

0385.¹ LEOPOLD MOZART TO HIS WIFE AND SON, MANNHEIM

À Monsieur / Monsieur Wolfgang Amadé / Mozart Maître de Musique / à / Mannheim / at The Palatine / Court²

Salzburg, 4th Decemb.

My dear wife and dear son!

1777.

[5] You say you have now had to wait³ for all those things about which you wrote to me: I have no objections to that; nor is there anything more to be said about everything that has occurred contrary to my views and contrary to our advantage, yes, to your obvious detriment on this journey, since it is past and cannot be changed now. – [10] But that you, my son, write⁴ that all speculations are superfluous and of no use, that, after all, we do not know what will happen; that is indeed thinking without any reflection regarding tomorrow – and certainly written down without due consideration. That everything will and must go according to God's will: no reasonable person, not to say Christian, will deny that. But to draw the conclusion that we should go our way acting blindly [15] and live carefree in all things, make no arrangements and should only wait and watch until something from up above flies down through the roof on its own? – – Does not God himself, and the reasonable world, demand from us that we consider the consequences and the scope of our actions with our human powers of reason and that we should take trouble to look ahead as much as possible? – – [20] If this, then, is necessary in all our actions, how much more necessary is it in the present circumstances on a journey? Or are you not in fact already reaping the consequences of this? – – Have you already done enough, for example, by taking the step <to see the Elector⁵ with the aim of staying for the winter>? – – Must you not – or should you not long ago have thought out the plan [25] which is to be adopted if this business should not work out? And should you not have given me information about this a long time ago and heard my opinion about it? – – Well, now – now you write⁶ – what? Whatever happens, when we leave here, we will travel in a straight line to Weilburg to the Princess of Nassau Weilburg⁷ |: for whom you wrote the sonatas⁸ in Holland :| etc: – [30] We will stay there as long as <we like the officers' meals> – What kind of anecdote is this? This is the language, like all of the preceding, of a <desperate man>, with which he wishes to comfort himself and me. – – Yes, a <hope> of 6 louis d'or⁹ comes on top of that, and all will be well again. – Now I ask if you know with certainty that the Princess is there, [35] for she cannot be there without a reason, since the residence of her husband,¹⁰ due to his position as a soldier, is in The Hague. Should you not have told me about this a long time ago? – Another question is: – whether you would not do better to go to Mainz?¹¹ –

¹ This letter contains numerous phrases in the family code, indicated by angle brackets: < >.

² = “To Monsieur Wolfgang Amadé Mozart, master of music in Mannheim / at The Palatine / Court”. [An inn, ‘Im Pfälzischen Hof’].

³ BD: Referring to No. 0381/79-81.

⁴ BD: Cf. No. 0379/33-34; cf. also lines 46, 56-57, 84-85.

⁵ “Churfürsten”. BD: Karl Theodor (1724-1799). Studied in Leyden and Leuven. From 1742 Elector [Kurfürst] of the Palatinate, where he encouraged the arts in Mannheim, and from 30th December, 1777, Elector of Bavaria.

⁶ BD: Cf. No. 0379/35 ff.

⁷ “Prinzessin”. BD: Cf. No. 0102/24 etc. Princess [Prinzessin] Caroline von Nassau-Weilburg (1743-1787), daughter of Wilhelm IV. Very musical, praised by Schubart (1739-1791). The piano/violin sonatas KV 26-31 were dedicated to her. Mozart visited her in 1778 with Fridolin and Aloisia Weber. Cf. No. 0102/24 etc.

⁸ BD: KV 26-31; cf. No. 0108/12, 20.

⁹ BD: 6 louis d'or = 66 florins. Cf. No. 0379/39.

¹⁰ BD: Prince [Fürst] Karl Christian von Nassau-Weilburg (1735-88, r. 1753-88). Cf. No. 0102/24 etc.

¹¹ Mainz.

and then from there via Frankfort¹² to Weilburg, then from Manheimm¹³ to Weilburg the route via Frankfort will cross your path? [40] And since you will not then always stay in Weilburg, the route to Maynz will again lead you via Frankfort. But if you go to Maynz beforehand and then to Weilburg, you will then have a short route from Weilburg to Coblenz,¹⁴ probably via Nassau. Or do you even want to bypass Maynz, where we have so many good friends? Where, without playing for the Elector,¹⁵ [45] who was ill, we took in 200 florins in 3 concerts?¹⁶ Tell me, my dear son, are these then unnecessary speculations? – – Our dear good Mama said to me, I will certainly be diligent in giving you an account of our expenses. Good! I do not desire an exact account, and I never thought of asking for one, but on your arrival in Augsp.¹⁷, [50] you should have written to me so: We have spent so much at Albert's¹⁸ in Munich; with the costs of travel so much has gone out of our hands that we are now in such and such a position. From Augsp. you write¹⁹ the following, namely that after the takings at the concert, you are 20-something florins in minus. From Manheimm, in the 2nd letter,²⁰ you should at least have written: The journey has cost so much, our position is now so – –, [55] consequently I would have made arrangements in time – – Was, for example, my arrangement to procure a letter of credit for you for Augsp. also an unnecessary speculation? – – do you really believe that Herr Herzog²¹ – who is my old, good friend – would have arranged money for you after all your writing from Mannheim if you had not already brought credit to him? – – It would not have crossed his mind! [60] All that he would have done, at the most, would have been to enquire about it from me first. – – Must I then hear only the news that you need money when you are in extremities? <You wanted to wait to see what the Elector gave you>, didn't you? So as to save me any possible vexation – – only it would have caused me less vexation [65] if I had been told everything openly at the right time, for I know better than you how one must be prepared for all eventualities on such journeys in order not to end up in horrible embarrassment at the moment where one had least reckoned with it. – Then, in a moment, all friends are gone! One must be good-humoured; one must have entertainment! [70] But one must also take time to think seriously, and this must be the main focus on journeys, and not to let a single day pass to one's detriment – – One day is constantly disappearing after the other |: they are now very short anyway |:), which are all very expensive at the inn. Righteous God! I should not speculate, after I <went into debt for 450 florins²² only because of the two of you.> – And you perhaps think you can put me in a good mood if you tell me of a hundred clownish farces. I am happy when you are in good spirits, but instead of the compliments²³ set out in alphabetical order, my spirits would have been raised more if you had written sensibly to me about the reasons and circumstances surrounding the journey to Weilburg, then what your further ideas are, [80] and if you had listened to my opinion whatever the situation. And this could already have had happened one post-day earlier, for this idea will not just have occurred to you now, and on your own you would

¹² Frankfurt.

¹³ Mannheim.

¹⁴ Koblenz.

¹⁵ "Churf.". BD: Emmerich Joseph, Count [Graf] Breidbach-Bürresheim (1707-1774). Cf. No. 0062/2, 24.

¹⁶ BD: Only two of them known: cf. Nos. 0062/4-5; 0064/6-7.

¹⁷ Augsburg.

¹⁸ BD: Franz Joseph Albert (1728-1789), landlord of the inn "Zum Schwarzen Adler" ["The Black Eagle"], where the Mozarts had stayed on a number of occasions. The keyboard competition between Mozart and Ignaz von Beecke (cf. No. 0110/7) took place there in the winter of 1774/75. His idea for raising support for Mozart is outlined in No. 0339/36 ff.

¹⁹ BD: Cf. No. 0355/113 ff.

²⁰ BD: Cf. No. 0363.

²¹ BD: Cf. Nos. 0051/10; 0378/12.

²² BD: Some details are given in No. 0375/70 ff.

²³ BD: Cf. No. 0355/113 ff.

never have been able to know that the Princess was there without someone suggesting it to you.²⁴ In a word: [85] It is not superfluous speculation to have an objective and draw up 2 to 3 plans for it and make the necessary arrangements in advance, so that if one plan does not work, one can take up the other one without hindrance. Whoever acts otherwise is an uncomprehending or reckless person who, especially in today's world, will always be left behind, however great his skills, [90] yes, will be unhappy, since he will furthermore be hoodwinked constantly by flatterers, false friends and enviers. Take good note, my son, one single person in a 1000 who is your true friend not out of self-interest is one of the greatest wonders of this world. Examine all who call themselves, or appear to be, your friends: you will find the reason for their being so. [95] If they have no self-interest at all regarding you, then they do have it regarding some other friend of yours, who is necessary to them; or they are your friends in order to vex another by your elevation. If nothing comes of the business in <Manheim>, you still have your plan to go to Maynz, Frankfort, Weilburg, Coblenz etc. One must always choose places [100] as close together as possible to make for short journeys where one can, and so as to come to another source of income quickly again. If this letter no longer reaches you in Mannheim and you are perhaps even already in Weilburg, I cannot help you either. But if the two of you are still in Mannheim and have to leave, [105] Mama will find on the post map that nothing can be shorter than to go to Maynz first, otherwise Maynz is left out, or you must to some extent come back again. In Weilburg you must keep in mind that you will not find any <Catholic church> there, since everything is <Lutheran> or <Calvinist>. So I do not want you <to stay there too long>. [110] ²⁵And who told you, then, that one must take the route through the Spessarth Forest²⁶ between Würzburg and Mannheim, since of course the Spesshard lies by Aschaffenburg between Fulda and Franckfort? – – This will no doubt have been foisted upon you by Herr Becke²⁷ again. Aschaffenburg and Würzburg are 10 miles²⁸ apart. – It may be that one drives past the forest, perhaps on the right-hand side going towards Mannheim, for some hours. [115] But there is nothing to be gained from Würzburg, whether you were there or not.

N.B. I have observed something else concerning a journey from Weilburg to Coblenz, namely that the route is on land, and it will be safer than the one on land from Maynz to Coblenz, [120] which goes too close to the Rhine. Now I want to hear the rest of it, and I would not have suspected at all that my dear wife would not have given me, from time to time, a correct account of the costs of your travel, when, after all, I had twice asked about the bill at Albert's, and should also have known about the bill for the landlord at The Lamb²⁹ etc. etc. But I do not need to know anything about all your expenses. [125] Accordingly, I have a specific request that Mama should simply write a confidential letter to me on this point – I do not want many words, but simply, in passing, to glance through the landlord's account, how they treated you both, and where all the money went to. For

²⁴ BD: The keen-sighted Leopold immediately senses that the plan outlined in No. 0379/35 ff. originated with someone else (cf. No. 0377/34 ff.). Subsequent events show that this was probably Fridolin Weber, who personally arranged the making of the copies intended for the Princess (cf. No. 0405/25 ff.).

²⁵ BD: Cf. No. 0379/8-9.

²⁶ BD: Spessart, originally "Spechtshart" [= "Woodpecker Forest"]. Leopold's statement is true: the route between Würzburg and Mannheim led through the central part of the forest, which had never been cleared because of the hunting enjoyed here by the rulers of Würzburg and Mainz.

²⁷ BD: Leopold suspects Beecke of deliberately suggesting a bad route (cf. No. 0360/16 ff.). Beecke: BD: Notger Ignaz Franz von Beecke (1733-1803), keyboard player, later superintendent of music in Wallerstein, cf. No. 0111/33-34. His first publication of compositions was in Paris. He took part in a keyboard "competition" with Mozart in Munich in winter 1774/75, cf. No. 0312/22.

²⁸ One Austrian "Meile" ["mile"] = approx. 7.6 km.(!) (Klimpert, *Lexikon der Münzen, Masse...*, Berlin, 1896). The distance here is therefore around 76 km.

²⁹ "Lamwirth". BD: Following Leopold's advice, Wolfgang Hunter's mother stayed here in Augsburg. Cf. No. 0331/37-38.

now one must think earnestly about means of getting oneself out of this, travelling as economically as possible, [130] and making good arrangements, but always reporting briefly to me everything, whether it be to our detriment or advantage. You should on no account sell the chaise.³⁰ God preserve you both, and me. Nannerl and I kiss the two of you many 100 000 000 times, and I am, as ever, your husband and father. Mzt

Count Czernin³¹ has sent me some news for you. [135] Not only was talk going round that the Archbishop³² will send Haydn³³ to Italy, but that he had already wanted to send him off to Bozen³⁴ with Triendl.³⁵ But Herr Triendl excused himself. I beg you, my Wolfg., you must consider everything, and not always write about things when they are already past, otherwise we will all be unhappy.

³⁰ BD: For different advice from Leopold cf. No. 0375/120.

³¹ BD: Johann Rudolph, Count [Graf] Czernin zu Chudenitz, son of the "old" Czernin, brother of Gräfin Antonia Lützow (1738-1780). Nephew of the Archbishop of Salzburg. Senior Chamberlain [Oberstkämmerer] and thus responsible for the theatre in Vienna. Cf. No. 0379/60.

³² BD: Hieronymus Joseph Franz de Paula, Count [Graf] Colloredo (1732-1812), Prince-Archbishop [Fürst-Erzbischof] of Salzburg from 1772. Employer of Leopold and, for a time, of Wolfgang.

³³ BD: Johann Michael Haydn (1737-1806), brother of Joseph. Employed at court in Salzburg from 1763. He was to be sent to Italy to find a music director and a respectable player of organ and clavier, but the journey never took place.

³⁴ Bolzano: today in Italy.

³⁵ BD: Anton Triendl (1721-1796), brother-in-law of merchant Siegmund Haffner the Younger (1756-1787). He took over the firm Haffner in 1787. Cf. Nos. 0374/83; 0380/110-111.