

# In Mozart's words

*In Mozart's Words*, Cliff Eisen (ed.), Version 1.0, published by HRI Online, 2011. ISBN 9780955787676.  
<http://letters.mozartways.com> (last Accessed: 20/01/2019). Reviewed by Andrea Poltronieri (Alma Mater Studiorum – Bologna University), [andrea.poltronieri@studio.unibo.it](mailto:andrea.poltronieri@studio.unibo.it)

## THE REVIEWER

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## ABSTRACT

In Mozart's Word is an online digital edition which aims to provide multilingual access to an annotated version of the correspondence of Mozart and his family.

The objective of this review is to verify if the edition can be defined a “Scholarly Digital Edition” (SDE), by analysing the features, the contents and the realization of the edition. This project, started in 2011 and still on its initial stage, could be an excellent historical resource that makes successful use of the digital medium. However, the lack of contents seems to be the crucial and most problematic point in order to be able to define it as an SDE.

## Introduction

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (27 January 1756 – 5 December 1791), baptised as Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart, was an Austrian composer, widely recognized as one of the greatest composers in the history of Western music. During his 35 years-long life he composed, from the age of five, more than 600 works, many acknowledged as pinnacles of symphonic, concertante, chamber, operatic, and choral music. With Franz Joseph Haydn and Ludwig van Beethoven, he constitutes the triad to which, in musicological literature, some authors refer to as the first Viennese Classical school. Moreover, Mozart was one of the first composer who worked as an independent composer instead of being employed as a court musician.

### 1. Opening the review

#### 1.1 . Bibliographic identification of the reviewed SDE.

The name of this project is “In Mozart's words” and it is available at the web-URL <http://letters.mozartways.com>. The edition's ISBN code is 9780955787676.

The project has been created under the academic direction of Cliff Eisen, Professor of Music at King's College, London, and it has been coordinated by Patrizia Rebulli, partner at Castaliamusic s.n.c., Milan, a provider specialized in music data management.

The realisation of In Mozart's Words (IMW) was possible thanks to the support of the Italian Committee 'Le Vie di Mozart' (<https://www.mozartways.com>), and created by the Italian Ministry of Culture (MIBAC) as part of the Mozart 2006 celebrations, of the Municipality of Milan, Cultural Direction and of European Mozart Ways itself. A further part of the project was assured through a grant of the 'Mozart and Italy' EU project, which also provided the expert partnership of the HRI (Humanities Research Institute) of the University of Sheffield. Indeed, this SDE is actually accessible on the main menu of the Mozart Ways website, since it has been developed as a small part of a bigger project.

The IMW itself closely cooperates with many other prestigious organisations, such as 'Stiftung Mozarteum', Salzburg, which provided the digital version of the original texts.

The project has been released for the first time in 2011 and since then it has never been updated, so the current website version is still 1.0. It has been conceived as an on-going project that will host approximately 1,400 letters of the voluminous correspondence of Mozart and his family, but at this stage it only contains 114 letters. Despite this lack of contents, the editions comes with almost all the functions and the features that have been designed for it.

It is worth noticing that the information mentioned above are not very easy to access: in particular the first year of publication of the project is not reported except in the box that shows the references to use when citing the website. Further modifications, except for the first publication, are not given at all.

## 1.2. General introduction.

As explicitly described in the IMW introduction, the conceptual idea of this project was:

- i. To offer a univocal database of all references to people, places and musical works contained in the letters, facilitating the systematic search of all cited occurrences;
- ii. To provide access to background materials like reviews, newspapers, documents, objects, paintings, engravings, and books as a corollary of the historical-critical annotations.

All the letters composing this SDE have already been published by the Neue Mozart-Ausgabe in the German (and thus original) version; Flammarion has published "Correspondence. Lettres de Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart" (Paris, 1986), the edition containing the French translation of these



Figure 1: the home page of 'In Mozart's Words' edition; screenshot.

letters; the publisher Gruppo Editoriale Il Saggiatore provided all the still-to-be published Italian translations. The English translations were expressly commissioned for this website and are currently not stylistically homogeneous and on an up-to-date version.

This website belongs to the bigger project ‘Mozart Ways’ and thus it is easily accessible from its page, whose function is to show, both graphically and textually, Mozart’s journeys. The letters contained in the edition we are reviewing are considered as a fundamental part of these journeys. The letters sent by Mozart and his father Leopold to their interlocutors are a fundamental source of information concerning daily life at that time and Mozart’s own biography, as well as numerous details about his life and about his compositional activities, including otherwise unknown works.

The edition refers to the *Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation*’s website (<http://dme.mozarteum.at>), which contains all the digitalized manuscripts.

### *1.3. General parameters.*

The editor of this edition is The Digital Humanities Research Institute of the University of Sheffield, with whom this project shares the website domain (<https://www.dhi.ac.uk>). This partnership has been managed by Michael Pidd, who made possible the adoption of internationally recognized standards of software, coding and metadata and handled the whole visual design and technical realisation part.

As mentioned before, the participating institutions were the Italian Ministry of Culture, the Milan Municipality, Cultural Direction, and European Mozart Ways.

Cliff Eisen (King’s College of London) cured the academic direction and the notes. He is a leading Mozart scholar musicologist and has published several books and articles about Mozart’s letters (e.g. *Mozart. A Life in Letters*, London: Penguin, 2006) and about Mozart’s journeys (e.g. ‘A New Mozart Portrait?’ in “*Coll’astuzia, col giudizio. Essays in Honor of Neal Zaslaw*”, ed. Cliff Eisen, Ann Arbor, MI: Steglein, 2009, pp. 226-55).

Patrizia Rebullà (Castaliamusic) handled the coordination and management of the project, the database building and the identification of the notes within the text with the cooperation of Claudia Pignato (Castaliamusic).

The original German text has been checked, revised and thus edited in a diplomatic transcription by Anja Morgenstern (Stiftung Mozarteum, Salzburg) and rendered in a modern German by Vera Grund and Anja Morgenstern (Stiftung Mozarteum, Salzburg). The French translation was made by Geneviève Geffray (text of the correspondence: *Lettres de Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, Parigi, 1986). The letters were translated in Italian by Elli Stern and the notes by Patrizia Rebullà; the editorial supervision of the Italian text was done by Maria Gregorio (Edizioni Sylvestre Bonnard). Daniele Pesatori (Pegaso '96) took care of the database software design and development and Keira Borrill (Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield) handled the interface testing and translation.

### *1.4. Transparency.*

The general parameters of the editions are easily accessible: all the information about the editions, such as the editorial guidelines and the text encoding, are grouped in the left column sited in the home page, whereas in the top navbar there are all the tools to navigate the resources offered by the website.

The logos of the institutions with their relative hypertextual link are all placed in the home page, even if some links are not working.

## **2. Subject and content of the edition**

### *2.1. Selection.*

As soon as the SDE is stuck at its very first version it is not easy to review the selection of the content operated by the authors of this edition. At the moment, the letters included in the edition only concern Mozart's Italian journeys, and thus written between 1769 and 1773. There is no specific reason why this choice was made, it is just the initial stage of a great work which aims to collect all the voluminous correspondence of Mozart and his family.

Anyhow, based on the currently available material, we can say that the goal of the SDE is to collect all the Mozart's letters available in a comprehensive shape, trying to give to the reader a full awareness of all the elements contained in those letters: this is the major relevance that this SDE can have to a current and a future research, namely a better comprehension of Mozart's life and his compositions.

### *2.2. Previous and project's achievements.*

Before this edition rose, Mozart's letters which are here collected, had been published only in German by the Neue Mozart-Ausgabe, and in French by Flammarion.

This project, moreover, enabled the translation of the texts in two new languages: Italian and English. The publication on this website of the letters translated in Italian has anticipated the publication of the book by the publisher Gruppo Editoriale Il Saggiatore, while the translation of the text in English is a brand-new work, expressly conceived for this digital resource.

### *2.3. Content.*

In this SDE some letters written by Mozart and his family between 1769 and 1773 are currently published. For each letter the following contents are provided:

- i) a digitalized version of the manuscript;
- ii) a transcription of the transcription (in German);
- iii) a transcription rendered in modern German;
- iv) an English translation of the letters;
- v) an Italian translation of the letters;
- vi) a French translation of the letters.

It is provided as well a description of the three Italian journeys made by Mozart throughout the years, as an explanation and a contextualization for the letters currently available on the website.

The SDE provides to the reader a fairly good number of tools with which to search in the letters catalogue based on the people mentioned, on the chronology, on the places mentioned, on the work mentioned or based on where the letter was addressed.

The lack of contents is justified only in the website's introduction, but there is no mention of the reason why no changes and no adds have been made to the site in several years (has the project been abandoned?). It is also worth noticing that some of the digitalized manuscripts are not available anymore, in fact an error is reported in the *Salzburg Stiftung Mozarteum* website, when trying to access some contents, but its transcription is available anyway.

### **3. Aims and methods**

#### *3.1. Aims and importance of In Mozart Words.*

The main aims of this edition are clearly described in the edition's introduction, namely: facilitating the systematic search of all cited occurrences by offering a complete database of all references to people, places and musical works contained in the letters, and providing access to background materials (e.g. books, reviews, newspapers, etc.).

In spite of the little material available on the website at the moment, we can affirm that the first goal is achieved, but the same cannot be said about the second one. All the material which should serve as a «corollary to the historical-critical annotations» is not currently present in the IMW (except for some notes), but some links bring the reader to the root website (Mozart Ways), which contains some of the material listed in the target list.

A third non-listed objective of this edition is to spread and to make available to everyone a great amount of Mozart's written texts, making them accessible to a wider audience by translating all the material in four different languages.

Furthermore, all the letters have been carefully analysed and linked to the others, identifying more connections possible on the basis of the actual researches: this operation is very important for a complete understanding of the texts, since in the family correspondence's language many references remain implicit or allusive and some parts of the text refer to previous letters or live conversations. Hence, IMW gives to the user a fast access to a wide range of information connected with each other that would have been arduous or even impossible to consult in a normal edition (i.e. a printed edition). The importance of this SDE is therefore this interconnection between a broad list of elements (e.g. names, musical works, places, etc.), easily reachable and grouped.

#### *3.2. Scholarly objectives.*

This edition is addressed to a potentially very wide audience, since the topics covered by the letters are many and diverse, supporting several forms of research inquiry.

More deeply, IMW could contribute in the field of historiography. For instance, thanks to the nature of primary sources of the letters the edition could be a great instrument to understand the society and the culture of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Another field to which this edition could be addressed is the musicological one. Through these letters, indeed, a scholar can approach Mozart's biography and his compositional works from an

intimate point of view, understanding all the hidden dynamics which would be difficult to investigate if not by reading the words of the composer himself and of his family.

### 3.3. *Mission.*

The editorial stated concerning the transcription of the manuscript is absent in the IMW website, but it can be found in the ‘Editorial Guidelines’ page of the *Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation*’s:

“The texts will be rendered in a diplomatic transcription taking into account the original line breaks. Customary spellings of the day, errors and peculiarities unique to the scribe will be consistently retained. Obvious misspellings will be indicated with a dotted line, words with an indeterminate reading will be underlined using a dashed line. Autograph corrections or cross outs by the author will be overlooked implicitly and the "final hand version" will be reproduced. Additional hand-written entries will be highlighted in grey. When capitalization cannot be positively determined, the editor will make the decisions according to the normal use of the writer.”

Moreover, it is clearly specified some standardizations are operated:

- Quotation marks are uniformly rendered ("..."). Their appearance at the beginning of each line, as was common practice at the time, is omitted;
- If a hyphen separating the syllables of a compound word appears at the beginning of a line, it is automatically entered at the end of the previous line of text. When two hyphens appear in use for the same word, then the hyphen which appears before the new line of text is omitted. Missing hyphens appear in square brackets;
- The varying short-hand markings are uniformly indicated by the symbol "ç" (e.g. Hç = Herr);
- Slanted brackets appear as |: :| or | |.

Regarding the modern German version, the explicit editorial stated is absent. It is specified how the manuscript has been rendered in modern German, but at the same time several printed editions are cited in the bibliography (at least for the German version). Hence, it is not clear at all if these printed editions were taken into account (and if so, to what extent?) or if the standardisation work have been made from scratch on the transcription of the manuscripts.

### 3.4. *Representation of documents and texts criticism.*

Due to the uniqueness of the correspondence letters the sources of this edition are unique, so they perfectly match the case in which there is only one witness.

The original texts are first transcribed diplomatically and then rendered in modern German, so as «to facilitate an understanding of the Mozart family’s eighteen-century written language, which includes both dialect and numerous historical usages, often with contemporaneous orthography that is no longer easy to understand». This German ‘reading version’ proves to be very useful to the foreign-language translations.

The diplomatic transcription is well done and accessible by using the link available on the left bar of every letter's page, which leads the user to the *Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation's* web page. There the user can find a page containing the manuscript copy on the right side and the diplomatic transcription on the left. The images are of a good quality, but it is not possible to zoom in, in order to check the smaller details.

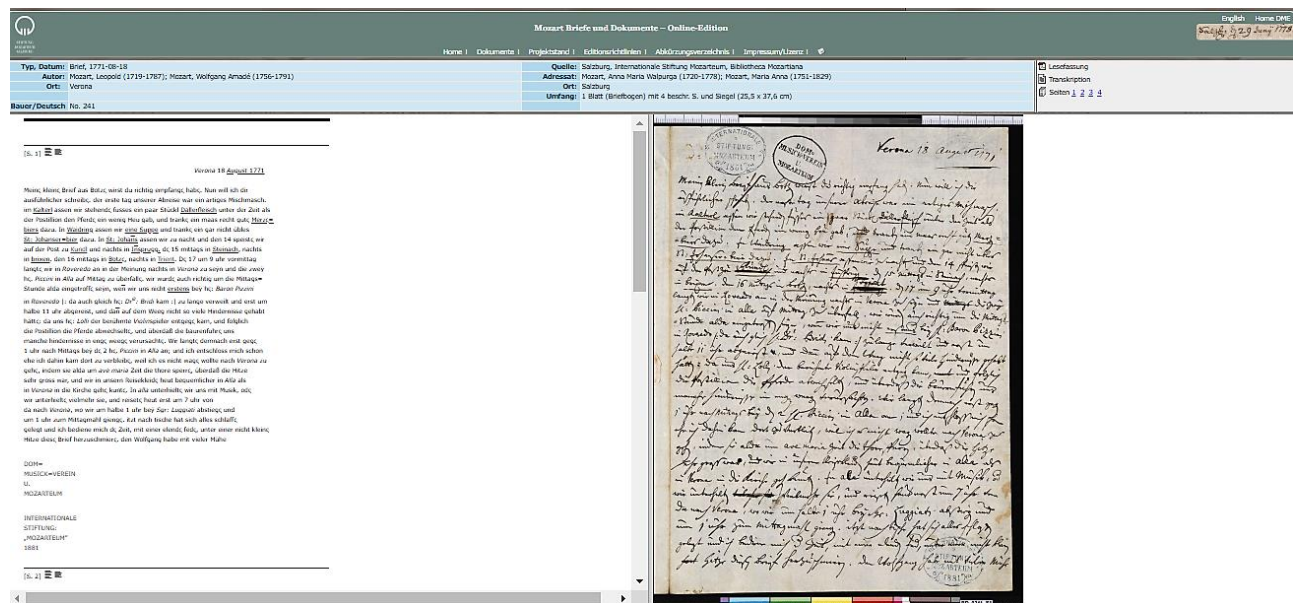


Figure 2: the manuscript image and its transcription available on the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation's website; screenshot.

In a different page (accessible in the same bar of the previous one) the user can find the diplomatic transcription (on the right side) compared to the critical one (on the left side). This modern-German edition has been rendered by following the modern orthography and punctuation (Duden, 24<sup>th</sup>); to achieve these results, the following standardisations were applied throughout:

- The foreign words such as ‘sinfonia’ or ‘accademia’, for example, are as ‘Sinfonie’ and ‘Akademie’, respectively;
- The personal pronouns and auxiliary verbs have been added when necessary; these are indicated within square brackets;
- Modal particles have occasionally been omitted;
- Longer passages or even whole sections of letters in foreign languages have been translated;
- Upper case has been added for all personal pronouns (Du, Dir, Euch, Ihr);
- Standard symbols have been applied for brackets and abbreviations;
- Realization of a common abbreviation (h: -> Herr, Sr: -> Seiner)



## 4. Publication and presentation

### 4.1. Technical infrastructure.

As described in the ‘Encoding Text: A Background’ section of the edition webpage, «the first idea for the website was triggered by the request of the Italian publisher of the letters to help preparing the indexes of cited people, places and musical works for the future printed edition». Initially the texts were contained in simple *.doc* files, where a macro was written to add four appropriate tags: <person>, <place>, <Mozart’s work> and <other composer’s work>. A database containing all these occurrences was later implemented and manually connected to the appropriate database through a content management tool, specifically designed for this project. This instrument allowed to connect the narrative reference to an entry in the database, to save variants and misspellings and to add annotations to the texts.

Afterwards the project team began to explore academic editorial standards, becoming increasingly aware of the importance to use open source tools to allow interoperability. All the texts have been then transformed in a “skinny” version of TEI, the reference standard for the representation of texts in digital form. The project developers have recently followed the evolution of such standard, and in particular the birth of a SIG (special interest group) of the TEI consortium.

### 4.2. Interface and Usability.



Figure 3: IMW top-navbar (circled in yellow), language menu (circled in green) and search boxes (circled in blue); screenshot.

All Mozart’s letters available on the website are reachable by using the navbar located on top of every page. The user can access the contents ordered by:

- i. Chronology
- ii. People cited in the letters
- iii. Places cited in the letters
- iv. Musical works cited in the letters
- v. Places where the letter were sent from/to.

By accessing any of this section, the user is addressed to a new page where more options are showed to him. For instance, by choosing ‘chronology’ a new page is shown. There the user is asked to select a year, and thus a letter among those ones written in the selected year.

When the user opens one letter, the latter is directly shown to him/her. It is possible to change the language among the four currently available (English, German, Italian and French) by clicking on the language menu accessible from any page.



In the letter's page a bar is shown on the left, and it allows the user to reach the manuscript/diplomatic transcription version and the original/modernized German version (very first box). In the same navbar it is also possible to easily examine all the references cited in the opened letter. By clicking on any of them, all the letters into which this reference is cited are shown and accessible. The same can be done by clicking on the hyperlink highlighted in blue in the letter's texts.

Within the text some notes can be found and displayed as an “n” followed by a number.

By clicking on one of those a new pop-up window containing the note text is displayed. In the current version of the site the notes are only available in English and in Italian.

Alternative Versions of Letter 228

[Original and Modernised German](#)

[Manuscript Version](#)

People in Letter 228

[Firmian, Karl Joseph](#)

[Lugliati, Pietro](#)

[Mozart, Leopold \(Johann Georg\)](#)

[Mozart, Maria Anna](#)

[Mozart, Maria Anna Walpurga Ignatia \(Nannerl\)](#)

[Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus](#)

[Tommasi, Antonio](#)

[Troger, Leopold Ernst](#)

[Wider \(Wieder\), Giovanni \(Johannes\)](#)

Places in Letter 228

[Lisbon, Portugal](#)

[Milan, Italy](#)

[Parma, Italy](#)

[Salzburg, Austria](#)

[Turin, Italy](#)

[Venice, Italy](#)

[Verona, Italy](#)

[Verona, Italy: Accademia Filarmonica](#)

Musio by Mozart in Letter 228

[Contredanses: K.123 in B flat](#)

[Mitridate, re di Ponto K.87](#)

Other Works in Letter 228

[None](#)

228. LEOPOLD MOZART TO HIS WIFE IN SALZBURG

Milan 12 January 1771

We shan't be leaving for [Turin](#) until next Monday. I have to tell you that yesterday I heard from Sgr Pietro [Luggiati](#), who informs me that our son has been elected a member of the [Accademia Filarmonica](#) of [Verona](#) and that the [Cancelliere dell'Accademia](#) is in the process of preparing the diploma .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mozart's diploma is dated 5 January. The document representing his nomination to the [Accademia Filarmonica](#) of [Verona](#) survives in the library of the [Stiftung Mozarteum](#), Salzburg:

The 5th day of the month of January 1771, Convocation of the Hon. Philharmonic Academy of Verona, in the usual Place, in the presence of the Worshipful Members. The Noble Count Murari BrÄ , Governor, stated that it was an ancient principle of this Academy to promote the honour of virtuosi in order that their distinguished Qualities might lend ever greater lustre and dignity to the said Academy; wherefore, note having been taken of the remarkable gifts possessed by the wonderful youth Sig. Amadeo Wolfgango Mozart of Salzburg, Concert Master to His Rev. Highness the Archbishop and Prince of Salzburg, Knight of the Golden Spur, decorated by the Reigning Supreme Pontiff, who deigned to hear him and to applaud the merits of this Youth. He may truly pride himself as one of the most admirable prodigies in the profession of Music, which this city of Verona can also affirm, in that during the few days he spent here he gave, on several occasions, such proofs of his skill at playing the most difficult things at sight on the harpsichord with great readiness and elegance ; setting on the spot certain poetical passages that were shown him to very fine concerted music for several instruments, to the amazement of those most versed in the said Art. Apart from which this our Academy can also offer the most truly sincere acknowledgments of the incomparable merit of this Youth, who in January of last year in the Hall of the Academy, in the presence of Ladies, Gentlemen and Public Representatives, miraculously overcame the greatest Musical Tests with complete mastery and to the astonishment of all this Noble Gathering. And this in addition to the multitudinous notices received from many parts of Italy, where this expert person has performed to the Principal Professors and lovers of

Figure 4: a IMW letter page; screenshot.

### 4.3. Browse and search.

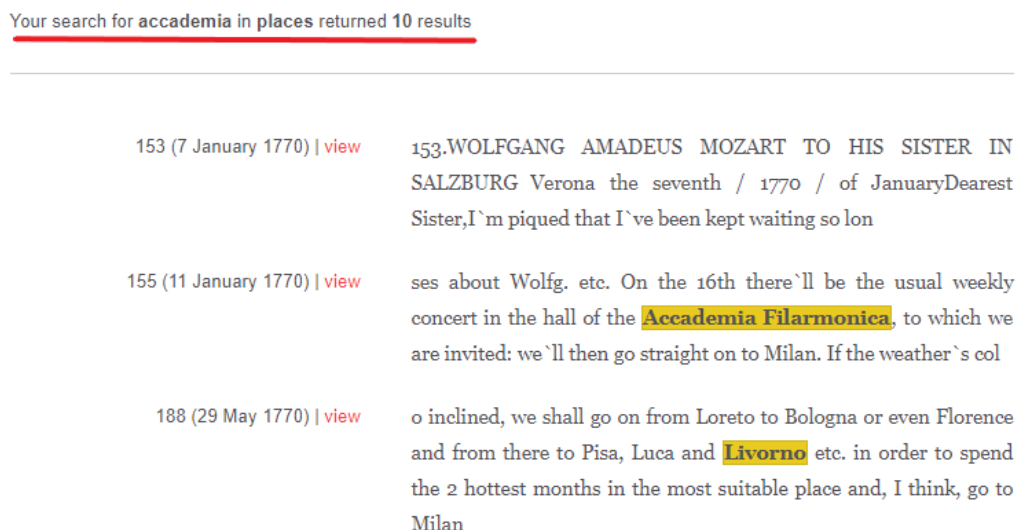


Figure 5: the IMW search engine; sreenshot.

It is possible to browse through the entirety of the content by using the search boxes on the top of every page. The search interface is quite simple but practical. It allows the user to search among the fulltext, people, places and annotations.

### 4.4. Spin offs and export formats.

In the IMW website alternative versions of the files displayed are not provided, but on the site where the user is linked when asking for the manuscript version, a *.pdf* file containing the transcription of the manuscript is available for the download.

### 4.5. Access to basic data.

The XML file of the texts is reachable by clicking on the “View XML” link located at the very bottom of each letter contained in the edition.

### 4.6. Documentation and associated texts.

The IMW website provides an introduction text aimed at historically contextualizing the texts currently available on the site (the Italian Mozart’s journeys).

In the same menu, accessible from the IMW’s home page several other pages are also available. These resources explain the aims of the edition and some technical aspect regarding the project’s realization and are organized as follows: ‘Introduction’, ‘Mozart in Italy’, ‘Encoding Text: Background’, ‘Modernized German Spelling’, ‘Editorial Guidelines’, ‘Bibliography’, ‘Abbreviation for Mozart’s Works’ and ‘Credits’.

#### 4.7. Long term use.

The IMW project has never been significantly updated since its creation in 2011 and is still at its 1.0 version. Thus, this edition cannot be considered complete at all.

Despite this, the future modifications and improvements are clearly described in the site's guidelines. First of all, the edition aims to collect the whole Mozart's family letters correspondence currently available – which is composed of approximately 1,400 letters – and provides to this a multilingual and annotated access. The further improvements the curators planned to achieve were:

- i. The extensive use of a geographical mapping of the citations within the letters;
- ii. The addition of a timeline;
- iii. The addition of a visualization tool to help investigating the social network of Mozart and his correspondents.

Regarding the technical part of the project, the next stage's aim will be concerning the adoption of the formal description of correspondence recommended by the TEI group.

## 5. Conclusion

IMW seems to have all the main characteristics that a Scholarly Digital Edition should have. The edition is ultimately well done, and it could be an historical resource of great value to researchers. In particular, the strength of the project is the relationability: all the references are indeed connected between others and processed at a speed and complexity unattainable in a printed edition.

But the very big lack in this project concern the contents available. As Patrick Sahle wrote in the article "*L'edizione scientifica al tempo dell'editoria digitale*", «an edition project is not an edition». A project can be fruitfully considered as a Scholarly Digital Edition «as soon as the publication makes a substantial amount or percentage of the intended documents [...] available» (Pierazzo, Leclerc, 2015), and IMW does not match at all with this description. Though this project has got most of the other elements of an SDE, currently it contains only the 10% of the material it intended to hold. Moreover, the long-time frame in which the site has not been not updated suggests that the project has (temporarily?) been abandoned or the funds available for its development have been terminated.

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