

Wolfgang Amadé

# Mozart

original text in Italian

by Luca Bianchini

[www.italianopera.org/mozart.html](http://www.italianopera.org/mozart.html)

free translation

by Robert Newman

Luca Bianchini, *Wolfgang Amadé Mozart*, italianOpera, Milano 2011.

[www.italianopera.org](http://www.italianopera.org)

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE GOLDEN SPUR

## THE TITLE OF KNIGHT

*«[...] Reverend Father', I began, 'I saw at the house of Abbé Momolo, that 'holy seducer of women', a young girl named Mary, whose confessor you are. I fell in love with her and offered her money to seduce her.... Here then, Reverend Father, is the sum of money for the good girl'. .... I was sitting at a table with Mengs when a Chamberlain of the Holy Father called. When he came in he asked M. Mengs if I lived there and on that gentleman pointing me out, he gave me from his holy master, the Cross of the Order of the Golden Spur, with a diploma, and a patent under the pontifical seals'».<sup>1</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> Giacomo Casanova, *The memoirs of Jacques Casanova de Seingalt*, Casanova Society, London 1922, vol.VII ch.8 p.181 segg.

The story of 14 year old W.A. Mozart transcribing from memory a sacred church work by Gregorio Allegri that was being performed at the Sistine Chapel during his visit to Rome in 1770 is part of musical folklore and has long been considered a standard part of Mozart biography. Our brief examination of his first tour of Italy would hardly be complete without examination of the facts related to this event. And, after this, details of the later presentation to Mozart by the papacy of the Order of the Golden Spur and its status within Rome at that time.

#### FIRST PART

#### THE THREE MISERERE

There are numerous volumes available on music related sources that are available should we try to reconstruct with accuracy the facts surrounding Mozart's Italian tour of 1770 . Including a series of related publications whose authors which have collected and quoted from documents of the period. The reader is invited to interpret these on their own, imagining how the story of that remarkable tour actually unfolded. Among these books and other publications which can assist in this process (not always exhaustively) may be included those by Otto Erich Deutsch, Eibl Anton, that of Cliff Eisen, the musical catalogue of Ludwig Ritter von Koechel, no less than 7 volumes of Mozart family letters collected by Wilhelm Bauer and by Otto Erich Deutsch and also numerous publications of the Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart "Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke" plus a detailed book by Alberto Basso on 'Mozart in Italy'. From which sources, having now been studied by me in some detail have been prepared the following list of dates for the first and second stay of the Mozarts in Rome during that same year of 1770. On Friday, the 6th of April 1770 Leopold and Wolfgang travelled by road from Florence headed for Rome. Where they resided from Wednesday 11th April to Tuesday, 8th May. Making a second visit between Tuesday, 26th June and Tuesday, 10th July. I will refer to these dates with a series of facts that are of relevance to provide a fairly accurate picture of events during those days, enabling readers to compare what Mozartean authors have repeatedly reported of them. This allowing readers to distinguish myths from facts. And will provide, below, information on the work in question, the 'Miserere' by Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652)<sup>2</sup>; In the second part of this chapter we will go more deeply into events relating to the Order of the Golden Spur awarded to the same W.A. Mozart during this same year.

---

<sup>2</sup> Details of the Miserere by Gregorio Allegri are given in the book of Anna Trombetta, Mozart e il Miserere di Allegri, italianOpera, Milano 2011.

## YEAR 1770

### Friday 6 April

On this day the Mozarts depart from Florence around noon headed in the direction of Rome. (Located approximately 320 kms away).

### Saturday 7 April

Departing from a short stay in the town of Siena, the Mozart's travel approximately another 50 kms and stay overnight at San Quirico d'Orcia (now in the province of Siena).

### Sunday 8 April

They resume their travels next reaching Acquadipente (now in the province of Viterbo).

### Monday 9 April

They now travel to Viterbo from Acquadipente, along the Lake of Bolsena. Their journey is said to be horrific, the landscape mostly uninhabited and with inns that are horrid and dirty with nothing to eat except here and there. Their meals, if they are lucky, being only eggs and broccoli.

### Tuesday 10 April

They then move from Viterbo, probably in the afternoon, to continue on their travel to Rome, which is still around 72 kms distant.

### Wednesday 11 April

Father and son finally arrive in Rome around noon or later, passing through Porta Flaminia, Piazza del Popolo<sup>3</sup> (fig.1).

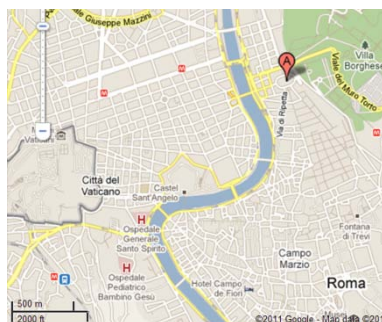
«Your letter of the 2nd and that of the 6, I believe, are answered by two letters from Bologna. In the meantime, you'll already be holding one of mine from Florence, and before that one sent from Rome, where I briefly described the weather and the gruelling journey, but I forgot to tell you we arrived at noon between thunder and lightings and a good hour from Rome the weather welcomed us with rumble of thunder and lightning, like great lords are greeted with the cannons, and accompanied us as far as we arrived in Rome. So

---

<sup>3</sup> This news is taken from 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.72.

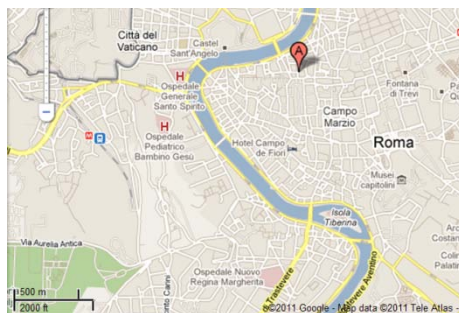
far, the weather was rainy, and today [Saturday, April 21, 1770] is the first day when we see one thing and another with ease».<sup>4</sup>

Francis Anthony Marcobruni, Abbot and Director of Post of Rome, appears to have learned only at the last minute of the imminent arrival of the Mozarts<sup>5</sup> since they will now need to stay with that family. Who can provide them only with a cramped room.



(fig.1)

Then, according to letters of the time, after unpacking their bags and having lunch, the Mozarts again travel, this starting about two hours after arrival at the above address, this time to meet friends at the Germanicus College that was located at the Square of Sant'Apollinare (fig.2) and also meeting young Albert von M $\ddot{u}$ lk, son of Chancellor Franz Felix von M $\ddot{u}$ lk of Salzburg. With this same Albert they take time to converse and to schedule a proposed concert during their stay.



(fig.2)

They then head for the Basilica of St. Peter and the Sistine Chapel with their stated intention of listening to a performance of the Miserere during Matins. On their way back, however, they are

<sup>4</sup> Letter to his wife sent from Rome on the 21st of April 1770: «[...] aber zu melden vergessen habe, daß wir unter Blitz und Donner um Mittagszeit angelandet sind, und das Wetter eine gute Stunde ausser Rom so, wie man die grossen Herrn mit abfeuerung des schweren Geschützes, uns mit Krachen und Blitzen empfangen, und nach Rom begleitet hat»

<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.601.

surprised by a tremendous downpour. They go to their room, which has no harpsichord<sup>6</sup>, and only a bed<sup>7</sup>, and thus end five days of coach travel and several walks of several kilometres.

#### Thursday 12 April

On this date the Mozarts attend a ceremony at St. Peter's at which the Pope washed feet. (Clement XIV distributed food to thirteen poor priests). At the soup kitchen the Mozarts pretend to be noblemen. The Swiss Guards allow them entry considering Leopold to be the tutor of a prince. They then meet Cardinal Lazzaro Opizio Pallavicini. Wolfgang approaches him and hands him a letter of recommendation from Count Gian Luca Pallavicini, his relative. The Mozarts then revisit the Sistine Chapel with the intention of once again hearing the Miserere. And after this is over they return home, once again experiencing a down pour. Here the problems begin. The Miserere performed on that Thursday of 1770 was not one composed by Georgio Allegri, but one by a different composer, Tomaso Bai (1650-1714) ! In fact, at this time in the 18th century it was customary that Gregorio Allegri's Miserere was only sung on the afternoon of Holy Wednesday, while that of Tomaso Bai was given on the next day, Holy Thursday.<sup>8</sup>

#### Friday 13 April

[...]

#### Saturday 14 Aprile

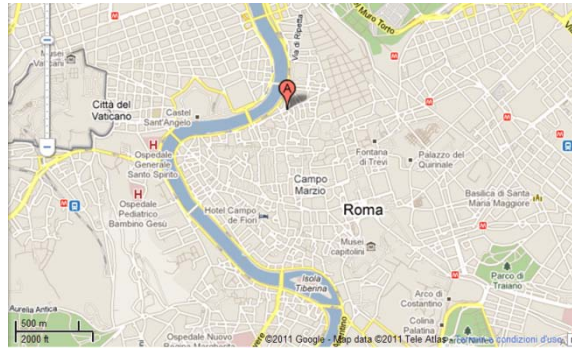
Abbe Francesco Antonio (probably under instruction from Cardinal Pallavicini) helps the Mozarts to move to a bigger apartment located on the second floor of the Scatizzi Palace, (today in Nicosia Square) (fig.3).

---

<sup>6</sup> In the letter of 21 April 1770 Leopold said since that day they have a harpsichord.

<sup>7</sup> Said by Wolfgang in the Postscript to the letter of 14th April 1770.

<sup>8</sup> Matins of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Matins Matins of Holy Saturday, which would have taken place in the early hours of the day, for practical reasons were advanced to the previous day, began at about 17 and made up the night office, or Darkness, "it is called the morning of darkness, or office at night, because on the night of this day [on the Holy Wednesday], and in the two following days the early Christians used to pray their officium in the churches. However, in some places this officium was assigned to the eighth hour in the night, in others to midnight, or to all that space of time in which would be possible to conclude all the ceremonies. But now the Church, to prevent disorders that could be, or had already introduced into the nightly vigils for the behavior of Christians that had changed, it was decided that the days to recite the offices on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, remained in the afternoon, despite the name of darkness, because although we celebrate them in the day, the fact is they end when the lights are off, so they still are considered as the mourning Uffici, and they actually represent the funeral of the Redeemer» (Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica*, Tipografia Emiliana, Venezia 1812, pp.283 e 284).



(fig.3)

On this day also Leopold obtains a copy of a Miserere. In a long letter of 14th Leopold writes to his wife they already have it and that Mozart has transcribed it. Wolfgang is also said to have composed a contradance [lost?].<sup>9</sup>

[...]

**Tuesday 8 May**

The Mozarts leave Rome around 10am headed for Naples.

[...]

There are in fact only two family letters in which reference is made to the Miserere.

The first is dated 14th April 1770, sent from Rome:

«LEOPOLD MOZART ALLA MOGLIE, SALISBURGO / Roma, addì 14 aprile 1770 / We arrived here safely at midday on the 11th. I could more easily have been persuaded to return to Salz. than come to Rome as we spent 5 five days travelling from Florence to Rome in the most appalling rain and cold wind. In Rome itself I heard that it's been raining constantly for the last 4 months, and we certainly got a taste of this when we went to the Sistine Chapel to hear the Miserere during Mass on the Wednesday and Thursday, setting off on both occasions in fine weather, only to be caught in such a terrible downpour on our way home that our coats have never been as wet as they were on that occasion. But I won't bore you with a long description of our appalling journey here. Imagine only a largely uncultivated country and the most appalling inns, filth everywhere, nothing to eat except - if we were lucky - the occasional meal of eggs and broccoli: and sometimes they even made a fuss about giving us eggs on fast days. Fortunately we got a decent supper and slept well in Viterbo. While there we saw St Rosa of Viterbo - she can be seen in a perfectly preserved state. From the former we took away an ague powder and some relics as a souvenir, from the latter a belt. After arriving here on the 11th, we went to St Peter's after lunch and then to Mass, on the 12th we attended the

---

<sup>9</sup> This is not, as some believe, a work for 2 oboes, 2 horns and strings K.123 (K<sub>6</sub> 73g), because that manuscript has the date 1771 - a year later.

foot washing and found ourselves very close to the pope while he was serving the poor at table, as we were standing beside him at the top of the table. This is all the more surprising in that we had to pass through two doors patrolled by Swiss Guards in armour and force our way through several 100 people - and remember that as yet we'd made no acquaintances. But our fine clothes, the German language and my usual freedom in telling my servant to speak to the Swiss Guards in German and make way for us helped us through everywhere. They thought that Wolfg. was a German gentleman, others even took him for a prince, and our servant let them believe this; I was taken for his tutor. And so we made our way to the cardinals' table. There it chanced that Wolfg. ended up between two cardinals, one of whom was Cardinal Pallavicini. The latter beckoned to Wolfg., saying: Would you be good enough to tell me in confidence who you are? Wolfg. told him everything. The cardinal replied with the greatest surprise and said: Oh, so you're the famous boy about whom so many things have been written to me. To this, Wolfg. asked: Aren't you Cardinal Pallavicini? - - The cardinal answered: Yes, I am, why? - - So Wolfg. told him that we'd got letters for His Eminence and were going to pay him our respects. The cardinal was very pleased by this and said that Wolfg. spoke very good Italian, saying among other things: ik kann auch ein benig deutsch spreken etc. etc. As we were leaving, Wolfg. kissed his hand, and the cardinal removed his biretta and bowed very politely. You'll often have heard of the famous Miserere in Rome, which is held in such high regard that the chapel musicians are forbidden on pain of excommunication to remove even a single part from the chapel, still less to copy it out or to give it to anyone else. But we already have it. Wolfg. has already written it down, and we'd have sent it to Salzb. with this letter except that it would require our presence to perform it; the manner of its performance must play a greater role than the work itself, and so we'll bring it home with us, and as it's one of Rome's secrets, we don't want it to fall into the wrong hands, ut non incurremus mediate vel immediate in Censuram Ecclesiae. We've already explored St Peter's, and I've no doubt that none of the local sights will be overlooked. Tomorrow God willing we'll see His Holiness preach. You simply can't imagine how arrogant the local clergy are. Any abbate who has even so much as the slightest contact with a cardinal thinks himself as good as the cardinal himself. And whenever he's on papal business, every cardinal drives with a corteggio of 3 or 4 carriages, each of them crammed full of chaplains, secretaries and valets, each taking up as much space as he can, and so I'm already looking forward to tomorrow when I shall walk straight past all these proud gentlemen and leave them guessing who we are, as we've not yet presented ourselves anywhere on account of the foot-washing ceremony. On Monday we'll make a start delivering our 20 letters of recommendation. Pleased though I am that the two of you didn't come with us on this trip, I'm sorry that you're not able to see all the towns and cities of Italy, but especially Rome. It's unnecessary, indeed impossible, to describe it in only a few words. Once again I advise you to read Kaysler's account of his travels. I wrote to you from Bologna and Florence. 2 hours after our arrival we called at the German College and found Herr von Molk in excellent health, as were all our other acquaintances there. Out of regard for Herr von Molk I intend to get Wolfg. to perform for the whole college as they'd very much like to hear him. Abbate Marcobruni has already sorted out our lodgings in a private house: but there's only one room here and we need 2 to receive people who call on us, so we'll be moving this evening to more spacious accommodation. Today and yesterday I've been something of an invalid as I took 3 digestive powders, but I now feel well again thank God Wolfg. also feels well and is sending you a contredanse. [...]The season is fast approaching that causes me the greatest anxiety



as it will soon be getting hot; but everyone tells me that Naples has much better air and that it's far healthier than Rome. [...] May God keep you, too, in good health. Remember us to all our good friends, I am your old Mzt. Wolfg. and I kiss you and Nannerl 1000 times. / MOZART'S POSTSCRIPT / Praise and thanks be to God, I and my wretched pen are well, and I kiss Mama and Nannerl a thousand or 1000 times. I only wish my sister were in Rome, she'd certainly like the city, as St Peter's is regular, and many other things in Rome are regular too. The most beautiful flowers are just being carried past, Papa has just this moment told me so. I'm a fool, as everyone knows. Oh, I'm having a hard time, there's only one bed in our lodgings, Mama can easily imagine that I get no sleep with Papa, I'm looking forward to our new rooms: I've just drawn a picture of St Peter with his keys, St Paul with his sword and St Luke with my sister etc. etc., I had the honour of kissing St Peter's foot in St Peter's, and as I'm unfortunate enough to be so small, it was necessary for me, that same old fool Wolfgang Mozart, to be lifted up».

Rhetorical details about the threat of excommunication and a few mentions of the Miserere help us to understand that at least part of this letter was addressed to His Grace the Prince of Salzburg. But it is blatantly stated in the second letter (sent by Leopold from Naples) on May 19th, 1770:

«LEOPOLD MOZART ALLA MOGLIE, SALISBURGO / À Madame / Madame Marie Anne / Mozart / à / Salzburg / Napoli 19 Maggio 1770. / You'll have received my last letter from Rome by now - the one dated 2 May. I'm sorry that I haven't been able to write again till now - you must have been very anxious in the meantime. [...] When we read the article about the Miserere, we couldn't help laughing out loud. There's not the slightest cause for worry. People are making far more of it elsewhere. The whole of Rome knows about it; and even the pope knows that Wolfg. wrote down the Miserere. There's absolutely nothing to be afraid of: quite the opposite, it's done him great credit, as you'll shortly be hearing. **You must make absolutely certain that everyone reads the letter and make sure that His Grace hears about it.** [...] NOTE ENCLOSED BY MOZART TO HIS SISTER / My dear sister, I really don't know how to reply to your letter as you wrote almost nothing. I'll send you Sgr Haiden's minuets when I have more time. But dflolo vlrstlul fcu nfcut, dh umot afr gloturflbln ofl wmln glotsumiol Alnhlt, umot dh ohl Itwm glotsueln, sdlr wfl. Please write soon, and write every post-day. Thanks for sending me the maths tables, and if ever you want a headache, please send me more of the same. Forgive me for writing so badly, but the reason is that I too have a slight headache. I really like the twelfth minuet by Heiden that you send me, and you've written a wonderful bass for it, without the slightest mistake. I'd like you to try your hand at such things more often»

The myths surrounding Wolfgang and the Allegri Miserere in Rome started to obtain literary form only with the compiling of the 'Nekrolog' by Schlichtegroll from around 1792 onwards. By which time the story had (as all myths do) to be expanded -:

«Father and son came to Rome during Holy Week. On Wednesday afternoon, they immediately went to the Sistine Chapel to hear the famous Miserere. Since, according to a story that is well known, it is prohibited for musicians of the pope to copy, under pain of excommunication (but) Wolfgang Mozart planned to listen to it carefully and write it down once he was back home. He did so, and the day of Good Friday [13 April], when

they again sang this Miserere, Mozart hid the manuscript in a hat, which allowed him to make some corrections. The news of this enterprise soon spread to the whole Rome and caused an uproar. He had to sing the Miserere in an academy with the harpsichord accompaniment. The castrato Cristofori, who had sung at the Sistine Chapel, was there, and his amazement caused to Mozart a triumph».<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Friedrich von Schlichtegroll, Mozart, EDT, Torino 1990, p.96.

Let's now examine the work of Schlichtegroll adding critical comments:

«FATHER AND SON CAME TO ROME DURING HOLY WEEK. ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, IMMEDIATELY WENT TO THE SISTINE CHAPEL TO HEAR THE FAMOUS MISERERE».

Father and son arrived in Rome around noon on that day, had lunch, then headed to the Germanicus College, where they arrived over two hours later. From there they supposedly headed to the Sistine Chapel, with the stated intention of listening to the Miserere. The singing of that Office on that day was scheduled for 17.00 hrs.

«Matutino of Holy Wednesday, or "uffizi of darkness, and other news about the way the last paps celebrate the holy week. Mattutino is sung in the chapel of the palace inhabited by the Pope. The carriage will be a longitudinal axis carriage. All robes, hoods, and anything are purple, and the Pope's miter is with a silver blade, and the cope is with red satin, with histological purple, if he would not take his hood red serge, with his cap, his robe is supported by two senior assistants to the bishops throne. [...] When the first master of ceremonies hinted that the Pope had finished saying the Patre noster in secret, it begins the singing of the famous Miserere for two choirs of four voices of Gregorio Allegri, who kidnaps the soul of the listeners for its sweet and expressive harmony, and also moves to compunction and devotion».<sup>11</sup>

« SINCE, ACCORDING TO A STORY WELL KNOWN, IT IS PROHIBITED FOR THE MUSICIANS OF THE POPE TO COPY, UNDER PAIN OF EXCOMMUNICATION»

It isn't a well known story. Indeed. A musician of the Pope, Sir Santarelli Maestro di Cappella of His Holiness made a copy for Burney that year 1770.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore –

«the notion that copying the piece was forbidden on pain of excommunication was an urban myth».<sup>13</sup>

So the threat of excommunication was only invented. Stories of that kind had already circulated in London as early as 1734. When in that same year the Royal Society organized a choral concert of the famous Miserere by Allegri in the Crown Tavern. To advertise it, they insisted (but without providing any proofs) that it was a sacred composition, 'forbidden from being copied out or communicated to anyone under pain of excommunication, being reserved solely for the use of his chapel, was sung, having been brought to us by the Earl of Abercorn, whose brother contrived to obtain it'. (From the diary of the Earl of Egmont). As the Duke of Egmont was not excommunicated

---

<sup>11</sup> Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica*, Tipografia Emiliana, Venezia 1858, pp.284 e 285.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Burney, *Viaggio Musicale in Italia*, UTET, Torino 1979, p.273.

<sup>13</sup> Neal Zaslaw, article on the Miserere by Allegri, in [http://www.mozartforum.com/VB\\_forum/archive/index.php?t-3212.html](http://www.mozartforum.com/VB_forum/archive/index.php?t-3212.html).

for staging this concert, that surely speaks for itself. And when in April 1743 (9 years later), the same work was performed once again in London, of course, no one referred to any story of excommunication. The fact is Allegri's Miserere was popular everywhere across Europe and it is (and always was) a nonsense to speak of prohibiting it from being copied under threat of excommunication. If anything what was complained about was the quality of its performances. "The Miserere" they said, "was the first work ever to be performed here by three very good voices, but forty who were really bad." Furthermore the Mozarts in 1770 had already access to these same British sources during their stay in London in 1765 (see the chapter on Symphony K.16). They could also see it if they wished a copy of the Miserere that had been made by and was still held by Padre Martini in Bologna. The very Franciscan who had also let Burney copy it. There were in fact many copies of Allegri's Miserere in music archives in Vienna, Germany and Portugal. Burney obtained access to it without difficulty and he did so in Rome also ! He even asked a papal singer for the score of a Miserere, who gave it to him. He was even able to compare this work, the Allegri Miserere with other copies, which were asked of many different people.<sup>14</sup>

«WOLFGANG MOZART PLANNED TO LISTEN TO IT CAREFULLY AND WRITE IT DOWN ONCE HE IS BACK HOME».

So, according to the letter of April 14th, Leopold and Wolfgang went to St. Peter's to hear a Miserere. Notice they do not say which Miserere they planned to hear and nor do they refer to having heard it. They do not in any way describe its performance or refer to that experience in any way. Which is surely bizarre. The peculiarity of this work in performance, which is a source of profound admiration for all musical people, cannot fail to have left some impression on Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart if they had really intended to hear and copy it. But they claim to have gone there specifically to hear it ! Any traveller, and especially one who is a musician, would carefully have noted its performance in his travel diary and certainly in his letters. But Leopold does not write anything, instead dwelling only on the events of Holy Thursday ! Providing particulars of those separate events. Strongly indicating that he and Wolfgang were simply unable to hear the Miserere on that Wednesday. Do they arrive too late ? Their stated intention was to go to the Sistine Chapel to hear the Miserere. We have already established that. But there is the problem that the Matins of Holy Wednesday was not usually held in the Sistine Chapel at that period (as it

---

<sup>14</sup> Charles Burney, *Viaggio Musicale in Italia*, UTET, Torino 1979, p.275.

was in the later days of Schlichtegroll<sup>15</sup>). It was held in the Pauline Chapel ! Which is a smaller, dark chapel and presumably suited to imitate the darkness of the tomb of Christ. Being more discreet, this room was also made more inaccessible, being protected by iron gates. (All the Roman holy places, at this time were protected by barriers. It was even necessary to apply for accreditation to attend any ceremony, and even more so to participate in the Office of darkness, at which all visitors wanted to participate. A few people could see the Pope and the bishops through iron gratings, listening quietly to music by Gregorio Allegri. Late arrivals or those who were not registered in advance, would therefore be on the sidelines, forced to see and hear almost nothing. In fact, surviving testimony of these events comes from an English aristocrat woman who speaks of the great crowd that attended the function on that precise day . She was allowed to participate in the Matins of Holy Wednesday, celebrated by Pope Clement XIV in the following year (1771). At which other people were removed by the guards, because only a group of privileged people could attend and listen to this event as it occurred in the Pauline hall (fig.XXX).



(fig.XXX)

Her eyewitness report comes from a year later, 1771, and she describes the emotional ceremony and performance of the Miserere by Allegri, which took place (as already said) in the Cappella Paolina, which communicates with the Sistine Chapel through the Sala Regia. Whose ceiling had been blackened for several similar ceremonies performed in the days of Holy Week during previous years: *«Miserere D'Allegri concludes this Function, and is performed by vocal musicians only. I own I never heard music before. I supposed I had formed some idea of the powers and effects of the human voice; but had I been conveyed blindfold into this Chapel, and no intimation given me whence the sounds proceeded, I should have believed myself in Paradise. How then shall I attempt conveying to your mind the slightest idea of this celestial melody by any description? I must say no more, than that I have heard enough to make me dissatisfied with the finest opera*

---

<sup>15</sup> *Diario di Roma, Cracas, Roma 1793, p.13: «After the meal in the same Vatican palace in the Sistine Chapel was sung the Mattutino of the Darkness with the intervention of the Sacred Assembly, and as usually of the Prelates of all leaders of the Religions and all other people».*

*and the most perfect performers that are to be found out of the chapel of St. Paulina. This chapel appears smaller than it really is, probably from the justness of its proportions. The cieling is vaulted and painted in fresco, as are the walls. The altar-piece and cieling by Michael Angelo: but the smoke of the lamps has so blackened his paintings, that the fine strokes of this great matter are no longer discernible. Other painters have done the rest; who are equal sharers in the general obscurity. The tabernacle is of rock crystal; the columns of the altar of fine porphyry; they were taken from the temple of Romulus. I was quite vexed when the charming vocal concert ended, and quitted this Function with regret».*

The Paolina chapel, as the Englishwoman says, is a wonderful room, richly painted and decorated, its altar adorned by two columns of porphyry. Two children are carved in bas-relief at the extremities of those columns. These carvings were found in the ancient temple of Romulus and were brought there. The ceiling was painted instead by Federico Zuccari, and it was already very smoky. The frescoes are the work of Michelangelo, the tabernacle of rock crystal.<sup>16</sup>

#### CAPPELLA PAOLINA.

**E** Ra qui la Cappella di Niccolò V , tutta dipinta dal B. F. Giovanni Angelico da Fiefole Domenicano . Paolo III fe' coftituir quefta da Antonio Sangallo , e vi pose un Tabernacolo , gettato in bronzo da Girolamo Ferrarefe , che poi ne fu tolto , e foftituitavi una macchina di Cristalli , con fogliami , e cartelle dorate . Le Statue negli angoli fono di Prospero Bresciano . La Crocififfione di S. Pietro , e la Converfione di S. Paolo nelle mura laterali , fono del gran Michel'angiolo Buonarroti ; le altre Iftorie di Lorenzo Sabbatini , detto Lorenzino da Bologna . La Volta , e i Fregi fono lavoro di Federico Zuccheri , di cui è anche la caduta di Simon Mago .

Ornano l'Altare due colonne di porfido , nelle quali fono fcolti-  
piti verfo l'eftremità due Fanciulli a bafforilievo , e fi legge , che  
fieno ftate ritrovate nel Tempio di Romolo .

(fig.XXX)

But Leopold and Wolfgang are amazingly silent on the event they had supposedly gone to witness ! They say nothing of any musical achievement by Wolfgang in their letter of April 14. And now we see the Office of Matins was held in Paolina Chapel. Even if it had been at the Sistine Chapel that would also be for a select few people. A few hundred had queued to enter but they had to be content to follow the scene from the sidelines. And its celebration in the Pauline Chapel would certainly have taken away the breath of anyone actually present there. Leopold was not impressed, it seems, nor Wolfgang. So in all likelihood they never saw or heard anything on that date - if they actually got there. Nor does Leopold say that on the 11th of April Wolfgang went

<sup>16</sup> Ridolfino Venuti, *Accurata e succinta descrizione topografica e istorica di Roma moderna*, Barbiellini. Roma 1766, vol.II p.490.

home quite late or had transcribed the Miserere from memory. That too is more fiction. He reported only they went to St. Peter's during Matins between 11 and 12 with an intention to hear a Miserere. Far more probably they returned to the Sistine Chapel on Thursday, April the 12th, to hear a Miserere, which they had obviously failed to hear on the 11th. But on that day, the Wednesday they were not accredited. And it was only on Monday, 16th when Leopold began to distribute some of his letters of recommendation. So that virtually nobody knew the Mozarts. They started to become familiar with the Swiss Guards only on Thursday the 12th. As we have seen. And when Leopold is telling us about the day of Holy Thursday, he seems to be describing his first visit to the Vatican Basilica.<sup>17</sup> Even the time available for the Mozarts on that Wednesday was very short. In short, if Mozart ever heard a Miserere in Rome it would have been on Holy Thursday and not one by Allegri, but one by Bai. (Tommaso Bai was then as celebrated as Gregorio Allegri). The fact that today the former is more famous is primarily the result of his posthumous association of it with Mozart.

«The Matutin of Holy Thursday do not differ from that of the previous day. Adami says, according to his Osservazioni etc., p.41 – that the first Lamentatio in four voices is by Palestrina, in which there is a Bass voice that sings Jerusalem, and that the Master of the Vatican singers choose a beautiful Miserere between that by Alessandro Scarlatti for two choirs, and that by Felice Anerio also for two choirs. But Cancellieri adds that it is not less common that the two choirs sing the harmonious Miserere by Thomas Bai. Today it is possible to sing the famous Miserere by d. Joseph Bainsi. They did the same as in the morning of the holy Wednesday, and the Pope, if involved, use the red dress with a mitra; otherwise he usually goes to assist privately in the choir».<sup>18</sup>

«HE DID SO, AND THE DAY OF GOOD FRIDAY [13 APRIL], WHEN THEY SANG AGAIN THE MISERERE, MOZART HID THE MANUSCRIPT IN A HAT, WHICH ALLOWED HIM TO MAKE SOME CORRECTIONS».

But Leopold says nothing about the events of Friday, April 13. In fact he didn't tell us anything about the hat either. In his letter of April 14 we learn only on Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 when both father and son went to the Vatican with the intention of listening to a Miserere. As repeatedly said. Speaking of that Friday, Schlichtegroll refers to the Miserere of Holy Week as it was sung in his day, in 1792. But 20 years earlier we are told that in 1771 the 'ceremonies were not exceptional on Good Friday and Holy Saturday ceremonies are not extraordinary. We sing the Miserere, but in the evening the church of San Pietro is crowded with people walking and

---

<sup>17</sup> «[...] is the very first day we can visit the town and clearly see one thing and the other».

<sup>18</sup> Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica*, Tipografia Emiliana, Venezia 1812, p.304.

talking».<sup>19</sup> The choice of the Miserere and the place where it was performed was actually variable, according to the will of the Popes themselves. Clement XII had been elected in July 1730 and celebrated Holy Week in the Pauline Chapel of the Quirinale. Then he returned to the Vatican's Pauline Chapel, next to the Sistine Chapel. When Pius VI went to Vienna in February 1782, all functions of that time were performed in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. And Schlichtegroll based his posthumous text on that topical information,<sup>20</sup> assuming (wrongly) that all must have taken place in 1770 in the Sistine Chapel. The confusion just gets worse. Marianne von Berchtold (Nannerl) in her account written in the spring of 1792 tells the same things as Schlichtegroll: «On Wednesday afternoon they accordingly went at once [?] to the Sistine Chapel, to hear the famous Miserere. And as according to tradition [?] it was forbidden under ban of excommunication [?] to make a copy of it from the papal music itself ; the son undertook to hear it and copy it out. And so it came about that when he came home, he wrote it out, the next day going back again, holding his copy in his hat, to see whether he had got it right or not. But a different Miserere was sung. However, on Good Friday the first was repeated again. After he returned home he made a correction here and there - then it was ready».<sup>21</sup> Nannerl wasn't an eyewitness. Leopold was. He wrote that he had heard the Miserere on Wednesday and on Thursday. But she adds the detail of the story of Holy Thursday and Holy Friday, which Leopold himself had not reported ! Wolfgang according to her returned on Thursday to the Sistine Chapel to hear the Miserere, but it was not the right choice, since that was one by Thomas Bai, so he would have to return again, for the third time (!) on the afternoon of Good Friday. Though even this story fails. Nannerl is simply not reliable, first because she was not there, secondly because she writes that the vote to promote academic Wolfgang in Bologna "was made unanimously," with all white balls, which is simply not true (see the chapter on Antiphon K.86). Schlichtegroll now tries to reconcile the version of Nannerl, finding it too far-fetched even for him, with that of Leopold Mozart and tells us Wolfgang heard the Miserere on two days: on Holy Wednesday and Holy Friday, and not all three. That all those events occurred in the Sistine Chapel is itself probably not the case. In fact, the Sistine Chapel and Pauline Chapel were often confused in Roman diaries of the eighteenth century, as if they were a single chapel. It is not even certain the Miserere was performed in full, or was written.

---

<sup>19</sup> «But to return to the Functions; Good-friday and Eafter-eve there are no extraordinary ceremonies. The common Miserere is chanted; but in the evening the church of St. Peter is crowded with people, who walk about and converse».

<sup>20</sup> Probably from Leopold, Nannerl and Burney, who never assisted in a performance of an Ufficio of the Darkness in Vatican.

<sup>21</sup> Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart a documentary biography*, Simon & Schuster, Suffolk 1990, p.459.



Some popes, because they had problems to stay kneeling for a long time, ordered it to be shortened, or modified. And if it were a shortened Miserere? Or modified? Even if Wolfgang had arrived in time to hear it, what would he, could he, have written down ?

«THE NEWS OF THIS ENTERPRISE SOON SPREAD TO THE WHOLE ROME AND CAUSED AN UPROAR. ».

This comment was simply invented by German biographer. It is not confirmed by even a single source in Rome. And never has been.

« HE HAD TO SING THE MISERERE IN AN ACADEMY WITH THE HARPSICHORD ACCOMPANIMENT. THE CASTRATO CRISTOFORI, WHO HAD SUNG AT THE SISTINE CHAPEL, WAS THERE, AND HIS AMAZEMENT PROCURED TO MOZART A HIGH TRIUMPH».

The above statement is simply ridiculous. How could one person sing a piece that was divided by its composer in to two polyphonic choirs ? Only, it seems, if he is W.A. Mozart. Since there are many voices in this work, what melody will he choose, from time to time, to give hearers an idea of the complexity of a composition that was deliberately intended to be polyphonic? It is of course sheer nonsense. About the named castrato Cristofori no one knows anything. He never existed. It is yet another invention by Schlichtegroll. Some scholars have even tried to venture that he was a relative of [?] Bartolomeo Cristofori, the inventor of the piano. It is already unlikely that Wolfgang may have heard the Miserere on Wednesday or that he memorized it and transcribed it. So that on Wednesday, after five days of travel through wind and torrential rain, after finding their address, after lunch, after the afternoon appointment at the Germanic College and after wrangling to get a ticket for admittance to the Sistine, after hearing a Mass, and having visited the Sistine Chapel, then after a stroll a few kilometres ending with the fierce shower, it is most unlikely that Mozart transcribed Allegri's Miserere in a small room that had one bed as its furniture. And what would be the reason to write it if there were plenty of copies scattered everywhere, even in Rome or Florence ? Why not write down the Miserere by Thomas Bai, which was equally famous? About this bizarre adventure which surrounds the Miserere nobody would speak more in that year and for many more. It is however already worthy of yet another file of the amazing Mozart's young career. So, to repeat, Leopold mentions a Miserere in two letters, but does not specify whether it is one by Allegri, by Bai or someone else. A strange omission, is it not ? He says nothing also of a transcription made by his son from memory since copies of the Miserere were already circulating. Even letters of recommendation sent from Rome, or those sent to powerful noblemen remain silent if this feat had really been achieved. That enterprise has somehow been forgotten for the

simple reason that it never happened. Even when Mozart returned to Rome in July of that year Wolfgang does not speak of it in the postscript of the letter to his sister of April 14. Instead of writing down the Miserere from memory, he focuses on designs made of the Basilica di San Pietro, more suitable to his age: "I am a fool, this is known, oh, I have a pen, our accommodation is just a bed, the mother can easily imagine that because of my father I do not have a moment of rest, I welcome the idea of the new accommodation: I just drew St. Peter with the keys, St. Paul with the sword, and together, San Lucas with my sister etc.. etc.. I had the honor of kissing the foot of St. Peter to S. Peter, and, since I have the misfortune to be so short, it was necessary to raise me, the fool Wolfgang Mozart, up to him. " Charles Burney devotes ample space to Allegri's Miserere in his book entitled 'Musical Journey in Italy'. He actually met with Mozart in 1770, but Leopold did not say anything then about the Miserere either. In fact Burney met over several days in Rome with many people, and especially with papal singers. But none of them pointed to that amazing 'fact'. Burney himself quoted Mozart only four times in his writings, to say the boy had grown up, but was still a boy; which, as Leopold said, was admired. He also remarks later on his sister Nannerl, as an informant had told him of her in Salzburg. Saying she did not show extraordinary gifts, that she is not playing too well, and that Wolfgang, already sixteen, was a great harpsichordist [not a great composer], and that the music of Wolfgang was «more astonishing than excellent»<sup>22</sup> And further to all of these problems the Miserere could not possibly have been transcribed by the boy in Rome for other reasons - these strictly musical. Take for example the fact that the Köchel catalogue of Mozart's works are widely considered to be authoritative but none of its editions over its first century of existence list it from the first edition K1 of 1862 to the 6th edition of 1964 inclusive . There is not even a version of Allegri's Miserere contained in the category of works by other composers copied by Mozart (i.e. in the Anhang A). The catalogue reports numerous works such as the "Lauda Sion" by Michael Haydn (K. Anh A15), copied by Mozart, and now lost, or other copies of works by Eberlin, which were once believed to Mozart, but are now attributed to Leopold. In short, Köchel implicitly assume a copy of the Miserere made by young W.A. Mozart never existed.

One reason is that in the little room of Mozart there was no keyboard, as Leopold wrote [perhaps there wasn't also a desk] since Mozart was not able to write music without a keyboard. A letter of 8 years later (1778) from the mother of Wolfgang in Paris to Leopold in Salzburg says -

"Mozart is doing nothing since he does not have a keyboard'.

---

<sup>22</sup> Charles Burney, *Viaggio Musicale in Germania e nei Paesi Bassi*, UTET, Torino 1986, p.257.

12 days later she writes -

'The entrance to our room is too narrow and a keyboard cannot be taken inside, so Wolfgang is obliged to work at the home of Le Gros'.

And 3 years later in Vienna he writes to his father that he can do nothing without a keyboard and that things have to be done in a hurry -

'My room is almost ready but I have to rent a harpsichord, because there isn't one yet. I cannot move there because I have to write a lot. Then we cannot lose one more minute'.

**A second reason is that in the Matuttino of the Holy week Miserere wasn't sung as they were written.** In fact each performance varied with different embellishments being improvised by the professional singers of the Cappella Paolina.

(These additions were to the musical quality and uniqueness of a piece that had been written in late Renaissance style). It would not make sense to write down a piece perennially mutant, which changes from day to day, which was especially precious for its technical mastery in the improvising of these papal singers. These Masters knew how to improvise polyphony according to the principles of an art of which they jealously guarded the secrets. Not one of which has ever been revealed. When Leopold writes that the Miserere [by Allegri, presumably] had already been there and that his son made a copy he uses the German verb "aufschreiben" which means "write", "copy" and not "record in his mind" as Alberto Basso unfortunately translates in his book 'Mozart in Italy'. But in Leopold's letter it is specifically said that his son "transcribed from memory" the Miserere. That is simply a fiction, in retrospect, as is also the fable of the uniqueness of the piece, the excommunication, and of the manuscript being kept under his son's hat. These are further mythical tales. Wolfgang may have, if anything, copied it. But Leopold does not say how he could have done so, when, or where. And why copy it at all, when we understand from his machinations what Leopold had in mind? Under the pretext of copying the Miserere [Allegri?], this supposedly done under a alleged risk of excommunication, he wants to justify the later award to his son of the Golden Spur. Wolfgang would thus be equated to Gluck, who was also a Knight of the Golden Spur.

Nor could Leopold have imagined the Vatican title of the Order of the Golden Spur, (because of the corruption of the papal court), had actually become a worthless and well known fake at this very time. The object of derision and of much laughter in Rome. The wearer often called a "spur"

or "jackboot", "Boccalone", or "ass". It was considered more a sign of distinction not to have such a medal, than to wear it around the neck. As we see in Part II of this chapter, it was only a distinctive sign that owners gave to their valets.

But Leopold, ignorant of this fact, sincerely desired to have this honour for his son which would be important to use as a new title when he was back home (as he informs us in another letter). And Cardinal Pallavicini, to help Leopold Mozart, will make sure Wolfgang gets it, which was without any value whatsoever, in recognising the end of an enterprise, though one with no value outside of show business.

In the letter of Leopold on April 14, there is little or nothing about the story of Schlichtegroll that was invented. The father, to make Wolfgang look good in the eyes of the Prince of Salzburg (the actual recipient of the letters), first pretends to impersonate a prince, then pretends that he met by chance the Cardinal Pallavicini at the table for the ritual of the table of the poor priests (some commentators hath been moved to say that the Cardinal invited the fourteen boy to lunch!), and finally said that first was the cardinal who greets his son, "the famous child about which people have spoken so often" , "taking off the cap hat from his head" and extend a "courteous compliment." Wolfgang, according to the father, would have guessed, without having met him before, that he was the Cardinal Pallavicini. The prelate, according to Leopold, received the letter from the hands of Wolfgang on Thursday, April 12, but then they say in the letter of 14 that Mozart was still considered to be two strangers among the cardinals in Rome. They had not yet released any of their letters of recommendation, because of the ongoing functions: "You simply can't imagine how arrogant the local clergy are. Any abbate who has even so much as the slightest contact with a cardinal thinks himself as good as the cardinal himself. And whenever he's on papal business, every cardinal drives with a corteggio of 3 or 4 carriages, each of them crammed full of chaplains, secretaries and valets, each taking up as much space as he can, and so I'm already looking forward to tomorrow when I shall walk straight past all these proud gentlemen and leave them guessing who we are, as we've not yet presented ourselves anywhere on account of the foot-washing ceremony. On Monday we'll make a start delivering our 20 letters of recommendation».<sup>23</sup> If Leopold had so much respect for these Roman cardinals, he clearly had

---

<sup>23</sup> «Du kannst dir den Hochmuth der hiesigen abbate unmöglich vorstellen. ieder, der nur daß mindeste bey einem Cardinal zu thun hat glaubt sich so gut als der Cardinal selbst zu seyn. da nun jeder Cardinal mit 3 und 4 Wagen Corteggio zu den Päbstl: Verrichtungen fährt, deren ieder mit den Capellanis, Secretairen und Cammerdienern angefüllt ist, und die alle den meisten Platz einnemen, so freue ich mich schon auf morgen, durch alle diese Stoltze Herrn durchzugehen, und sie, wer wir sind, in der unwissenheit zu lassen, dann wir haben uns noch nirgends

none for their chaplains, secretaries and servants of these same cardinals. Leopold was indeed jealous and considered them a mass of arrogant men.

To understand the close connection of these two letters on the Miserere, just scroll down the postscript of the second letter. Since it contains a coded message. Since it provides clear evidence that Wolfgang and Nannerl were exchanging messages according to a predetermined coded language, which could not be read easily. Whose letters were made up of several pages, one addressed to the Prince and the others to family members: *«My dear sister, I really don't know how to reply to your letter as you wrote almost nothing. I'll send you Sgr Haiden's minuets when I have more time. But **dflolo vlrstlul fcu nfcut, dh umot afr glocurflbln ofl wmrln glotsumiol Alnhlt, umot dh ohl ltwm glotsueln, sdlr wfl.** Please write soon, and write every post-day. Thanks for sending me the maths tables, and if ever you want a headache, please send me more of the same. Forgive me for writing so badly, but the reason is that I too have a slight headache. I really like the twelfth minuet by Heiden that you send me, and you've written a wonderful bass for it, without the slightest mistake. I'd like you to try your hand at such things more»*. Some of Mozart's biographers have taken this text to prove Nannerl was good in composition, and that Wolfgang had also praised her, and it was a pity she had not continued that way, perhaps because of the narrow views of his father etc. Nannerl, according to Mozart, had just composed some nice bass for the minuets of Haydn. But if you have the key to decipher the code: **h=u, u=h, f=i, l=e, e=l, o=s, s=o, m=a, a=m** I can read also the riddle message and everything changes as a direct result: **dieses verstehe ich nicht, du hast mir geschrieben sie waren gestohaise Menuet, hast du sue etwa gestohlen, oder wie.**

**«dieses verstehe ich nicht, du hast mir geschrieben sie wären gestohlen Menuet, hast du sü [sie] etwa gestohaise [gestohlen], oder wie» («That I don't understand, you told me that Minuets were stolen - did you steal them, or what?») .**

Which startling things make us wonder about the minuets of Nannerl's surviving notebook. Are they stolen too ? (Of these I'll devote a separate chapter at a future time). So how could those things be true Nannerl was providing many years later to Schlichtegroll?

---

presentiert, weil itzt die Functiones sind. am Montage werden wir anfangen unsere 20 Recomendationsschreiben abzugeben».

Leopold's own version of the Miserere story, intended to be read by the Prince of Salzburg in 1770, was later adapted and further mutated in Nissen's biography, (he being the second husband of Constanze Mozart). Since he, inter alia, changed some punctuation to adapt the facts. In the tampered version of these letters of Leopold, Wolfgang appears to have only heard the Miserere at the Matins of 11 April, namely that of Allegri. He has not heard the Miserere of April 12, that of Thomas Bai.

And here is the version of Nissen:

«The day of our arrival we have already gone to the Sistine Chapel to hear the Miserere of Matins. On The 12 of April there were functions [...]»<sup>24</sup>Nissen also says Mozart went straight to the Matins of Wednesday to listen to Allegri's Miserere. Leopold himself wrote that on Wednesday they went there with the intention to hear the Miserere and had returned on Thursday to listen to it again.

And here is the original version by Leopold: « In Rome itself I heard that it`s been raining constantly for the last 4 months, and we certainly got a taste of this when we went to the Sistine Chapel to hear the Miserere during Mass on the Wednesday and Thursday».

Nissen after the letter of Leopold Mozart's postscript adds: «I am, thank God, healthy and kiss his hand to his mother, as well as my sister's cheek, nose, mouth, neck, and my poor pen»<sup>25</sup>, However, the original reads: "I am, thank God, healthy and kiss the hands of my mother, as well as my sister's cheek, nose, mouth, neck, and my bad pen and ass if it is clean»<sup>26</sup>.

Nissen also added to the postscript of Mozart the following text (taken from Schilchtegroll, and used as a guide for Nannerl), but, having inserted it this passage between the letters of Leopold it appears to have been written by Leopold Mozart himself and has thus deliberately misled many scholars ever since, who assume it to be a biographical and documentary fact. Further building, of course, on the myth of Mozart and the Miserere:

«Given the fact that Wolfgang had transcribed the Miserere at home, after listening carefully, because it was repeated on Good Friday, he took the music into his hat to make some corrections. The news of this feat soon spread to Rome, and it attracted general attention. There was the occasion of academy at which Mozart had

---

<sup>24</sup> «Am Tage unserer Ankunft gingen wir schon nach St. Peter in die Capella Sixti, um das Miserere in der Mette zu hören. Am 12ten haben wir die Functiones [...]».

<sup>25</sup> «Ich bin Gott Lob und Dank gesund, und küsse der Mama die Hand, wie auch meiner Schwester das Gesicht, Nase, Mund, Hals, und meine schlechte Feder».

<sup>26</sup> «Ich bin Gott lob und danck gesund, und küsse der mama die hand wie auch meiner schwester das gesicht, nasen, mund, hals, und meine schlechte feder, und arsch wen er sauber ist. Wolgango [sic] Mozart: Rom: 1770».

to perform this transcription. The castrato Cristofori [this character having been invented], who had performed it in the Sistine Chapel, was there, and with his astonishment brought the triumph of Mozart to its height. You have only to think what effort it takes to keep in mind a simple melody! And this? What a grand choral piece! divided into a double chorus, full of imitations and repercussions, and ever-changing in the interweaving of voices! What a profound knowledge of musical phrases, of counterpoint! What a prodigious memory! That ear! Able to hear the subtle changes! A theft of music, unique in the history of music!»<sup>27</sup>

Of course everything has been invented, is not confirmed by Leopold's letters (which are themselves loaded with half truths and inventions). So that the famous biographer Russian Alexander D. Ulybyshev in good faith believed this false letter reported by Nissen<sup>28</sup> and has confused it with an authentic one by Leopold. He comments that -

«Although this anecdote had been very long and very generally known, it struck me as being so little worthy of credit that, I frankly own, I frankly own, I looked upon it merely as a hyperbolical flourish in Mozart's biography, knowing how eager people are to exaggerate things which already have a touch of the wonderful. Von Nissen's work, however, has convinced me, since the fact is then mentioned in a letter from Leopold Mozart to his wife. Nevertheless, I did not give up my opinion easily, but, had I continued to doubt, I must have admitted one of two things: either that Leopold Mozart invented a vapid story simply to amuse himself and to mystify his wife, thereby incurring the risk of passing for a barefaced charlatan, in which case his letter were shown to others, and he was not in a position to establish its truth; or that Herr von Nissen, the compiler of this correspondence, was only an impostor. Neither of these suppositions is admissible, firstly, because they would convey an insult to the memory of two honourable men, and, secondly, because it is impossible to adduce any proofs in support of them».

This Russian biographer was right! And now we have evidence on this issue on which anyone can draw their own conclusions.

---

<sup>27</sup> «Da sich Wolfgang das Miserere nach genauem Anhören zu Hause aufgeschrieben hatte, hielt er später, als dieses Miserere am Charfreitage wieder gegeben wurde, sein Manuscript im Hute, um noch einiges berichtigen zu können. Dieses wurde in Rom bald bekannt und erregte allgemeines Aufsehen. Es gab Gelegenheit, dass Mozart sein nachgeschriebenes Stück in einer Akademie beym Claviere singen musste, wobey der Castrat Christofori, der es in der Kapelle gesungen hatte, zugegen war, und welcher durch sein Erstaunen Mozart's Triumph documentirte. Man darf nur bedenken, welche Anstrengung es kostet, eine einfache Melodie zu behalten, um hier in zweifelndes Erstaunen zu sinken! Dieses lange kritische Choralstück, und noch dazu zweychörig, voller Imitationen und Repercussionen, ewig wechselnd im Einsetzen und Verbinden der Stimmen unter einander – welche Kenntniss des reinen Satzes, des Contrapunctes, welch umfassendes Gedächtniss, welch ein Ohr, welchen allumfassenden Tonsinn erforderte dieser in seiner Art einzige musikalische Diebstahl!».

<sup>28</sup> Alexandre Oulibicheff (Александр Дмитриевич Улыбышев) "The life of Mozart" in "the Musical World", 1854, vol.XXXII p.83.