

1074. MOZART TO HIS SISTER,¹ ST. GILGEN²

*À / Madame / Madame Marie Anne de Sonnen- / burg. née Mozart. /
par Salzbourg à / St. Gilgen*

Dearest sister! –

Vienna, 19th Dec., 1787

I most fervently beg your pardon for leaving you without a reply so long.³ [5] – As you will perhaps already know, I composed *D. Juan*⁴ in Prague, and indeed to all the applause imaginable – but you will perhaps not know that His Majesty⁵ the Emperor has now taken me into service.⁶ – I am convinced that you will surely welcome this news. – I beg you, send me as soon as possible the little box with my scores;⁷ [10] – as far as new music for *keyboard* by me is concerned,⁸ I would ask you simply to write down for me the themes of the pieces which I sent you from Vienna and send them to me, so that I do not send you anything twice. – This way your wishes will be fulfilled at once. –

I wish you well, dear sister, and make a point of writing to me often – [15] if I do not always reply to you as I should, do not ascribe it to any neglect, but purely to my being so very busy. – *adieu*. – – I embrace you from the heart and am eternally your sincere loving brother

W: A: Mozart mp⁹

P.S. – From my wife |: who is due to begin her confinement at any moment¹⁰ :| 1000 little pecks.¹¹ [20] – all imaginable good wishes from both of us to your dear husband! –

THE FOLLOWING LINES ON THE ENVELOPE ARE IN NISSEN'S HAND, BUT WITH CONSTANCE'S OWN SIGNATURE:

With pecks [“Busserln”, little kisses] in order to sound even more charming? The “Busserln” mentioned are kisses in Viennese dialect. –

¹ BD: Maria Anna Walburga Ignatia (“Nannerl”), née Mozart, (1751-1829). After her marriage in 1784 her name was Maria Anna von Berchtold zu Sonnenburg. In all letters to Nannerl after her marriage Leopold refers to her as “Frau Tochter” [madam daughter] and to his son-in-law as “Herr Sohn” [esteemed son].

² BD: On the envelope remarks in Nissen’s hand: “father had been dead for half a year, therefore black seal. Sonnenburg was not yet a Baron.” and “I hereby testify that the present letter is throughout in the handwriting of my deceased husband, W. A. Mozart (died 1791), in order to assure the esteemed Privy Councillor [Geheimrath] Dr. Feuerstein of this. Salzburg, 6th February, 1826. Constanze Nissen. [Signature in Constanze’s hand] I testify that the foregoing signature is that of my wife, since 1791 the widow of W. A. Mozart. As above. Nissen.”

³ BD: Nannerl had thus written to her brother some time previously (No. 1073a, lost).

⁴ = “Don Giovanni”.

⁵ “S. Mayst. der kayser”. BD: Joseph II Joseph II (1741-1790), Holy Roman Emperor [Kaiser] 1765-1790. Son of Maria Theresia. Ruler of the Habsburg lands from 1780.

⁶ BD: From 7th December, 1787, as “k. k. Kammer-Komponist” [“Imperial and Royal Chamber Composer”] with 800 florins per year. Countess [Gräfin] Wilhelmine Thun is said to have exercised influence on the Emperor. According to Johann Wenzel, Count [Graf] Ugarte (1748-1796), writing on 30th December, 1791, the appointment was made purely to safeguard against losing such a genius to employment elsewhere; the position was dispensable and would not be filled after Mozart’s death. In 1793, however, the post was in fact given to Anton Teyber. Mozart’s only duty, rather loosely defined, proved to be that he should write some dances, minuets and German dances every year for the masked balls at court.

⁷ BD: Mozart had already asked for them on 1st August, 1787 (cf. No. 1061/14). Nannerl’s statement to B & H on 4th August, 1799, (cf. No. 1250/11-13) that she had sent them to her brother “at once” should presumably not be taken too literally if they were still in her possession in December, 1787.

⁸ BD: Cf. No. 1061/13-14 and note on No. 1082/5.

⁹ mp = manu propria = in his own hand.

¹⁰ BD: Mozart’s fourth child, Theresia Constanzia Adelheid Friederika Maria Anna, was born on 27th December, 1787; the godmother was Theresia von Trattner.

¹¹ “Busserln”: dialect for kisses.

I hereby testify that the present letter is in the hand of my former spouse, W. A. Mozart (died 1791), throughout, so as to assure the esteemed privy councillor um den D.^r Feuerstein¹² of the fact. Salzburg 6 Febr. 1826.

Constance Nissen.

I hereby testify that the proceeding is the signature of my spouse, W. A. Mozart's widow since 1791. As above. *Nissen*

His father had been dead half a year. Therefore the black seal. Sonneburg¹³ was not yet baronised.

¹² "Herrn Geheimenrath". BD: Johann Heinrich Feuerstein († 1850), physician in Pirna and then in other towns in Saxony. Published a book on mental illness (Leipzig, 1826). Reputed to be talented but eccentric. Died in the poorhouse in Dresden after suffering under alcohol and madness and receiving punishments for begging and fraud. His relationship to the Mozart family is unclear; he described himself as Mozart's friend. After Nissen's death in 1826, Constanze entrusted the final redaction of Nissen's Mozart biography, as well as numerous manuscripts and also the business side of the publication, to Feuerstein. He kept the money paid by subscribers, despite numerous demands and a court action by Constanze.

¹³ BD: Johann Baptist von Berchtold zu Sonnenburg (1736-1801), regional administrative official, Mozart's brother-in-law. Nannerl was his third wife. Later created Imperial Baron [Reichsfreiherr]