

## Historical Perspectives

### *The Composition, Completion, and Early Reception of Mozart's Requiem*

#### *Fiction, Facts, and Open Questions*

The circumstances of Mozart's death have from the beginning provided fertile ground for mysterious fantasies and romantic fairy tales. Here was one of the greatest geniuses of all time writing, on his deathbed, a mass for the dead that he would leave unfinished. The first legends sprang up immediately after the composer's death, commingling into a single narrative the events surrounding the Requiem's genesis and the circumstances of Mozart's illness and death. These accounts are colored by mystery and characterized by the often bizarre traits found in popular and pseudo-scholarly versions of the tale. Familiar anecdotes cling to the history of the Requiem: for example, that of the "unknown messenger" (Doc. 9). This figure has a basis in the historical facts but has acquired a romantic aura as the "Grey Messenger" who, in bringing Mozart the anonymous commission to write a requiem for the dead, conveyed a warning of the composer's own impending death.<sup>1</sup> There are tales of remarkable documents which came to light and vanished just as mysteriously, such as a patently fictitious letter in Italian that Mozart is supposed to have written to Lorenzo da Ponte, saying that he could not rid himself of the image of the unknown man who incessantly importuned him, that he now knew his last hour was upon him, and that he must finish his funeral hymn ("il mio canto funebre"), for he could not leave it uncompleted.<sup>2</sup> The rumor that Mozart was poisoned by his jealous rival, Antonio

1. See Deutsch, "Der Graue Bote," and below, n. 10.

2. Bauer-Deutsch IV, No. 1190; comment in Eibl VI, p. 423. The "original" letter, said to belong to a private collector in England, was first published in 1877. It is now wholly discredited and its whereabouts are unknown.

Salieri, began to circulate at an early date.<sup>3</sup> Our own time has seen the fabrication of other fairy tales—for there is no better term to describe such absurd speculations—such as that Mozart's wife, Constanze, and his pupil Franz Xaver Süssmayr had a love affair (of which Franz Xaver Mozart, born in July 1791, is supposed to have been the fruit),<sup>4</sup> or that Constanze Mozart's financial wheeling and dealing in connection with the Requiem prove her to have been an adept and unscrupulous businesswoman.<sup>5</sup>

The early anecdotes may well have been motivated by the search for more or less plausible answers to the mystery of Mozart's deplorably early death, as a means of easing the sense of tragic loss, but those of recent date tend toward sensationalism. Biographical embroidering of the events surrounding Mozart's death, inseparable as they are from the genesis of his Requiem, will probably never cease altogether.

The essential elements of the actual story were already known by around 1800, and—with the aid of the few additional details that have since come to light—it has always been possible to construct an entirely down-to-earth narrative. The young Countess Anna von Walsegg, born von Flammberg in 1770, died on 14 February 1791. Her husband, Franz Count von Walsegg (1763–1827), of Schloss Stuppach (on the Semmering Pass, some fifty miles southwest of Vienna and about half that distance from the nearest sizeable town, Wiener Neustadt), wanted to commemorate her worthily, and to this end he turned to Vienna. From the sculptor Johann Martin Fischer he commissioned a marble and granite monument at a cost of over 3,000 florins (Doc. 14),<sup>6</sup> and from Mozart a setting of the requiem mass for the comparatively modest fee of 50 ducats<sup>7</sup>—that is, 225 florins (Docs. 9, 11, 16b, 16h, 20).<sup>8</sup> The count was an enthusiastic but dilettante musician with a taste for dressing himself in borrowed plumage from time to time, in that he would put on private performances of music he claimed as his own when it was in fact the work of other hands (Doc. 14). He intended to do the same with Mozart's Requiem, which is why the commission was transmitted in writing and

3. On the various versions of the poisoning legend, see Braunbehrens, *Mozart in Vienna*, 429–35.

4. Cf. Schickling, "Einige ungeklärte Fragen"; comment in Eibl 1976–77.

5. Gärtner, *Mozart's Requiem und Constanze Mozart*, 11; cf. Wolf-Dieter Seiffert's review of Gärtner, *MfJ* (1987–88): 289–92.

6. Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexikon*, 4:245.

7. In setting the fee, Mozart was clearly guided by what he received for an opera (450 florins each for *Die Entführung*, *Figaro*, and *Tito*) and put a relatively high price on the Requiem: half as much as for an opera. On Mozart's income see Steptoe, "Mozart and Poverty," and Steptoe, "Mozart's Finances," in *Mozart Compendium*, 127–30.

8. The sum of 100 ducats (= 450 fl.) cited in some documents is erroneous.

with such discretion (Doc. 9).<sup>9</sup> It reached Mozart in the summer of 1791, anonymously, and very probably carried by a clerk employed by Walsegg's Viennese lawyer, Johann Nepomuk Sortschan.<sup>10</sup>

Mozart died on 5 December 1791, leaving the Requiem unfinished. The larger part of it had been written, however, and in order to honor the commission and collect the rest of the fee—an advance had been paid, and the whole represented a substantial sum to the young widow with two small children to support—Constanze Mozart arranged for its completion by several musicians from her husband's immediate circle. The score was finished by Franz Xaver Süssmayr (who had assisted Mozart in the last months of his life with the operas *Die Zauberflöte* and *La clemenza di Tito*) and duly delivered to the unknown client, whose name Constanze learned only in 1800 (Doc. 19). The count had the work performed on 14 December 1793 in the parish church, the Neuklosterkirche, in Wiener Neustadt, within the liturgical framework of a mass for the soul of his late wife. The score used on this occasion was a copy in the count's own hand, giving his own name, "Fr. C[omte]. de Wallsegg," as the composer.<sup>11</sup> But the first performance of the completed Requiem had already been given, probably without the count's knowledge, on 2 January 1793 in the Jahn-Saal in Vienna, at a concert arranged by Baron Gottfried van Swieten for the benefit of Constanze Mozart and her children.<sup>12</sup>

Mozart's fragment had been performed even earlier, just a few days after his death and burial. The almost universally accepted notion that Mozart was quietly buried in a mass grave with no mourners present conveniently buttressed the prevailing view that the financially strapped composer had increasingly become alienated from his friends, supporters, and wider audience—a misinterpretation that was finally put to rest by Volkmar Braunbehrens, who showed that the burial ritual followed exactly the Josephine regulations observed in Vienna at the time.<sup>13</sup>

9. Constanze Mozart referred later (Doc. 16g) to the wax seal from the letter commissioning the Requiem. Niemetschek had also seen the letter (Doc. 9, Niemetschek's note).

10. Cf. Deutsch, "Der Graue Bote"; Deutsch, "Geschichte von Mozarts Requiem." For quite a long time the "Grey Messenger" was identified as Franz Anton Leitgeb (cf. Doc. 14, n. 17); however, as Deutsch argues convincingly, Leitgeb was not a stranger to either Mozart or his wife. Since the commission to Johann Martin Fischer for the tomb was sent via Walsegg's lawyer in Vienna, it is likely that the Requiem commission traveled by the same route and that a clerk from Sortschan's office would have been the carrier of this intentionally anonymous letter. On the Walsegg family, see Requiem Catalog, 237–42.

11. Cf. Biba, "Par Monsieur de Walsegg."

12. *Mozart-Dokumente*, 409; *Mozart DB*, 467. See also below, n. 26.

13. Braunbehrens, *Mozart in Vienna*, 413–18.

Further details have come to light regarding Mozart's funeral, which was paid for by Baron van Swieten, prefect of the Imperial Library and one of Mozart's staunchest patrons. For instance, on 6 December 1791 the funeral procession from Mozart's apartment to St. Stephen's Cathedral was led by a crossbearer, four pallbearers, and four choirboys with candle lamps. The identity of those who followed him also seems quite clear: the widow, Constanze; her sisters and other members of the Weber family; Baron van Swieten; Mozart's students Franz Jakob Freystädler, Franz Xaver Süssmayr, and Otto Hatwig; then Mozart's colleagues and friends Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, Anselm Hüttenbrenner, and Antonio Salieri. However, of particular importance is what hitherto unknown church records, only recently discovered, have revealed: on 10 December 1791 a requiem mass was held for Mozart at St. Michael's, the parish church of the Hofburg (Mozart held the appointment of court composer) and chapel of the Caecilien-kongregation (the association of court musicians, of which Mozart was a member; Docs. 4 and 5). The memorial service was organized by Emanuel Schikaneder (impresario, librettist, and the first singer to play Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*) and his colleague Joseph von Bauernfeld on behalf of Vienna's court and theater musicians. Moreover, a newspaper report of 16 December 1791 states that "the Requiem, which he composed in his last illness, was executed" (Doc. 5)—an unmistakable reference to an actual performance of Mozart's Requiem as part of a liturgical requiem mass.

This performance within less than a week of Mozart's death must have been confined to the finished part of the Requiem. The only completely finished and indeed performable section was the Introit, the first movement, but it seems that the Kyrie was included in the performance as well.<sup>14</sup> The extant documents reveal no concrete details regarding the performance of Mozart's Requiem fragment. Hence we can only speculate whether the remainder of the liturgical requiem was presented as plainchant or, perhaps, in combination with the finished portions of Mozart's four-part short score of the Sequence and the Offertory, with organ instead of orchestral accompaniment.

But there is no need to ponder why musical Vienna neglected to pay Mozart an appropriate tribute: it didn't. Mozart's friends not only held a memorial service soon after his death, they also chose the most fitting music. They clearly understood that when the dying composer put aside the Requiem score, he knew that he had been writing a requiem for himself.

14. For Mozart's funeral and memorial service, see Brauneis, "Unveröffentlichte Nachrichten"; Brauneis, "Exequien für Mozart"; Wolff, Review of *Mozart: Requiem*.

The various anecdotes and legends that have accumulated around the Requiem's genesis can be related to the objective core of the story as set out above, if the crucial data are kept in sight. But we are on less certain ground when it comes to the essential details of the actual process of composition, beginning with Mozart's plan and conception of the work, and his execution of a substantial part of it, and continuing to its posthumous completion by a number of other composers. This, however, is precisely the area of greatest interest to those who wish to understand the Requiem as a musical work of art.

The voluminous specialist literature on the subject of Mozart's Requiem (see the Bibliography) has until now paid less attention to the fascinating way in which the various aspects of the history of the work's composition interlock with the history of its early reception than it has to a series of important individual questions. Foremost among these has been the fraught, complex question of authenticity, the exact relationship, that is, between that part of the unfinished work that is known to be by Mozart and the remainder, to which the extent of his contribution is problematical.

Friedrich Blume summarized the state of knowledge in the early 1960s in an article first published in English translation under the title "Requiem but No Peace."<sup>15</sup> This title expresses the patent resignation of one contemplating the host of open questions that still surround Mozart's last, unfinished work—in particular the question of authenticity. Blume acknowledged that Mozart scholarship found itself powerless to reduce the innumerable controversial statements and opinions that had been aired for nearly two centuries to a common denominator, let alone bring them to a final and conclusive resolution. The situation has scarcely changed in the three decades since Blume wrote. What is to follow on these pages will not affect our understanding fundamentally, but perhaps it will make a difference at the level of detail. One unhappy result of past discussion—as Blume noted—has been the polarization of source studies and stylistic criticism. The present study hopes to avoid giving primacy to either of these approaches; rather, the two aspects should be allowed to complement each other.

Some progress has been made, as can be seen above all from Wolfgang Plath's work on sketches he himself discovered and on the voluminous historical correspondence about the Requiem, or from Ernst Hess's stylistic analyses of Süssmayr's contributions to the work.<sup>16</sup> Last but not least, Leopold Nowak's edition,

15. *Musical Quarterly* 47 (1961): 147–69 (the English title was suggested by Paul Henry Lang).

16. Plath, "Über Skizzen zum Requiem"; "Requiem-Briefe"; "Noch ein Requiem-Brief"; Hess, "Zur Ergänzung des Requiems"; supplemented by the sensitive observations in Beyer's edition of the Requiem (1971; 1979); cf. also Beyer, "Zur Neuinstrumentation."

published in the *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, played a decisive role in illuminating the darkness that surrounds the Requiem by placing the accent firmly on the study of primary musical and archival sources, which proved to be far from exhausted.<sup>17</sup> H. C. Robbins Landon, on the other hand, presented a work of compilation rather than one that broke new ground;<sup>18</sup> other additions to the literature, in their concentration on the roles possibly played by Constanze Mozart and Franz Xaver Süssmayr, have tended toward the speculative, sensationalist, and/or polemical.<sup>19</sup>

The central questions remain the same as they have always been.<sup>20</sup> Everything starts from, and returns to, one fact: Mozart, having received the commission to write his Requiem in 1791, was unable to complete it because death took the pen from his hand. This truth is indisputable, although it was consciously and persistently concealed as far as possible by members of Mozart's family and intimate circle.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, uncertainty has always clouded attempts to establish the exact amount of the surviving musical text of the Requiem that can be attributed to Mozart. The decisive role played by his pupil and assistant Süssmayr in completing the work is well known, and the parts of the score that survive in autograph permit, up to a point, exact differentiation of what is in Mozart's hand and what in the hands of others.<sup>22</sup> But we still do not know exactly how much of the music Mozart had worked out, the overall formal disposition or the form of what remained to be done. Further questions hang upon this point: what is the chronology of the composition and completion of the Requiem in 1791–92? When did Mozart start, and how did he proceed? What happened in the weeks immediately before and after his death? When was the score ready? And, further, what were the decisive technical and stylistic premises for the work,

17. NMA I/2, vols. 1–2 (1965). The Internationale Bachakademie Stuttgart organized a symposium on Mozart's Requiem in the autumn of 1987, with contributions from Franz Beyer, Robert Levin, Wolfgang Plath, and the present author (English version: Wolff, "Composition and Completion of Mozart's Requiem"). Moseley, "Mozart's Requiem," presents a recent, more detailed discussion of the sources.

18. Landon, 1791.

19. Schickling, "Einige ungeklärte Fragen"; Gärtner, *Mozarts Requiem und Constanze Mozart*; Hildesheimer, *Mozart*; in particular, Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus* (later filmed).

20. The questions centering on the ominous "Grey Messenger" and the commissioning of the work by Count Walsegg must now be regarded as essentially settled. See Anton Herzog's "True and Detailed History of the Requiem by W. A. Mozart" (Doc. 14), discovered in the early 1960s; Deutsch, "Der Graue Bote"; "Geschichte von Mozarts Requiem"; Biba, "Par Monsieur de Walsegg."

21. Nissen, *Wolfgang Mozart's Biographie*, 1:571f., and 2:168–75, does not once allude to additions to the score made by other hands.

22. Cf. also Günter Brosche's commentary in his facsimile edition of the Requiem (1990).

and to what extent were those who worked on its completion after Mozart's death aware of them and able to implement them?

If we are to answer these questions, it can only be by reference to the whole complex of historical, archival, textual, and analytical factors. We cannot afford to neglect any one of these aspects, even though there is no hope that Mozart scholarship will ever be able to lay the question to rest. The attempt will be made in the following pages to organize the daunting quantities of intractable material into groups of compatible content while keeping the questions posed above in sight in at least some form. But there is no escaping the fact that some things can be treated only summarily and that some aspects will be favored above others: more emphasis will fall, understandably, on those of central importance, but those that promise to open new perspectives will also be explored.

### *The Requiem Controversy (1825–39)*

The so-called “Requiem-Streit,” or Requiem controversy, was kindled by a polemical article, “Über die Echtheit des Mozartschen Requiem” (On the Authenticity of Mozart's Requiem), published in 1825 by Gottfried Weber.<sup>23</sup> It caused a furor, for it raised the question of Mozart's authorship of the entire work. Weber began as follows:

Of all the works by our glorious Mozart, there is hardly one that enjoys as much general admiration, even veneration, as his Requiem.

This is, however, very remarkable—one might almost say amazing—for of all his works this is the one that can be described, bluntly, as the least perfect, the least finished: indeed, it is scarcely worthy to be called a work of Mozart's at all.

Jacob Gottfried Weber (1779–1839) was a lawyer by profession and an official of the court of appeals in Darmstadt at the time, but he was well read in music theory, and his article was written in a serious attempt to shed light on the contradictions that had been apparent for the previous twenty-five years. For the story of the work's genesis was generally seen as “threaded through with a certain mystical, almost romantic obscurity.”<sup>24</sup>

23. Weber, “Über die Echtheit”; “Weitere Nachrichten über die Echtheit”; “Nachtrag zur Vertheidigung der Echtheit.” On Weber's life and writings, see *MGG*, vol. 14, cols. 333–36, and *New Grove*, 20:267f.

24. Weber, “Über die Echtheit,” 205.

In the course of that quarter-century, Mozart's Requiem had become well known to the musical public through numerous performances in many places as well as through the publication of a full score (Leipzig, 1800), a vocal score (Offenbach, 1801), and the parts (Vienna, 1812). But from a very early date, too, anecdotal reports had drawn a veil of mystery about the work. In connection with the appearance of the Leipzig first edition, Franz Xaver Süssmayr wrote a letter to Breitkopf & Härtel, setting out his crucial part in the work's final form. The letter was published in 1801 in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (Doc. 17).<sup>25</sup> In spite of that, his name was not mentioned in any of the editions of the work. Since no documentary evidence or original source material was available, the question was inevitably asked: Had the Requiem been left unfinished, or had Mozart in fact finished it?

On the one hand, there was the plain statement in the first full-length biography of the composer, by Franz Xaver Niemetschek (Prague, 1798), that the messenger from the person who had commissioned the Requiem "arrived and asked for the composition in its incomplete state, and it was given him" (Doc. 9).<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, Friedrich Rochlitz's far more elaborate account, also published in 1798, declared that Mozart had believed that he was "writing this piece for his own funeral. He could not be shaken in this belief; he worked, therefore, like Raphael at his *Transfiguration*, with the constant sense that his own death was near, and, like Raphael, what he created was the transfiguration of himself."<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Mozart believed that his client

25. The letter was published in vol. 4, p. 1; it was reprinted in Weber, "Über die Echtheit," 208f.

26. The brief reference to the Requiem in the first biography of Mozart, that of Schlichtegroll, also mentions its being unfinished. The reference is introduced by a quotation of Haydn's testimony to Leopold Mozart. "I tell you before God, and as an honest man, that I acknowledge your son as the greatest composer of whom I have ever heard; he has taste and possesses the most thorough-going knowledge of the art of composition." This verdict from one better qualified than any other to judge was confirmed yet again by the Mass for the Dead, the so-called Requiem, which Mozart composed in the last days of his life but was unable to finish altogether. The solemn pathos of expression, which we find most aptly combined there with the highest degree of art, moved every heart at the performance given in aid of the composer's widow and children, and earned the admiration of all connoisseurs" (Schlichtegroll, "Mozarts Leben" [1793], 29).

27. In the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1 (1798): 150. Rochlitz later told Weber that during Constanze Mozart's visit to Leipzig for the performance of the Requiem given there in 1796 (Doc. 15), he had "laid siege to her" to ask her questions "about everything that I was then capable of esteeming and taking interest in; among other things, about the genesis of the Requiem, and everything to do with it. From everything that I learned then, and at once made a note of, without any purpose in mind, other than not to forget it" (*Cäcilia* 4 [1826]: 287f.). See Solomon, "The Rochlitz Anecdotes," 32 (anecdote 20).



had been sent to him to warn him of his end. He was therefore all the more earnestly resolved to set up a worthy memorial to his name. He worked on in these beliefs, and it is no wonder that the outcome was so perfect a piece. He often sank in utter exhaustion and unconsciousness as he labored on. Before the four weeks were at an end he had finished but also—fallen asleep.<sup>28</sup>

The general public's confusion can only have been increased by the authors' claims to have based these differing accounts on the testimony of Mozart's widow.

Weber published a series of papers, setting out his grounds for doubting the Requiem's authorship, but his arguments were generally viewed in a negative light in later Mozart scholarship. An exception was Otto Jahn, who not only provided the first comprehensive discussion of the whole Requiem controversy, in his biography of Mozart, but also went so far as to credit Weber with an "honest endeavor," even if his criticisms of the Requiem were often unjustified and marred by polemical exaggeration.<sup>29</sup> Weber had based his case on the following premises.

We may . . . accept with Rochlitz that before his death Mozart had completed his swan song (but for a few small details, perhaps). We may further accept, with Gerber,<sup>30</sup> that after Mozart's death the manuscript of the work—complete but for a few small details, perhaps—was delivered to the unknown client. We further accept as well known that the identity of the unknown client was not discovered and that the original manuscript handed over to him has not come to light since then: no one has ever yet made any such claim. . . .

But it is common knowledge that before the author of an extensive work commits it to paper in the form of an orderly and complete manuscript, it is customary for him first of all to set down quick drafts: outlines, sketches, *ébauches*, *croquis*, call them what you will. In the case of vocal compositions, especially, there will be places in his rough draft where the composer may

28. Rochlitz, in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1 (1798): 178. See Solomon, "The Rochlitz Anecdotes," 33 (anecdote 22).

29. Jahn's discussion is found in his *W. A. Mozart* (1867), 800–814 ("Die Kontroverse über das Requiem"). Remarkably, Gruber, *Mozart und die Nachwelt*, treats the Requiem's reception history and the whole Requiem controversy only peripherally. See, however, the extensive documentation in Requiem Catalog, 271–92. The quotation is from Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (1867), 804.

30. Ernst Ludwig Gerber, in *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*, (Leipzig, 1814), s.v. "Mozart," col. 481: "Immediately after his death, the messenger called again, and asked for the work, and was given it in its incomplete state."

well write out only the parts for the four voices in full, on two or more staves; he will then have them copied out, in full score as it were, with the copyist leaving blank the staves on which the composer then writes out the instrumental parts. In short, before elaborating and writing down the complete score, the composer first executes sketches and other preparatory work of all kinds, according as circumstances, need, and convenience dictate.

It was no doubt sketches of such a nature, left behind among Mozart's papers, perhaps mixed up with other snippets of paper, that were given by his widow to Herr Süßmayr and used by the latter in the composition of the Requiem which we now possess.

An explanation on these lines serves not only, as may be seen, to resolve the apparent contradiction between Süßmayr's and Rochlitz's accounts, and between Rochlitz's and that of the truth-loving Gerber; but also to solve the riddle of how it came about that the Requiem was given to the unknown client and yet remained among Mozart's papers to be found by Süßmayr. . . . The upshot is that, in place of the above-mentioned, very well-founded suspicions concerning the authenticity of the Requiem as we know it, we now confront the sad but scarcely debatable certainty that this same Requiem, exactly as Süßmayr's letter to the publishers alleges, is largely Süßmayr's work, with not a movement in it purely by Mozart, while the authentic Requiem composed by Mozart has not—or at least not yet—seen the light of day.<sup>31</sup>

These premises underlay Weber's graver aesthetic doubts about the entire work, which led him to the conclusion that, contrary to Süßmayr's own testimony (Doc. 17), less of the original material of such movements as the Kyrie, the "Tuba mirum," the "Confutatis," or the "Quam olim Abrahae" fugue was by Mozart than alleged, while he must have had a substantially greater share in the movements that Süßmayr had claimed were by himself (Sanctus to Agnus Dei). Thus Weber cast serious doubt on the authenticity of the complete score that had been published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1800, and widely distributed in the following twenty-five years, under the name of Mozart alone.

Weber's detailed criticism of the music was often both pedantic and unjustifiedly harsh, as his comments on the Kyrie illustrate:

It would distress me to be obliged to believe, for example, that it was Mozart who inflicted such warblings as the following upon the chorus [Kyrie,

31. Weber, "Über die Echtheit," 211–14.

mm. 18 ff.]. There would be howls of protest on all sides, from singers and critics alike, if such *gorgheggi* were offered under the name of Rossini, perhaps, or any other composer less highly respected than Mozart.<sup>32</sup>

This was not the first occasion on which Beethoven took umbrage at the man he called “Giffried” Weber (translated “Gallfrey” as opposed to “Godfrey”): here he scribbled furiously in the margin, “O you arch-donkey” and “O you double donkey.”<sup>33</sup> Nothing less, indeed, than the integrity of Mozart’s genius was at stake, and the entire musical world was aroused to express a wide variety of views. The response that carried the most weight came from Abbé Maximilian Stadler, the long-established friend and adviser of the Mozart family, who wrote *Vertheidigung der Echtheit des Mozart’schen Requiem* (Defense of the Authenticity of Mozart’s Requiem) and two supplementary statements.<sup>34</sup> Stadler was the first to refer to the original source material in his rebuttal of Weber’s arguments (Docs. 22, 26a). At the same time, he threw new fuel on the fire with his remark that the Requiem also contained some motives of Handel.<sup>35</sup> Weber’s reaction was to surmise that the movements in question could therefore only be studies by Mozart. Weber’s opinions gained wide and enduring credence: even Robert Schumann regarded Mozart’s Requiem as “not merely corrupt but wholly inauthentic except for a few numbers.”<sup>36</sup>

The 1827 edition of the Requiem, *Neue nach Mozart’s und Süßmayr’s Handschriften berichtigte Ausgabe* (new edition, corrected on the basis of Mozart’s and Süßmayr’s manuscripts), published by Johann Anton André, the owner of Mozart’s musical estate, was the first edition to name Süßmayr in connection with the work. In conjunction with his wish to present an improved edition, André

32. Weber, “Über die Echtheit,” 216–18. The word Weber used for warblings was “Gurgeleyen,” an allusion to Niemetschek’s comment on Mozart’s songs, in which the composer “dared to defy Italian singers, and banned all useless, characterless warblings, embellishments and trills!” (*Leben des Kapellmeisters Mozart* [1798], 49; the translation given here differs from the version on p. 58 of the English edition, *Life of Mozart*).

33. In Beethoven’s copy of *Cäcilia* (see Krones, “Ein französisches Vorbild,” 17). The Requiem controversy also reached the pages of Beethoven’s conversation notebooks (cf. *Mozart-Dokumente*, Addenda et Corrigenda, 96f.).

34. Stadler, *Vertheidigung der Echtheit des Mozartischen Requiem; Nachtrag zur Vertheidigung; Zweyter und letzter Nachtrag*. On p. 46 of the last work, Stadler reproduced a letter sent him by Beethoven, dated 6 February 1826, saying: “You have done very well indeed in obtaining justice for Mozart’s name through your truly masterly, penetrating essay.”

35. See Part II, pp. 78–80.

36. K<sup>6</sup>, 730.

also sought to clarify the work's history and included a substantial introduction, which contained sober factual information but also found room for some fairly wild hypotheses, such as the attempt to connect the Requiem with another unfinished work, the Mass in C Minor K 427, and to prove that both dated from 1783 (Doc. 26a). The edition reveals plainly enough the difficulty of making a clean separation of Mozart's and Süßmayr's contributions and designating them appropriately. The problem becomes even clearer in the edition of the Sequence and Offertory published separately in 1829 ("as written by Mozart in his own hand, and copied exactly from Mozart's original by Abbé Stadler").<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, André's editions of 1827 and 1829 constitute the first essential landmarks on the road toward an edition based on the best available sources.

In the early years of the Requiem controversy, none of the disputants could call on truly reliable evidence of Mozart's part in the composition. As Weber rightly bemoaned, the original manuscripts were not available. They remained unknown to the general public for as long as the owners—for whatever reason— withheld them. Abbé Stadler was the first to mention them (Doc. 22), but then, very quickly, one piece at a time, they came to light. Stadler himself gained possession of the autograph score of the Sequence, lacking only the "Lacrymosa," in 1826 and sold it to the Court Library in Vienna in or about 1829.<sup>38</sup> In 1826—and probably earlier—the "Lacrymosa," together with the Offertory, belonged to Joseph Eybler, one of Mozart's pupils and Salieri's successor as Capellmeister to the Court in Vienna;<sup>39</sup> he presented both manuscripts to the Court Library in 1833.<sup>40</sup> Neither Stadler nor Eybler gave any account, however, of how they came by these autographs. Stadler only mentioned a mysterious "friend," who gave him the material on 22 March 1826 (Docs. 23, 26a, 29).<sup>41</sup> Stadler's reference to the autograph material had an effect on the subsequent stages of the Requiem controversy, however, insofar as that material played an important part in un-

37. André's 1829 edition also includes a hypothetical "original score" of Mozart's "Requiem" and "Kyrie," reduced to the vocal parts and figured bass. See also below, pp. 17–22.

38. According to Nowak, "Die Erwerbung des Mozart-Requiems," this transaction took place in 1831. The diaries of Vincent and Mary Novello testify, on the other hand, that the manuscripts were already in the Court Library in July 1829 (Doc. 12).

39. He had been given them by Constanze Mozart, probably as early as 1792 (Doc. 25).

40. Cf. Nowak, "Die Erwerbung des Mozart-Requiem." Eybler suffered a stroke in 1833 and was given his pension. He had arranged that his Mozart Requiem manuscripts should go to the Court Library after his death (see Fig. 3). That they went there earlier was evidently connected in some way with the terms of his retirement.

41. Stadler's section of the manuscript (Codex b[1]; see pp. 21–22) was in Constanze Mozart's hands in 1800 (Doc. 16n) and was lent to André in Offenbach in 1801–2 (Bauer-Deutsch IV, 387).

derpinning the case that the “Lacrymosa” and the Offertory were indeed by Mozart, thus diminishing Süssmayr’s role.

As the public debate about the Requiem continued,<sup>42</sup> it spread far beyond the circle of those most immediately concerned: the matter crops up, for example, in the correspondence between Goethe and Zelter.<sup>43</sup> But it took a completely new course when, to everyone’s surprise, the complete “original” score was discovered in 1838, among music that had belonged, at the time of his death, to the late Count von Walsegg, who had commissioned the work in 1791. Through the agency of the count’s former steward, Nowack, this score was in turn offered to the Court Library in Vienna and was purchased before the end of 1838 by the chief librarian, Moritz Count Dietrichstein, for the sum of 50 ducats (Mozart’s original fee).<sup>44</sup> The curator of the music collection at that time, Hofrat Ignaz von Mosel, was very well aware of the significance that this unexpected find would have in the Requiem controversy and wasted no time in setting up a team of graphologists. Their professional conclusion, after comparing the score with some of the Süssmayr autographs in Budapest, was that it was the work of two hands, namely Mozart’s and Süssmayr’s.<sup>45</sup>

42. Cf. Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (1867), 800ff. One of the most important participants in the discussion was the Berlin critic and theorist Adolf Bernhard Marx, who wrote about the matter several times in his *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*.

43. “At last we have the score of Mozart’s Requiem in our hands, corrected according to the original manuscripts and enhanced by so much discussion, and now we know what we always knew. You know the periodical *Cäcilia*, so you must have become familiar with Herr Weber of Darmstadt’s bitter, sour, wordy polemic against the authenticity of this posthumous work. He has claimed, namely, that the Requiem is not by Mozart, to all intents and purposes, and if it is, it is the weakest, nay, the most sinful, thing that ever came from the pen of that celebrated man. In short, Mozart left the work unfinished, but after his death Süssmayer put his oar in, sullied Mozart’s ideas, and the work was polluted, if not poisoned, by his imperfect understanding; since Mozart’s death, the world has lived in a state of amazed—nay, amazing—delusion over this legacy, entirely due to the fairy tale of its composition, and no one yet has had the heart to drag the blemishes, patches, and flaws of a work of artistic forgery into the light. Such is Weber’s fancy.” Zelter’s letter of 16 June 1827 to Goethe enlarges further on the subject of the Requiem. See Zelter and Goethe, *Briefwechsel*, 331.

44. Nowack, by then commissioner of justice in Schottwien, wrote to Dietrichstein and Mosel in October and November 1838, giving the names of those who had owned the manuscript since Walsegg’s death (1827; the letters are reproduced in Nowak, “Die Erwerbung des Mozart-Requiem”; cf. also Doc. 14): Countess Sternberg, Walsegg’s sister and residuary legatee; the manager of the Stuppach estate, Joseph Leitner, who bought Walsegg’s musical manuscripts and instruments from the countess; the manorial secretary Karl Haag, formerly one of Walsegg’s musicians, who bought the manuscript; finally, on Haag’s death in 1837, his residuary legatee, Katharina Adelpoller.

45. The Süssmayr autographs included his horn concerto based on a Mozartian original (catalogued as K 514; see p. 45). On the Süssmayr manuscripts in the National Library in Budapest see Kecskeméti, “Süssmayr-Handschriften in Budapest.” Mosel, *Über die Original-Partitur des Requiem*, contains a circumstantial account of the investigation of the Requiem manuscript; cf. also the commentary in Plath, “Noch ein Requiem-Brief,” 101.

Armed with this unanimous verdict, Mosel wrote to Constanze Nissen, Mozart's widow, on 7 February 1839, asking her bluntly to provide definitive information about Mozart's part in the composition of the Requiem (Doc. 31).<sup>46</sup> His sole concern was to obtain a more exact account of Süßmayr's contribution. Once again, however, Constanze avoided giving a direct answer: she replied briefly that Mozart often employed copyists and must have done so in the case of the Requiem—in short, Süßmayr had made no creative contribution to the work (Doc. 32).

Not once after Mozart's death did Constanze make an unequivocal statement about the Requiem, and yet it is impossible to accuse her of dishonest intentions. Like everyone else in the circle of those closest to Mozart, she was motivated primarily by the desire that the Requiem's reputation as Mozart's crowning masterpiece should not be tarnished. They all regarded the question of the work's completion as a matter of secondary importance. None of those who were asked to complete it, including Süßmayr (Doc. 17), wished to see their own names placed at the side of Mozart's—all of which demonstrates how inseparable the composition of the Requiem was from Mozart himself in their eyes and how much they identified the completed work with him.

Constanze died on 6 March 1842—a date that marks the end of the historical Requiem controversy, for she was the last survivor of those who had been directly involved in what happened after Mozart's death.<sup>47</sup> As the documents demonstrate, this small group—Mozart's closest intimates—had contrived repeatedly, and for honorable reasons, to draw all askers of unwelcome questions into an extraordinary game of blind-man's bluff. As a result, to some extent we remain in the dark to this day.

### *The First Edition and Süßmayr's Testimony*

In considering how the Requiem controversy developed, it is important to recognize that what was known in the 1820s about the Requiem's genesis was not essentially different from what had already been established a quarter of a century earlier in connection with the preparation and printing of the first edition (1799–1800), but doubt had repeatedly been cast on that information in the interim. In 1800 the Leipzig company Breitkopf & Härtel lost the competition to acquire Mozart's musical estate to the enterprising publisher André of Offenbach, but it

46. Plath, "Noch ein Requiem-Brief."

47. Except for Joseph Eybler, who lived until 1846, but was disabled following his stroke in 1833.

brought off the coup of publishing the first edition of his Requiem in the same year.<sup>48</sup> Constanze knew of Breitkopf's plans and found herself faced with the need to secure permission to publish from the unknown person who had originally commissioned the work—a need made all the more pressing because publication would be to her benefit. Not knowing his identity, her first idea was to trace him by means of an advertisement in the newspapers (Doc. 16e), but in the end she did not carry out this plan.

For Breitkopf & Härtel, as the publishers, the question of whether Mozart actually completed the Requiem had become a pressing one before 1800. As their correspondence with Constanze shows, they felt obliged to get to the bottom of the matter in good time in order to avoid problems and embarrassment later. They had possessed a copy of the score, provided by Constanze, since the Leipzig performance of 1796 at the latest (Doc. 15), but it was in the hand of a copyist.<sup>49</sup> They also got in touch with Süßmayr, at Constanze's suggestion, and he responded in a letter, dated 8 February 1800 (Doc. 17), giving a more detailed description of his part in completing the Requiem. Finally, in the autumn of 1800, the pertinent sources were collated under notarial supervision—including the score that Constanze had had delivered to Count Walsegg in 1792 in fulfillment of his commission of 1791—for the count had intervened meanwhile, fearing that publication of the Requiem by Breitkopf & Härtel would affect his rights in the work and hoping, if he suffered a loss, at least to recover the fee he had paid Constanze in 1791 and 1792.<sup>50</sup>

A comparison of the first edition and the original score in Count Walsegg's possession took place in the office of the Viennese lawyer Sortschan. Constanze was represented in these proceedings by Nissen and Stadler. The Swedish diplomat Frederik Samuel Silverstolpe, then resident in Vienna, was also present and

48. It appeared before June 1800. The edition included a German version of unknown origin printed below the Latin text; in an appendix, it also included a poetic translation by C. A. H. Clodius (p. 179) and a German parody of the liturgical requiem text by Johann Adam Hiller (p. 180). Constanze could not include the Requiem in her sale of Mozart's musical estate to André, as she had no rights in the work.

49. The Leipzig performance was the first public performance of the completed Requiem outside Vienna (apart from the two given in Wiener Neustadt). It was given by the Leipzig Singakademie under Johann Gottfried Schicht, later Thomascantor, on 20 April 1796 (Doc. 15 and notes). An earlier performance is believed to have taken place in Leipzig, in the Thomas Schule, under Johann Adam Hiller, who also directed individual numbers from the Requiem in the Thomas Kirche. Two copies of the score were made during Constanze Mozart's stay in Leipzig, reportedly by a "Thomaner" called Jost (cf. Weber, "Weitere Nachrichten über die Echtheit," 297). The Breitkopf & Härtel first edition of the Requiem (Leipzig, 1800) was based on one of them.

50. A compromise was reached in that the count "offered to accept copies of several pieces of music in compensation" (Nissen, *Wolfgang Mozart's Biographie*, 2:170).