability of the letters of Leopold you must of course remember they were all written with the aim of putting his son in the best possible light in the eyes of the Prince Archbishop of Salzburg<sup>4</sup>:

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<sup>3</sup> This woman poet (born in Pistoia March 17, 1727, died at Florence, 8 November 1800), came to Florence in 1765 with the court of Grand Duke, and remained there for ten years. She had great fame. She was crowned as the Capitol Poet of Arcadia because of the cheating of abbot Pizzi, but also with the approval of Pope Pius VI. The affair caused protests by numerous Roman people who interrupted the ceremony with boos and stones. Pasquini dedicated to her the epigram: "Order and wants Monsignor Maffei [Prefect of Rome] / that when Corilla passes with the laurel / Nobody shoots tomatoes and stones / Under the penalty of six cents" («Ordina e vuole Monsignor Maffei [Prefetto di Roma]/ Che se passa Corilla con l'alloro/ Nessun gli tiri bucce e pomodoro/ Sotto la pena di baiocchi sei»).

<sup>4</sup> Leopold wrote to his wife, May 19, 1770: "You absolutely have to read the letter everywhere and make it known to His Grace the Prince" (see the chapter on the Miserere of Allegri).

« Florence April 3, 1770,

Happily arrived in Florence on 30th March in the evening. We were all day of the 31st at the hotel and Wolfgang was in bed until lunch time because of a slight cold caused by rain and strong winds blowing in the mountains. I made him take tea and syrup of violets and let him sweat a bit. On April 1st, at ten o' clock in the morning, we went to the house of Count von Rosenberg, who has let us pass, since we have submitted a letter to His Excellency the Count Firmian. [...] Last night, the 2nd [of April], we were taken in a carriage to a castle outside the city, where we stayed until the 10th. All happened as usual. All were even more amazed, as His Excellency the Marquis [de Eugène] Ligniville, who oversees music there is the strongest contrapuntist in Italy and requested Wolfgang to play the most difficult fugues. The subjects were the most difficult ones which Wolfgang played and performed like eating a slice of bread. [Peter] Nardini, the good [sic] violinist, accompanied him. [...] I have to finish, because the post is ready to leave. Wolfgang and I send our greetings, kiss you 1000 times. I remain your old Mozart [...]».

### Wednesday, April 4

Wolfgang plays with Linley at the 'Black Eagle' inn. In the State Archives of Florence is preserved a payment order which appears to relate to this, signed by Count Orsini Rosenberg which reads as follows -

'Il sig. Domenico Martin Cashier of the Royal Court is to pay to the performer Mozard the sum of three hundred and thirty-three and 6.8 as his fee for having played at a concert held at Poggio Imp[eria]le in the Quarters of their Royal Highnesses according to the Order in File III number 17. Due receipt of this sum is required at the foot of this Order, and it is posted as an outlay in the expenses of the Department of the Major-Domoin-Chief of the Royal Court. L. 333.6.8'.<sup>5</sup>

### Thursday, April 5

Wolfgang and Linley play at the home of Giuseppe Maria Gavardo des Pivets, Director of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

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<sup>5</sup> Alberto Basso, *I Mozart in Italia Cronistoria dei viaggi, documenti, lettere, dizionario dei luoghi e delle persone*, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Roma 2006, p.71.

Friday, April 6

The Mozarts leave Florence at 9 am headed for Rome (approximately 320 km away). Thomas Linley, according to Leopold, delivers to Wolfgang the following sonnet, which poetess Maddalena Morelli (who will shortly be known as Corilla Olimpica) "must" have been written on behalf of Thomas Linley:

'On the departure of Mr. Amadeo Wolfgango Mozart from Florence.

Since the Fate had divided you from me,  
I always am following you in my thoughts,  
and I turned the joy into tears;  
But in between the tears I hope to see you again.  
A sweet harmony of Heaven,  
that opens my heart to an ecstasy of love,  
sounds into my heart, and abruptly  
take me to the heaven to contemplate the truth.  
O happy day! O fortunate instant!  
When I saw you and was astonished listen to you,  
and I eventually became the lover of your beauties.  
Hope that the gods will allow that  
I will never depart from your heart.  
I always will love you  
I always will imitate your virtues.  
In token of sincere esteem and affection

Thomas Linley

(«Per la partenza del Signor Amadeo Wolfgango Mozart da Firenze.

Da poi che il Fato t`ha da me diviso,  
Io non fò che seguirti col pensiero  
Ed in pianto cangiai la gioia e il riso;  
Ma in mezzo al pianto rivederti io spero.

Quella dolce armonia di Paradiso  
che a un estasi d`amor mi apri il sentiero

Mi risuona nel cuor, e d'improvviso  
Mi porta in cielo a contemplare il vero.

Oh lieto giorno! o fortunato istante  
in cui ti vidi e attonito ascoltai,  
E della tue virtù divenni amante.

Voglian gli Dei che dal tuo cuor giammai  
Non mi departa: lo ti amerò costante.  
Emul di tua virtude ognor mi avrai.

In segno di sincera stima  
ed affetto  
Tommaso Linley».)

The poetess, according to musicologist Alberto Basso wanted to persuade her fellow countryman Luke Anthony Pagnini (himself a member of the Arcadia Society and known there as 'Eristico Pilenejo') to write a poem about Mozart.



«The name of the Abbot [Pagnini] does not appear in the letters of the Mozarts, but we know he was urged by his compatriot Maria Maddalena Morelli-Fernandez to compose a sonnet in honour of the young boy of Salzburg, whom she knew and whom she met several times [?] during Mozart's stay in Florence, between March 30 and April 6th».<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the Mozarts are known to have stayed for approximately one week in Florence. Wolfgang was ill for the first few days, thus meeting Corilla only on the evening of April 3rd - three days before they left. Excluding the day of departure and time spent giving concerts at the Inn how could Wolfgang have met this woman "several times" in just two days?

### Saturday, April 7

The edition of the "Tuscany Gazette" of the above date, April 7, provides us with positive comments on a music concert given on Monday, April 2nd involving Mozart, but we are from the start misinformed there of Wolfgang's age, since he, by April of 1770, was actually 14, having been born on January 28, 1756 -:

«Finding himself at Florence, Mr. Wolfgang Mozart, excellent Player of the Harpsichord and at present in the service of His Highness the Bishop of Salzburg, last Monday had the honour to be heard by the court, where he received all the applause due to his ability. He is just thirteen years old, and is so grounded in music that he two years ago completed an opera that was staged in Vienna. [...] The most learned Professors always admire this young boy, recognizing in him the rarest capacity for profiting by this art as is possible».<sup>7</sup>

Again, O.E. Deutsch, in his celebrated documentary biography of Mozart noted the error of Wolfgang's age contained in the above gazette report but, somehow, by attempting to edit the sources, translated the original Italian "tredici" ("thirteen") as "fourteen" [!].<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, that 'Gazette' article says nothing of any performance on that date by the virtuoso violinist Pietro Nardini. One of the most celebrated violinists of the 18th century, in fact. Which is surely surprising because, according to Leopold's correspondence Nardini was playing at that concert. Further proof of Nardini's reputation comes from a comment made on September 9, 1770 when Charles Burney describes Nardini as a 'perfect violinist, precise, expressive, whose performance tends to satisfy more than to amaze' -

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<sup>6</sup> Alberto Basso, *I Mozart in Italia Cronistoria dei viaggi, documenti, lettere, dizionario dei luoghi e delle persone*, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Roma 2006, p.627.

<sup>7</sup> Otto Erich Deutsch, *ibid.*, p.105.

<sup>8</sup> Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart a documentary biography*, Simon & Schuster, Suffolk 1990, p.116.

«In the afternoon I had the pleasure of listening to Mr. Nardini and his little student Linley in a concert at the house of Mr. Hempson, an Englishman, where there were many people. [...] Mr. Nardini played a solo and a concerto he had composed, so perfectly, his sound is sweet and smooth, not very strong but clear and precise, very expressive in the slow movements, and similar to this of his great master Tartini. The performance tends to satisfy and cause pleasure rather than cause just a surprise: In short, I think he is the most perfect violinist alive in Italy and, in my opinion and according to my impression, I find his style delicate, measured and very fine».<sup>9</sup>

The second strange fact surrounding this alleged concert is that the editor of the 'Gazette' did not focus attention on the fourteen years old boy. Nor did anyone in Florence know anything of him at the time. He should certainly have referred, however, to the violinist Nardini. Such an omission is highly unusual especially since all previous concerts Mozart is said to have improvised at, or highlighted his alleged powers of invention, provided some reason for noting them. And especially since here (Leopold says) Nardini was himself performing. Furthermore, according to Leopold, that celebrated man was willing to accompany Wolfgang in concert with his violin. An astonishing fact since it would have been the first time they had ever met. Nor are there letters between Mozart and Nardini after that date nor any documents showing there was any friendship between them.

Nor would a musical professional such as Nardini have risked his reputation at a court concert to accompany a child whom he, Nardini, nor anyone else, actually knew. The fact that the name of that great violinist has not even been mentioned by the editor in connection with this alleged event, reinforces the probability that Nardini did not play on that night. That Leopold has merely added Nardini's name to his letter (the only reference to Pietro Nardini we have from that time) to magnify the supposed achievements of his son in the eyes of His Highness the Bishop of Salzburg and other members of the Salzburg court. He clearly wanted to indicate that his son was an even better performer than the just "good" Nardini.

In an attempt to confirm the conventional story that violinist Nardini accompanied the child that evening musicologist Fausto Torrefranca<sup>10</sup> has even surmised (by hypothesis) the musical programme performed that evening. He proposed a performance of Boccherini's Concert for harpsichord with violin accompaniment, Op. 5. But if that is correct one would naturally expect a violin virtuoso as its soloist and a harpsichordist to have provided the accompaniment. Torrefranca

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<sup>9</sup> Charles Burney, *Viaggio Musicale in Italia*, UTET, Torino 1979, p.221.

<sup>10</sup> Fausto Torrefranca, *Le origini italiane del Romanticismo musicale*, Torino, 1930, pag. 278

writes that Wolfgang could have played that work by Boccherini. But his idea is impractical because that specific work had its own particular difficulties. We also know from other sources four years earlier that Mozart had received even more enthusiastic praise, but could not, when asked to do so, read music at first sight. One example of this comes from a record made by composer André Ernest Modeste Grétry (reported by O.E. Deutsch) in which he states that Wolfgang certainly did not read closely the part provided for him at that public concert but only rearranged it in a form convenient for himself -

«When I was in Geneva [August 1766] I met a child who could play anything at first sight. His father told me before a gang of people: "Because I want there is no doubt about the talent of my son, write for him, for today, a very difficult movement of Sonata." And I wrote an Allegro in E flat, difficult yes, but without pretension, and he played it, and everyone, except me, shouted it was a miracle. The boy had not stopped, but following the modulations, had replaced a lot of what I had written».<sup>11</sup>

The truth is Op. 5 by Boccherini, the piece alleged that was performed that evening at the Florence academy, was simply unknown to the fourteen year old boy. Having first been published in Paris only the previous year. (Probably not even Nardini having heard it). This for a concert, that was, according to Leopold, so memorable. But it's already curious the published report did not mention the presence of Nardini who was supposedly its soloist. ! Especially since at other concerts when Nardini played with his young student Linley, the editor of that same 'Gazette' has properly reported the pieces being performed and referred to these two players individually by name (Furthermore, Linley himself was considered to be a violin prodigy similar to that now being claimed of Mozart by Leopold and was, unlike Mozart, well known in Florence at the time). So it is far from clear why in concerts of Linley there was always reference to Nardini while here with Mozart the name of Nardini is not given though he is the supposed soloist ! An extraordinary oversight since newspaper reference to Nardini would surely have increased the public profile of Mozart while on tour ! Why was it not provided, given the promotional nature of that concert ? It is surely obvious that if the editor of the 'Gazette' did not mention the name of one of the most acknowledged master violinists of Italy and of Europe in connection with that concert it is because Nardini never actually played with Mozart on 2nd April. And, as for the report, it is equally clear from its text Wolfgang 'had the honour to be heard' there, rather than vice versa. This after his father had already cheated on his age.

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<sup>11</sup> Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart a documentary biography*, Simon & Schuster, Suffolk 1990, p.477.

A further biographical oddity related to Mozart's stay in Florence, is as already said that poetry that was supposedly written for Mozart by Linley. The report of which comes only from Leopold who specifically says Thomas Linley, his English contemporary and student of Nardini dedicated a poem to Wolfgang. Although, even on literary grounds, that would surely have been very strange, since it is fact a love poem. Furthermore, to dedicate a poem such as this to Mozart was never reported by Linley himself, nor by any contemporary witnesses, nor does it appear in any subsequent letters, and nor has it been proved by any other documents. Leopold was and is the only source of that story. And Linley would surely have needed a reason to declare that he wants "emulate " the virtue of a direct competitor such as Mozart. Real or supposed. Especially since he himself, already being described as a child prodigy on violin and having a reputation of his own, wanted to excel as a virtuoso as a pupil of one of the most famous violinists alive at that time. Equally obvious is that Linley, English, was not able to write a poem in Italian. Indeed, it was for this very reason he is said to have asked Corilla to compose one for him for eventual presentation to Mozart. Which are all very strange. To complicate these matters even more, Corilla, some time later, according to Andrea Della Corte (this time reported by Alberto Basso) wanted to write a poem about Mozart, but would not have wished to have written it himself. Rather she commissioned Abbe Pagnini to write one !

«The famous woman urged the distinguished humanist Abbot Pagnini to write a sonnet For Mozart».<sup>12</sup>

This whole affair is of course ludicrous. It is however typically Mozartean in terms of its dubious claims and nonsense content, biographically. Would it not be more logical, that anyone wishing to write a poem for another person would actually do so himself ?

Furthermore, the text "From then that Fate" is very generic, almost like an "Aria di Baule", and would be valid for any occasion. That text could also be addressed to a man or a woman, and it could be written by a man or a woman. Just change the final vowel of "attonito" (astonished) in "attonita" and it works.

But this love poetry of 'Linley-Corilla' seems from its text to be addressed to a girlfriend who has been absent for a long time (the lover feeling for her "ecstasy" of a "constant love ").

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<sup>12</sup> Guglielmo Barblan, Andrea Della Corte, Mozart in Italia, 1956, p.89.

«Da poi che il Fato t`ha da me diviso,  
Io non fò che seguirti col pensiero  
Ed in pianto cangiai la gioia e il riso;  
Ma in mezzo al pianto rivederti io spero.

Quella dolce armonia di Paradiso  
che a un estasi d`amor mi apri il sentiero  
Mi risuona nel cuor, e d`improvviso  
Mi porta in cielo a contemplare il vero.

Oh lieto giorno! o fortunato istante  
in cui ti vidi e attonito ascoltai,  
E della tue virtù divenni amante.

Voglian gli Dei che dal tuo cuor giammai  
Non mi departa: lo ti amerò costante.  
Emul di tua virtude ognor mi avrai».

The very same text also has a series of misspellings ("o" – exclamation mark - with "h", and then without "h", "un estasi" without apostrophe). There are of course no references to harpsichords or child prodigies. The relevance of it is immediately questionable. Nor is it easy to imagine Corilla writing a love poem that has been so poorly misspelled for a 14 year old boy. She being, at the time, 40 years old. And, since she was not a paedophile but a distinguished literary woman in her own right, the story becomes ever more absurd and contradictory. Furthermore, she had seen the visiting boy only once.

The quality of poems made by Corilla was very high. There is another poem that closely resembles that of Corilla, but as anyone can read for themselves it has nothing to do with that which is reported for Mozart. It is also strange Mozart, who would have admired Corilla so much, appears to have confused the name of its supposed author by the name of 'Corinna'.<sup>13</sup>

«Sonetto di Corilla Olimpica a Salomone Fiorentino.

Fu propizia la sorte al desir mio,  
Che pur mi diè di rimirarti infine,

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<sup>13</sup> lettera di Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart a Linley del 10 settembre 1770: «farei tutto il possibile di abbracciare [...] la signora Corinna e il signr. Nardini».

E ne' tuoi carmi ravvisar che un dio  
Grazie t'ispira ignote e pellegrine.

Dotto è il tuo stile e limpido qual rio  
Che fa specchio alle rose porporine,  
Qualor sul fresco margine natio  
Aprono il seno all'aure mattutine.

Oh qual dolce sorpresa all'alma mia  
Il rimirarti in volto il cuor sincero,  
Pien d'onestade e affabil cortesia!

Or s'attonita in te fisso il pensiero,  
Che fòra mai, se per la stessa via,  
Meco venissi a rintracciare il vero?».<sup>14</sup>

And a check of the known works of Corilla do not include a poem using the term 'Since the Fate', and nor is there reference of any other meeting between her, Leopold and Wolfgang. Corilla during that month of April 1770 is known to have focused her thoughts on only one man - Peter Nardini himself, whom she had met recently, after which she had become his violin pupil and, it seems, his lover. She tells us herself at that time she wrote all poetry for herself, and that no one, except herself, had ever read them.

Ademollo doubts Corilla ever wrote a poem for Wolfgang:

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<sup>14</sup> Tratto da Storia del Sonetto italiano, Guasti, Prato 1839, p.299.

«It is a fact that Mozart was in Florence in the autumn of 1770 and it is a fact that at that time Corilla wrote some sonnets, and among them perhaps that for Mozart».<sup>15</sup>

‘Nor is it certain, as some argue, that at her living room Corilla could ever have held large gatherings of celebrities/distinguished persons, and this almost every night. From what the poetess writes herself, it seems Corilla wanted at this time to be alone during the whole day and was worried about her age, being more than forty years old. So the story of the political-literary use of Corilla’s living-room is based on a major misunderstanding. Burney himself, (already referred to) during his trip to Italy, wrote that Corilla when in public attended the Salotto Baldigiani. Not that she socialised in her own home. It was in that same year of 1770 at another academy held at the home of Baldigiani, where he (Charles Burney) met Corilla, the famous literary improviser. He describes her as the female violin student of Nardini and continues.

«I went to visit her several times, beyond her extraordinary talent to speak in verse, improvising on any party is given, and able to be able to play a concert in one part of ripieno with her violin, she also sings with great expression and performs well at the higher level».

Charles Brack, who translated Burney’s musical travel book into French, has added an explanatory statement on those times but has clearly confused matters by stating that these were held at the home of Corilla herself rather than at the house of Baldigiani. Since he writes.

«There was every night at the home of Corilla [?], conversations or meetings made especially for foreigners and people of letters in Florence. She was then more than 40 years old. An important woman, from her majestic bearing, her eyes full of fire. She was jealous and proud of her own poetic talent. She was even thinking herself to be superior than all other improvisers of her contemporaries. Europe has seen her successes. But having had little luck she lived now with assistance of a group formed of many kings of Europe».<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Alessandro Ademollo, *Corilla Olimpica*, Ademollo, Firenze 1887, p.129.

<sup>16</sup> Alessandro Ademollo, *Corilla Olimpica*, Ademollo, Firenze 1887, p.129: «Il y avait tous les soirs, chez la Corilla, conversation ou assemblée composée particulièrement des étrangers et des gens de lettres qui se troivent à Florence. Elle avait alors 40 et quelques années. C'est une femme grande, ayant un port majestueux, les yeux pleins de feu et le regard imposant. Jalouse et fière de son talent poétique, elle se croyait supérieure à tous les improvisateurs ses contemporains. L'Europe a connu ses succès. Ayant peu de fortune, elle vivait des bienfaits de plusieurs Souverains de l'Europe, par qui elle était pensionnée».

Vernon Lee in his own study of eighteenth century Italy, based his statement on that same basic oversight, and also because wanted to celebrate Mozart. He too wrote that in her modest house at Via della Forca Corilla were held lavish receptions, attended by many celebrities -

«'Corilla's receptions were well attended in Florence by high society.....'. So I very much doubt any crowded receptions were ever held in Corilla's house on Via della Forca, as Vernon-Lee and others assume, since the visiting Mozart's would only have been attending as guests, and even more so since Corilla is said by Leopold to have written a sonnet for him. Furthermore, Mozart was in Florence in the autumn of 1770 and, though it's certain that at this time Corilla wrote some sonnets, (amongst which is one said to be that for Mozart) but of her writings she speaks in a letter to Pagnini himself as follows, adding that she was tired and annoyed. ».<sup>17</sup>

Ademollo doubts Corilla held large receptions and academies of such a kind. Indeed, to support his view, he even quotes a letter she wrote to Abbe Pagnini to show how she was bored that year, and how her heart was fully occupied by thoughts of Pietro Nardini.

And here in her letter to Abbot Pagnini we find no reference to any poetry written by Pagnini to Mozart. Musicologist Della Corte has simply invented it. We find instead within it an exhortation to write poetry for Pietro Nardini, who by 1770, had become her beloved idol, the only musician who can make her feel an 'ecstasy of love' for the 'Harmonies of Heaven' and who knows how to produce these harmonies with his violin. Here is what she actually wrote -

«October 2, 1770.

Since you have so exalted my bad sonnets I think I appreciate them because you did not despise them. I will make a copy of them and send them to you. Gladly would I have taken them in person to you, but to move makes me wince - I have become a lifeless body and do not know for what unlucky fate, and if no external force gives me the strength, I am simply not able to move. My country would be enough to stir me, and in fact I have the spirit and the will to fly and move, but the body requires a physical force and I cannot detach myself from this boring sofa where I am pinned by heavy laziness, and cold indolence. Dear Pagnini I send a million greetings of the most cordial and interesting kind to you and my distinguished fellow citizens, amongst which is first of all Baldinotti, then to Montagnani Forteguerra, and the Bishop Ipoliti, do not forget! I don't know if my sister will come, because the store of her husband can not be left alone. Anyway I will not fail to persuade her to come, and it will be better if she will come there, and not I, because my person is no longer able to be seen. And even if it would be good to hear from me I believe that in people the feeling of the sight of what they saw would prevail over the hearing. My poems are trifles, as you know, so I do not copy them in fair copies, so they are not listened to by anyone, except me. Have fun, and guard for your

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<sup>17</sup> Alessandro Ademollo, *ibid.*, p.129.



grace, and if you have leisure write a sonnet and send it to me, and if you want to, I will give the most beautiful topic for you to write about, that will give you the greatest of the honours: write it in praise of Mr Pietro Nardini who is so admirable with the violin, who makes you feel all the power of harmony, and show us the riddle of sweetness, that until now has been unknown to us.

I will be obliged to do so, thank you. Mr. Senator, greets and admires you, and so does his sister, and husband. Goodbye».<sup>18</sup>

In the same letter of 2nd October 1770, (written six months after the stay in Florence of the Mozarts) Corilla clearly says she writes no poetry, except for herself. She further suggests Pagnini would be inspired by Nardini, the only great player worthy of attention. The poetess, already herself a good violinist, was as said by this time to be a noted student of that same Master. The idea of a poem written for Mozart by Corilla, that of Linley ordering her to write one, that Pagnani is urged to compose poetry - these are all the direct results of Leopold Mozart's frenzied and invented celebration of his own son. Once again. And this time by the invention of a poetry commission which makes no sense at all.

In this next part we focus on the strange figure of the Marquis Ligniville, who, as we will see, was to play an important role in the career of Mozart, more so than the alleged input of either Corilla or Linley during for the status of Mozart than the alleged input of Corilla and Linley during the stay of Mozart in Florence. We will also see if this man was possessed with extraordinary musical talent as was said by Leopold Mozart who (as we have see above) called him "the strongest contrapuntist in all of Italy".

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<sup>18</sup> Alessandro Ademollo, *ibid.*, p.130.

## STABAT MATER

Until about 1850 (that is, until almost 60 years after Mozart's death) no one who wrote on Mozart doubted that the musical works that are known today as K.44, K.85, K.86, K.89a, had really been composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Nor were any such ideas likely to be listened to. The myth was still growing.

But popular assumption was wrong. The above were all false musical attributions and were products of inconsistent stylistic and other analysis. Yet it was widely believed and dogmatically taught that when Mozart was only fourteen years old he could already master ancient compositional techniques, from the simplest to the most complex, ranging from Palestrina's Antifona style to that of late Renaissance Oratorio - from imitation of two voices in unison to that of producing a Baroque fugue. It was on these wholly false and continually repeated assumptions, in fact, that the posthumous musical reputation of Mozart grew to huge, even iconic size.

This fact is reflected in a statement made as early as 1836 by an unidentified author that - «as for counterpoint, Beethoven was certainly inferior than Mozart, who was without doubt the greatest in this school »<sup>19</sup>.

"That idea, grossly exaggerated from the time it first appeared in print (since we now know with certainty these same pieces were simply copied by Mozart from others before him), survives even today in high-sounding phrases, a few of which are here -

«'Who could have done anything so ingeniously effective as a master contrapuntist as did Mozart?' (Edward Joseph Dent, 1960), And -'If Bach, Mozart and Wagner are three individual masters of counterpoint, they are well nigh masters of three individual arts [...]' (Ernst Toch, 1977). Also,'Above all, Chopin was the greatest master of counterpoint since Mozart' (Charles Rosen, 1998). And 'For Haydn was, after Bach and Handel and Mozart - one of the finest masters of counterpoint who has lived'. (John F. Runciman, 2007) etc.

Is it not remarkable that musicology, whose exponents should abhor dogma and which exists to cultivate honest, detailed research on such questions, drinks so deeply, so dogmatically, and so free of criticism from myths over which it has presided for 200 years? Other examples being that

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<sup>19</sup> "The Musical World", Novello, Londra 1836, p.104: «As a counterpointist, Beethoven was certainly inferior to Mozart, who was without doubt the greatest in that school of writing».

Franz Joseph Haydn was the 'father of the symphony' and that Rossini invented the musical crescendo etc.

These 19th century musicologists were far too busy inventing to be stopped. They identified, among these alleged early compositions of W.A. Mozart, this Stabat Mater, which, they believed, stood out from others because of its particularly extensive use of canons written in what they called (and some still call) the old Flemish style. That discovery was extraordinary to them, and it is for us today also. Since it credits a boy of young age with the ability to control with mathematical certainty settings of music that was first written in the late sixteenth-century style in work such as K.44, and even in that Stabat, a work which proceeds with close imitations under rules which applied from the 15th century onwards. Or so they thought. Few actually examined the work itself. But that too is common in 'Mozart Studies'.

The legend of that one Stabat, still being portrayed in the standard Mozart literature as a piece in "late Flemish" style, naturally rose to feature prominently in the early Mozart biography of G. Nissen published in 1828. That German biographer had even had the chance to ask Mozart's widow Constanze of its genesis. And she herself considered it to be one the most worthy of the thirty or so church works of her late husband. So acclaimed did this work become that Nissen lists it (Fig. 2) in his book, next to the Quareite [...] K.86 ( though that second work in fact, was made by Padre Martini), and also alongside the famous Requiem, (the score of which unfortunately bears the signature "Mozart, made by me 1792 [sic] " and even dated as having been composed after his own death [!]. Further absurdity [!].

IV. Verzeichniss derjenigen Compositionen, welche Mozart ausser den hier angeführten noch vollendet hinterlassen hat.

- 1) Ein Oratorium: *Davidde penitente*, vom J. 1785, wovon in der Biographie mehres gesagt ist.
- 2) 50 verschiedene Kirchen - Compositionen, wie: Missen, Litaneyen, Offertorien, Motetten, Hymnen, Cantaten u. dgl., worunter auch ein Requiem mit ist. Vorzügliche Auszeichnung unter diesen verdient ein *Stabat mater* à 5 Soprani von lauter Canons, und dann die *Antiphona* à 4 Voci, welche er 1770 zu Bologna als Aufgabe zur Aufnahme in die dortige filarmonische Gesellschaft schrieb. Siehe die Beilage zur Biogr. S. 227. — Die grösste ist sein schon aufgezähltes Requiem.
- 3) 4 Chöre für 4 Singstimmen und volles Orchester

(fig.2)

But the manuscript of the Stabat, as Nissen describes it for us in his book, consisted of six pages written on both sides. Music for three voices in canon, in fact, though its text was found to be complete only for number one (that is, for the words "Stabat Mater") and for the first twelve bars of number two (the words " Cujus animam"). That strange defect did not however stop Edward Holmes, in his own biography of Mozart ( New York 1845), accepting the standard views on it that had been provided for him by Nissen, since he considered they were still valid for his book of that year. Holmes speaks of that Stabat Mater for three sopranos as having been "built entirely on Canons" and as being among the thirty major works of Mozart for the Church:

**IV. Catalogues of the Compositions which, in addition to those here mentioned, Mozart left complete.**

1. An oratorio, " Davide penitente." 1783.
2. Thirty various church compositions—masses, litanies, offertories, motets, hymns, cantatas, &c., and among them a requiem. Of these a *stabat mater* for three soprani, consisting entirely of canons, and an antiphona in four parts, which he wrote at Bologna in 1770, for reception into the Philharmonic Society of that city, deserve especial notice. The greatest work of all is, however, the requiem.
3. Four choruses for four voices and orchestra

(fig.3)

Citing this same Stabat Mater, it was not long before other 'critical texts' on this very piece appeared whose authors spoke of the mastery of its counterpoint - the young Wolfgang thus having written a Stabat in the style of Pergolesi and "able to be received in the Academy Filarmonica of Bologna in 1770".

One American newspaper reported that –

"Mozart at the age of sixteen years had produced two Requiem, a Stabat Mater, a number of offertory, hymns..."<sup>20</sup> The views of Holmes on this piece were copied by Catholic magazines, such as United States 'Catholic Magazine' and 'Monthly Review'. And so things mushroomed in the usual Mozartean way.

In reality, the Stabat Mater was a kind of music much loved by faithful people though of uncertain origin (the attribution to the composer Jacopone has been discussed), and it was very popular, especially since it accompanied church processions on Good Friday. One can certainly understand

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<sup>20</sup> American Phrenological, Wells, New York 1848, voll.47, 48 p.174.

the enthusiasm for Mozart's composition from that perspective. Generations of musicians had already been attracted to set to music work of that name such as Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Alessandro Scarlatti, Antonio Vivaldi, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, Joseph Haydn and others. Why not Mozart?

Which brings us to the next strange fact. This Stabat Mater was not commissioned from its composer by anyone and was not performed for any documented occasion. This too we overlook, as usual.

We may also ask why Mozart's version was so often cited by 'experts' of the nineteenth century, but never actually performed. Since it was certainly included by numerous authors as being amongst his religious works and even as being one of the most complete and representative.

The reason is purely musical. This Stabat Mater of 'Mozart' coolly features an identical musical subject that is in performance highly monotonous, starting at different points in its measures in order to generate musical effect from a single voice, which serves as its model, a full polyphony, for sure, always the same and, in truth, awfully monotonous. Though nobody tells you this. Till now.

As for it being an example of 'Flemish musical art' (on which it is supposedly based) that was of course completely inappropriate. The Flemish was a musical style far, far more complex than we find here anywhere in this Stabat. The entrance of its theme occurs in that style at different heights. The musical parts ran in retrograde motion, mirror, and its note values were not only identical but were often shortened or extended. While this Stabat being dogmatically attributed to Mozart, is by comparison extremely basic. Even banal. Yet the mythmakers persisted, once again. They still do.

Music, like mathematics, geometry and astronomy, once belonged to what was called quadrivium: as arithmetic was called in medieval times, as was the science of pure number, geometry, the science of number in space, astronomy, the number also of their movements, and also in music, a science of proportion that existed between numbers tonally. The Flemish enigmatic Canon composers insisted on that idea of scientific music, which was really half way between art and applied mathematics. And Mozart should certainly have invoked such brilliance if he really had this in mind. But he did not do so in that work. Nowhere. But the mythmakers persisted, once again. How many decades could this nonsense be sustained before it was laughed at?

Otto Jahn, the celebrated Mozart biographer was the first (as far as I know) to realize by the mid-nineteenth century this Stabat Mater was not actually a work by W.A. Mozart. First to indicate (correctly) that Mozart had simply copied it from another source to which he had access. And it was the same Otto Jahn who identified that original source to have been the famous (according to him), Stabat Mater of Pierre Eugène François Marquis Ligniville (1730-1788). The Marquis appears here from a painting now hanging in the hall of the Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna (fig.4):



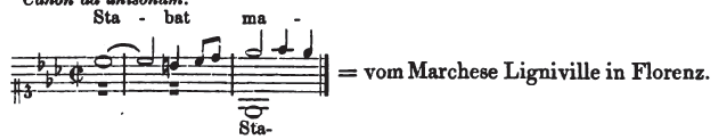
(fig.4)

In point of fact Ligniville had already published his Stabat Mater there in Florence in 1767. But Mozart, without mentioning Ligniville has merely copied it though not entirely. The original model surviving in thirty-nine sections:

Nr.1 Stabat Mater/ Nr.2 Cujus animam/ Nr.4 Quae maerebat/ Nr.8 Quis est homo/ Nr.11 Pro peccatis/ Nr.14 Fac ut ardeat/ Nr.24 Fact ut portem/ Nr.26 Inflammatus/ Nr.30 Amen.

And Ludwig Köchel in his first catalogue K1 (nearly 70 years after Mozart's death) accepts that the work is actually one by Marquis de Ligniville (fig.5):

## 238. Stabat mater a tre voci in Canone.

*Canon ad unisonum.*

Eine Abschrift Mozart's nur aus J. André hands. Verz. bekannt.

*J. André* führt dieses Stabat mater in seinem hands. Verz. (eben so *Nissen* Anh. S. 4. n. 15, aber a 4 voci) als Autograph Mozart's an. *O. Jahn I.* 207 sprach die Vermuthung aus, diess dürfe nur eine Abschrift nach Ligniville's Stabat mater sein: und so bewährte es sich auch glänzend durch Vergleichung mit dem 1767 in Florenz gestochenen Originale von Ligniville (im Besitz von Dr. O. Lindner). Mozart schrieb daraus ab n. 1. Stabat, n. 2. Cujus animam, n. 4. Quae maerebat, n. 8. Quis est, n. 11. Pro peccatis, n. 14. Fac ut ardeat, n. 24. Fac ut portem, n. 26. Inflammatus, n. 30. Amen. *O. Jahn IV.* 825.

(fig.5)

Later, others such as Einstein changed the supposed year of the printing of this Stabat by Ligniville to the year 1768. He also reproduced the original Ligniville dedication (which had originally been dedicated the Grand Duke of Tuscany). In the next version of the Mozart catalogue known today as K3 Einstein, its editor, changed again the number of the piece within the Mozart catalogue to become Anh. 109ii. (By now inserting the 'Stabat by Ligniville / Mozart' into the Appendix labelled "Mozart copies made by other composers."). Still later the same Einstein postulated that Amadeus must have copied the Stabat Canons from Ligniville in April 1770 at the time he met Marquis Ligniville in Florence. Around the time of a meeting which we read of in a letter written from Leopold to his wife -:

«All were even more amazed, as His Excellency the Marquis [de Eugène] Ligniville, who oversees the music, is the strongest contrapuntist of Italy, and has proposed to Wolfgang to play the most difficult fugue. The subjects are the most difficult ones, that Wolfgang has played and performed like eating a piece of bread».

Will you be surprised to learn this too is more nonsense from Leopold Mozart ? We can ask why Mozart had such a strong interest in the music of Ligniville that he dared to copy his work almost entirely without the fact of it being known to musicology for close to 70 years? It is clear the relationship between Ligniville and Mozart was very special, as special as that between a teacher and student. And that from it was born the hypotheses that he, Ligniville, may have given composition lessons to Wolfgang. Though that too is nonsense.

It is at this point where I must honestly confess that Neal Zaslaw, a noted American writer on Mozart did not realise the true teacher of W.A. Mozart must have been modern music researchers Robert Newman of London and Luca Bianchini of Sondrio, Italy. Since Padre Martini and now Ligniville have both conspicuously failed. Again And this despite Zaslaw's confident statement that

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"Wolfgang was educated by two Italian contrapuntists, Padre Martini and the Marquis of Ligniville" <sup>21</sup>

and this despite an even more remarkable claim that -

"when he was composing the Finale of the Jupiter Symphony [...], Mozart would have been thinking of the training in counterpoint he had received from his father, from Padre Martini and from the Marquis of Ligniville" <sup>22</sup>

Zaslaw appears not to have done his homework. He certainly promotes his idea as one of the most representative scholars of official Mozartean musicology today, even stating that Ligniville has to be considered as the basis of the Jupiter Symphony. And Mr Zaslaw (unlike many others) is open to criticism. His is a startling claim that stimulated me to try to understand who Ligniville actually was, and, above all, to see what character Ligniville's music may have had . And to know how his music was acknowledged in his own time.

Let's start at the beginning. It was April 3rd, 1770 when Leopold Mozart tells us in a letter written from Florence some days before he had met "the Ligniville Marchese, Director of Music, who is the most sophisticated expert in counterpoint throughout Italy,". Zaslaw does not expose this claim as sheer nonsense and we wonder why. Since, in reality, Ligniville was certainly not a contrapuntist, was not the 'greatest expert of it in all Italy', (not in that year, nor before 1770 nor ever after that date). Nor has Mr Zaslaw admitted that Leopold once again invented nonsense. Ligniville was in reality a eclectic man, a lover of literature, and one especially known for writing a treatise - on mulberry trees! He was in fact a civil servant, and an amateur musician who wrote some canons in imitation.

Ligniville was born in 1730 in Luneville and had the advantage of being descended from one of those great families of the European aristocracy. I know nothing of his early life and upbringing.

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<sup>21</sup> Neal Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies. Context, Performance Practice, Reception*, Oxford, New York 1989, p.10.

<sup>22</sup> Neal Zaslaw, *ibid.*, p.542.



The earliest information I found says he lived by 1757 in Mantua. (Having been sent there by the Austrian Government to carry out research into the commercial cultivation of mulberry trees. It was for this reason that he wrote 'Mémoire sur la culture des Meuriers dans le Duché de mantou').

In the late fifties, Ligniville is known to have begun a correspondence with Padre Martini of Bologna. In December of 1759 he then moved to Florence and found employment with the Post Office. (The monopoly of which was held by Thurn and Taxis - who settled in Regensburg, Germany, although parts of the family were at the time based in Mantua - in particular, the postmaster of Rome). And Ligniville held his position there until 1767. Florentine musical life was good at this time. Credit for which was especially due to one Charles Antoine Campion, Master of the Court Chapel who was the favoured musician of the Emperor Franz Stephan. And it was there in Florence that Ligniville began writing music. He composed a Salve Regina in three-voice canon in 1762. He also managed to assume the post of Superintendent of Music and had established a friendship with Prince Leopold. The Marquis, as the young king, had the same scientific interests.

Nowhere it is written in documents of the time that the Marquis of Ligniville has distinguished himself for having composed fugues, or for having written treaties of counterpoint. In fact he didn't write notable music at all. Nor did he publish anything but clever Canons. Of these it is not even possible to say whether he wrote them or if he was helped. The marquis had become a member of the Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna, for sure, but he had passed the entrance examination only by correspondence.

The main musical interest of Ligniville in those early years was certainly to obtain membership admission to the Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna, of which Padre Martini was already an influential and authoritative representative. Unable to go there to take a test for admission, [Ligniville] wrote to propose that he would send him a "thema on a Gregorian chant to compose a composition in four to eight voices, or whatever it's commitments wish to their pleasure ", which, according to that composition, would be judged by the academics of that institution...

This same Marquis of Lorraine was apparently unaware of the existence of some academic rules, made in 1726, to facilitate membership of the Accademia Filarmonica for people of noble lineage of a "higher level" as an "academic honour" - i.e. those who wanted the title of "Academic honour" as a Composer "and who lived, as Ligniville did, extra locum (ie not resident in Bologna). That could be achieved by him producing a statement of the choirmaster of the town where the candidate was ordinarily resident, testifying to his ability, and attaching this evidence to his composition sent to the censors. Ligniville followed this procedure

and a few months later (August 2, 1758), sent his composition, favourably evaluated by the board of the Academy, who allowed him admission to the Academy in the category of Composer. "Unanimously!".

This highlights the importance given to this generic title of "Academic aggregate", which does not seem to have been particularly difficult to achieve. Ligniville was also a foreigner and an Aggregate Philharmonic as was Mozart.

Ligniville, during his application process searched for approval by a choirmaster and sent his work to Bologna. After which he was admitted unanimously (unlike Wolfgang). And, as for his musical career, compared to that of Wolfgang, it lasted only a short time. Long enough for him to stand out as an amateur dilettante of music. But little more. Since, according to various reports, he ended his career due to a scandal. He survived thanks to recommendations and thanks to the protection of Padre Martini and his protoges -.

«The Marquis of Ligniville showed himself quite willing to sponsor others [such as musician Filippo Maria] Gherardeschi and even advised him to ask Padre Martini to send to him another letter addressed directly to Marshal Botta Adorno, who, in the choice of candidates, was held in high regard by those who enjoyed the recommendations of famous people».<sup>23</sup>

Ligniville, as said, was finally expelled from Florence, this occurring only a few years after the arrival of Mozart. Which certainly explains why his name is mentioned only once in the extended correspondence of the Mozart family.

Commissions received by Ligniville to provide music were in part only honorary. It is also known that in the eternal struggles between musical masters of the court, that Marquis, jealous of his own skilled colleagues, tried to discredit them by accusing them of incompetence, but that tactic soon backfired. It is also known Grand Duke Peter Leopold soon fell out with him, sending him a horse called "ungrateful" which, for Ligniville was the social equivalent of being accused of ignominy at the time. After which he was gently removed from court society. Ligniville's life after this date becoming obscure. (So much for Leopold's claim of his musical mastery !).

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<sup>23</sup> Stefano Barandoni, *Filippo Maria Gherardeschi (1738-1808): musicista "abile e di genio" nel Granducato di Toscana*, Edizioni ETS, Pisa 2001, p.24.

Ligniville was also described as being equipped with "biting sarcasm and a directness of judgments that did not know mediation...'. He found himself several times in a situation of fierce controversy with some fellow musicians. He suffered for this and maybe suffered exile for not so careful management of the musical budget of the Florentine Court. «L'incarico musicale ricevuto da Ligniville fu in parte solo onorifico». " The Marquis was soon in conflict with the Master of the Capella Campion, who was also of French origin. Two years after he met Mozart in Florence, Ligniville wrote a memoir in which he accused Campion of being incapable of being a musician, that is, of directing, playing the harpsichord and keeping the accounts of Chapel Music. Master Campion replied as well as he could to the allegations of the Marquis and confronted him on the subject of counterpoint. Campion even composed some Canons, that were corrected to Padre Martini, and won the contest. Ligniville was also soon defeated by young composer Alessandro Felici, "who was accused by the Marquis of Lorraine for being prepared in the art of counterpoint no better than the last of my hunting dogs. " This new exuberance, apparently unfounded, that tells us a lot about the character of the Marquis and which finally cost him an expulsion from the court. [...]

(It was in February 1773 when Leopold gave him a horse named "ungrateful. " The Marquis was then virtually put in the social pillory). Furthermore -

"No article - (and it should be noted the newspapers of the time were the unofficial press organs of the Court) - bothered to give news of his death on December 10th, 1788 in Florence. Which is a fact that should make you think, especially if we consider that during his 'lucky' period the same chronicles of Court had always devoted to him such attention and exaggerated kindness".<sup>24</sup>

It is a plain fact that Leopold Mozart grossly exaggerated Ligniville's musical abilities. The real expertise of Ligniville was only that of silkworm production. As for Ligniville's Canons these have little to do with Fugues, which were the talent claimed of him by Leopold. Since Fugue is the natural completion of a course in counterpoint. It is equally clear that Fugue is the fulfilment of higher education courses in composition as we see from the titles of various music teaching manuals, such as the "Treaty of counterpoint and fugue" by Dubois.

So, in summary, when Mozart was in Italy, Ligniville had already published a Salve Regina, undated, and by 1767 this same work, also appeared in the form of Canons for three voices. "The reputation of Ligniville was quoted that time in just this Florence episode because of Mozart in musicology and was more generally limited to a cameo appearance in the chronicles".<sup>25</sup> So Leopold presented the marquis as 'der ganzen stärkste Contrapunctist in Italien' ("the strongest

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<sup>24</sup> Duccio Peri, "Il Marchese Eugenio de Ligniville. Sovrintendente alla musica della Real Camera e Cappella", in "Philomusica, Rivista del Dipartimento di filologia musicale", Pavia 2006, vol.5 n.1.

<sup>25</sup> Duccio Peri, *ibid.*, vol.5 n.1.

counterpointist in Italy”). And it too is nonsense. It is however clear Mozart considered his association in Italy with Ligniville to be very important for his career as we see in the fact he drew from 39 canonic movements of Ligniville’s ‘Stabat Mater’ when composing the Kyrie for 5 Sopranos (KV89).<sup>22</sup>

But, as to Ligniville’s very real limitations as a composer of sacred music, this is evident in the fact that when he was commissioned by Grand Duke Peter Leopold to write something in that style, Ligniville, worried by this, wrote to Padre Martini of Bologna, asking him to send -

‘A very short composition with some instruments, composed by a good composer, with some fugue which might ‘illuminate him and serve as an example’.<sup>22</sup>

A clear proof that Ligniville was prepared to copy the music of other composers. The story reminding us that the term ‘fugue’ could be and was often used very differently than it is understood today. Again, years later, Mozart was asked to compose in Paris a Miserere and was forced to ask Holzbauer back in Munich to send one of that kind to him. (That subject being one we can devote another chapter to). But the clearest indication can be found in the fact that Ligniville had obtained his own diploma not by posting an application letter but by relying at that time on the music of others. He certainly obtained musical help from Padre Martini and what was sent to him from Bologna was very probably ‘his’ Stabat Mater’ - the only work ever associated with Ligniville of any real importance.

«It is possible that after this commission, the famous Stabat Mater for three voices in canon materialized. Ligniville published it in April 1767 and dedicated it to the Grand Duke, and it was performed a few days later there in the Royal Palace of Pisa, where the Court had moved. This composition should be considered as particularly rich. Mozart - as noted - also drew on it an inspiration».<sup>26</sup>

It is only because of Mozart we assume the musical value of the Ligniville’s Stabat must have been very high. That’s the same as we once assumed the Mozart work was an original work. But what did Ligniville’s contemporaries think of it? Leopold to whom it was dedicated) was not very impressed: a catalogue of 1771 survives from the library of Grand Duke with "numerous handwritten notes on the side of each title - some by the Grand Duke himself. [...] The one

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<sup>26</sup> Duccio Peri, “Il Marchese Eugenio de Ligniville. Sovrintendente alla musica della Real Camera e Cappella”, in “Philomusica, Rivista del Dipartimento di filologia musicale”, Pavia 2006, vol.5 n.1.

hundred and fourteen music titles listed in it are all accompanied by a brief review about the quality of each individual piece: "excellent", "fort bon", "bon", "passable", "singulier", "mediocre", "mauvais". The Stabat Mater of Ligniville which is present among others, is considered to be only "singulier". So the 'Stabat Mater' by Ligniville is given the same assessment as that given by Padre Martini to Mozart when the Franciscan had to judge the Salzburgian's qualities as a performer. In both cases the word 'singulier' means sufficient, but that is all).

Remember, it was with the help of Martini that the Marquis had been appointed by the Grand Duke to be Superintendent of Music. Florence at this time was a centre for theatrical important works in Vienna and "a centre of worshipping the music by Handel." The Marquis in a series of surviving letters sent to Padre Martini asked him to send all "music of Handel choruses, indicating it as the type of composition favoured by the Grand Duke of Tuscany".<sup>27</sup>

So Amadeus and Leopold Mozart had association with this strange aristocrat. In the letter, we see Ligniville, who did not actually write fugues, but only Canons, is said to have required from 'Wolfgang the most difficult Fugues[sic], that he resolved as easily as eating a piece of bread'. Etc.

The very idea Ligniville was at this time "the supreme Italian contrapuntist" is laughable and for anyone to say he was an expert on Fugues in the strict sense is nothing but fantastic folly.

Italian musicians who composed for the theatre of the court were as we have already seen assessed in their individual works using such terms as 'excellent'. "excellent", "fort bon", "bon", "passable", "singulier", "mediocre", "mauvais". We have seen that for his simple canonic imitations the Marquis de Ligniville only received "singulier", certainly not "mauvais", but somewhere between "passable" and "mediocre". Given the political support enjoyed by him in those times, "singulier" was far from positive.

And what does this tell us about Ligniville teaching Mozart composition? If Neal Zaslaw is right Ligniville was the composition teacher of Wolfgang. But Ligniville, an academic only by mail order, could hardly judge Fugues if he never written any. And how could his 'pupil' Mozart instantly write them if his 'teacher' had not taught him how to write them? 'Dial a Fugue' is never so easy. Nor

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<sup>27</sup> Duccio Peri, *ibid.*, vol.5 n.1.

are fugues like 'eating a piece of bread'. Everyone knows that. Except, of course, those who rely on the fairy stories of Leopold Mozart.

Giving a theme to a music candidate for making a Fugue is itself not an automatic process even today. Proponents of a fugue need to plan a solution, a response, countersubject, episodes [...]. But Ligniville did not compose fugues, merely canons in simple unison and octave and we are not even sure they were his. It is highly unlikely Ligniville was able to give to Mozart themes of a Fugue to be developed, except if what Leopold meant by "Fugue" was not a true Fugue but simply a polyphonic composition with generic parts in imitation - which has really nothing to do with the real art of fugue. Still, the first biography of Mozart had already interpreted the word as "anthem", though we read in another letter by Leopold it was a "Fugue". According to him Wolfgang composed a Quareite "in the form of Fugue". Though that too is contradicted by what we know from works such as the Quareite K.86, and the Kyrie K.89 (which I shall discuss below) since both are very simple compositions, with only fragments of imitation in octaves or in unison. If Leopold and a string of subsequent biographers used the term "Fugue", it was only because "Fugue" and "imitation" are words that were interchangeable in their everyday language. Leopold was building castles in the sand - as usual.

Leopold says the Marquis tested Wolfgang in counterpoint. Which kind of counterpoint? The Stabat Mater of Ligniville consisted of 30 pieces only in Canon, and is itself the result of alterations, corrections and assistance from Padre Martini, who certainly did not help Ligniville but Campion at the time of their quarrel. And what Martini thought of Ligniville we may deduce from the letters of commendation, written to the Franciscan by the Marquis. What Martini thought of the Marquis, we can see, when Martini, in giving the verdict of the Filarmonic for his entrance said that Ligniville was nothing but a good follower, having rediscovered a generally forgotten music, in Canons, especially cultivated by masters of the fifteenth century. He did so assuming that Ligniville was the true author of the music, but Martini coldly writes "Your excellence with the Stabat Mater, which is a canon of the most ingenious, is the study in this century of a genre of music that was somehow forgotten and which had been practiced by the most celebrated masters of the past."

The Canon Stabat Mater of Mozart, since it was only copied from Ligniville, was not surprisingly forgotten throughout the early nineteenth century and is known only for its name. It was never performed. Probably not loved. It has however recently been revived by receiving its world premiere, but is met when heard with a certain coldness (and that's all one can say about it) -

The Stabat by Ligniville received modern performance for the Ravenna Festival in 2006. The newspaper La Repubblica thoughtfully titled the evening "Riddles and copying. The genius child at the court of Lorraine. "Critic Gregorio Moppi continued his review: "Ligniville is the highlight musician of tonight's concert in the cathedral for the exhibition of "O flos colende" (21.15, free entrance), the first modern performance of his monumental Stabat Mater for three voices in canon (transcribed for the occasion by musicologist Gabriele Giacomelli) page of pure mathematical knowledge [?] that Mozart studied with interest, even copying entire sections.<sup>28</sup>

Another article on the same concert held on Friday, July 7, 2006 at the Basilica of San Vitale, concentrated on Ligniville: which was published with the awkward question of Who was "the strongest contrapuntist all of Italy" in the eighteenth century? ". A question asked by Oliviero Ponte di Pino . "What a question! For sure Pierre-Eugène-François, Marquis and Prince of Conca Ligniville! Who says so? None other than Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart the fourteen years old boy who, in 1770, met his colleague [!], as he was also a member of the Academy Filarmonic in Bologna, at the court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany Leopold of Habsburg-Lorraine».<sup>29</sup>

In fact, Ligniville's Stabat is no masterpiece, being too artificial and strangely disconnected from its text. Starting with the fact the shape of its canon, because of its nature, is not really appropriate for the text. Since the text written below changes and continues to repeat the same notes on different syllables. A 'Ligniville Style' canon may well be sung using sacred text, as a profane joke, or may use words of Metastasio, or even obscene texts (as W.A. Mozart would do in the coming years). But the musical value of such work low.

From all these perspectives there are no grounds for saying Ligniville was the 'strongest expert of counterpoint in Italy'. Such a statement (made by Leopold) is an invention. Nor did Corilla write that poem for Mozart. Wolfgang's own 'Stabat Mater' was merely copied. And we can see Wolfgang Mozart played at a Florence without any involvement by the violinist Nardini.

In the following section of this chapter I will discuss the influence of the Marquis of Ligniville on the career of W.A. Mozart. Focusing in particular on an analysis of the 'Mozart' Kyrie KV89.

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<sup>28</sup> Giornale "La Repubblica", 06 luglio 2006, p. 16 sezione: FIRENZE.

<sup>29</sup> Articolo di presentazione di Ravenna Festival 2006 (riportato su [www.trax.it/olivieropdp/mostrascheda.asp?num=336](http://www.trax.it/olivieropdp/mostrascheda.asp?num=336)).