

**Technical and archival evidence binding W.A. Mozart to the portrait  
„Man in Red Coat“**

**Communication \* October 20, 2006, by M. Braun**

**A. Evidence in the painting**



Fig. 1: Portrait “Man in Red Coat”



Fig. 2: Detail of Fig. 1, showing the small functional buttons of the vest and the large decorative buttons of the coat that was worn over the vest. The large buttons are the ones that are described in the first letter below.

**B. Evidence in two letters written by W.A. Mozart**

"Mozart, Briefe und Aufzeichnungen, Gesamtausgabe, Herausgegeben von der Internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, Gesammelt und Erläutert von Wilhelm A. Bauer und Otto Erich Deutsch, Bärenreiter Verlag, Kassel 1963." (Translation M. Braun. The relevance of the letters was discovered by Dan Leeson.)

**Letter number 1, dated Sept. 28, 1782, letter number 696, Vol. III, pp. 232-233.**

Mozart an Martha Elisabeth Baronin von  
Waldstätten, Wien [Auszug]

Mozart to Martha Elisabeth Baroness von  
Waldstätten, Vienna [part]

„Wienn den 28:ten September  
1782.

„Vienna, 28th of September  
1782.

Wertheeste frau Baronin!

Most honorable baroness!

..... – wegen dem schönen rothen frok welcher mich ganz grausam im herzen kitzelt, bittete ich halt recht sehr mir recht sagen zu lassen wo man ihn bekommt, und wie theuer, denn daß hab ich ganz vergessen, weil ich nur die schönheit davon in betrachtung gezogen, und nicht den Preis. – denn so einen frok muß ich haben, damit es der Mühe werthe ist die knöpfe darauf zu setzen, mit welchen ich schon lange in meinen gedanken schwanger gehe; - ich habe sie einmal, als ich mir zu einem kleide knöpfe ausnahm, auf dem kohlmarkt in der Brandauischen knöpffabriquer vis a vis dem Milano gesehen. – diese sind Permutter, auf der seite etwelche weiß Steine herum, und in der Mitte ein schöner gelber Stein. – Ich möchte alles haben was gut, ächt und schön ist! – woher kommt es doch, daß die, welche es nicht im Stande sind, alles auf so was verwenden möchten, und die, welche im Stande wären, es nicht thun? - .....

..... - As to the beautiful red coat that is tickling my heart so mercilessly, I would like to beg you very much to let me know where one can get it and how expensive it is. You see, I completely forgot to check this, because I only looked at its beauty and not at the price. – The thing is I must have such a coat to make it worth the effort to put on those buttons, which have been on my mind already for a long time. - I saw them once when I bought buttons for a suit in the Brandau Button Factory at the Kohlmarkt opposite the Milano. - They are made of mother-of-pearl with several white stones around the edge and a beautiful yellow stone in the middle. – I like to have all that is good, genuine, and beautiful! - Why is it that those who cannot afford it would like to spend all on such things and those who could afford it do not do it? - .....

your most humble servant  
Mozart

your most humble servant  
Mozart

**Letter number 2, dated Oct. 2, 1782, letter number 697, Vol. III, pp. 233-235.**

Mozart an Martha Elisabeth Baronin von  
Waldstätten, Wien [Auszug]

[Wien, den 2. Oktober 1782]

Allerliebste, Allerbeste, Allerschönste,  
Vergoldete, Versilberte und Verzuckerte  
Wertheeste und schätzbarste  
Gnädige Frau  
Baronin!

..... Ich habe gestern einen  
großen Bock geschossen! – es war mir  
immer als hätte ich noch etwas zu sagen –  
allein meinen dummen Schädel wollte es  
nicht einfallen! Und das war mich zu  
bedanken, daß sich Euer Gnaden gleich so  
viel Mühe wegen dem schönen Frack  
gegeben – und für die Gnade mir solch einen  
zu versprechen! – allein, mir fiel es nicht  
ein; wie dies dann mein gewöhnlicher Fall  
ist; - ..... – Meine Frau, die ein Engel  
von einem Weibe ist, und ich der ein Muster  
von einem Ehemann bin, küssen beyde Euer  
Gnaden 1000mal die Hände und sind ewig  
dero

getreue Vasallen  
Mozart magnus, corpore parvus  
Et  
Constantia, omnium uxorum pulcherrima et  
prudentiſſima.

Wien den 2:ten Oktober 1782

Mozart to Martha Elisabeth Baroness von  
Waldstätten, Vienna [part]

[Vienna, 2nd of Oktober 1782]

Dearest of all, Best of all, Most beautiful of  
all,  
Bathed in gold, Bathed in silver, and Bathed  
in sugar,  
Most honorable and most valuable  
Kindhearted  
Baroness!

..... – Yesterday I really made a big  
blunder! – it always seemed as if I had  
something more to say – alas, my stupid  
skull would not work it out! And that was to  
thank Your Goodness for immediately  
taking so much trouble in caring about the  
beautiful coat – and for the kindness to  
promise me one! – alas, it did not come to  
my mind; as usually is the case with me; -  
..... - My wife, who is an angel of a  
woman, and me, who is a good example of a  
husband, both kiss the hands of Your  
Goodness a 1000 times and always remain  
your

obedient followers  
Mozart, the Great, with short a body  
And  
Constance, the most beautiful and wisest of  
all wives

Vienna, 2nd of October 1782

### C. Observations

1) There are two small buttons on the right. They are in buttonholes. These are functional buttons to close the vest under the coat. They are not the buttons that are described by Mozart.

2) There are two large buttons on the left. They are opposite of the large pseudo buttonholes that are seen right of the small buttons. These buttons belong to the coat and are purely decorative. They match the buttons that Mozart described in his letter. Two independent and highly characteristic features identify them:

- a) A white edge around the button, and
- b) a yellow stone laid upon in the middle

The shape of all buttons probably was circular and had to come out as oval due to the painter's perspective in a profile portrait.

3) The part of the coat that has the two large buttons on it is strangely twisted in order to move the buttons well into the picture. Had the coat been sitting straight and normal, not much of these buttons had been visible in a profile portrait. This means that Mozart must have strongly begged the painter to make these buttons well visible. This wish of the client is an almost absurd one. But it shows how important the buttons must have been for the sitter. Just as important as they were in the first letter to the baroness.

4) The large decorative buttons cannot have been mass-produced. They must have been something exclusive and special. One can conclude this from the big importance that Mozart laid in them, both in the first letter and when sitting for the painter. One can also conclude this from his words in the letter, after describing the buttons: "I like to have all that is good, genuine, and beautiful!" These were rare specimen, of rare beauty for Mozart.

### C. Conclusions

- The red coat is a rare and exquisite piece of clothing. The large decorative buttons with a white edge and a yellow stone laid upon in the middle are rare and exquisite pieces of ornament. The combination of both is a highly individual one.

- W.A. Mozart's description of the coat and the decorative large buttons fully match the visible evidence in the portrait "Man in Red Coat".

- The dates of the letters fully match the dating of the painting based on clothing style, hairstyle, and apparent age of the face.

- In conjunction and agreement with all other evidence, the two referenced letters by W.A. Mozart provide conclusive evidence for the view that the portrait shows W.A. Mozart.

- It appears warranted to publish the described evidence in an international press conference, immediately, for two reasons:



(a) Previous comments about the documentary value of the portrait indicate that the worldwide interest is enormous already today and that an immediate publication of authenticating evidence, when found, is widely expected.

(b) The two letters may be discovered by anybody any day, which includes the imminent risk of an unprofessional and unfavorable publication.

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