



Sophie Haibl (1763-1846), the youngest of the four Weber sisters, by an unknown artist

## THE TRUE CAREGIVER

**H. S. Brockmeyer**

(This article appears in part, from my upcoming book, *Opening Pandora's Box: Cracking the Mozart Cold Case File*, scheduled for publication in 2025)

While visiting Salzburg several years ago, I walked by the former apartment shared by Constanze and her sister, Sophie Haibl, in the last few years of their lives. Their apartment, in a building on Mozartplatz – now Nr. 8 – looks out over the town center, toward the statue of Mozart.

The town center was formerly Michaelsplatz, when Constanze and Sophie lived there. In 1842, after a commemoration for the unveiling of a statue of Mozart on 4 September, the area was renamed Mozartplatz; a year before, a baroque fountain featuring a statue of St. Michael was moved, to make way for the statue.

It is interesting to note that Constanze's second husband, Georg Nissen, passed away on 24 March 1826, and Sophie's husband, Johann Petrus Jakob Haibl, died on the same date. Sophie was residing in her husband's home town, Đakovo, (Croatia, Slavonia, part of Hungary at the time).

Jakob Haibl was a performer in Vienna at Emanuel Schikaneder's Freihaus Theater, since 1789. He was a singer, an actor, and a prolific composer. His first big work was the ballet, *Le nozze disturbate* - The Disrupted Wedding -- which was a grand success at its premiere in 1795. It ran 39 times in that year. Haibl's *Singspiel*, *Der Tiroler Wastel*, a comic opera, premiered in 1796, to rave reviews. (Sophie's eldest sister, Josepha, sang in the opera.)<sup>1</sup>

Haibl's opera enjoyed a run of 118 performances in total, at the Freihaus Theater. It was vastly popular; staged at many theaters in the Austro-German cities of Europe. In addition, Haibl composed sixteen Masses, which are still extant.<sup>2</sup>

After the death of his first wife, Katharina, in 1806, Jakob married Sophie Weber, an actress at the Freihaus Theater, on 7 January 1807. Shortly after, the couple moved to Jakob's country, Croatia, to the city of Đakovo, where he was the cathedral choirmaster.

After Jakob's death, Sophie moved from Đakovo to Salzburg, to live with Constanze. (In 1831, their older sister, Aloysia, joined them.)

Sophie Haibl died in 1846, at eighty-three years old, four years after Constanze's passing, on 6 March 1842. She was a guest of honor in September 1842 at the Mozart statue commemoration ceremonies, on the newly-named Mozartplatz, where her nephews, Karl Mozart and Wolfgang Xaver Mozart, also attended, as special guests of honor.

Constanze was not able to attend the commemoration ceremonies when the statue of her former husband was unveiled in 1842, as she had passed away six months before the illustrious event. Karl Mozart must have been a bit tearful at the uncovering of the magnificent statue, in memory of his father, and Wolfgang took part in the musical events. He transformed two of his father Mozart's unfinished works, the Offertorium *Venite populi* [K. 263/248a] and an Adagio for piano, into

a 'Festiva Cantata' that was performed during the solemn, three day event, with Wolfgang as conductor of his father's compositions.

Sophie bravely soldiered on, alone, with all of her sisters gone; Aloysia passed away in 1839; the oldest sister, Josepha Hofer Meier, the first Queen of the Night in Mozart's opera, *Magic Flute*, in Vienna, died several years earlier in Vienna, in 1819.

But Sophie Haibl was more than just the youngest Weber daughter, the last surviving one. This woman, who remains an enigma to us after nearly two and a half centuries, concealed a few mysteries, like her older sister Constanze – which she could never tell a soul. However, some of her secrets spilled out -- like fine sands, in a sieve.

\*\*\*\*\*

While visiting Salzburg a few years ago, I glanced up at the first floor windows in Constanze and Sophie's apartment at 8 Mozartplatz, which the two women must have looked out often; checking the weather, or watching the clouds over the imposing mountains: the Alps, the Gaisberg, and other, smaller summits, in the distance. Constanze, particularly, loved to rise early in the morning, to enjoy her coffee, while observing the cloud shadows over the mountains.

I noticed an old ivory plague, worn smooth with age and the elements, on the building, just above the entry door. Upon investigating the writing, I was rather floored.

My translation from the German follows below in English:

The German reads:

Im Diesem Hause  
Starb am 6 März 1842  
Mozarts Wittwe  
Konstanze Nissen  
Geborene Weber  
Und  
Am 26 Oktober 1846  
Ihre Schwester  
Sophie Haibl  
Mozarts Treue Pflegerin  
In Seiner

Todeskrankheit.

In this house

Died on 6 March 1842

Mozart's widow

Constanze Nissen

Born Weber

And

On 26 October 1846

Her sister

Sophie Haibl

Mozart's true caregiver

In his

fatal illness



**A photograph of the plaque on 8 Mozartplatz, the building that was formerly the residence of Constanze Mozart Nissen and Sophie Haibl. The last three lines read, “Mozart’s true caregiver in his fatal illness”**

Reproduced by permission from Peter Krackowizer, photographer

Who would put that plaque up? The wording is an outright slap in the face of Constanze. She was in the 970 Rauhensteingasse apartment on 4 December 1791, the entire night, when Mozart died. Sophie didn’t arrive at their apartment until early on the evening of 4 December; we know this from Sophie’s letter of 7 April 1825, to Georg Nissen, for use in his *Biographie W. A. Mozarts*, describing details of Mozart’s last night.

Sophie told the English couple, Vincent and Mary Novello visiting Salzburg in 1829, that Mozart had “died in her arms,” but where is the proof that Sophie was “Mozart’s true caregiver”? And, where was Constanze, when Mozart died?

These enigmatic questions are necessary, to pull back the deliberate veil that obscured events in the last hours of Wolfgang Mozart’s life. Unfortunately, to this day, most remain a mystery – but if we dig deep enough, we can bring to light some of the main clues.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mozart was ill about fifteen days before his death; only becoming fatally ill in a relatively short time span; essentially, rapidly deteriorating in a 48-hour time frist, from 3 December, to early in the morning hours on the 5<sup>th</sup>. He died at around 1 a.m. on Monday, 5 December 1791. In the previous two weeks, he suffered from an unexplainable, grotesque swelling that occurred, and which continued, right up to his death.

Nissen wrote in his biography that “Mozart’s fatal illness, where he was bedridden, lasted 15 days. It began with swelling of the hands and feet, and he was almost completely immobile; later, sudden vomiting followed.”<sup>3</sup> We don’t know exactly where Nissen obtained this detail, but we can take an educated guess, and surmise that Constanze supplied this information.

Sophie gives us a clue, from her narrative of Mozart’s last days, with a road map, as it were, of Mozart’s physical condition in the last 2 days of his life. From Sophie’s account cited in Deutsch, *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, we learn that Sophie has been checking in daily to see how her brother-in-law was, and visited Constanze and Mozart on Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. She hadn’t intended on stopping by their apartment on the following day, but something odd happened, to change her plans.

I went to visit him in the city every day, and once when I went in on a Saturday, M. [Mozart] said to me, “Now, dear Sophie, tell Mama that I am getting on very well, and that I will be coming out to her in the octave [an 8-day period during which a holiday is celebrated] of her name-day to give her my congratulations.” Whose joy could be greater than mine when I brought my mother such glad tidings, after she could scarcely expect the news: so I hurried home to calm her fears, after he had really seemed to me to be so cheerful and well.

The next day was a Sunday, then: I was still young and I admit it, vain – and I liked dressing up, but I never liked walking from our suburb into the town in my best clothes, and I had not the money for going by carriage; so I said to our good mother, “Dear Mama, I shan’t go in to Mozart

today – he was so well yesterday, so he’ll be better still today, and one day more or less will make no difference.”<sup>4</sup>

We know that this Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, that Sophie refers to, is the last day Mozart was alive. She eventually plans to visit Constanze, and finds out that, on the day before, in the evening, Mozart has fallen fatally ill. On Sunday, Mozart has less than 24 hours to live.

So we know now that, prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mozart was not desperately ill; he was not presenting signs of being on his deathbed; “he was so well yesterday, so he’ll be better still today,” Sophie observed. Mozart felt so well, in fact, that he planned to visit his mother-in-law, Cäcilia Weber, to celebrate her name day.

But something happened, between Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Sunday evening, the 4<sup>th</sup>, when Mozart’s condition went from slightly ill, to fatally ill.



**The long building behind Mozart's statue to the right, was the last residence of Constanze and Sophie Haibl, 8 Mozartplatz. Their apartment was on the left side, 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The statue of Mozart was erected in 1842, six months after Constanze's death in March. The plaque is clearly visible on the building, to the right of the statue**

Wikimedia Commons: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mozart\\_Statue\\_in\\_Mozartplatz,\\_Salzburg.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mozart_Statue_in_Mozartplatz,_Salzburg.jpg)  
Ken Eckert, 23 October 2020  
CC BY-SA 4.0 DEED Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International



**A better view of Constanze and Sophie's apartment building at 8 Mozartplatz. The plaque on 8 Mozartplatz, is clearly visible, to the left, over the entry doorway**

Wikimedia Commons.org  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mozartplatz\\_8\\_-\\_10.jpg#/media/File:Mozartplatz\\_8\\_-\\_10.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mozartplatz_8_-_10.jpg#/media/File:Mozartplatz_8_-_10.jpg)  
Source: Peter g at szg, 31 March 2012, ©CC BY 3.0

In a letter from 7 April 1825, written from Đakovo, Sophie shared her memories of Mozart's last night with brother-in-law Georg Nissen:

As he became sicker, we made him a night shirt that he could put on from the front, because he couldn't turn himself in bed because of the swelling; and as we didn't know how very sick he was, we made him a padded dressing gown for the time when he could get up again. This



delighted him. One day he said to me that he was feeling better and would visit Mama during the holiday festival on her name day, to wish her happiness. I visited him every day.

The following day I did not hurry to go there and only until the evening did I go. How shocked I was when my sister, despairing and yet trying to remain calm, opened the door and said these words, “Thank God that you are here. Last night he was so sick that I really thought he would not survive through the day. If he remains so, he will die tonight. Go to him and see how he’s doing.”<sup>5</sup>

The main reason that Sophie happened to visit Constanze on that last night, was because of a supernatural event that happened earlier in the late afternoon of December 4th, when she was still at her mother’s apartment. She wasn’t sure if she wanted to walk over to Rauhensteingasse in her good clothes, in the cold weather, and asked her mother what to do. Sophie describes the uncanny incident in her letter to Nissen:

She [Cäcilia] then said, “I’ll tell you what, make me a cup of coffee, and then I’ll tell you what you can do.” She was rather concerned to keep me at home, for my sister knows how much she always wanted me to be with her.

So I went into the kitchen. The fire had gone out; I had to light a taper and kindle the fire. But Mozart was still constantly on my mind. My coffee was ready, and my candle was still burning. The candle was burning brightly, and I stared straight at my candle and thought, “I wonder how Mozart is?”, and as I was thinking this, and looking at my candle, the candle went out, it went out as if it had never been alight.

Not even a spark remained on the big wick, there was no draught, to that I can swear; I shuddered, ran to my mother, and told her. She said, “All right, hurry up and take those clothes off and go in [to see him], but come and tell me straight away how he is. Now don’t be long.” I hurried as fast as I could.<sup>6</sup>

In her letter to Nissen, Sophie writes that on the night that Mozart died, after she initially showed up, she had to run back home to her mother, to let her know of the composer’s condition; when she returned, “to her unconsolable sister, [Franz] Süßmayr, [Mozart’s copyist] was now at his bedside. On the bed cover lay the *Requiem*, and Mozart explained to him, in his opinion, how [Süßmayr] should finish it after his death...As his doctor Closset came by, he ordered cold compresses to be placed upon his burning head which shocked Mozart so much that he became unconscious until he died.”<sup>7</sup>

This was all a calculated yarn, to distract from the real, chilling events of that night. But, for the time being, we will entertain Sophie’s “eyewitness” account, as

we are only considering whether Mozart's sister-in-law, was, in actuality, Mozart's "true caregiver."

Sophie claimed to Vincent and Mary Novello, in their 1829 visit to Salzburg, to bring money to Mozart's sister, the blind and bedridden Nannerl, that Mozart's physician, Dr. Closset told *her* to apply the cold compresses; but in the letter to Nissen, in Sophie's literal words, she writes only that Closset "ordered cold compresses to be placed upon his burning head." However – if Mozart died in Sophie's arms, she must have been nearby, to hold him as he died, possibly being the person applying the cold compresses to his forehead.

Why didn't Closset, himself, apply the cold compresses to Mozart's forehead? He was, after all, standing right at his patient's bedside. According to Sophie, he bled his patient earlier. It's not likely that the doctor stood across the room, calling out instructions to Sophie; that theory is obtuse.

But now, this second medical mystery begs the question: where was Constanze, when Mozart died? Where else would she have been – but in the sick room, with Dr. Closset, and her sister. It's unlikely that she would have been in the chamber pot closet, or washing dishes, when Mozart was on his deathbed, and every second of her husband's life was slipping away; precious moments, lost forever.

However, in Mary Novello's travel diary of 1829, we have yet another account from Sophie, in person. Mary Novello and her husband, Vincent, had made a second journey through Salzburg, stopping again to visit Constanze, on their way home to London. Sophie Haibl recounted this narrative of Mozart's last night, which Mary recorded in her travel diary:

Towards evening they sent for the Medical person who attended Mozart, but he was at the Theater and, on receiving the message, merely said that he would come 'as soon as the opera was over.' On his arrival he ordered Madame Haibl to bathe the temples and forehead of Mozart with vinegar and cold water. She expressed her fears that the sudden cold might be injurious to the sufferer, whose arms and limbs were much inflamed and swollen. But the Doctor persisted in his orders and Madame Haibl accordingly applied a damp towel to his forehead. Mozart immediately gave a slight shudder and in a very short time afterwards he expired in her arms. At this moment the only persons in the Room were Madame Mozart, the Medical Attendant [Dr. Closset] and herself.<sup>8</sup>

The book editor, Rosemary Hughes, makes this off-sided comment above Sophie's story: "With such a sympathetic audience she naturally stresses her own role more than she did in the letter [to Nissen]."<sup>9</sup>

Sophie's adherence to her narrative of Closset handing her the cold cloths to place on Mozart's forehead, is contested by Georg Nissen himself, who writes in his biography that "Mozart remained totally conscious during his illness, right up to the end."<sup>10</sup> Two different versions; Nissen, without a doubt, received this information from Constanze.

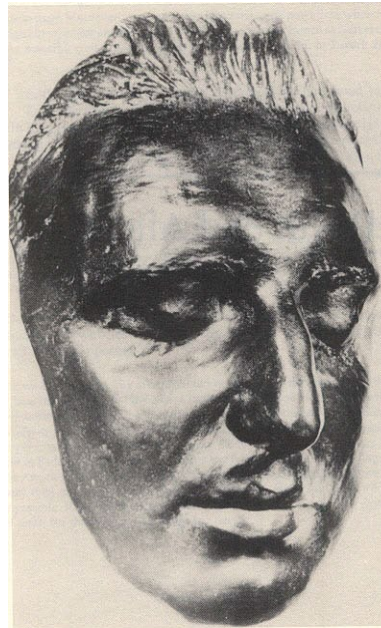
It's plausible, that, given the possibility of a violent end for Mozart, witnessed by his wife and sister-in-law, that a prefabricated agreement between the two women was worked out, shortly after his death, about what to present to the public. In the time span of thirty-four years, Constanze may have forgotten their secret pact.

It is worthy to note that Constanze rarely discussed Mozart's death in any detail, and her insistence at avoiding the question of why his burial site at St. Marx lacked any gravestone, garnered public ire. Her excuses were all lame.

A few comments on Sophie's second version: she reports that Constanze is in the room at the end; why is Dr. Closset giving instructions to Sophie, to bathe Mozart's forehead? Also, Sophie relayed in her letter to Nissen, that Franz Süssmayr was in the apartment, when Sophie returned from informing her mother that she would be staying with Constanze on this evening. Yet, she fails to mention him, when describing the "only persons in the Room."

There was a specific reason why Sophie makes the unnecessary comment that "the only persons in the Room were Madame Mozart, the Medical Attendant and herself." This will offer another, outstanding clue as to what the real situation was, on the night that Mozart died. There was a reason that Mozart died in Sophie's arms – and not in Constanze's. However, these topics need to be debated in another article.

What is important, but a mystery to us, however, is that Constanze is also in the sick room when Closset arrives. She's there with her sister, Dr. Closset, and, possibly, Franz Süssmayr. Sophie Haibl also describes the scene directly after her brother-in-law died, in her letter to Nissen; "The last thing he did was how he wanted to express the timpani in the Requiem with his mouth and he puffed out his cheeks. After his death came Müller from the art gallery and pressed his pale, dead face in plaster."<sup>11</sup>



**Mozart's controversial death mask, originally cast in plaster, then in bronze, made by Joseph Müller, a wax sculptor, who owned a renowned wax shop in Vienna, the *Kunstkabinette Müller*, featuring wax figures of famous persons. Müller's real name was Joseph Deym von Střítež. He made two masks of Mozart; he gave the plaster cast to Constanze. She claimed that, while dusting one day in 1820, she broke the mask, saying, "I'm glad the ugly old thing is broken."<sup>12</sup> Müller's shop in Vienna featured a wax figure of Mozart, in his original clothing. Nobody knows who called Müller to Mozart's apartment on the night that the composer died**

Now, at this point, we discover that Constanze has been in the room all this time, up to the seconds when Mozart dies. It makes no sense, whatsoever, that Constanze would not be present in the death room, when her husband drew his last breath.

Sophie continues:

My sister threw herself on her knees to pray. She could not tear herself away from her husband, as much as I begged her. If her pain could have been increased, it had to happen that [on] the day following this horrifying night, people came in droves and they cried and screamed loudly for him.<sup>13</sup>

Another conundrum presents itself, thirty-eight years later, in 1829, when Sophie relates to Mary Novello, that "Mozart died in her arms."<sup>14</sup> She doesn't say why or

how. Constanze, herself, never contested her sister's statement – though Constanze was not at her apartment during the earlier part of the day, when Sophie related the tale of Mozart's end to Mary Novello. Mary writes in her 1829 travel diary:

On our arrival at Madame Mozart's delightful residence [on the Nonngasse], we found that she had very kindly gone on a visit to inquire after the health of Madame Sonnenburg [Mozart's sister]. Her sister (Sophie) however, received us in such a manner as to convince us that her surprise in seeing us was an agreeable one...<sup>15</sup>

Sophie's tale of Mozart's last night is not exactly as she related it. The words Sophie used, "this horrifying night," hold a crucial lead. She uses the German words *schauervolle Nacht* – and these words will have a pivotal significance as to what really happened in the early hours of 5 December 1791.

We have another clue from Sophie, who claimed that, when she entered 970 Rauhensteingasse, and was asked by Constanze to go and see how Mozart was, he called out to her:

"Ah, dear Sophie, it is good of you to come. You must stay tonight to see me die." I tried to be strong and to dissuade him, but he answered to all my attempts, "I have the taste of death on my tongue already", and "Who will look after my dearest Constanze if you don't stay."<sup>16</sup>

Mozart was not delusional, but totally lucid, several hours before, and up to his death. He knew that this was his last night on earth, but he did not explain his words to his sister-in-law. There was a reason for Sophie to obscure what she witnessed on the night that Mozart died, which should be discussed at another time.

Among the tiny sands which leaked out of the sieve, is a disturbing diary entry from Constanze, written shortly after Vincent and Mary Novello departed from Salzburg. Something on their visit to her, must have roused the old ghosts. Constanze alludes to a mysterious event; but we can take a guess at what she is alluding to.

Her sister, Sophie, had adopted a small dog from acquaintances. The little dog was sick, and Sophie was quite anxious about it. Constanze writes in her diary on 21 September 1829 [my bolding]:

I know how dear this little animal was to her. This gave me disturbing dreams, and one of my best friends wanted to stab me with a knife but thank goodness only in my dream. Now I woke up tormented with

anxiety and thanked my Creator and lifted Sophie to him, but felt so troubled and torn apart that I could not go back to sleep but now everything is well...as I came from the bath, I met Dr. Storck, and as I told him about the disturbing night, he advised me not to bathe another hour. **Ach, the good Storck doesn't know the real reason for my troubled night, otherwise he would advise me not to think too much and to leave everything to God! This I say now to myself.**<sup>17</sup>

The “good Storck” could never discover the “real reason” for Constanze’s troubled night; nor could she ever divulge it to anyone. It was a deep secret, shared between Constanze and Sophie, and, possibly Franz Süßmayr; it had to do with Mozart’s last night. She could not confess it to a priest. Her Catholic faith was the only mitigation that she could lean on.

\*\*\*\*\*

It’s not quite clear from her letter to Nissen, what Sophie’s role was as a caregiver for Mozart, as he became increasingly immobile and unable to care for himself. Certainly, she helped her sister to sew a padded bed jacket for the grossly swollen man, which alleviated his pain, and which her brother-in-law much appreciated.

Sophie probably helped Constanze bring her brother-in-law something to eat or drink. She also likely sat by his bed, and had conversations with him; tried to cheer him up. But that Sophie was not aware of how badly Mozart’s condition had deteriorated until she arrived that evening of the 4<sup>th</sup>, is a hint that Mozart had suddenly and precipitously, taken a turn for the worst, beginning on the afternoon or evening of 3 December.

When Constanze, “half-desperate,” opened the front door for her sister, on the early evening of the 4<sup>th</sup>, this relays the supposition, that the composer’s precarious health was suddenly turning on the head of a dime.

She tells Sophie, “Thank God you’ve come, dear Sophie; he was so bad last night that I never thought he would survive this day. Stay with me today, for if he gets bad again today, he will die in the night.”<sup>18</sup>

We wonder: what does Constanze mean, by “he was so bad last night”? It could have been incessant vomiting, convulsions, or something else. These are new symptoms; they haven’t been a part of his illness trajectory, up to now.

At this point, both Constanze and Sophie are Mozart’s caretakers.

\*\*\*\*\*

I contacted the Salzburg Tourist Office in 2006, about that strangely-worded plaque on Constanze and Sophie's Mozartplatz apartment building; they forwarded my message to the Salzburg State Archives. Dr. Peter Kramml answered by email in January 2006. He informed me that Mozart researcher Friedrich Breitlinger conceptualized the plaque in 1942, on the occasion of Mozart's 100-year *Jubiläum*, but the war intervened, and the plaque disappeared in 1948, before it could be mounted.

Franz Martin, director of the Salzburg Provincial Archives, found it again, handing it back to Breitlinger. The Salzburg City Council voted on 7 July 1952, to mount the plaque in August of that year. Apparently, the wording about Sophie as Mozart's 'true caretaker' did not bother them.

(Perhaps we should point a finger at Breitlinger for creating the wording on the plaque; if only we could go back, and ask him what his motive was.)

It would be interesting to find out why Breitlinger considered Sophie Haibl as Mozart's caregiver, in his fatal illness. Why would he think that Constanze could not have taken care of her husband, as Mozart lay in his bed, unable to move or get around? Certainly, she did. Perhaps, Breitlinger considered Sophie's comment to the Novellos that Mozart had died in "her arms" as some sort of [flimsy] proof, that she had been the main nurse to the dying composer.

But that does not make her the true caregiver. The plaque takes credit away from Constanze. It is disingenuous, and seems like an attempt to somehow place blame on Constanze. It is well known, that early attempts to portray Constanze, mostly by male scholars and authors, such as one of Constanze's first biographers, Arthur Schurig, did not portray her in a good light.

She was seen as a mediocre singer, pregnant nearly every year of their marriage. What really seemed to gall the Mozart scholars and authors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – mostly male – was that they felt that Constanze was unsuspecting that her husband was more than a provider; he was a musical genius, and, they felt, she did not know enough to him in this capacity. For decades after Mozart's death, nearly everything written about Constanze was a slur on her character.

Johann André, the Offenbach publisher who bought out Constanze's fifteen parcels of Mozart's compositions, remarked, "I did not gain the impression that she was capable of fully understanding Mozart's genius."<sup>19</sup>

Schurig described Constanze as “primitive, sensuous” and claimed that the marriage “robbed [Mozart’s] artistic productivity of its intensity.”<sup>20</sup> But author William Stafford, in *The Mozart Myths*, exposes what he considers Schurig’s faulty judgement; it seems to be an adherence to an aversion that repelled male scholars, for many years:

The classic version of the anti-Constanze story is Schurig’s... The Countess in *Figaro*, with her bourgeois view of sexual morality, deserves what she gets; the faithful Ottavio is a weakling beside the strong seducer Giovanni. *La clemenza di Tito* is about the mad jealousy of an insignificant woman. Yet he has a distaste for *Così fan tutte*, which depicts ‘Venus vulgiva, who gives herself to whoever pleases her at the moment.’

Evidently, sexual freedom is right for men but not for women. Schurig exhibits a distaste for female sexuality.<sup>21</sup>

H.C. Robbins Landon catalogues her critics’ objections (with a nudge at Constanze as a sultry seductress):

Constanze Mozart is perhaps the most unpopular woman in music history. For the last hundred years or so she has been subjected to an increasingly slanderous series of attacks: she was a sex kitten, she was a superficial, silly woman incapable of understanding Mozart, she mismanaged the household finances and encouraged him to live a scatterbrained, if not absolutely dissolute, life.<sup>22</sup>

Mozart’s sister, Nannerl, had a hand in maligning Constanze. She wrote to Friedrich Schlichtegroll, for use in his *Necrolog aus dem Jahr 1791*, this unsavory recollection: “He married a girl quite unsuited to him, and against the will of his father, and thus the great domestic chaos at and after his death.”<sup>23</sup> (As Nannerl had only met Constanze in a visit of her brother and his wife to Salzburg in 1783, we can guess that Nannerl was mouthing the opinions of the disgruntled Leopold Mozart, furious at his son for escaping his domination.)

Specifically, William Stafford charges the composer’s wife with all manner of misdemeanors:

Her flirting destroyed his peace of mind. For she did not give him the warmth and love he needed. It is to be doubted whether she actually loved him; she had no respect for the man who played the silly ass with her, and failed to establish himself in the world. Only after his death, when his scores began to fetch high prices, did she realize that she had been living with a genius. She was too uncultured and unmusical to be his soul-mate. None of the works composed specifically for her was ever finished; one can imagine him giving them up in despair when her boredom became apparent. She was insignificance personified, an insipid doll. Mozart was defeated and destroyed by his marriage.<sup>24</sup>



Stafford zeroes in on the Constanze-problem succinctly, citing Schurig's aversion to female sexuality: "If Mozart had had less sex, there would have been more symphonies."<sup>25</sup>

It was only in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century, when other, more impartial writings appeared, that Constanze was not lambasted for, apparently, not appreciating Mozart's genius -- and for Mozart finding his wife sexy.

\*\*\*\*\*

Then, more recently, while perusing Google images, I came across *another* description of Sophie as Mozart's final caregiver. These words appear on her gravestone in the Salzburger Kommunal Friedhof – the Salzburg Municipal Cemetery:

Sophie and Aloisia – two Weber sisters – are buried together in the Kommunalfriedhof der Stadt Salzburg [Municipal Cemetery of the City of Salzburg – their graves had been exhumed from St. Sebastian Cemetery, and moved to this site.] The single square headstone reads:

[in German]

Ruhestätte  
Der Schwagerinnen  
W. A. Mozarts  
Aloisia K. K. Hofsängerin  
Gattin des Hofschauspielers  
Josef Lange Geb. Weber  
+ 3. Juni 1839  
und  
Sophie Gattin des Chor-  
Regenten Jakob Haibl  
Geb. Weber  
Die Treue Pflegerin Mozarts  
Auf Seinem Sterbebette  
+ 26. Oktober 1846

[in English]

The resting place of  
The step-sisters

Of W. A. Mozart  
Aloisia K. K. Court Singer  
Wife of the Court Actor Josef Lange, Born Weber  
+ 3. June 1839  
and  
Sophie Wife of the Choir-  
Director Jakob Haibl  
Born Weber  
The true caregiver of Mozart  
on his deathbed  
+ 26. October 1846



**Sophie Haibl and Aloisia Lange, Constanze's sisters, buried together in the Salzburger Kommunalfriedhof. The last two lines, as in the plaque on 8 Mozartplatz, state that Sophie was the "true caregiver of Mozart on his deathbed"**

Wikipedia Commons.org

“Salzburger Kommunalfriedhof, Grabstätte von Aloisia Lange und Sophie Haibl“

© 1971markus@wikipedia.de / Cc-by-sa-4.0, 22 February 2017

A strange connection with the plaque wording, on the building in Salzburg, at Mozartplatz. Is there something unknown, that we are missing?

On 8 October, 2024, I began an investigation into who chose the wording on Sophie and Aloysia's gravestone. I emailed the Salzburg Tourist Information office, who forwarded my email to the Salzburg State Archives. Lukas Fallwickl replied on 21 October, with this disappointing email:

Unfortunately, no records of this honorary grave could be found in the city archives.

The Mozart-Lexikon (2006, p. 161) states that both Sophia Haibl and Aloisia Lange were exhumed on 3 December 1895 from the St. Sebastians-Friedhof and reburied in the grave of Alois Taux (d. 1861) at the Kommunalfriedhof. However, on whose request or authority this happened remains unclear.

Fallwickl suggested that I contact the Mozarteum, which I followed up on. I sent several emails over a number of weeks, but never heard back from them on this matter. Perhaps they, too, could find no records of who created the wording on Sophie and Aloysia's gravestone.

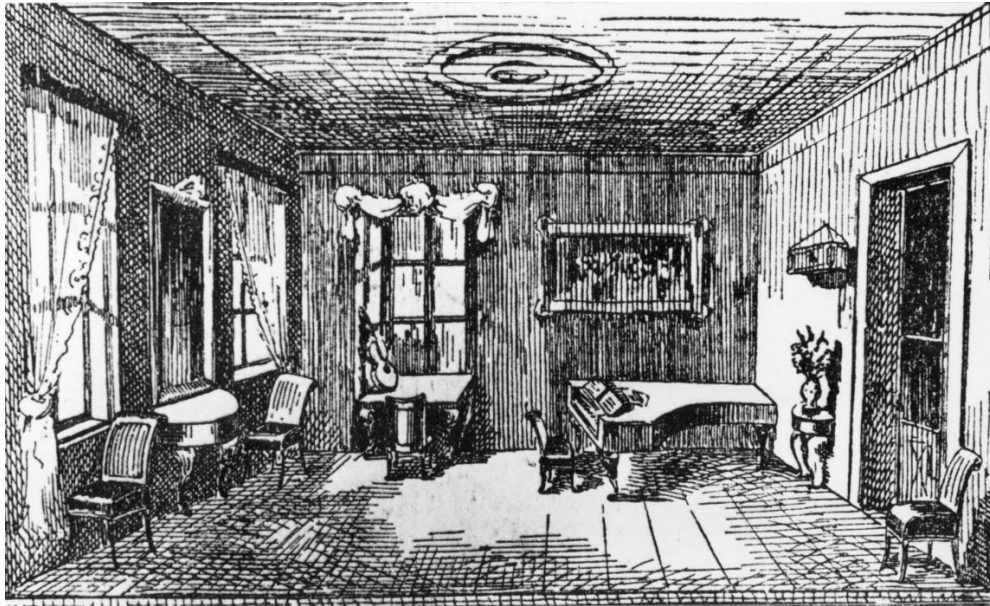
\*\*\*\*\*

We know that Constanze, and not Sophie, was in the apartment at 970 Rauhensteingasse, on Mozart's last day, up until the early evening. She opened the door that evening, when Sophie came to see how Mozart was. Constanze was in a state of panic; Sophie described to Nissen:

How frightened I was when my half-desperate and yet so moderate sister came to meet me in the doorway with the words: Praise God that you've come. He was so sick last night, that I thought, he would not survive the day.<sup>26</sup>

Surely, Constanze catered to her sick husband, bringing him water or food, bathing his swollen extremities with cool cloths, and keeping his bedclothes clean. We know from Nissen's biography that Mozart suffered from projectile vomiting: "Suddenly he vomited – it gushed out of him in an arc -- it was brown..."<sup>27</sup>

There was most likely, a lot of mopping up, and changing the bed sheets. In addition, seven-year-old Karl Mozart, an eyewitness, described a terrible odor exuded by Mozart, that resembled a carrion-like smell. This would anticipate the moving of the composer to other rooms, to air out the apartment. On top of all this, Sophie wrote to Nissen, Mozart's beloved canary had to be removed from his sickroom, as the composer was sensitive to the bird's singing.<sup>28</sup>



**The *Sterbezimmer* – the room where Mozart died, in his last apartment at 970 Rauhensteingasse. His canary, by the room entry doorway, had to be removed in its little cage**

©akg-images

It's no wonder, then, that when Sophie came to visit on that portentous night of 4 December 1791, that Constanze was in a state close to hysteria, when she opened the door at 970 Rauhensteingasse.

Furthermore, Sophie sent a note that night to the Burgtheater, to be handed to Dr. Thomas Franz Closset, Mozart's personal doctor, attending the opera, to hurry to 970 Rauhensteingasse; his patient has taken a turn for the worse. Deutsch cites from Sophie Haibl's letter to Nissen: "There was a long search for Glosett [sic] the doctor, who was found at the theater; but he had to wait till the play was over..."<sup>29</sup>

Closett was at the opera – Mozart's doctor, who had been treating his famous patient, refused to come to the sick man's bedside *until the opera was over*. This was a doctor who did not follow his sworn Hippocratic Oath:

I shall do by my patients as I would be done by; shall obtain consultation whenever I or they desire; shall include them to the extent they wish in all important decisions; and shall minimize suffering whenever a cure cannot be obtained, understanding that a dignified death is an important goal in everyone's life.<sup>30</sup>

An important phrase, “First do no harm” [*Primum non nocere*] is an integral part of the Hippocratic Oath (originating in the 17<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>31</sup>, and when a patient whom the doctor has been treating – and an internationally famous composer -- is in a fatal condition, and a family member begs him to come and render medical advice, remaining at the opera is not an option.

Another version of *Primum non nocere* is “I will abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm.”<sup>32</sup> Closset did not follow this maxim, in his professional dealings with Mozart. Continuing to watch the opera performance, when he received an urgent message to come quickly to attend to Mozart, is outright grossly negligent behavior.

In a letter, 10 June 1824, Dr. Guldener von Lobes, the state protomedicus in Vienna, wrote to Guiseppe Carpani, an Italian man of letters, in their defense of Salieri, after rumors of him poisoning Mozart were circulating. Von Lobes wrote in praise of Dr. Closset:

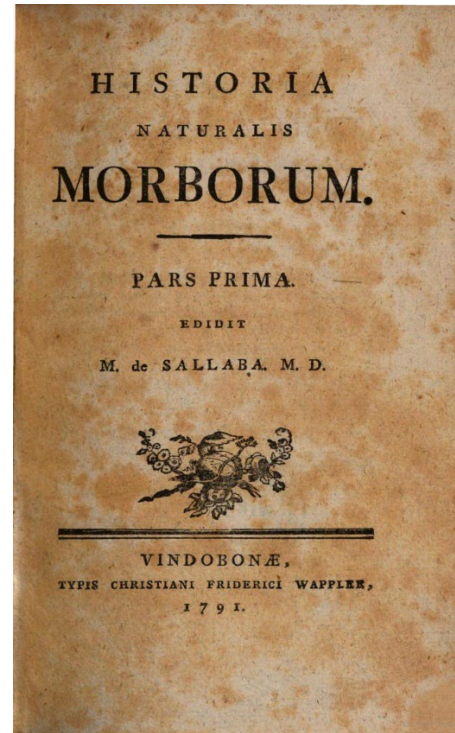
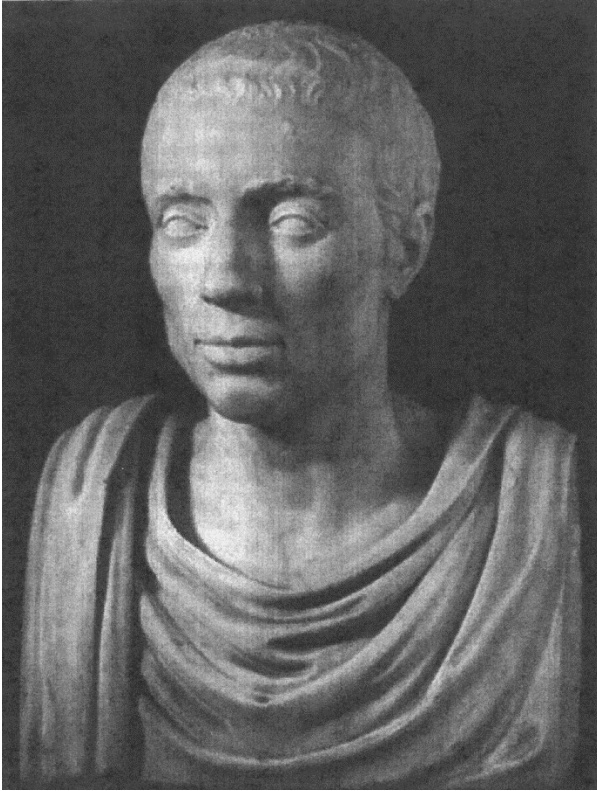
Many people saw [Mozart] during his illness, many inquired about him, his highly esteemed doctor, the talented and experienced Closset, treated him with all the attention of a responsible doctor and with the compassion of a friend of many years...<sup>33</sup>

Closset’s actions, on the night Mozart died, is all the more surprising, given his milieu, as well as his friendship with the composer. Closset boasted an extensive medical background. Studying in Köln, he received, in 1774, a philosophical doctor’s degree, then spent two years studying theology, before returning to medicine. Closset moved to Vienna in 1777, where he pursued further medical education with the renowned Dr. Maximilian Stoll, at Vienna’s *Dreifaltigkeitsspital* – one of the main hospitals in the city.

In 1780, he passed the exams for his medical certificate, with distinction. Remaining as assistant to Stoll, he continued his medical studies, producing an academic paper, “On the Sources of Prognosis in Chronic Illnesses,” which received much acclaim in medical circles.<sup>34</sup>

Dr. Matthias von Sallaba, another prominent physician in Vienna, who had treated Mozart, warmly dedicated his prestigious book, *Historia Naturalis Morborum*, an extensive medical reference of diseases and their cures, to his extremely close friend, Closset. Even more interesting; Sallaba taught at a school of forensics that he, himself, established, and where he worked, without salary. Both Closset and Sallaba were authorities on poison; the former, a quicksilver specialist; and the

latter, a state forensics specialist. Closset had also conducted scientific studies with the poison quicksilver.<sup>35</sup>



**Dr. Matthias von Sallaba and his famous work, *Historia Naturalis Morborum*, 1791**

Bust of Dr. Sallaba reproduced by permission from the Institut für Geschichte der Medizinische der Universität Wien

Closset followed his mentor, and, in 1787, shortly after Stoll's death, opened his own private practice in Vienna. Carl Bär states, "After Stoll's death, Closset was a renowned man, and one of the most famous and sought-out doctors in Vienna."<sup>36</sup>

Bär notes, after Stoll's death, Closset absorbed into his practice many of Stoll's patients, which included several aristocratic families. For instance, two of the most respected and prominent Viennese families of two field marshals, whom Stoll had advised, now entrusted Closset with their health care.

He also treated the royal family, who called on him for many consultations. In 1788, the *Staatskanzler* secured for him 1,000 gulden for his yearly salary. Soon,

he had established a practice that reached throughout Vienna, and the surrounding suburbs.

Stoll's advice to his students? "The doctor should never leave the patient, even if he is not to be saved, but should do as much as he can, and should spare no troubles . . ." <sup>37</sup>

So – we must ponder – why, given Dr. Closset's professional concern for his patients – chosen as his assistant by the distinguished Dr. Stoll -- wouldn't he come promptly, to the bedside of the fatally ill composer?

Nissen remarked in his biography:

The sister-in-law thinks that Mozart was not treated appropriately enough during his illness, because instead of trying to drive out the friesel further in other ways, he was bled and cold compresses were applied to his head, whereupon his strength apparently dwindled and he fell into unconsciousness from which he never came out of. <sup>38</sup>

Joseph Deiner, in his "Deiner Report," appearing in the *Morgenpost* on 28 January 1856, on the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Mozart, wrote that "one week before Mozart died, Sallaba and Closset met and discussed phlebotomy for Mozart." <sup>39</sup> Apparently, Sallaba believed that Mozart may have developed inflammatory heart disease. Dr. Anton Neumayr informs, "The most famous doctor in the city diagnosed Mozart's disease as inflammatory and bled his veins." <sup>40</sup>

Phlebotomy, or blood-letting, was a common treatment, when the physician assumed that the inflammation was the result of a proliferation of pathological liquid.

It was only until 1835, when the French physician Pierre Charles Alexandre Louis (1787-1872), after making careful observations on the effects of blood-letting in the treatment of pneumonia, deduced that the procedure was of no use.

"Thus, writes Dr. Simon Jong-Koo Lee, a Korean cardiologist, "it is likely that the greatest musical genius became another victim of phlebotomy – an example of useless and harmful medical practice. It is ironical that Mozart's life was probably shortened by two most famous physicians in Vienna at the time." <sup>41</sup>

It is worth mentioning here, that the odd diagnosis of Mozart's fatal disease, *hitziges frieselfieber* – a hot miliary fever, was a very unusual term. Carl Bär, who thoroughly investigated Mozart's death in his book, *Mozart - Krankheit - Tod – Begräbnis* [Mozart: Illness – Death—Burial] confirms: "Stoll, the most famous

advocate for new medical findings, knew no such disease name of ‘hitziges Frieselfieber.’”<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, Sallaba, in all of the articles and books he authored, including his legendary *Historia Naturalis Morborum*, never mentioned this disease. “It is sufficient to note,” Bär continues, “that the majority of advocates of the then prevailing school of medicine in Vienna were not knowledgeable of any separate disease by that name. . . It is unthinkable that both of Mozart’s doctors used this expression during their consultations.”<sup>43</sup>

How, then, does one account for their “professional,” albeit, peculiar, diagnosis of Mozart’s condition, as an obscure disease, largely unused in medical texts? Even their mentor, the eminent Dr. Stoll, had never used the term *hitziges Frieselfieber* - supposedly the cause of a (nonexistent) epidemic in the winter of 1791. Most especially, however, this question holds true for Closset, as the author of his renowned article, “On the Sources of Prognosis in Chronic Illnesses.”

In addition, though Closset and Sallaba chose an obscure diagnosis for Mozart, they failed to document the composer’s disease or symptoms, though medical records at the time were sporadic.

Later, after Mozart’s death, rumors ran round that a *Frieselfieber* epidemic raced through Vienna, decimating the population, but this was untrue; Mozart was the *only* patient who allegedly succumbed to the *Frieselfieber* in December, 1791. No reports exist for any deaths under that disease diagnosis in November, either.

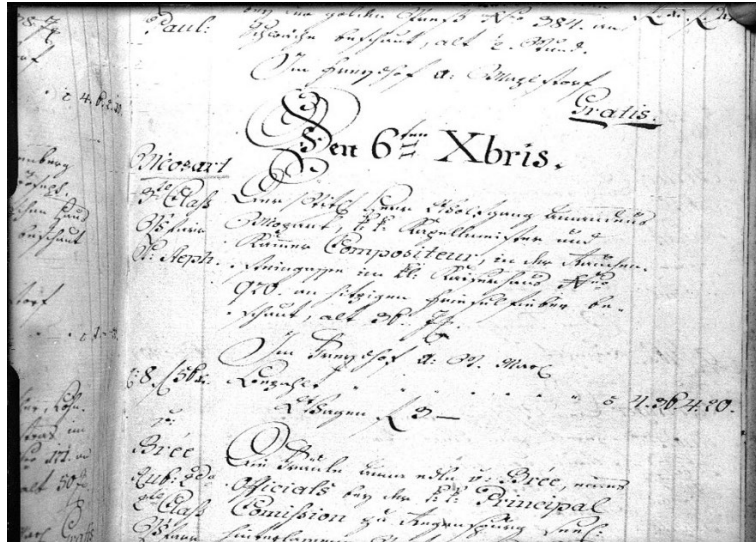
Had there been such an epidemic, the Vienna Sanitation Department would have reports in all the city newspapers, especially the *Wiener Zeitung*, as well as posting announcements around the city. The sanitation squad would be busy, burning mattresses and bedclothing. Sick citizens would be quarantined.

German physicians Dalchow, Duda, and Kerner note in *Mozarts Tod: 1791–1971* [*Mozart’s Death: 1791-1971*], that *hitziges Frieselfieber* is not specified in *any other deaths* in the last months of the year: “this diagnosis is not found at all in any of the male deaths from November to December in 1791, *only for Mozart*, which excludes any ‘epidemic.’”<sup>44</sup> [My italics.]

Someone did report *hitziges Frieselfieber* to the authorities at St. Stephen’s Cathedral, as the disease that took Mozart’s life. The death registry record appears with this diagnosis for the composer. Perhaps it was Dr. Closset who supplied this information – but it appears that the physician tried to distance himself from



anything relating to Mozart's death. He left no medical report behind, detailing Mozart's course of illness and prognosis; he left no signed medical documents.



Reproduced by permission from the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna

Mozart's death certificate from St. Stephen's Cathedral death registry. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> lines record that he died of *frieselFieber* at 36 [sic] years old, and that his body was *beschaut*: observed. This is highly unlikely, as Mozart's body was grossly swollen, emitting a pungent, carrion-like odor. These factors would have prompted the person who inspected Mozart to call in a coroner, as his bodily conditions in no way resembled a natural death. State laws mandated that if a body exhibited unusual conditions, authorities were to be called in immediately

Let's look at the word, "*beschaut*" – observed – in Mozart's death record. Nobody looked at Mozart's grossly swollen corpse. Something strange was afoot in the city of Vienna.

Two of the city corpse inspectors, adjunct Joseph Kerndl and his supervisor, Franz Anton Schmid, were very busy at work on 5 December, inspecting dead bodies. Kerndl had at least 15 corpses to review on this winter's day, and Schmid, whose title was "Infektions-Chirurgus und Ordinariusbeschauer," [infectious medical surgeon and inspector], had to observe 12 in the outskirts of the city.<sup>45</sup>

Schmid and his adjunct, Kerndl, would report to **Samuel Riedl**, Magl. G. K. Adjunkt, (Totenschauprotokolle und Hof-und Staatsschematismus in 1791) – [Magisterial Death Inspection Protocols and Court and State Schematism].<sup>46</sup>

That neither corpse inspector made it to the internationally famous composer's apartment, is indeed, very peculiar.

Joseph Kerndl actively avoided coming to 970 Rauhensteingasse to inspect the composer's body – even though he was just around the corner at 923 Singerstrasse, examining another corpse.

Dalchow, Duda and Kerner note:

Kerndl must have inspected at least 15 corpses, most of which were in the suburbs and one actually in the immediate vicinity [at No. 923 Singerstrasse] of Mozart's dwelling and Schmidt, his supervisor, viewed 12 bodies, in any case, chiefly in the outer district.<sup>47</sup>

Duda comments, ““It is more than strange that Mozart, of all people, should have been “forgotten,” is more than unlikely.”<sup>48</sup>

Had either inspector checked Mozart's body, they would have been quite alarmed. In 1791 Vienna, the state sanitation laws decreed that:

If the deceased died rapidly of a fatal illness which lasted only a few days, with which he has frequent vomiting, complains of pains in the stomach or intestines, and has black or unusually colored spots on his back, then the death is usually by poison. If the inspector learns or discovers these conditions, he must postpone the burial and propose a forensic investigation.<sup>49</sup>

State law also decreed that:

Every corpse shall, before burial, be examined, in order to ascertain whether a violent death occurred, or whether in the examination of the body a wound or other noticeable mark of violence should be recognized; whether the throat is blue, or otherwise how the body appears.<sup>50</sup>

Mozart's grotesque swelling, repulsive odor of failing organs [causing the “carrion-like” smell that Karl Mozart could never forget], and his projectile vomiting, could certainly signify that the composer did not die a natural death.

Apparently, Closset's lips remained zipped as to what he witnessed at Mozart's deathbed on 4 December, but he, like Constanze and Sophie, remained mute about the composer's last hours.

If there was, as I posit, a powerful group behind the demise of Wolfgang Mozart, the doctors' behaviors make sense. Better to distance themselves from trouble; better to conceal, hide, and obfuscate.

Most likely, is that Dr. Closset and Dr. Sallaba came up with the confusing, obtuse diagnosis deliberately, describing the demise of the composer; for reasons known only to themselves.

The mysteries surrounding Mozart's last days continued. I. R. Karhausen, in his article, "Contra Davies: Mozart's Terminal Illness," writes:

Actually, the mortality of November and December 1791 showed 656 deaths in Vienna, a 17% increase above the previous months. Among those, a single one was attributed to 'Hitziges Frieselfieber' (heated military fever), that one of Mozart.<sup>51</sup>

Author Brendan Cormican notes:

In 1791 the most widely used cemeteries for residents in the Inner City were the St. Marx and Matzleinsdorf. There were ten funerals on 6 December 1791 in Vienna recorded in the St. Stephen's registers, three of which were Gratis [free, 4<sup>th</sup>-class burial for indigents]. One was to the Währinger cemetery, three to the Matzleinsdorf and six to St. Marx.

They came from different churches, four from the Augustinian Church alone. The only one from St. Stephen's on that day was that of Johannes Chrystosomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart, entered in the Cathedral death register as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.<sup>52</sup>

Yet, the authorities at St. Marx had no record that Mozart had, indeed, ever been there. Curious, how the corpse of one internationally famous composer could go missing.

That Baron Gottfried van Swieten, Mozart's *Steinreich* – filthy rich – friend, who made ten times as much as Mozart, or around 20,000 florins yearly,<sup>53</sup> whose Sunday concerts Mozart had enriched for years, with his incomparable music, could only be bothered to give him a common grave, with no headstone, does not hold water.

Next, we are confronted by yet another mystery, surrounding Mozart's death. As we read in numerous biographies of Mozart, that Baron van Swieten gave Mozart a 3<sup>rd</sup> class burial, to take some of the debt burden away from Constanze; it turns out that this was absolutely unnecessary.

Most significantly of all – Mozart, as a Master Mason, was eligible for a solemn Masonic funeral, with all the pomp and circumstance that the Brothers could offer, to their musical friend, whose compositions graced the hallowed walls of their sacred Lodge. It wouldn't have cost van Swieten or Constanze one kreuzer – the Freemasons at *Crowned Hope* would absorb all the costs.

No scholar has ever mentioned this detail.

According to Albert G. Mackey, considered the greatest Masonic scholar of all time, whose works are still studied in Lodges around the world, in his book *Jurisprudence of Freemasonry*, we find this Master Mason Right:

The right to be conducted to his last home by his brethren, and to be committed to his mother earth with the ceremonies of the Order, is one that, under restrictions, belongs to every Master Mason.

No Mason can be interred with the formalities of the Order, unless it be at his own special request, communicated to the Master of the Lodge of which he died a member – foreigners and cojourners excepted; unless he has been advanced to the Third Degree of Masonry, from which there can be no exception.<sup>54</sup>

All Mozart had to do was to inform his Lodge Master, Count Johann Esterházy, of the wealthy Hungarian family, that he was not feeling well, and would request, in the event of his death, that he receive a Master Mason burial. That would alleviate all funeral costs, and would give him a worthy send-off, from his illustrious Brothers.

Mozart was last in his Lodge on Thursday, November 17, 1791,<sup>55</sup> when he directed his *Laut verkünde unsre Freude*, [Loudly We Proclaim our Joy, K. 623], his last Masonic cantata, at a consecration of his Lodge. So he had plenty of time to speak with his Lodge Master, to request a Masonic burial. Even later, when he was bed-bound, he could have sent a written request to *Crowned Hope* Lodge authorities.

But no Masonic burial ceremonies sounded in Vienna for Brother Mozart. The songs of the black winter birds, flying overhead in the gray December sky, were the only music heard on that dreary day.

\*\*\*\*\*

Later, as Mozart's condition worsened, Sophie went out, on that freezing December night, to find a priest, to administer last rites. Yet, when she arrived at St. Peter's Church in the inner city, just around the corner from 970 Rauhensteingasse, the priests refused to come. She documented the event in her letter to Nissen:

The clergy refused to come to the last rites because the sick person did not send for them himself.<sup>56</sup> The clergy all refused for a long time; finally, I was able to persuade the holy monster who promised (but didn't come).<sup>57</sup>

Gunther Duda notes:

When Mozart was dying, Sophie ran to a clergyman and asked him to come to Mozart to hear his confession and to give him the last rites. -- The pious man asked her whether Mozart sent her, and when she couldn't answer in the affirmative, he said: 'This musician has always been a bad Catholic, I won't go to him.' So Mozart died without receiving the last rites, but another tolerant clergyman blessed his body.<sup>58</sup>

Nissen notated in the margin of Sophie's letter: "They didn't come."<sup>59</sup>

Duda adds, humorously:

For fun's sake I have to mention it here; that when I told this in the Vienna newspaper years ago, the censor changed it as follows: 'She [Sophie] immediately rushed to the confessor and he (Mozart), as he had always been a good Catholic, received the last sacraments.'<sup>60</sup>

Sophie's statement shows that something strange was afoot. True, Mozart was not an ardent Catholic, only sporadically attending Mass – if at all, since he moved to Vienna in 1781. We know that he attended Mass with Constanze, before their marriage. In her prayer book, the composer scribbled, "Don't be too pious."<sup>61</sup>

True, he was a Freemason, which association the Catholic Church regarded as anti-religious and anticlerical. This point, alone, possibly alludes to why the priests from St. Peter's Church resolutely refused to come to 970 Rauhensteingasse, to administer last rites to Mozart.

But to claim that a person, on their deathbed, should, of necessity, be well enough to issue a request to a family member to march to the church, and ask a priest to come to their residence (late at night), to administer last rites, calls up all matter of absurdities on a grand scale; almost to the point of parody. Sophie, as a family member, was sent by Mozart's wife; that should have been sufficient to summon the priest.

But the Catholic Church and the Freemasons – that was another matter. They had a very tenuous association.

The head priest at St. Peter's Church was the Jansenist dean, Anton Ruzizcka (1735-1795), a friend of Baron Gottfried van Swieten, an assistant to Arch Duke Max Franz, and a "well-known pulpit preacher."<sup>62</sup> Ruzizcka employed 68 vicars and curates in 1783; it's not known which clergymen Sophie begged to attend to Mozart on that last night.

Duda calls Ruzizcka a "sacrament refuser": "the "sinners" had to have shown real remorse first through their lifestyle. Before he allowed them to receive Communion, he imposed long, penitential rites on them."<sup>63</sup>

The refusal of the priests at St. Peter's Church to administer last rites, or even sacraments, was not an anomaly. In 1791, an apostolic letter, "In Eminente" of Pope Clement XII (dated 28 April 1738, and the corresponding bull of Benedict XIV of 18 May 1751) were still valid. Pope Pius VI had condemned all Freemasons: he considered "all corruption" as well as "contempt for religion" to be the work of Freemasons." Pius wrote: "No one should harbor a Freemason under penalty of excommunication."<sup>64</sup>

Duda notes: "The Viennese clergy were, of course, aware of the papal condemnation of the "godless". Nevertheless, Freemason Brothers continued to be buried in church [cemeteries], for example, Joseph Soldaner (1758-1784), Master Mason of "True Concord," and Director of the Gräflich [Count] Dietrichstein Natural History Collection."<sup>65</sup>

In comparison to Ruzizcka, Duda cites the more open tolerance of the head priest, Stanislaus Spenger, at St. Michael's Church, writing, "In any case, he did not refuse the funeral in his church for Mozart [an *Exequiem*] by the Wiedner theater directors, [Emanuel Schikaneder and Joseph von Bauernfeld] on December 10, 1791."<sup>66</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

Sophie was good to help Constanze with sewing the padded nightshirt, as it was painful for Mozart to move. She was a great help at the end, and Constanze, alone and on her own, must have been very grateful to have her sister present. But whoever worded the plaque at 8 Mozartplatz, and Sophie's gravestone, appears to be trying to discredit Constanze.

But Constanze had the last word. Because Mozart always loved her with all his heart and soul, as he often wrote in his letters to her, and because Constanze sold 15 parcels of Mozart's scores to Offenbach music publisher, Johann Anton André in 1799, with a copy of Franz Süssmayr's score of the completed *Requiem*, for 2,550 gulden, ensuring that the world would never lose the sound of her husband's phenomenal music. <sup>67</sup>

And for these reasons alone, Constanze, despite all her faults, should be given at least more than a paltry modicum of credit. Thanks to Constanze, Mozart's compositions, lying dusty and yellowing in a closet, in her apartment in Vienna, were rescued by her, Georg Nissen, and the Abbé Maximillian Stadler, who

organized the scores -- possibly with other, outside guidance -- and assisted in preparing them for sale, ensuring that Mozart's precious scores would not be lost to posterity.

Heinz Gärtner astutely comments:

If she had not taken an interest in Mozart's musical estate, if she had not asked Stadler and Nissen to sort it out and put it in order, there is not telling what would have happened to it. Quite possibly it might have been scattered to the four winds.<sup>68</sup>

Constanze was the "true caregiver" of Mozart at the end, and even more importantly, the true caretaker of his immortal music, which we still have today. That is the most priceless gift of all. A world without Mozart's music is unimaginable.

A big round of applause for the magnificent Madame Mozart. And now, let us present Constanze with a posthumous, virtual cyber award: a nursing certificate.

My translations are used for Nissen's *Biographie W. A. Mozarts* endnotes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Corneilson, Paul, "Josepha Hofer, First Queen of the Night." This paper was originally presented at the conference, 'After the Magic Flute,' organized by Adeline Mueller at the University of California, Berkeley, March 2010. It is available online at Academia.edu: <[https://www.academia.edu/36830980/Josepha\\_Hofer\\_First\\_Queen\\_of\\_the\\_Night](https://www.academia.edu/36830980/Josepha_Hofer_First_Queen_of_the_Night)> (4 November 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Haibl's 16 Masses are preserved in the Kuhač collection, at the Nacionalna i Sveučilišna Knjižnica in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia.

<sup>3</sup> Nissen, Georg Nikolaus von, *Biographie W. A. Mozarts*, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1991, 572.

<sup>4</sup> Deutsch, O. E., *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, Translated by Eric Blom, Peter Branscombe and Jeremy Noble, London: Adam & Charles Black, 1956, 524.

<sup>5</sup> Nissen, Georg Nikolaus von, *Biographie W. A. Mozarts*, 573.

<sup>6</sup> Deutsch, O. E., *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, 525.  
(See pages 524-527 for Sophie's entire letter.)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 574.

<sup>8</sup> *A Mozart Pilgrimage: The Travel Diaries of Vincent & Mary Novello in the Year 1829*, Edited by Nerina Medici & Rosemary Hughes, London: Eulenburg Books, 1975, 215.

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>10</sup> Nissen, Georg Nikolaus von, *Biographie W. A. Mozarts*, 564.

<sup>11</sup> Nissen, Georg Nikolaus von, *Biographie W. A. Mozarts*, 574.

<sup>12</sup> Davies, Mozart: *Mozart in Person: His Character and Health*, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1989, 174. Von Střítež was a soldier in the Austrian army, who fled Austria to Holland, after taking part in an unlawful duel (Empress Maria Theresa outlawed duels). He changed his name to Müller, and began working as a sculptor; he was a talented artist. He became very wealthy in Naples by recasting ancient statues. He returned to Vienna in 1780. His shop was initially based on the Kohlmarkt, but moved; he opened an art gallery on the Stock-im-Platz, No. 610, first floor, near St. Stephen's Cathedral. His shop was a renowned tourist attraction, where he presented famous figures, cast in wax, wearing their own clothing. Müller's shop also featured mechanical objects, for which Mozart and other musicians, composed music. Leonard Posch, who cast Mozart's profile in wax, worked at Müller's shop, at one time. Posch recalled in his autobiography, that "his job was to make the figures, which were then coloured, dressed and given real hair by Müller-Deym." Posch gave up marble sculpture for health reasons, and dedicated himself to making small wax portraits and medals. In 1791, Posch and von Střítež went into business together.

See also: O. E. Deutsch, "Count Deym and His Mechanical Organs", in *Music & Letters*, 29, 2, 1948, 140-145, and an online article, Galleria Carlo Virgilio & C., "Joseph Deym von Střítež and Leonard Posch – Sir William Hamilton,"

<<https://www.carlovirgilio.it/en/opera/joseph-deym-von-stritez-and-leonhard-posch-sir-william-hamilton/>> (16 October 2024).

<sup>13</sup> Nissen, *Biographie W. A. Mozarts*, 573.

<sup>14</sup> *A Mozart Pilgrimage: The Travel Diaries of Vincent & Mary Novello in the Year 1829*, 214.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 213-214.

<sup>16</sup> Deutsch, O. E., *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, 525.

<sup>17</sup> Hermann Abert, "Konstanze Nissens Tagebuch aus den Jahren 1824-1837," *Mozarteums Mitteilungen*, 1920, 69.

<sup>18</sup> Deutsch, O. E., *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, 525.

<sup>19</sup> Gärtner, Heinz, *Constanze Mozart: After the Requiem*, Translated by Reinhard G. Pauly, Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1991, 203.

<sup>20</sup> Stafford, *The Mozart Myths, A Critical Reassessment*, Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1991, 135.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>22</sup> Robbins Landon, *Mozart's Last Year: 1791*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1988, 182

<sup>23</sup> Solomon, Maynard, "The Myth of the Eternal Child," *19<sup>th</sup> Century Music*, Vol. 15, No. 2 Toward Mozart (Autumn 1991), University of California Press, 104, fn 49:

Nannerl's comment first appeared in Friedruck von Schlichtegroll's *Necrolog aus dem Jahr 1791*, Voll II [Gotha, 1793] 109; in Jean-Baptiste Suard, "Anecdotes sur Mozart," in *Mélanges de littérature* (1804), 5; cited in Deutsch, *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, 498, and Nissen's *Biographie W. A. Mozarts*, 529.

<sup>24</sup> Stafford, *The Mozart Myths, A Critical Reassessment*, 132.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>26</sup> Nissen, Georg Nikolaus von, *Biographie W. A. Mozarts*, 575.



---

<sup>27</sup> Solomon, Maynard, *Mozart: A Life*, New York: HarperCollinsPublishing, 1995, p. 493. Solomon cites this detail on p. 588 of his book, in fn54: Nissen, memorandum, in Dalchow et al., *Mozarts Tod*, 30.

<sup>28</sup> Nissen, Georg Nikolaus von, *Biographie W. A. Mozarts*, 575.

<sup>29</sup> Deutsch, O. E., *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, 525.

<sup>30</sup> There are several versions of the Hippocratic Oath, but I chose this one, online, as it is short and concise. The modern oath is much longer, but this version supports what Dr. Closset should have followed concerning the care of his patients.

Penn State College of Medicine, “Oath of Modern Hippocrates,”

[https://students.med.psu.edu/md-](https://students.med.psu.edu/md-students/oath/#:~:text=I%20shall%20do%20by%20my,important%20goal%20in%20everyone's%20life.)

[students/oath/#:~:text=I%20shall%20do%20by%20my,important%20goal%20in%20everyone's%20life.](https://students.med.psu.edu/md-students/oath/#:~:text=I%20shall%20do%20by%20my,important%20goal%20in%20everyone's%20life.) (16 October 2024).

<sup>31</sup> Wikipedia.org, “Hippocratic Oath,” <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippocratic\\_Oath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippocratic_Oath)> (8 October 2025).

<sup>32</sup> This phrase originated from the 19<sup>th</sup> century English surgeon, Thomas Inman.

Wikipedia.org, “Hippocratic Oath,”

<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippocratic\\_Oath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippocratic_Oath)> (16 October 2024).

<sup>33</sup> Duda et al, *Mozarts Tod, 1791-1971*, Pähl: Verlag Hohe Warte, 1971, 217.

<sup>34</sup> Retitled “A Dissertation on the Sources of Signs of Chronic Illnesses,” Closset’s paper appeared in print in 1788 in a collection of dissertations under Stoll’s direction.

<sup>35</sup> Bär, Carl, *Mozart - Krankheit - Tod - Begräbnis*, Schriftenreihe der Internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum, Vol. I, 1966, 48.

<sup>36</sup> Bär, *Mozart - Krankheit - Tod - Begräbnis*, 15.

<sup>37</sup> Bär, Carl, *Mozart - Krankheit - Tod - Begräbnis*, 18; From Stoll’s lecture “Concerning the Care of the Doctor.”

<sup>38</sup> Nissen, Georg Nikolaus von, *Biographie W. A. Mozarts*, 575.

<sup>39</sup> Lee, Simon John-Koo Lee, MD, “Infective Endocarditis and Phlebotomies May Have Killed Mozart,” Jong-Koo Lee Heart Clinic, Seoul, Korea, Copyright by The Korean Society of Cardiology, 2010, 612, online:

<[https://www.academia.edu/121381138/Infective\\_endocarditis\\_and\\_phlebotomies\\_may\\_have\\_killed\\_mozart?auto=download&email\\_work\\_card=download-paper](https://www.academia.edu/121381138/Infective_endocarditis_and_phlebotomies_may_have_killed_mozart?auto=download&email_work_card=download-paper)> (28 October 2024).

Joseph Deiner’s Report appears in Duda et al, *Mozarts Tod: 1791–1971 – Zum 200 Todestag am 9.12. 1991*, 145-147.

<sup>40</sup> Neumayr, Anton, *Music & Medicine: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert – Notes on Their Lives, Works, and Medical Histories*, Medi-Ed, 1994, 204.

<sup>41</sup> Lee, Simon John-Koo Lee, MD, “Infective Endocarditis and Phlebotomies May Have Killed Mozart,” 613.

<sup>42</sup> Bär, Carl, *Mozart - Krankheit - Tod - Begräbnis*, 48.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 48–49; Dalchow, Duda, and Kerner remark: “Fever with rash (*Fieber mit Ausschlägen*) or high fever (*Fieber hitzige*), or even high fever with rash (*Frieselfieber*) was known, but not the term *hitziges Frieselfieber*. See Johannes Dalchow, Gunther Duda, and Dieter Kerner, *Mozarts Tod: 1791–1971 – Zum 200 Todestag am 9.12. 1991*, Sonderdruck aus der Zeitschrift Mensch und Maß, Pähl, Deutschland: Verlag Hohe Warte – Franz von Bebenburg, 1991, 31.

<sup>44</sup> Duda et al, *Mozarts Tod: 1791–1971 – Zum 200 Todestag am 9.12. 1991*, 134.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

- 
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., 134.
- <sup>47</sup> Duda et al, *Mozarts Tod 1791 – 1971. Zur Wiederkehr seines gewaltsames Endes am 5.12.1971*, Germany: Pähl, Verlag Franz von Bebenburg, 1966, 151.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., 153.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., 133-134.
- <sup>50</sup> Bär, Carl, *Mozart -- Krankheit – Tod—BegräbnisI*, 85.
- <sup>51</sup> I. R. Karhausen, “Contra Davies: Mozart’s terminal illness,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, Vol. 84, Issue 12, December 1991, (734-6), 734.
- <sup>52</sup> Cormican, Brendan, *Mozarts Death: Mozart’s Requiem*, Northern Ireland: Amadeus, 1991, 250-251.
- <sup>53</sup> Braunbehrens, Volkmar, *Mozart in Vienna, 1781-1791*, Translated by Timothy Bell, New York: HarperPerennial, 1990, 317.
- <sup>54</sup> Macky, Albert G., *Jurisprudence of Freemasonry: The Written and Unwritten Laws of Freemasonry*, Revised by Robert L. Clegg 33°, Richmond, Virginia: Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Co., Inc., 1953, 172, *Section VIII: The Right to Burial*.
- <sup>55</sup> This date has always been cited as 18 November 1791, but an article in the *Die Wiener Blättchen*, a supplement of the city newspaper, *Die Wiener Zeitung*, which listed concerts in the city, reported that the Freemason event took place on 17 November.  
Cited in Cliff Eisen, *New Mozart Documents: A Supplement to O. E. Deutsch’s Documentary Biography*, Palgrave Macmillian, 1991, Entry 112, 71.
- <sup>56</sup> Deutsch, O. E., *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, 525.
- <sup>57</sup> Duda, W.A. *Mozart: “Den Göttern gegeben”*: ein “Bauopfertod,” 170. Duda cites Nissen, “Eintrag in Niemetschek’s Biography 1808,” 87 (fn 318 in Duda, 440).
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., 170-171. Apparently, Sophie made this comment to L. P. Lyser. William Stafford, in *The Mozart Myths: A Critical Reassessment*, p. 194, writes: “This gives the impression that a priest came in the end, but later Sophie told a different story to L. P. Lyser. According to him the priest said: “The musician has always been a bad Catholic. I’m not going to him!”
- <sup>59</sup> Solomon, Maynard, *Mozart: A Life*, New York: Harper Collins, 1995, 497.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., 171.
- <sup>61</sup> Nottebohm, Gustav, *Mozartiana*, Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1880, 10.
- <sup>62</sup> Duda, W.A. *Mozart: “Den Göttern gegeben”*: ein “Bauopfertod,”. 171.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>67</sup> Deutsch, *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, 490-492. This is a copy in English of the “Article of Agreement Between Constanze Mozart And Johann Anton Andre, Vienna, 8 November 1799.”
- <sup>68</sup> Gärtner, Heinz, *Constanze Mozart: After the Requiem*, 203.