

0593.<sup>1</sup> MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

*de Vienne: / À / Monsieur / Monsieur Leopold Mozart / maitre de la  
Chapelle de S: A: R: / l'archeveque de et à / Salzbourg.*

*vienne ce 12 de May  
1781.*

*Mon très cher Père!*<sup>2</sup>

[5] You know from my last letter that I have asked the Prince<sup>3</sup> to release me – because he himself has enjoined me to do so. – For even in the first 2 *audiences* he said to me: <let him<sup>4</sup> clear off if he does not want to serve me properly; he will of course deny it, but for all that it is still as true as God is in heaven. – what wonder then if I have at last [10] |: entirely beside myself as a result of boy, villain, lad, wretched lout, and more such praiseworthy expressions from the mouth of a Prince :| taken the let him clear off as an official statement. – The next day, I gave Count *Arco*<sup>5</sup> a letter of petition to be handed to His High Princely Grace,<sup>6</sup> and again for the journey money consisting of 15 florins 40 kreuzers for the *diligence* and 2 ducats<sup>7</sup> for meals and accommodation. [15] – he accepted neither of the two from me, but assured me that I cannot *leave* his service at all without having your consent, my father. – That is your duty, he said to me; – I likewise assured him that I know my duty towards my father as well as, and perhaps better, than he does – and it would be a very sorry thing if I had to learn it from him first. [20] – Very well, said he, if he is happy with it, you can apply for your release, if not, you can also apply for it. – A fine *distinction!* – All the edifying things that the Archbishop said to me in the three *audiences*, especially in the last one – and the new things that this splendid man of God is telling me again, has such an outstanding effect on my body [25] that at the *opera* in the evening, in the middle of the first act, I had to go home to lie down. – For I became very hot – my whole body shook – and staggered around like a drunkard in the street – stayed at home the following day, which was yesterday, as well – but the whole morning in bed because I had taken *tamarind* water. –

[30] The esteemed Count also has the habit of writing very many fine things about me to his esteemed father, which you have probably already had to swallow; – there will of course have been some fable-like passages in it – but if one writes a *play* one must exaggerate somewhat if one wishes to receive applause and not remain so precisely faithful to the truth of the matter. [35] – and you must also give these gentlemen some credit for their readiness to serve. –

Without becoming over-diligent, for my health and my life are more important to me – |: it is distressing enough for me when I am forced to do it :|, I only wish to put down here the main accusation made to me about my service. [40] – I did not know that I was a valet, and that was my undoing – I should have strolled around for a couple of hours or so in the *antechamber* every morning – admittedly I was often told that I should show my face – but I

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<sup>1</sup> This letter contains passages in "family code"; these are marked with angle brackets < >.

<sup>2</sup> = "From Vienna: To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, Music Director to His Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg. / Vienna, this 12<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1781. / My very dear father!"

<sup>3</sup> "den fürsten". BD: Hieronymus Joseph Franz de Paula, Count [Graf] Colloredo (1732-1812), Prince-Archbishop [Fürst-Erbischof] of Salzburg from 1772. Employer of Leopold and, for two periods, of Wolfgang. Cf. No. 0263/9. At one point he dismissed both Leopold and Wolfgang, although Leopold was later reinstated. Cf. No. 0328.

<sup>4</sup> BD: Addressing persons of lower rank in the third person was customary.

<sup>5</sup> BD: Karl Joseph Felix, Count [Graf] Arco (1743-1830), son of Count [Graf] Georg Anton Felix Arco, held various offices in Salzburg, including High Master of the Kitchen [Oberstküchenmeister]. Played a role in the dismissal of Mozart as described in No. 0604/4 ff.

<sup>6</sup> "S: H: Gnaden" (= the Archbishop).

<sup>7</sup> BD: 1 ducat = 4.5 florins.

cannot remember that this was ever my service and I always came correctly only when the Archbishop sent for me. –

[45] Now I would like to confide to you, just briefly, my immutable decision, but in such a way that the whole world may hear it; – if I can get a salary of 2000 florins with the Archbishop of Salzburg and in some other place only 1000 – I do of course go to the other place. – For instead of the other 1000 florins I enjoy my health and am content in my heart. – I therefore hope, [50] for all the fatherly love that you have shown to me to such a great degree from my childhood on, and for which I cannot be grateful enough as long as I live |: but least of all in Salzburg :| that, if you wish to have your son healthy and content, – you will not write to me at all regarding this whole matter and bury it completely in the deepest oblivion – [55] for even one word of this would be enough to stir up gall in me again and in you yourself – yes, just admit it – you yourself.

Now I wish you the very best indeed and may you be glad that you do not have a cringing coward as a son; I kiss your hands 1000 times, and embrace my sister from my heart and am, sir, eternally your

[60]

most obedient son  
Wolfgang Amadè Mozart