Antonio Porta and Seventeenth-Century Central European Architecture Martin Krummholz

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Abstract

The text places the work of Antonio Porta (1631/32-1702) in the broader context of European architecture. It emphasises the close connections between Porta's architecture and the work of Francesco Caratti and Jean Baptiste Mathey, and the common starting-point for these artists, which was the Viennese architecture of Filiberto Lucchese and Giovanni Pietro Tencalla. The architecture of the Troja chateau of Count Sternberg can also be interpreted in this context; it draws on the analogous suburban summer residences in Vienna (*Lusthäuser*). There were also significant connections between mid-17th century Central European architecture and the Piedmont metropolis of Turin, which was being developed on a grand scale at that time. On the one hand there were many artists from the Lugano region active in Turin who later went on to work in Central Europe, and on the other numerous Central European aristocrats stayed for a while in Turin as part of their grand tour. It was via Turin that the influences of French architecture were reflected in the Bohemian and Central European milieus.

Contents

Roudnice nad Labem Turin Troja, Jean Baptiste Mathey, and Viennese architecture

- A number of buildings decorated by paintings by Giacomo Tencalla are attributed to the architect Antonio Porta, who like both Tencallas came from the Lake Lugano region. The aim of this study is to examine Porta's work within the broader framework of 17th-century Central European architecture and to point out some interesting parallels and connections that are usually either overlooked or interpreted separately, without drawing the appropriate conclusions, in traditional artistic profiles of Porta. The thesis presented here may provide a starting-point for further reflections and discussions in which this theme is considered in a somewhat broader context than has been the case until now.
- The literature on 17th-century architecture in the Czech lands consists of monographs on individual buildings and artists, synthesising descriptions of the "development" of early Baroque architecture in the Czech lands, and studies examining Italian and French influences on the Bohemian milieu. Numerous monograph works based on painstaking study of archive materials and surveys of the construction history of buildings have helped assemble a large quantity of relevant data on the various localities and artists. A

¹ The basic literature includes: Heinrich Gerhard Franz, Bauten und Baumeister der Barockzeit in Böhmen, Leipzig 1962; Věra Naňková, "Architektura 17. století v Čechách," in: Jiří Dvorský (ed.), Dějiny českého výtvarného umění II. Od počátků renesance do závěrů baroka, 1989, pp. 249-278; Pavel Vlček – Ester Havlová, Praha 1610-1700. Kapitoly o architektuře raného baroka, Praha 1998; Pavel Vlček (ed.), Encyklopedie architektů, stavitelů, zedníků a kameníků v Čechách, Praha 2004.

methodological shortcoming of existing Czech research into "development" in this field is the fact that it is traditionally interpreted without its natural historical and geographical contexts – as an autonomous "Bohemian" development. The subsequent debate on "influences" is certainly not without interest; but unless it is supported by convincing arguments which develop individual insights into more than simply formal analogies, it becomes an end in itself. In the case of stylistic analysis it is not possible to completely lose sight of the contemporary cultural and social context.

- [3] Antonio Porta (1631/32-1702) is, together with Jean Baptiste Mathey (1630-1695) and Giovanni Domenico Orsi (1633/34-1679), a representative of the second generation of architects who worked in Bohemia in the second half of the 17th century.² Their predecessors in the previous generation were Carlo Lurago (1615-1684) and Francesco Caratti (1615/20-1677). Before we consider Porta's relationship to his peers, let us look at the interrelationships between the two generations we have mentioned. Lurago, who all the evidence indicates to have originally trained as a stucco artist, arrived in Prague from northern Italy in the 1630s. He settled in Prague and until 1669 was the head of a building enterprise there that was in great demand. Its clients were predominantly religious orders, above all the Jesuits. It was under Carlo Lurago that Giovanni Domenico Orsi received his training in the 1650s. Orsi, a native of Vienna, eventually became Lurago's foreman, and after the latter moved to Passau he completed a number of the buildings in the Czech lands that Lurago had begun.³
- [4] Francesco Caratti came from Bissone in Ticino, where in 1642 he married the daughter of Pietro Maderna, a stonemason at the Viennese court, in whose circle he evidently not only received his training, but also carried out his first commissions.⁴ The fact that in Caratti's case, too, his original profession was not exclusively architecture is shown by a contract for two fountains for the Liechtenstein Garden in Lednice, which he undertook to supply with his father-in-law in 1645.⁵ Although for a whole decade (1642-1652) we have

² Věra Naňková – Pavel Vlček, "Antonio Porta," in: Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, pp. 517-521; Věra Naňková – Pavel Vlček, "Jean Baptiste Mathey," in: Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, pp. 409-411; Pavel Vlček, "Jean Baptiste Mathey," in: Vlček – Havlová, *Praha 1610-1700*, pp. 257-287; Věra Naňková – Pavel Vlček, "Giovanni Domenico Orsi," in: Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, pp. 461-462; Pavel Vlček, "Giovanni Domenico Orsi," in: Vlček – Havlová, *Praha 1610-1700*, pp. 180-200

³ Pavel Vlček, "Carlo Lurago," in: Vlček – Havlová, *Praha 1610-1700*, pp. 110-150; Pavel Vlček, "Carlo Lurago," in: Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, pp. 381-383; Pavel Vlček, "Francesco Caratti," in: Vlček – Havlová, *Praha 1610-1700*, pp. 151-179; Pavel Vlček, "Francesco Caratti," in: Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, pp. 104-106.

⁴ Pietro Maino Maderno also came from Bissone. He is said to have been related to Carlo Maderna and Francesco Borromini. In 1627 he was living in Rosice, and in 1632 he supplied the fountain for Bučovice. From 1643 he worked with Caratti in the service of Karl Eusebius of Liechtenstein. He contributed as a sculptor and stonemason to the decoration of the Pálffy garden palace in Bratislava and the reconstruction of the Červený Kameň chateau. The artists he worked with included Giovanni Giacomo Tencalla, Giovanni Battista Carlone and Filiberto Lucchese. Cf. Petr Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento. Baumeister, Architekt und Bauten des Wiener Hofkreis, habilitační práce*, Universität Innsbruck 1990, p. 47.

⁵ Oldřich Jakub Blažíček, "Fontána v Bučovicích," in: *Umění*, 2, 1954, pp. 251-252.

no further information about Caratti's activities, it would seem that his artistic profile was shaped at this time in the Viennese milieu, where his father-in-law was employed at the court. At the end of 1652 Caratti was approached by an important client, the recently appointed President of the Court War Council, Prince Wenzel Eusebius of Lobkowicz, for whom he drew up the plans for the Prince's residence in Roudnice nad Labem, where Caratti worked in 1652-1654.⁶ It thus follows that he could not have been an unknown figure in Viennese circles in the early 1650s; the fact that he had such a prominent client testifies to his successfully cultivated social contacts and connections. However, it is highly likely that his princely patron first approached the imperial architect and it was through the latter's mediation that he acquired the services of Caratti, as an able pupil of the Lucchese or Tencalla school.

- A key figure on the architectural scene in the metropolis on the Danube in the mid-17th [5] century was the imperial court engineer Filiberto Lucchese (1606-1666), whose style was later developed further by his close associate and successor in his court function Giovanni Pietro Tencalla (1629-1702).⁷ Through the influence of Lucchese and Tencalla a new type of monumental chateau layout and an artistically imposing concept for palace façades became established in Central Europe. A planimetric façade is covered in several thin layers by a grid of lisene frames, pilasters, continuous mouldings, parapets, and recessed sections. Alternating frontons and in some cases figural decoration is often used as an accentuating element, especially in the area of the bracket cornice. The extent to which the work of Lucchese and Tencalla contributed to the transformation of Vienna and its surroundings is shown by an album by Wolfgang Wilhelm Praemer (ca. 1637-1716) which depicts the most important contemporary Viennese buildings.8 The value of Praemer's illustrations is augmented by the fact that hardly any of these magnificent buildings have survived down to the present day. Everything that survived the tragic year 1683 was covered over in the subsequent years and centuries by later building development.
- [6] Czech art history has traditionally not attached sufficient importance to this significant stage in the development of Viennese architecture, and has essentially disregarded it.⁹

 However, architecture in the Czech lands at this time did not develop autonomously and

⁶ Monika Brunner-Melters, *Das Schloss von Raudnitz 1652-1684. Anfänge des habsburgischen Frühbarock*, Worms 2002, pp. 75-81.

⁷ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, pp. 145-223, 225-271.

⁸ ÖNB, manuscript collection, Codex Series Nova 365, Architektonischer Schauplatz. Cf. also Hans Tietze, "Wolfgang Wilhelm Praemers Architekturwerk und der Wiener Palastbau des XVII. Jahrhunderts," in: *Jahrbuch des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhaus*, 32, 1915, pp. 343-402; Hellmut Lorenz, "Wolfgang Wilhelm Praemers 'Palaz zur Accomodirung eines Landt-Fürsten'," in: *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 34, 1981, pp. 115-130; 36, 1983, pp. 191-202; Friedrich Polleroß, "Der Wiener und sein Gartenhaus: Wolfgang Wilhelm Praemer (um 1637-1716)," in: Martin Scheuz (ed.), *Wien und seine WienerInnen: Ein historischer Streifzug durch Wien über die Jahrhunderte. Fesstschrift für Karl Vocleka zum 60. Geburtstag*, Wien 2008, pp. 99-124.

⁹ An exception here is the fundamental (and unfortunately unpublished) monograph by Petr Fidler devoted to 17th-century Central European architecture (see note 4).

without any connection with the Viennese milieu.¹⁰ Any such notion can be dismissed, among other reasons, because of the existence of a separate circle of prominent aristocratic patrons who lived and built their residences in every part of the Habsburg monarchy. And the natural centre of the cultural scene, a place with a high concentration of first-class (and at the same time by no means the cheapest) artists, was the imperial metropolis. From the mid-16th century the sources provide us with a wealth of evidence that the leading architects (such as Wolmut, Pieroni, Alliprandi, the Martinellis, Hildebrandt, and the Fischers von Erlach) worked in parallel in both the Bohemian and Austrian territories. In the 17th and 18th centuries it would be extremely difficult to find even a single decade in which there is no evidence for this intensive contact. And the example of Antonio Porta provides a graphic illustration of the connection between architectural events in the different territories of the Habsburg imperium.

[7] We know very little of Porta's early life. He came from Manno near Lugano, where in 1659(?) he married the niece of the prominent Viennese notary Antonio Anonini. 11 It appears to have been this marriage that introduced Porta into the circle of the most successful North Italian artists settled in Vienna and working in the imperial services (such as Giovanni Battista Carlone, Filiberto Lucchese, Carlo Quaglio, Simone Retacco, Giovanni Pietro Tencalla, Andrea Allio, Silvestro Carlone, and Carpoforo Tencalla). These men were linked by family ties and often worked together on the many commissions they received. In 1662-1666 Porta was the court master-builder of Count Ferdinand von Verdenberg, for whom (for 300 gulden a year) he worked on the Grafenegg and Straß im Straßertale estates, and also in southern Moravia (in Náměšť nad Oslavou and Rosice). 12 After Verdenberg's death the architect was employed for a short time by the former's sister Anna Camilla von Enckevoirt, for whom he worked on the Loreto Chapel in Straß.

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Roudnice nad Labem

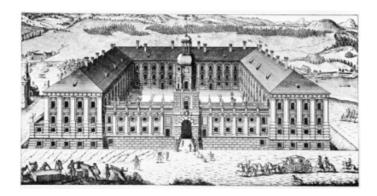
In February 1668 Porta signed a contract in Vienna, on the basis of which he moved the same year to Roudnice nad Labem as master-builder for the Lobkowic family.¹³ Here he directed the construction of the chateau residence [Fig. 1], which had been designed in 1652/53 by Francesco Caratti. Caratti had also supervised the work until 1656, and after a break his work had been continued in 1665 by Carlo Orsolini († 1667).

¹⁰ The important role played by Vienna has also been underestimated by German art historians, focusing primarily on Czech-German connections; see Heinrich Gerhard Franz, *Bauten und Baumeister der Barockzeit in Böhmen*, Leipzig 1962.

¹¹ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, p. 39; Naňková – Vlček, "Antonio Porta," in: Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, pp. 517-521.

¹² Alfred Piffl, "Společnost okolo A. Porty v Roudnici nad Labem," in: *Časopis přátel starožitností českých*, 48, 1940, pp. 113-123; Naňková – Vlček, "Antonio Porta," in: Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, pp. 517-521.

¹³ Naňková – Vlček, "Antonio Porta," in: Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, p. 518.



1 Heinrich Jonas Ostertag – Johann Baltazar Probst, chateau in Roudnice nad Labem, copperplate engraving, ca. 1700, Institute of Art History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

- [9] Although the construction of the Roudnice chateau continued under Porta's direction for a full sixteen years, it deviated only to a limited extent from Caratti's original conception, of which we are relatively well informed thanks to the plans and correspondence, which have been preserved. Incidentally, Caratti continued to monitor the work on this prestigious building, as is testified to, among other things, by his presence in Roudnice in August 1668, when he acted as godfather to Porta's twin children. This fact leads us to speculate whether Porta's engagement with the Lobkowicz family might not have been mediated by Caratti himself.
- The chateau in Roudnice is a remarkable piece of architecture, particularly in terms of its material composition. Here, for the first time in the Czech lands (albeit for the time being inconsistently), we find an open layout being used for a chateau instead of the four-wing block that had been usual until then. The entrance wing in Roudnice is formed by a low galleried section with a traversable axial tower. [Fig. 1 and 2]



2 Francesco Carrati – Antonio Porta, chateau in Roudnice nad Labem, from 1652, photo: Martin Mádl

¹⁴ See Brunner-Melters, *Das Schloss von Raudnitz 1652-1684*.

¹⁵ Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, p. 518.

[11] The appearance of the tower in Roudnice chateau, relatively unusual in the Czech milieu, may have been inspired by the tower of the Franciscan (later Jesuit) church in Żagań – the dominant feature of the town. [Fig. 3]



3 Żagań, tower of the Jesuit (Franciscan) church, photo: Martin Krummholz

- This design is usually interpreted as being "French" and is placed in the context of Prince [12] Lobkowicz's alleged Francophile orientation. 16 A single-storey entrance wing with a central tower does indeed occur in 17th-century French architecture; but apart from this parallel there is no trace of anything "French" in the Roudnice chateau. The whole has a monumental effect, with the other three wings being materially compact. The articulation of the façades, both overall and in detail, fully correlates to Viennese architecture in the third quarter of the 17th century, as represented by the work of Filiberto Lucchese and Giovanni Pietro Tencalla.¹⁷ The thesis that in 1652 Lobkowicz wanted to demonstrate his Francophile tendencies architecturally must thus be rejected as being ahistorical. Until the end of the 17th century the main inspiration for Central European architecture was Italy. 18 Also debatable is the "parallel" with Cardinal Richelieu postulated by Monika Brunner-Melters, 19 for Lobkowicz did not become the Emperor's first minister until 1669, long after the concept and basic architectural layout for the Roudnice chateau had been decided on. If we exclude the unlikely hypothesis that Lobkowicz wanted the primary starting-point for the design to be imported prints, then we need to explain Caratti's inventiveness in more natural contexts.
- [13] The layout in Roudnice is followed in the three-wing Lobkowicz residence in Żagań / Sagan [Fig. 4], which was built after Porta's design in 1673-1695.

¹⁶ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, p. 367; Brunner-Melters, *Das Schloss von Raudnitz 1652-1684*, pp. 132-134.

¹⁷ Fidler, Architektur des Seicento, pp. 273-274.

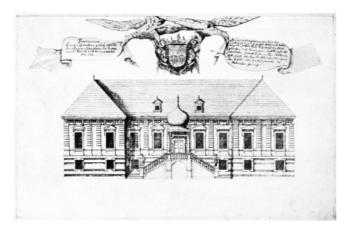
¹⁸ Incidentally, that leading patron of building work and dilettante architect, Count Karl Eusebius of Liechtenstein, had a critical view of contemporary French architecture: Petr Fidler, "'Form follows Function'. Zur Funktionalität der Profanarchitektur der frühen Neuzeit," in: *Documenta Pragensia*, 28, 2009, p. 50.

¹⁹ Brunner-Melters, *Das Schloss von Raudnitz 1652-1684*, pp. 161-165; Petr Maťa, *Svět české aristokracie (1500-1700)*, Praha 2004, pp. 418-419.



4 Antonio Porta, Żagań chateau, garden façade, from 1673, photo: Martin Mádl

As in his final major building for the Lobkowicz family in Neustadt an der Waldnab (from 1684), bossed window frames were a prominent feature. The Żagań chateau displays the wide range of Porta's repertoire, admirably reflecting various features of Viennese architecture in the second half of the 17th century. In accordance with the principle of a significant dualism of the exterior and interior façades, we find here a relatively austere exterior, formed by the bossage of the massive socle, the windows, and above all the pilasters. The exterior casing of the building thus resembles the Amalienburg in Vienna, the chateau in Dürnstein, or the Montecuccoli summer palace in Vienna [Fig. 5]. By contrast, the façades in the courtyard are made lighter by double arcades (similar to Neustadt) and recessed sections in the colossal pilasters. The discreetly used decorative features of the severe Żagań exteriors include the Tencallian bell-shaped lambrequins on the Doric frieze and the mascarons, virtually obligatory for Viennese architecture in the second half of the 17th century, although here with a somewhat local interpretation. It is not possible to speak of French influences here.²⁰



5 Wolfgang Wilhelm Praemer, Montecuccoli summer palace in Vienna, pen and ink wash, ca. 1670-1675, ÖNB, Wien

²⁰ As was mistakenly thought by Jan Wrabec, "Český proud ve slezské architektuře," in: Mateusz Kapustka – Jan Klípa – Andrzej Koziel – Piotr Osczanowski – Vít Vlnas (eds.), Slezsko. Perla v české koruně. Historie – kultura – umění, Praha 2007, pp. 293-294.

Turin

- The majority of the North Italian artists who worked in the transalpine lands spent the winter period in their homeland every year or every so often. These visits were an opportunity both for family life and also for exchanging information among themselves about current developments on the artistic scene and work opportunities. Apart from prints, the role of medium, where required, was also played by their own sketch-books and studies. At this time, many more or less distant relatives went to work not only in the north, but also naturally enough in the most important artistic centres of Northern Italy.
- Turin, in particular, was transformed during the course of the 17th century into a modern residential metropolis, where artists and craftsmen of various professions were in demand.²³ The Francophile court of the Savoy dynasty here was regarded as a miniature Versailles, and as such was used by many Central European noblemen as a substitute for France on their Grand Tour, since France itself was temporarily inaccessible due to the wars taking place there. In this role it was also equipped with an academy for the nobility, founded in 1678, which was famous in its day.²⁴

²¹ On Lucchese and Tencalla see Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, p. 148.

²² Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, p. 327.

²³ Turin did not become the Savoy metropolis until 1563, when Duke Emanuele Filiberto (1528-1580) moved his court there from Chambéry for strategic reasons. During the following century the hitherto by no means architecturally attractive town was reconstructed into a well-fortified metropolis, on the basis of the most advanced principles of Baroque town planning. In 1584 a competition was announced for an overall urbanistic design for the town and the residence, which was won by Ascanio Vitozzi (1539-1615), an architect who until then had worked in Rome. His work was continued by the court architects Carlo (1571-1640) and Amedeo di Castellamonte (1613-1683). The most celebrated period of Turin architecture is associated with the names of Guarino Guarini (1624-1683) and Filippo Juvarra (1678-1736). Apart from the complex of the ducal palace, a whole series of attractively built residences were built in the immediate or more distant surroundings of the capital during the course of the 17th century. The appearance of Baroque Piedmont and the residences of the Savoy dynasty is documented by the lavishly illustrated album Theatrum Sabaudiae by Giovanni Tommaso Borgonio, printed in 1682 (republished Torino 2000). See also Costanza Roggero Bardelli - Maria Grazia Vinardi - Vittorio Defabiani, Ville Sabaude, Torino 1990; Giovanni Romano, Torino 1675-1699. Strategie e conflitti del Barocco, Torino 2002; Franco Caresio, Arte in Piemonte. Il Barocco, Torino 2005; Lucia Caterina Mossetti - Cristina Mossetti, *Villa della Regina*, Torino 2005; Paolo Cornaglia, "1563-1798, tre secoli di architettura di corte. La cittá, gli architetti, la committenza, le residenze, i giardini," in: Enrico Sactelnuovo (ed.), La Reggia di Veneraria e i Savoia, Torino 2007, pp. 117-184; Walter Barberis (ed.), I Savoia. I secoli d'oro di una dinastia europea, Torino 2007; Elisabeth Wünsche-Werdenhausen, Turin 1713-1730. Die Kunstpolitik König Vittorio Amedeos II., Petersberg 2009.

²⁴ The Turin royal or noble academy (Accademia Reale – Accademia Nobile) was founded in 1678 (but not opened until 1683) by the Regent Marie Jeanne Baptiste, widow of the Duke of Savoy Carlo Emanuele II. The academy building was part of an extensive complex constructed in the years 1674-1680 on the northern side of the Piazza di Castello. So far unpublished sources testify to the exceptionally high number of aristocrats from the Central European area who attended it. On this theme see: Paola Bianchi, "In cerca del moderno. Studenti e viaggiatori inglesi a Torino nel Settecento," in: *Rivista storica italiana*, 105, 2003, pp. 1021-1051; Paola Bianchi, *'Baron Litron' e gli altri. Militari stranieri nel Piemonte del Settecento*, Torino 2008; Paolo Cornaglia, "L'Accademia Reale e il Teatro, invenzioni castelmontiane," in: *Esiti*, 18, 2000, pp. 51-57.

- In view of the fact that both a substantial number of Habsburg aristocratic patrons and also artists who were at the same time working in Central Europe were familiar with the rapidly changing Turin milieu from their own experience, possible parallels between Piedmont and Central European architecture are highly relevant, even before the era of Guarini and Juvarra. References to formal analogies between Piedmont and Viennese buildings in the 17th century are thus fully justified.²⁵ In addition, archive findings have recently been published explicitly demonstrating that some artists from Tencalla's circle active in Bohemia or Moravia were also working in Turin in the 1660s and 1670s.²⁶
- Apart from the Ducal (or Royal) palace [Fig. 6], the most important early residence of the Savoy dynasty was the Castello del Valentino [Fig. 7], built close to the metropolis by the court architects Carlo and Amedeo di Castellamonte in several stages, starting in 1630.²⁷
 As with the Palazzo Reale, in the Valentino we find an open triple-wing layout, with which we are familiar from Caratti's Roudnice and later in Żagań.
- [19] Furthermore, the Valentino is reminiscent of Roudnice because of its massive western front [Fig. 8], with an external staircase (situated in an analogous position to Roudnice) which served as the principal entrance from the river, which at the time was used as the main form of access.

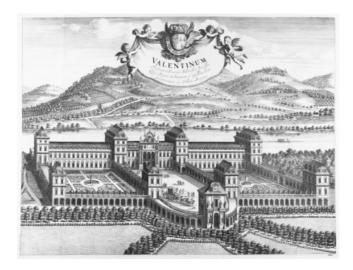


6 Giovanni Tomasso Borgognio – Romein de Hooghe, Turin, Piazza Castello, engraving from the album *Theatrum* statuum regiae celsitudinis Sabaudiae ducis, Amsterdam 1682, Institute of Art History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

²⁵ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, pp. 221-222, 388.

²⁶ Jana Zapletalová, "'Jakobus Tencalla figlius Joannis de Bissone'. The Origin and Life of painter Giacomo Tencalla," in: *Umění*, 56, 2008, pp. 65-76.

²⁷ Costanza Roggero Bardelli, *Torino. Il Castello del Valentino*, Torino 1992; Caresio, *Arte in Piemonte*, pp. 35-36.



7 Turin, Castello Valentino, engraving from the album *Theatrum* statuum regiae celsitudinis Sabaudiae ducis, Amsterdam 1682, Institute of Art History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic



8 Castello Valentino, built from 1630 onwards, view from the river, photo: Martin Mádl

- In the case of the Savoy residences there genuinely were direct French influences. Apart from its traditionally Francophile cultural orientation, until the early 18th century Piedmont was also dependent on France politically. While the cultural, social, and political situation in the Czech lands in the second half of the 17th century excluded direct French influence, the role of the Savoy metropolis as a major artistic and social centre at that time is indisputable. The rare echoes of French architecture in the Bohemian milieu might therefore be explained by the natural links between Central Europe and the Piedmont milieu. Further weight is added to this assumption by the fact that a considerable number of North Italian artists who worked in Turin during the 17th century were also active in the Czech lands. It would be desirable for future research to properly elucidate these connections, which are at present more a matter of conjecture.
- In the context of Viennese architecture we find an important building that is very close to the Roudnice chateau in terms of both the date it was built and its layout. During the years 1654-1663, Count Trautson built on the northern outskirts of Vienna (later known

as the Augarten) a garden palace which, after it was sold to the Emperor in 1677, became known as the Old Favorita (after its model in Mantua). ²⁸ This magnificent piece of architecture [Fig. 9], destroyed in 1683, is documented by Praemer's album (fol. 190-191). A square courtyard with a taller main building (with an axial tower) and single-storey side wings is closed by a ground-level wall decorated by sculptures ("gallery"). The close interconnection between the building and the garden in the Favorita complex, and the element of the cour d'honneur, were a major source of inspiration in the Viennese milieu and beyond. ²⁹



9 Wolfgang Wilhelm Praemer, the "Old Favorita" in Vienna, pen and ink wash, ca. 1670-1675, ÖNB, Wien (Detail of the centre. Martin Mádl)



10 Giovanni Pietro Tencalla (?) – Antonio Porta, Libochovice chateau, courtyard, 1682-1689, photo: Martin Mádl

[22] Let us move on to December 1682, when a contract was signed with Antonio Porta for the reconstruction of the chateau in Libochovice [Fig. 10], which had been destroyed by fire. The new chateau was built in the years 1683-1689 and was commissioned by Prince

²⁸ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, pp. 193-196.

²⁹ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, pp. 193-196.

Gundakar of Dietrichstein. The edifice is one of a series of four-wing buildings, beginning with Lucchese's Holešov (from 1652) and continuing with the residences in Petronell (from 1660), Eisenstadt (from 1663), and Kroměříž (from 1668). The layout in Libochovice is especially similar to that in Petronell.³⁰

- Apart from the corridors of courtyard bays, we also find virtually identical triple-section [23] sala terrenas in both buildings.³¹ Petr Fidler aptly described the Libochovice chateau as the "Bohemian fata morgana of Viennese architecture". 32 A comparison of the façades in Libochovice with the form and structure of the most significant buildings of Giovanni Pietro Tencalla legitimises the assumption that the person responsible for the final design in Libochovice must have come from the immediate circle of that imperial architect, or even have been Tencalla himself. The situation is thus made more complicated by the fact that in 1683 Jean Baptiste Mathey came to Libochovice, where he surveyed the chateau and drew up a new plan.³³ So unless someone else again was also involved in the construction of the Libochovice chateau, this would mean that our architect who was oriented purely towards Tencalla was Mathey. However this may be, in the case of Libochovice Porta evidently played the role of the master-builder implementing somebody else's design. Prince Dietrichstein, busy in Vienna with duties connected with his career, was represented on the site of the construction of his new residence by his neighbours, the Counts Kolovrat, Schützen, and Kaplíř.³⁴
- However, Zdeněk Kaplíř of Sulevice was likewise not present all the time at his own residence in nearby Milešov [Fig. 11], and so the building work there was overseen by his wife. There is no doubt that Porta was responsible for the design of this further North Bohemian building; however, it reveals his limitations as an architect. The dating of the Kaplíř chateau is somewhat confused, but it was probably built during the course of the 1660s, and by 1675 the basic structure was evidently completed. The cubic new building, belonging to the type mentioned above, was joined in an interesting way to a solitary older section of the chateau, whose location made it prominently visible, and in which were situated the private rooms of the builder, including his personal studiolo. The

³⁰ The chateau in Petronell was built in the years 1660-1680 by Count Ernst III Abensberg-Traun (†1668) and his son Ferdinand. It is distinguished by the suggestion of an independent great hall, accessible from the courtyard by a double-flight staircase with an entrance baldachin, and also by the rich decoration of the courtyard façades. Cf. Werner Kitlitschka, "Das Schloss Petronell in Niederösterreich. Beiträge zur Baugeschichte und kulturhistorischen Bedeutung," in: *Arte Lombarda*, 12, 1967, pp. 105-126; Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, p. 199.

³¹ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, p. 200; Martin Mádl, "Giacomo Tencalla and ceiling painting in 17th-century Bohemia and Moravia," in: *Umění*, 56, 2008, p. 53.

³² Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, pp. 271-272.

³³ Pavel Zahradník, "Archivní nálezy k dílu Jana Křtitele Matheye," in: *Umění*, 45, 1997, pp. 551-553

³⁴ Zahradník, "Archivní nálezy k dílu Jana Křtitele Matheye," pp. 553-554.

³⁵ Mádl, "Giacomo Tencalla and ceiling painting in 17th-century Bohemia and Moravia," p. 54.

³⁶ Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, p. 518.

Milešov chateau displays all the external features of "Portan architecture": a bossed socle, the Roman Tuscan order of pilasters (Roman Doric in the courtyard), bracket cornices, an alternating rhythm of frontons, and diamond window parapets. Nevertheless, every one of these elements has its origin in the milieu of Viennese architecture around the middle of the 17th century. But in Milešov the overall composition of the façades is more a mechanically repeated scheme and a simplified derivative of the chosen starting-points. The execution is also noticeably lower in quality – this being particularly obvious in comparison with Libochovice. Worthy of note is the monumental entrance to the chateau, which functionally is extremely bizarre. The steps of a double-flight staircase climb up to the chateau portal, behind which is a magnificently laid out vestibule hall with three bays. It was thus not possible to enter this pretentious residence in a carriage or on horseback! Rather unfortunate was Porta's use of this another Viennese motif, which we will refer to later.



11 Antonio Porta, Milešov chateau, 1663-1666, photo: Martin Mádl



12 Antonio Porta (?), Červený Hrádek chateau, from 1669, photo: Martin Mádl

[25] In the case of the Hrzan family chateau in Červený Hrádek [Fig. 12], the construction of which was started in 1669-1670,³⁷ uncertainty prevails in identifying the parts that were

³⁷ Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, p. 519.

the work of Antonio Porta and those that were designed by Jean Baptiste Mathey. The latter's involvement was recorded by the Jirkov registry office in 1684. While the enclosed layout of the chateau and, above all, the form of the courtyard give the impression of being Porta's work, the monumental exterior staircase and the pavilion of the central hall avant-corps are reminiscent of Mathey. However, it should be emphasised that the decorative elements on the external façades in Červený Hrádek are foreign to the styles of both Porta and Mathey. The Lobkowicz family chateau in Bílina [Fig. 13] was likewise built by Porta in the years 1675-1682 after another architect's design. In this case we are reliably informed by written sources that the design can be attributed to Giovanni Pietro Tencalla, son of the former Polish royal architect Constante Tencalla (1610-1647) [Fig. 14].³⁸



13 Giovanni Pietro Tencalla, Bílina chateau, 1675-1682, photo: Martin Mádl



14 Costante Tencalla, Podhorce chateau (today in the Ukraine), 1635-1640, photo: Martin Krummholz

[26] What we have said above enables us to draw the conclusion that Porta, coming from the Viennese artistic milieu, often implemented the designs of other architects, in particular

³⁸ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, pp. 269, 345; Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, p. 658. On Costante Tencalla: Mariusz Karpowicz, *Artisti Ticinesi a Polonia nella prima metá del' 600*, Ticino 2002, pp. 135-153.

the extremely overworked imperial court architect G. P. Tencalla. Incidentally, the close personal links between the two men is testified to by the fact that Tencalla acted as proxy for Porta in signing a contract to buy Italian property in Vienna in 1671.³⁹

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Troja, Jean Baptiste Mathey, and Viennese architecture

One of the most controversial Baroque buildings in the Czech lands is the famous Troja chateau [Fig. 15], which is traditionally attributed to Mathey. Porta is recorded in the sources as having worked here after the death of the first master-builder to oversee the project, Giovanni Domenico Orsi, at the end of 1679. We have already come across the presence of both Porta and Mathey on the same site several times; the possibility that they may have worked together on the construction of this suburban residence of the Sternberg family is thus not surprising.



15 Jean Baptiste Mathey, Troja chateau, garden façade, from 1679, photo: Martin Mádl

Before going on to discuss the issues surrounding the Troja chateau it is necessary to devote a few words to the figure of Jean Baptiste Mathey. A native of Burgundy, he trained as a painter for many years in Rome, where he made the acquaintance of the future Archbishop of Prague, Johann Friedrich of Waldstein (1644-1694), at whose invitation he settled in Bohemia. It is not entirely clear where and under what circumstances the painter Mathey transformed himself into a dilettante architect, although this question is of quite fundamental importance. Recent art-historical literature has examined in some detail the influence of 17th-century Roman architecture

³⁹ Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, p. 518.

⁴⁰ On Mathey: Johann Joseph Morper, Der Prager Architekt Jean Baptiste Mathey, München 1927; Vlček – Havlová, Praha 1610-1700, pp. 257-287; Mojmír Horyna, "Architektura trojského zámku," in: Mojmír Horyna – Pavel Zahradník – Pavel Preiss, Zámek Trója u Prahy. Dějiny, stavba, plastika a malba, Praha – Litomyšl 2000, pp. 119-125; Vlček, Encyklopedie architektů, pp. 409-411; Mojmír Horyna, Jean Baptiste Mathey a počátky vrcholného baroka, (unpublished manuscript) Praha 2010.

⁴¹ As late as 1692 Mathey was described in the correspondence of Prince Johann Adam of Liechtenstein, who was particularly well informed about the artistic world, as "the Archbishop's painter and master-builder". Herbert Haupt, *Ein liebhaber der gemähl und virtuosen ... Fürst Johann Adam I. Andreas von Liechtenstein (1657-1712)*, Wien – Köln – Weimar 2012, pp. 544-545.

in the oeuvre of this important artist, but even less effort has been devoted to tracing any Central European sources of inspiration for his work than is the case with Caratti and Porta.⁴² Let us therefore attempt to verify the hypothetical existence (or absence) of Central European connections in relation to Mathey's work.

- If we confine ourselves to the field of secular architecture, the significant features of Mathey's work can be summarised as follows: a projecting hall avant-corps (higher than the main façade), a double-flight exterior staircase, façades divided up either by simple lesene frames or by a colossal Roman Doric order of pilasters (often in two sections, one above the other), and alternating segmented and triangular frontons. Apart from the higher avant-corps these are all elements that we have seen both in the Viennese architecture of the generation of Filiberto Lucchese and Giovanni Pietro Tencalla, and in the Bohemian buildings by Antonio Porta that we have discussed earlier. The façades of Mathey's secular buildings are almost surprisingly simple. Their qualities can be seen above all in the overall reduction of forms to a simple rectangular lesene grid, or in some cases the monotonous rhythm of colossal pilasters and alternating frontons.
- [30] A giant order of pilasters on two levels also appears in one of the competing designs for the Dietrichstein (later Lobkowicz) Palace in Vienna from the year 1687, which has led to it being attributed to Mathey. If we accept this attribution, the question arises: How could this not overly inventive design have had an impact and held its own in the highly competitive environment of Vienna? Was Mathey hoping the principle of an austerely monumental façade would have an impact, or was he banking on his reputation, already considerable at that time, as the architect of the church of the Knights of the Cross with the Red Star in Prague? Evidently both.
- So far as the genesis of the "Matheyan" double-section vertical lines is concerned, it is worth mentioning the illustrations in Praemer's album depicting the exterior (fol. 215) and main courtyard (fol. 214) of the Hofburg in Vienna with the proposed integration of the façades of the old castle and the newer Leopold Wing. 44 While the exterior facing of the whole complex adopts the pattern of the Leopold Wing (Lucchese Tencalla), in the case of two sides of the courtyard [Fig. 16] we encounter the articulation that we have become used to calling "Matheyan": above a bossed socle there are two storeys of a colossal order of pilasters culminating in a Doric entablature, and triangular and segmented frontons alternate above the windows on the main floors. If we can exclude the possibility that the inventiveness of Praemer's drawing dating from the 1670s came

⁴² See in particular Horyna, "Architektura trojského zámku," in: Horyna – Zahradník – Preiss, Zámek Trója u Prahy, and Horyna, Jean Baptiste Mathey a počátky vrcholného baroka.

⁴³ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, pp. 296-300; Georg Wilhelm Rizzi, "Das Palais Dietrichstein-Lobkowitz in Wien. Zur Planung und Baugeschichte," in: Oskar Pausch (ed.), *Lobkowitzerplatz 2. Geschichte eines Hauses*, Wien – Köln – Weimar 1991, pp. 17, 21; Horyna, *Jean Baptiste Mathey a počátky vrcholného baroka*, p. 22.

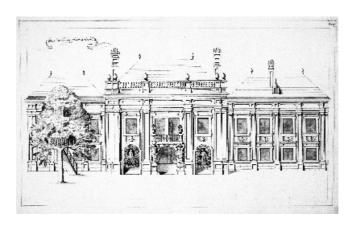
⁴⁴ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, pp. 211-213.

from Mathey, then, vice versa, we have to conclude that Mathey's architectural work was inspired by this design, which was evidently already a familiar one in artistic circles in this environment. In any case it is evidence that the Viennese milieu played an important role in forming Mathey's artistic profile.⁴⁵



16 Wolfgang Wilhelm Praemer, courtyard of the Hofburg in Vienna, proposal for adaptations to the façades (never carried out), pen and ink wash, ca. 1670-1675, ÖNB, Wien

[32] Let us return to the Troja chateau, concerning which continuing disputes persist with regard to the context of its style and the identity of the architect, 46 and try to examine the possible connections of this interesting building which are geographically the more natural ones. If we continue to browse through Wilhelm Praemer's illustrations, we will find on folios 180-183 four drawings of his own summer palace in Vienna [Fig. 17].



17 Wolfgang Wilhelm Praemer, entrance façade of the Wenzelsberg summer palace in Vienna, pen and ink wash, ca. 1670-1675, ÖNB, Wien

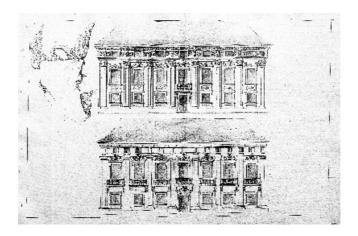
[33] They depict the entrance and garden façades and the ground plans of the ground floor and first floor. If we disregard the clearly Tencallian concept for the façades of this building, then the numerous analogies with Troja are striking. Praemer's garden palace had two storeys and eleven axes, with the central triaxial hall projecting and being slightly taller than the rest of the building, and also having a separate roof. The perhaps

⁴⁵ Similar articulation can incidentally be seen on the façade of another prominent Viennese building – the Jesuit church.

⁴⁶ French influences are defended in particular by Pavel Vlček, in: Vlček – Havlová, *Praha 1610-1700*, pp. 266-269; Mojmír Horyna, on the contrary, believes that the building is mainly influenced by Roman models, Horyna, "Architektura trojského zámku," in: Horyna – Zahradník – Preiss, *Zámek Trója u Prahy*, pp. 96-111; Horyna, *Jean Baptiste Mathey a počátky vrcholného baroka*, pp. 9-10, 19, 36.

slightly elevated building was separated from the courtyard by a balustrade, from which an exterior double-flight staircase, richly decorated with sculptures, led up directly to the entrance to the great hall on the first floor. On the opposite side was a balcony with a view over the garden, held up by a pair of atlantes flanking the entrance to the ground-floor sala terrena.

Praemer's building is a development of the type of the simple garden casino, which we are familiar with from the example of Wenzelsberg's summer palace in Wieden (before 1664).⁴⁷ Wenzelberg's cubical solitary building [Fig. 18] is developed in Praemer's garden residence in terms of its composition: the central block is supplemented by side wings, and access on the first floor is by means of an exterior staircase with a sophisticated design. When comparing the entrance façades of Praemer's summer palace and the Troja chateau we come to the conclusion that the newer building in Prague (with slightly larger proportions) further developed the layout in Vienna by the addition of shallow side wings with observation towers above them (a motif of Roman provenance), and rectangular staircase forms here replaced oval ones. The material composition is thus slightly more complicated in Troja, and the form of the Baroque staircase here evidently reached its pinnacle.

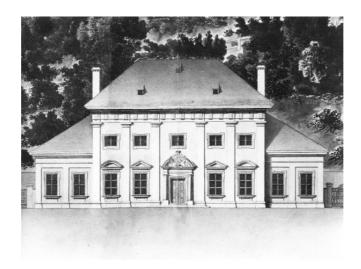


18 Wolfgang Wilhelm Praemer, Wenzelsberg summer palace in Vienna, pen and ink wash, ca. 1670-1675, ÖNB, Wien

The role of the delayed "link" between the two summer palaces in Vienna and the Troja chateau fell to Mathey's casino (later Šlechta's restaurant) in the imperial game preserve in Prague [Fig. 19], built in 1688-1691,⁴⁸ which modified the original models in Vienna and was at the same time a kind of reduction of the nearby Sternberg residence.

⁴⁷ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, p. 276.

⁴⁸ Horyna, *Jean Baptiste Mathey a počátky vrcholného baroka*, p. 18.



19 Jean Baptiste Mathey, former summer palace of the Vratislav of Mitrovice family (later Šlechta's restaurant) in the Stromovka park in Prague, 1689-1692, photo: Institute of Art History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

- The exterior staircase providing access to the central area of the chateau building (an [36] element of apparently Genoese origin) is a typical feature of Viennese architecture in the second half of the 17th century (the generation of Lucchese and Tencalla). It can be seen, among other places, in Petronell, Kaiserebersdorf, Rohrau, Kittsee, or the Montecuccoli summer palace (Praemer). 49 This motif also occurs in many buildings which are wholly or partly the work of Antonio Porta (Roudnice, Libochovice, Milešov) and Jean Baptiste Mathey (Duchcov, Troja, Červený Hrádek, Plasy), where it is likewise of Viennese provenance. We have already spoken about the slightly curious application of this element in Milešov. Also worthy of note is the truly monumental staircase in Červený Hrádek, which is most probably the work of Mathey, who here based himself on the model of the ground plan of the staircase of the Czernin family hunting lodge Humprecht, attributed to Carlo Lurago. 50 In spite of the fact that a road leads comfortably into the courtyard in Červený Hrádek through a passageway in the opposite wing, the majestic entrance here is only for those arriving on foot! The objection that the primary function of the magnificent staircase was to connect the chateau (but not its main hall) with the garden is contradicted by the far from spectacular conception of the direct roadway into the courtyard from the rear that we have just mentioned, and, by contrast, the splendid forms of the portal at the top of the "garden" staircase. If the original intention of the architect here had been a more appropriate approach ramp, then the necessary modifications to the terrain would have been an extremely expensive business.
- [37] The fact that the personal and professional contacts between Antonio Porta and Jean Baptiste Mathey must have been much more intensive than was hitherto assumed is testified to by the common starting-point for their work, which was contemporary

⁴⁹ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, p. 200.

⁵⁰ Vlček, *Encyklopedie architektů*, p. 383.

Viennese architecture, shaped to a large extent by artists whose orientation was towards Northern Italy and Piedmont. Taking this into consideration, the fact that both artists worked together on a number of occasions in the localities referred to above (Troja, Libochovice, Červený Hrádek) is evidence of their genuine close cooperation; it is not always possible to reliably work out what share of a particular project can be attributed to which architect.

To the list of buildings which can be shown to have been the work (or joint work) of Porta and Mathey, and have been discussed as such, let us add the bishop's residence in Litoměřice [Fig. 20] built in 1689-1694. It is usually attributed to Giulio Broggio from Litoměřice, who is recorded in the sources as the master-builder. However, the layout, material composition, and articulation of the façades clearly point to the Porta-Mathey circle we have talked about.

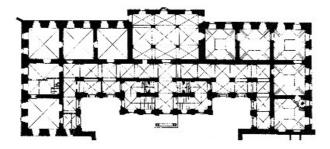


20 Jean Baptiste Mathey (?), Litoměřice, Bishop's residence, entrance façade, 1689-1694, photo: Martin Mádl

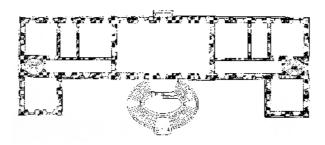
The ground plan [Fig. 21] is evidently based on the scheme of the Troja chateau [Fig. 22]. Typical of Mathey's style is the (in this case substantially) projecting avant-corps, while the shaping of the façade is more reminiscent of Porta: a bossed socle, a giant Roman Doric order of pilasters, diamond-pointed rustication, and vertical window lines with alternating frontons, linked by parapet fields. The quality of the execution excludes the possibility that this could be Broggio's own variation on the Porta-Mathey theme. In addition, in the case of such a prestigious building as the bishop's residence in a recently re-established diocese it can be assumed that a prominent architect would have been chosen, whether it was the court architect of the Archbishop of Prague or the architect responsible for the most magnificent piece of architecture in the region – the Roudnice chateau. Especially since we know that the form of Mathey's archiepiscopal palace left its mark on the appearance of the new residence of the Bishop of Hradec Králové, constructed in 1704-1707.⁵²

⁵¹ Petr Macek, "Architektura," in: Mojmír Horyna – Jaroslav Macek – Petr Macek – Pavel Preiss, *Oktavián Broggio 1670-1742*, Litoměřice 1992, p. 72.

⁵² Horyna, Jean Baptiste Mathey a počátky vrcholného baroka, p. 14.



21 Litoměřice, Bishop's residence, ground floor ground plan, Martin Mádl



22 Troja chateau, first floor ground plan, Institute of Art History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic



23 Jean Baptiste Mathey, Prague, façade of the church of St. Francis of the Knights of the Cross with the Red Star, 1679-1688, photo: Martin Mádl

[40] To those indications of the Viennese sources of inspiration for Mathey's oeuvre that we have mentioned so far can be added several more. The imperial Favorita in the Augarten has already been mentioned. If we focus on the appearance of the main building [Fig. 9], our attention is captured by the central avant-corps with a tower. The monumental broken Doric aedicule is not unlike the analogous frame on the façade of the church of the Knights of the Cross with the Red Star in Prague [Fig. 23], while it is impossible to overlook the similarity between the tower on top of the Viennese building and the similarly conceived pavilions of the Tuscany Palace in Prague [Fig. 24] or the monastery

granary in Plasy [Fig. 25]. Also similar in character to Mathey's granaries was the solitary building of the great hall of the Deutschkreuz chateau in Burgenland, which is based in its entirety on the form and structures used by Lucchese.⁵³



24 Jean Baptiste Mathey, Prague, Tuscany Palace, façade, from 1690, photo: Martin Mádl



25 Jean Baptiste Mathey, Plasy, granary of the former Cistercian monastery, 1685-1686, photo: Martin Mádl

[41] To summarise the observations we have made above, it is necessary first of all to note the interconnections between the oeuvre of Francesco Caratti, Antonio Porta, and Jean Baptiste Mathey [Figs. 3, 11, 16, 20, 21]. The artistic basis for all three was Viennese architecture around the mid-17th century, especially the work of the imperial architect Giovanni Pietro Tencalla. It is important to emphasise that this was not seen at the time as a second-class role, as it might appear from today's perspective. Naturally, the two celebrated artists were not able to satisfy personally the demand from competing noble families who wanted buildings designed, and this was often the case even with very prominent aristocrats.

⁵³ Fidler, *Architektur des Seicento*, p. 192, Fig. 246. The building was demolished in the 1950s.

- So far as the architectural profile of Jean Baptiste Mathey is concerned, it is highly likely [42] that it first took shape only after his arrival in Central Europe as court painter to the Archbishop of Prague.⁵⁴ At the side of Johann Friedrich of Waldstein (1644-1694), who was not only a high-ranking prelate of the Kingdom of Bohemia, but also a prominent member of the aristocratic society of the Habsburg monarchy, Mathey naturally mixed in Viennese court circles. When the Archbishop was then faced with demanding building projects, his court painter was sent to spend several months in Rome, 55 in order to complete his architectural education and so that he would be able to deal with the exacting ideas and requirements of a patron of the highest level of artistic refinement. The fruits of this journey of Mathey's were the famous church of the Knights of the Cross with the Red Star in Prague, dedicated to St. Francis (1679-1688), and the inventive garden residence of Count Sternberg in Troja (from 1679). Nevertheless, even these two exceptional buildings are not entirely without associations with the original source of the artist's oeuvre, which was contemporary Viennese architecture. For Mathey can no longer continue to be interpreted as "a Frenchman", nor as an architectural genius transplanted from Rome. 56 It is Central European roots that explain "Mathey's gradual adaptation to Bohemian conditions", which is a repeated source of puzzlement for the art-historical literature.57
- [43] It is necessary for the thesis presented in this article to be verified and added to as a result of more long-term systematic research. This, however, must respect the contemporary cultural and social context. It is not possible to explain the natural context of the architecture we have been examining simply by listing "French" or "Italian" formal analogies.

Translation by Peter Stephens

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⁵⁴ Haupt, *Ein liebhaber der gemähl und virtuosen*, pp. 544-545.

⁵⁵ Milada Vilímková, "Některá novější zjištění k pražské architektuře 17.-18. století," in: *Barokní umění* 1991, p. 140.

⁵⁶ Morper, *Der Prager Architekt Jean Baptiste Mathey*, pp. 43-44; Franz, *Bauten und Baumeister der Barockzeit in Böhmen*, pp. 35-38; Vlček – Havlová, *Praha 1610-1700*, pp. 266-269; Horyna, *Jean Baptiste Mathey a počátky vrcholného baroka*, pp. 1-4.

⁵⁷ Vlček – Havlová, *Praha 1610-1700*, p. 257; Horyna, *Jean Baptiste Mathey a počátky vrcholného baroka*, p. 34.

