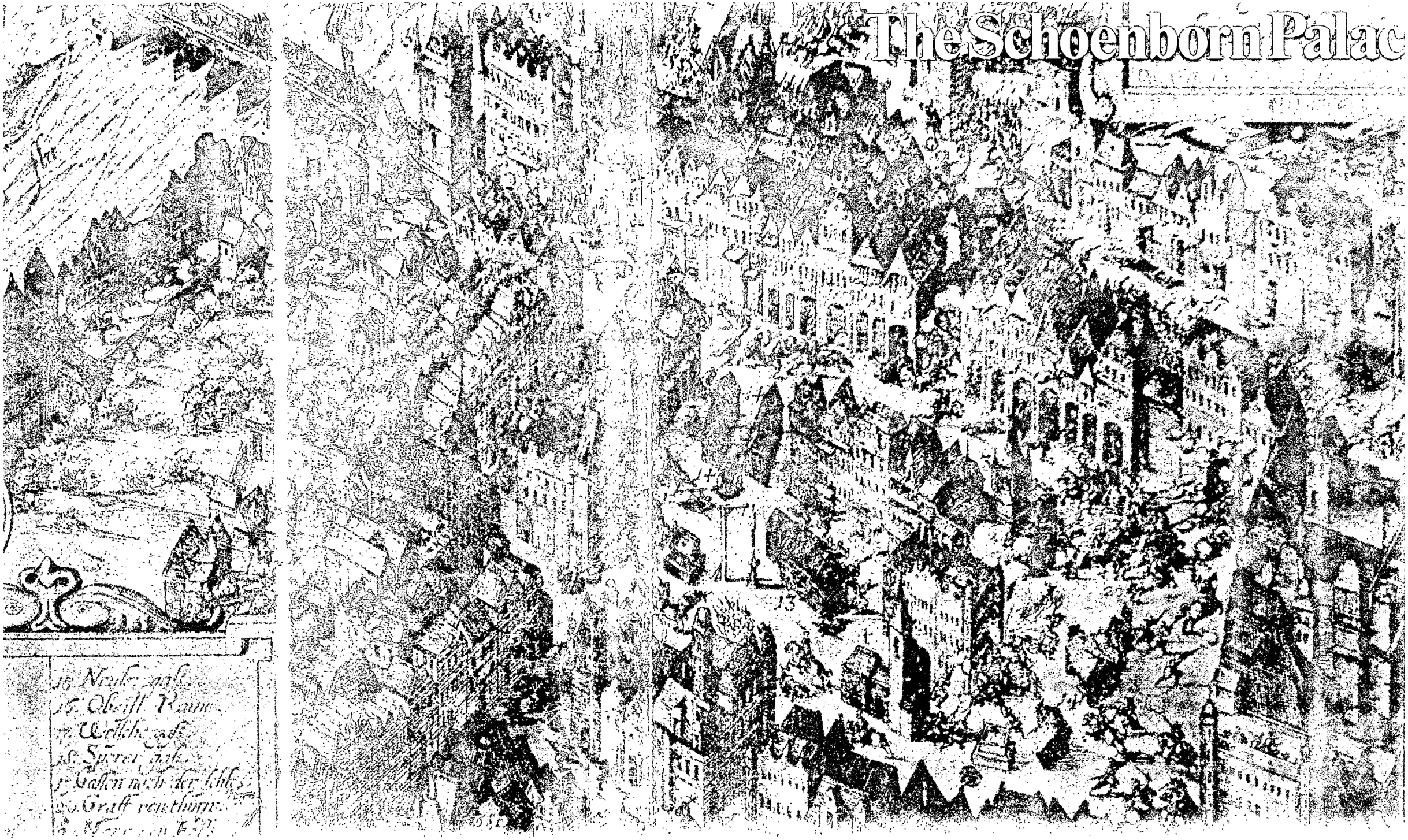
The Schoenborn Palac



The Schoenborn Palace

A History of the American Chancery Building in Prague

(Am. Embassy)

By Brigitte Hauger

Introduction

An Embassy chancery is the building that houses the many activities comprising any American overseas mission. It is the office of the Ambassador, the President's personal representative in the conduct of foreign affairs with another country. It also houses the Embassy Political, Economic and Commercial, Consular, and Press and Cultural Sections, and the military attachés accredited to the country, plus the administrative staff that helps keep the building in order and cares for the mission's other material needs. All of these offices work in one way or another on aspects of Czechoslovak-American relations, from discussions at the Foreign Office to arranging for concerts or business contacts. Several American families live in this building as well, and the International School, with children from many countries in its classrooms, is quartered here.

In Prague, we are fortunate to have one of the most attractive and historic of all American Embassy buildings, the Schoenborn Palace. It was purchased by the U.S. Government as a Legation in 1924 from its then owner, Richard Crane, the American Slavophile who was the first American diplomatic representative accredited to the Czechoslovak Republic. This structure, initially built in the 15th Century, reflects something of Czechoslovakia's history in its own development in later centuries. Thanks to the patient and detailed work of Mrs. Brigitte Hauger, who lived here from 1969 to 1972 when her husband was assigned to the Embassy, we now have assembled a history of the chancery building, which it is our pleasure to share with you.

Thomas R. Byrne
Ambassador of the United States of America

The Schoenborn Palace,
Prague,
January 1976.

An Embassy is not overly concerned with history. It serves as a present link between two countries, as they are and as they act. But an Embassy is not only a function; an ambassador and his staff need a place to operate, a place to live, and an American diplomat assigned to Prague soon finds his place very much involved with history. Entering the main gate of the American Embassy, he steps more than two hundred years back in time, facing a garden which astounded foreign visitors three centuries ago. Unfortunately, although the American Government has owned the Schoenborn Palace for nearly half a century, it has until now coped with its historical load by means of a one-page leaflet handed out to visitors; these were the owners, this stairway was for horses, and we bought the place at a good price. It was built, reconstructed, and finished in neatly defined years, involving architects and artists of undoubted quality. However, history does not lend itself to one-page leaflets, and a good house in a city is like a person in a crowd, that is involved in but not defined by it, equipped with personal traits which shun all definition, and yet part of that amorphous moving entity called history.

A few personal words are necessary. I came here as a Foreign Service wife in 1969 with no day-to-day office work to do. I was unhappy with the one-page leaflet and thought that we should know a little more about the history of our Palace. So I started my "research," suffering from many interruptions, obstacles and a general inclination to take it easy. Three years seem like a long time at the beginning; towards the end they have a tendency to run away.

My greatest original help came from Josef Kaplan, an employee of the Embassy, who put me in touch with Petr Herman of the "Pražské středisko Státní památkové péče a ochrany přírody" (Prague Center of the State Office for Preservation of Old Buildings and Protection of Nature). This office maintains a record of every historical building in Prague; each one is equipped with a so-called "passport" which contains all known facts about the building concerned. The Schoenborn Palace "passport" was made accessible for me by Správa služeb (Office for Services to the Diplomatic Corps), and a translation was kindly provided by Ing. Karel Herbrych.

The "passport" served as a control for the Palace's general history; the attached drawings provided an excellent guide to the age of various parts of the building, especially in connection with the McNayr drawings of 1928. Brooding over plans was one of the most tedious and tricky parts of my work. I relied on the "passport" for the Renaissance period (exceptions are noted in the text), and it was an invaluable help in finding original documents in the Prague City Archives. However, the main shortcoming of the "passport" originates with the fact that neither the Colloredo Archives

(at Zámrsk) nor the Schoenborn Archives (at Klatovy) are yet sorted or accessible. Considering the fact that my historical training and my private time were limited, I did not make an attempt to gain access to these untapped resources. I limited myself to some research in the University Library, general "Pragensia," and a specific interest in all material pertaining to the matter concerned.

Invaluable personal help came from several Czech friends and acquaintances, especially from Paní Inka Blažková who not only told me about her childhood in the Schoenborn gardens but also supplied old photographs and postcards. Count Erwein Schoenborn was kind enough to answer several questions by letter although it was no substitute for personal talk with him.

The picture material was sometimes difficult to find, and in most cases I had to do with second-rate reproductions. Jindřich Herbrych did wonders with the tired material I gave him, and he turned some of my inept sketches into clear graphic language.

A word of caution: nothing in this condensed record should be taken as an indisputable fact. The "passport" itself is not free of contradictions, mistakes and obscurities. For a great part, I relied on secondary sources. My attempt to be as clear and honest as possible, is, infortunately, no guarantee of historical truth.

Brigitte Hauger

Brigitte Hauger was born near Bremen, Germany, and attended school there, and in Goettingen and Munich. She is married to Donald W. Hauger, who spent three years as Second Secretary of the American Embassy, Prague, for Press and Cultural Affairs. It was during that period, 1969–72 that she wrote this history of Schoenborn Palace, the American Embassy building in Prague. The Haugers have lived in Hannover, Germany, since 1972, where Mr. Hauger is director of the Amerika-Haus.

If you could somehow be transported to the 13th century in order to see the very beginnings of the Schoenborn Palace on Tržiště Street, you would be well advised to wear hip boots because Tržiště at that time was a soggy medieval moat. It ran west, paralleling the city walls in Malá Strana, Prague's "Little Side," across the Vltava River from Prague's Old Town. A vestige of this period can be found if you walk down Tržiště from the Embassy and turn left into Karmelitská in the direction of Malostranské náměstí. There you pass two curious houses on your left. One has a slanted front of raw bricks and the other one is very narrow (No. 516-III). These houses are the last remaining witnesses of the time when this was the entrance gate to Malá Strana, the so-called Újezd Gate. Beyond it the street led out into the country to the village of Újezd (today absorbed by the city and only remembered in a street name). The gate lost its function when Charles IV had the moat filled in and extended the city limits to the south although it remained as a monument until 1727 when it was finally torn down.

The former moat which was eventually to be Tržiště became Nová ulice, the "new street" leading from the Újezd Gate up to the vineyards. Houses were erected on its south side, and its extension, Vlašská ulice, came into existence as a planned housing project for the large Italian community in Prague. The lower, wider part of the street became the market place of Malá Strana, hence the name Tržiště or Neumarkt. Looking at a plan of the area, you can still detect traces of the historical background. The houses on the north side of Tržiště are crowded together in two rows between the street and Malostranské náměstí, because the Renaissance houses were built on the foundations of medieval houses huddled together within the narrow limits of the city walls. The south side, where the Embassy stands, allowed for more generous buildings, inhibited only by the slope of the hillside behind. By comparison, the plan of Vlašská looks like the regular pattern of a modern suburb.

The Renaissance Period (1500–1620)

Malá Strana, the Lesser Town of Prague, was a densely populated area before it became the seat of the aristocracy after the Czech defeat at the Battle of White Mountain (1620).[1] Craftsmen, merchants, scribes and master builders displayed their prosperity as citizens of one of the richest and most important capitals of the Holy Roman Empire.

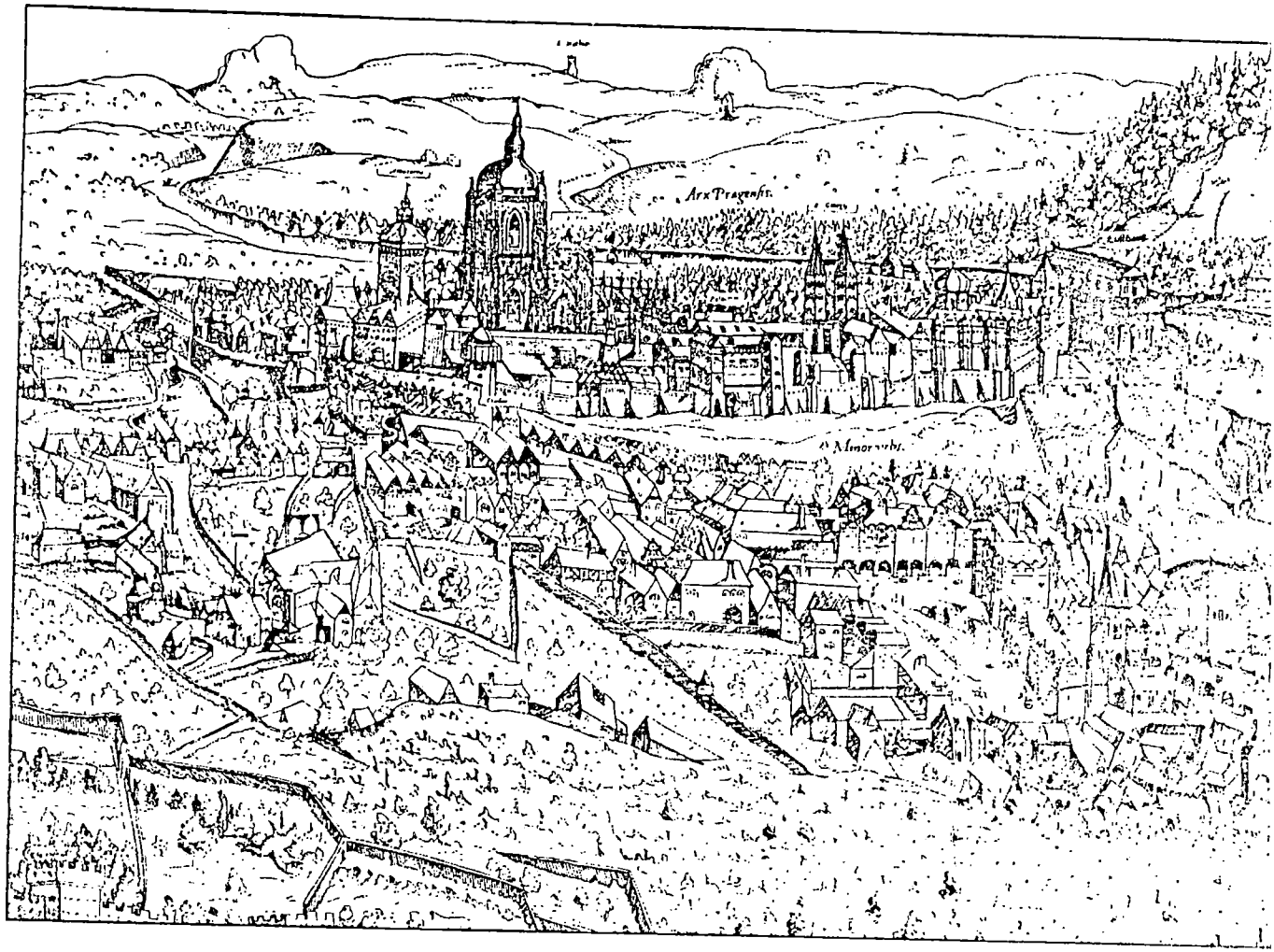
Between 1500 and 1600 the area of the later Palace was occupied by five houses and a malthouse. None of the houses remained, but the old foundations were never destroyed and determined the general shape and accounted for the many irregularities of the present ground plan of the Palace.

Very little is known about several of the houses before 1587. They had been under the jurisdiction of the Tyn Church in Old Town, the records of which are lost. Occasional sales records, legal questions, and the fact that aristocratic owners had them entered in the "Landtafel" (registered property of the nobility), help to fill in the blanks. This explains the apparent differences mentioned below in the age of the houses concerned, which are accidental and do not tell anything about their real age.[2]

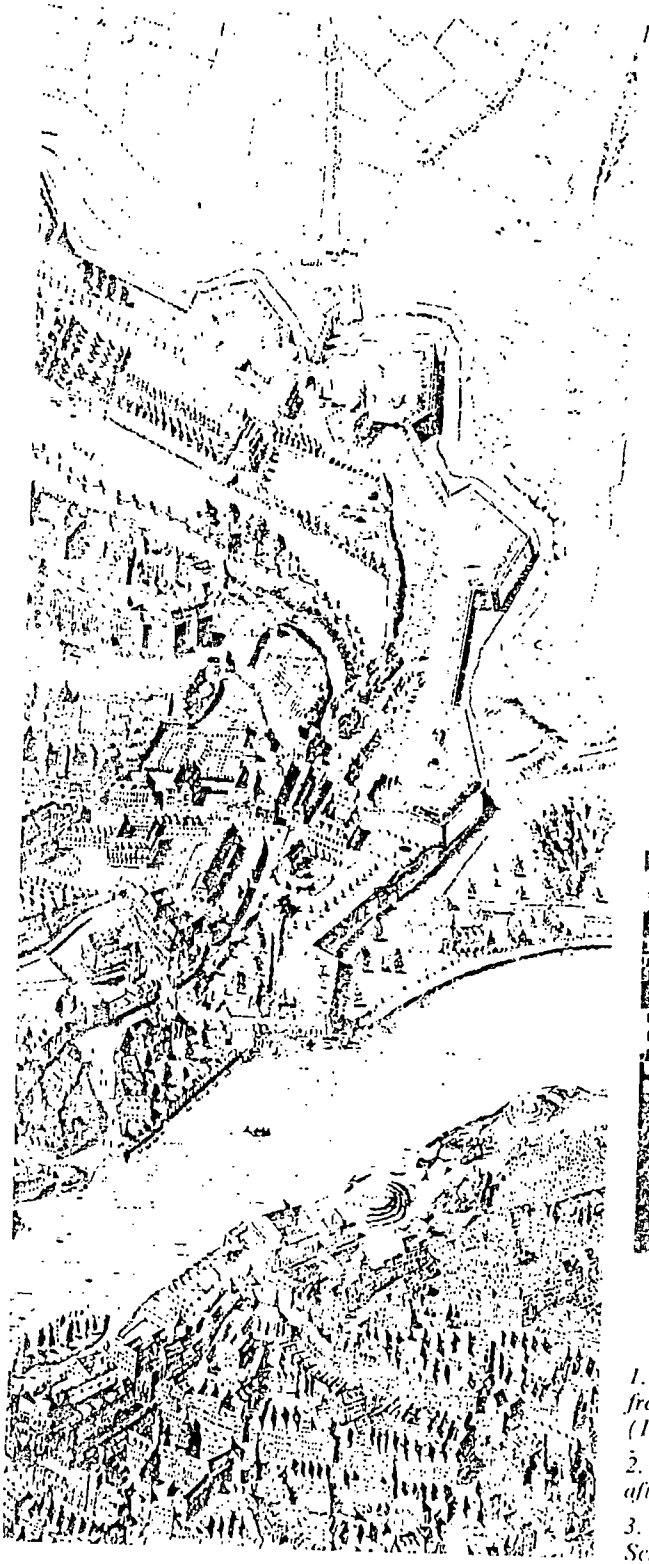
House A, the westernmost house that was later incorporated into the present Palace, existed before 1496 when it was sold by a tailor's widow for 29 Schock Meissner (from now on referred to as S.M.). It was originally connected with the neighboring house, No. 362, today harboring a police station. After several changes of ownership it was sold in 1538, "including well, nursery and garden," to the scribe Jan Starý as the "House in the Corner." Later the house was owned by the Italian master builder Dominik de Margo. One of his daughters inherited the house in 1567 after her father returned to Italy. Dominika was married to another master builder, Oldřich Avostalis, one of the most important builders and architects of the Renaissance period in Prague (Archbishop's residence on the Hradčany, restoration of Karlštejn, etc.) and also appointed to the Imperial court under Maximilian II and Rudolph II. Avostalis was also responsible for the aforementioned Italian community project in Vlašská ulice. The Renaissance building boom had brought Italian builders and their companies of masons to Prague, and they required their own houses, church and hospital. Avostalis became quite rich and owned several houses in the city, but he lived in the house on Nová ulice (Tržiště) until he died in 1598. It is therefore probable that he rebuilt the old house in the grand style, although it is impossible to determine to what extent. The Avostalis House had three floors and was divided into two tracts by a strong wall running parallel to Vlašská. It had a prominent east gable. The ground plan indicates that there were originally two Renaissance entrance ways, of which only the eastern one now exists. It is also possible

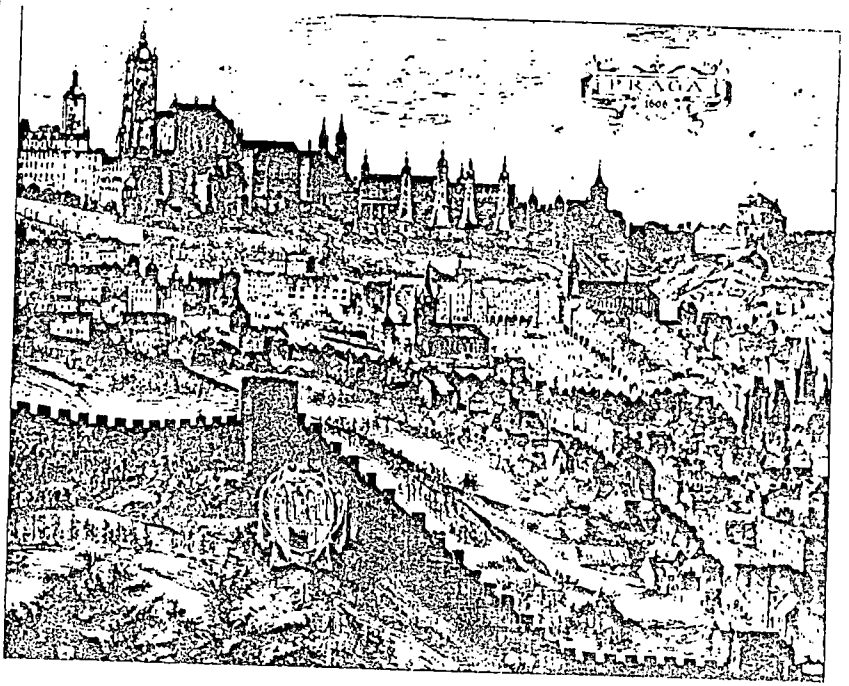
[1] *cf. p. 14 f.*

[2] *Before we enter the somewhat spotty history of each of these buildings, we have to learn a lesson about money. One of the most popular means of payment in the 1500's was the "grossus denarius," a coin equal to several Latin "denarii." The name was originally limited to a certain kind, the French "tournose," representing a value of twelve German pennies. Named after the mint of Tours, this coin in the course of the 13th century was also minted in Lorraine, the Netherlands, and in the next century all over Germany. The most famous and historically important copies were "Prague grossus" (minted under Václav II in Kutná Hora) and the "Meissen grossus" (minted under Frederic I of Meissen since 1307). The German word "Groschen" (still existent today for the 10 Pfennig coin) originated with the Czech pronunciation of "grossus," "groš." It is not the Prague but the Meissen "Groschen" which figures in the sales documents we are concerned with. One "Schock" represents the number 60, and one "Guilder" (the gold coin appearing only out of rich men's purses) roughly equals one "Schock Meissner."*



The Castle of Prague and Malá Strana. Taken from Praga Bohemiae Metropolis Accuratissime Expressa, *1562; woodcut by J. Kozel and M. Peterle of Annaberg in Prague*

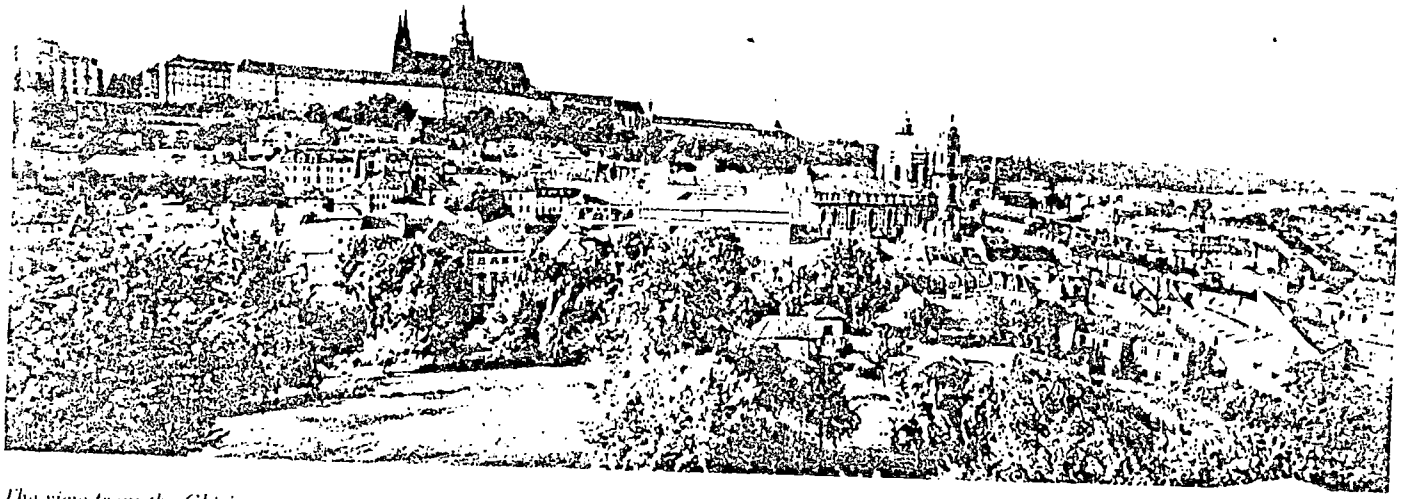




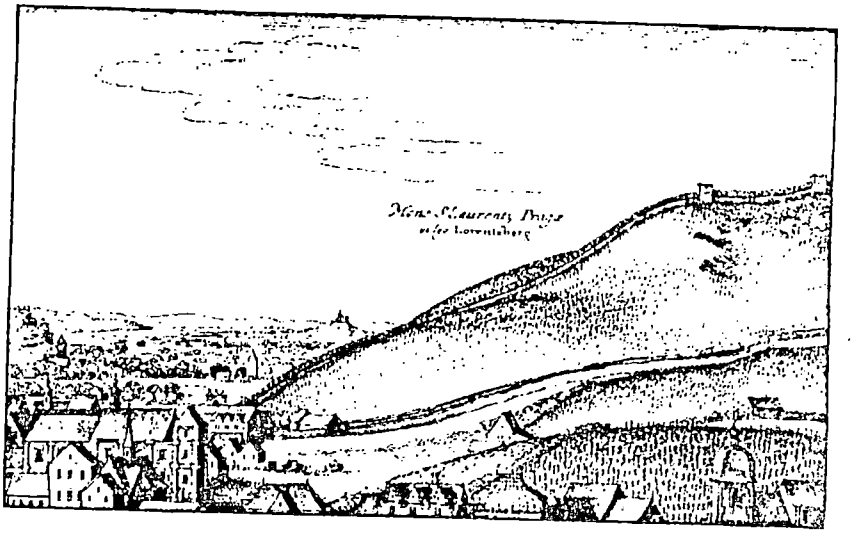
1. Hradčany and Malá Strana; detail from An Orthographic Sketch of Prague (1769), by Joseph Daniel Huber.

2. Malá Strana and Hradčany (1606); after Sadler.

3. Contemporary view of Hradčany with Schoenborn Palace in the foreground.



The view from the Gloriette.



View of the Petrin Hill (1643), by Václav Hollar; from Prospectus Aliquot Locorum in Diversis Provinciis.

that he erected the high tower with the staircase which is still in evidence today.

By Avostalis' death the house was still referred to as "divided in two parts by a garden," i.e., it was still connected with No. 362. The increased worth of this property is evident in the selling price: this and two other houses on Újezd were sold to Eliáš Šmidgrabner of Lustenek, "rent-master of the Kingdom of Bohemia," for 5,000 S.M. Four years later, in 1602, it was resold "with a small vineyard behind the house" to Wolf Helcl von Šternštejn, the German accountant of the "Boehmische Hofkammer" (Bohemian Chamber) for 3,000 S.M. Helcl changed the layout of the house considerably. He sold the west end of his property with the divided garden and thus No. 362 became independent. The erection of a new brick gable on the east wall of his property led to a legal quarrel with his neighbor Mundbroth who claimed the wall for himself. Imperial commissioners investigated the matter and decided that the wall was common property. Jakub of Altenštejn, secretary of the Imperial Chamber, bought the Helcl House with garden and vineyard in 1607 for 5,700 S.M. One year later he also bought House B.

House B, just east of House A, was much smaller than the Avostalis-Helcl House. It was bounded on the west by the dividing line between Vlašská and Tržiště ("old" and "new" parts of the Palace) and on the east by the west wall of the central entrance way. House B had belonged to Prokop Kozdraka in 1508. After his death in 1520, his widow sold it to Václav Knap. Knap was apparently in debt up to his ears and used the house as a payment to his creditor Jiří Boreš, a cloth merchant. Boreš sold it to a "widow Katharina" for 70 S.M. Either he was a good salesman or Katharina ruined the house in a short time because as soon as 1525 she resold it for only 34 S.M. It changed hands again in 1534 (45 S.M.), 1535 (same price), 1538 (same price) and 1540 (65 S.M.) It finally burned down in the great fire which destroyed many houses of Malá Strana in 1541.[3] Jan Starý, the same prosperous scribe who had purchased the future Avostalis House in 1538, acquired the lot. For the rest of the century, little is known about the house. It came under the jurisdiction of the Old Town church Mary at the Týn (Týn Church). In 1601, Jeroným Mundbroth bought the house, again under the jurisdiction of Malá Strana, from the advocate of the orphans of the former owner, Mikuláš Purger, for 1,200 S.M. (note the increased value). Jakub of Altenštejn, the secretary, bought it from him in 1608 for 1,700 S.M. Houses A and B had the same owner from then on. Both were purchased in 1614 by Stefan Šmíd von Freihof zu Kunstat for 12,000 S.M. This transaction brought the *Šmídovský House* into existence; both houses were

[3] *After this fire began the great Renaissance rebuilding of Hradčany and Malá Strana. Large houses of ordinary citizens (cf. Avostalis) competed with the now emerging city palaces of the nobility.*

connected and remained a unit until the Colloredo Palace was constructed.

Houses C and D: In the year 1588 Anselm von Fels bought two houses "in the New Street, which leads from Újezd, on the left side." House C was sold by the goldsmith Simon Miller for 800 S.M. House D, the so-called Peřejovský House, was sold by Zikmund Brozanský of Vršovice for the same price. Both houses were from then on under the jurisdiction of Malá Strana "in order that they shall be connected into a single house not only for the use of von Fels but also as an embellishment of the town."[4]

Fels' property was limited on one side by the west wall of the main entryway (Šmídovský House) and on the other by the wall which divides the central part of the Palace from the east part. Like Helcl and Mundbroth farther up the street, Fels and his neighbor, Purger, got into a disagreement about their common wall.[5] A contract entered into the Malá Strana Books in 1591 determines that both parties have a right to build onto a wall, as long as "the new wall" of Fels is not damaged. Purger (who apparently wanted to raise his eastern gable) was not allowed to close off any of the Fels' windows facing west, one of which received a new iron grill. Fels contributed 23 "taler" (a silver coin, origin of the dollar, named at the mint in Joachimsthal-Jáchymov) for a new sanitation ditch dug by Purger, and Purger had to promise to fill in the old one. Ondřej von Fela inherited Fels' house. After his death, Ondřej's widow sold it to Lazar Henkel von Donnersmarck for 9,000 S.M., an increase of more than 7,500 S.M. since Houses C and D were purchased. From then on Fels' property was integrated into the Henkel House.

House E: East of Fels' house stood in 1550 the house of the family Vilém Klenovský of Klenov. It was bought by the family Leskovec of Leskov and stayed in their possession until 1609 when Arnošt of Leskovec sold it to Lazar Henkel von Donnersmarck (by then already owner of the Fels House) for 2,900 S.M.

The Henkel House (C, D, E): Henkel von Donnersmarck, a member of the aristocracy, proceeded to rebuild the two houses in 1609, probably with the help of the master builder Antonín Brok of Campion who listed in his will 300 taler "Herr Henkel owes me for mason work." Henkel supplied the two-story building with a high attic (decorative wall above the entallature of the building), the facade decorated by stone pilasters. The whole concept was doubtlessly influenced by Palladio (1508 - 1580), one of the major Italian architects. We can see this ambitious building in construction in the anonymous engraving "The Assault of the Passau Troops" (1611) which, at the same time, is the earliest picture showing a part of the later Palace. The engraving depicts a simple low

[4] *Books of Malá Strana*

[5] *It seems that common walls really presented a problem at that time. Nobody seemed to know what to do and what not to do with such a thing. Physical closeness and the highly developed sense of private property created one of the earlier problems of urban life.*

building on the left with a gable facing the street. Next to it is a high vaulted entrance framed by two pillars standing free in front of the unfinished second story. On the right a story is already finished, and the pillars are topped by an ornamented attic. The Henkel House, which was never finished, was surely one of the outstanding buildings in pre-Baroque Prague.

In 1621, the house came into possession of Stefan Šmíd von Freihof who was by then already the owner of the Šmídovský House. He paid the formidable sum of 20,000 S.M.

The Malthouse: It belonged originally to the western part of No. 359 (now the east neighbor of the Schoenborn Palace) as working quarters. The owner of No. 359, Jiří, signed over the property to his wife Johanna. After his death in 1541 she married another maltster and when he also died, she carried on the tradition with Jan Sláma, another representative of the guild. When Sláma died, his house on Malostranské náměstí "with the malthouse, next to the house of the Knight Vilém Klenovský with a vineyard" was given to the gardener Klaudius by the King himself for faithful services. The faithful gardener had to pay a "regalium," the common tax imposed by the King, without deduction. Klaudius sold house and malthouse for 600 S.M. The property thereafter changed hands very quickly, until it finally came to rest in the hands of the brewer family Glauch. There is a will which tells a little about the matter involved: "My house in Malá Strana, the brewery with all accessories, i.e., tools, store house, wheat, hops and all the malt in the malthouse I inherited from my husband, the wood on a pile for drying the malt, prepared for burning, I bequeath to..." The malthouse stayed in the possession of the family Glauch until 1646 when Count Colloredo-Wallsee, the Grand Master of the Priorate of the Maltese Knights,[6] added it to his two other houses (Šmídovský and Henkel). He bought it for 800 Rhenish Guilders, and since then it has been put to uses other than producing one of the main ingredients of beer.

By 1620 — roughly the end of the Renaissance period — five houses had already been integrated into two larger units, the Šmídovský and the Henkel houses. The Henkel house was, as we have seen, still under construction in 1611. Nothing is known about the changes Šmíd undertook after 1614, but according to a later document he united the two properties he had bought into a single house. It is this part of the Palace which is the least affected by Baroque changes, and to this day the west part (Vlašská Street) remains distinctly and clearly different from the other parts. This overall impression is confirmed by the more hidden parts of the buildings, i.e., the cellars and the age of the wallwork.

Let us first consider the facade of this older, western part. It is very plain without any ornaments except for a

wide ledge under the fourth floor windows. The simple windows of the first three floors vary only slightly in size, the ones on the fourth floor are very small and square. The arrangement of the windows into vertically constant groups of two and three accentuates the facade somewhat. There are six such window axes in the rhythm 2-3-2, 2-3-2. Under the second window axis from the left (east) there is a typical Renaissance "Bossage" portal, built from rough stones set in a diamond pattern. Originally, there was a similar portal under the fifth axis, an opinion confirmed by the fact that the wallwork in this place as well as in the corresponding place in the courtyard originates in the 19th century while it is still Renaissance in the upper floors. The thruway leading from the existent portal opens rather awkwardly into the east corner of the western courtyard, and the portal on that side is partly obscured by the west center wing, further proof that it was not part of the baroque design.

The most obvious remnant of the Renaissance period on the courtyard side is the great staircase tower and the adjoining arcades (they were still open in the 20th century and got their windows after 1930). The tower itself was part of the oldest Renaissance building, which was originally three floors high. The tower at first had five stories. The sixth story with its early Baroque ornamentation was added at a later date, at the same time as the sightseeing arcades.

Very intriguing is the relation of the tower structure with the cellars. We have already pointed out that all main walls are of Renaissance origin, in many parts extending up to the third floor. While the Renaissance building had already two tracts (a thick dividing wall ran the full length of the west palace parallel to the street), the long main cellar (today storage room) is situated only under the street tract; with a small extension under the garden tract. The smaller square cellar in the west (divided from the main cellar by an original thick wall) coincides exactly with the location of the tower (3rd window axis from the west), except for the fact that the tower is raised over the garden tract and the cellar is sunk under the street tract.

There are several possible explanations for this coincidence. One is, of course, that the street tract within the cellars is older. However, the foundations of the tower reach down to the same depth as the cellars. The most logical theory seems to be that there was an original cone-tract building with a tower set behind it. A later builder continued the tower walls and added the whole south tract. The arcades, like the sixth tower story, although Renaissance in appearance, came into existence around 1650.[7]

There is a possibility that parts of the cellars are of Gothic origin, but this could only be determined by an investigation

[7] *Even after the Renaissance style went "out of fashion," it continued its influence, and Colloredo had good reasons to favor the Italian preference for open-air sight-seeing constructions.*

of the walls by an expert. No part of the western "Old Palace" was changed after the 17th century, with the possible exception of the addition of the fourth floor and regulating of the roof in line with the main Palace.

The Renaissance look of the small eastern part of the Šmídovský House (B) was largely destroyed by the Baroque main staircase in the garden tract. The cellar (connected with the main cellar by a barrel vaulted thruway) however, shows the original structure, occupying the space unter the staircase, the adjoining gatekeeper's room and the room opening to the street (today the USIS Library). We enter the cellars today by way of the west center wing (west corner). After you enter the first cellar, you face a simple arched entrance to the second, 2m high and 1.6m wide, framed by two upright sandstone slabs and topped by three others in a half circle, slightly molded on the inside. This entrance is a remnant of the original house. The only room upstairs of a distinct Renaissance character is in the Library. It has a beautiful stucco ceiling with a geometrical pattern with an octagonal "mirror" in the center. The arched supports do not reach down to the floors but are undercut by typical Renaissance molded brackets where walls and ceiling meet. Also Renaissance are the cast iron gratings in front of the windows — simple crossed rods with an intertwining circle in the center.

Although not a part of the "old" part of the Palace, there are some similar Renaissance remnants farther east. The main thruway as well as the adjoining three rooms to the east have a distinct Renaissance appearance, although the original walls rise only in fragments above the ground floor level (the walls of the main thruway and old ballroom, today a reception room and consular offices). The ground floor rooms have identical window grills (cf. Library) on the street front, and their ceilings have Renaissance type stucco ridges which accentuate the intricate vaultings, especially in the south-east corner room. Particularly interesting is the outside window of this room which lost its function after the east center wing was built. It can be seen from the left of the wide stairs leading up from the east-south corner of the main courtyard. Its frame is obscured by a small metal door, but the molded window sill is still visible — a memory of the time when Colloredo (or even goldsmith Miller) had an unobscured view of the sloping vineyards.

The formidable post-1609 Henkel House cut much deeper into the former structures than the western projects did, and tracing any of them would be a mere conjecture. The cellar under the west part of the eastern section (now housing the heating plant) is Baroque in appearance — it might be older, but nobody has looked under the plaster work yet. There are no traces of the much-inherited malthouse. The year 1620 is

officially the end of the Renaissance period, but there is, of course, no distinct year which acts as a temporal watershed. Almost a century went by before the Baroque style in Prague was fully developed.

The Early Baroque Period (1620—1643)

Curious as it might seem, the early Baroque history of the Palace is more obscure than the Renaissance records. Neither do we know much about the changes brought about by the first owners of both the Šmídovský and Henkel Houses, nor is even the question of ownership quite clear. Stefan Šmíd von Freyhof "gave" the Henkel House to the Emperor in 1621, after he had just purchased it for 20,000 S.M., a mysterious transaction, especially since it occurred in the year of the extensive post-White Mountain confiscations. Somehow both the Henkel and Šmídovský Houses passed into possession of Karl, Prince of Liechtenstein, in 1625; he had them removed from the jurisdiction of Malá Strana and entered into the Estate Register under the name of his good friend, Cardinal Dietrichstein, in 1626, who became the next owner. Although both Liechtenstein and Dietrichstein "purchased" the houses, there are no known sales documents. At this point, it is necessary to make an excursion into political history. These were the crucial years for Bohemia, and Liechtenstein as well as Dietrichstein played an important role in them.

The young Habsburg Empire had just passed through one of the most critical ordeals of its history. Bohemia, the "Treasure Chest of the Holy Roman Empire," had been a volcano ever since Hus challenged the Roman Church in the early fifteenth century. It had remained a nation of "heretics" even after Hus was burned at the stake, a people fiercely aware of their right to choose their own king and their own religion. In 1618, the Bohemians revolted against an unwanted Catholic Habsburg succession by throwing three of the Imperial emissaries out of the window of the royal castle on the Hradčany. (This method has been curiously termed as the Bohemian 'Policy of Defenestration,' since it had occurred during the Hussite revolt.) This incident, unbloody as it was — all three remained alive and well — triggered off the devastating Thirty Years War, although the war was finished for the Bohemian Estates after two years. The Battle of White Mountain in 1620 put an end to independent Bohemian politics for nearly three hundred years, condemning Prague to the role of a provincial city, subjected to the Habsburg capital, Vienna.

Ferdinand II was the heir to Matthias of Habsburg, the last ruler of the Holy German Empire resident in Hradčany castle, who spent his last years there as a paranoid, unable to conduct the normal business of government. Ferdinand, on the other hand, was shrewd, suspicious, and a steadfast Catholic. He remained in Vienna, transferring the powers of government to his faithful servant, Liechtenstein.

Together with Cardinal Dietrichstein and Karl von Žerotín (Wallenstein's brother-in-law), Liechtenstein was a leader of the Moravian Estates, which played a very shrewd and careful role during the uprising of the Bohemian Estates.[8] They had remained aloof but not hostile, waiting to see how the dice would fall. While Žerotín decided to go along with the Bohemians, Liechtenstein and Wallenstein put their services early on the Emperor's side. Wallenstein even went as far as to sneak away with the treasure chest of the Moravian Estates.

They had placed their bets on the winning side. On March 15, 1621, court convened for the first time on Hradčany castle to decide the fate of the Czech rebels. The chairman was Karl Liechtenstein, named by the Emperor as president of the tribunal. The accusation was insurgency, breach of peace, and *lese majeste* — the outcome was clear enough. Liechtenstein was somewhat reluctant, therefore, the unavoidable execution was postponed several times thanks to his interventions. But being only a deputy of the Emperor his influence was limited. The twenty-four Czech nobles were executed June 21, 1621, on Old Town Square. The fact that he had acted according to the Emperor's wishes was rewarded early in 1622, when Ferdinand II promulgated several decrees which made Liechtenstein vice-regent with practically unlimited powers: "So that he, in the whole Kingdom of Bohemia, as well in matters of war as of law, *in summa* in everything, no exception granted, may govern, rule, dispose, order, prohibit, and do anything His Grace the Prince of Liechtenstein may consider as good in order to further our benefit and advantage, without any hindrance, free and secure."[9] Since the Emperor himself was still involved in the great war which had just begun, he needed a reliable man to rule the affairs of his defeated crown land. In short, Liechtenstein was granted virtual dictatorial powers, and he used them immediately to call up the court of confiscations which convened on January 22, 1622.

The actions of this court caused a total social upheaval, perhaps equalled only after 1948. Three-quarters of the Czech lands were confiscated in the name of the victorious Emperor and redistributed among his followers. Because of the war, the once affluent citizens of Prague, craftsmen and merchants, lost their peacetime customers and were glad to sell their property, particularly in view of the amount of pressure a

[8] *The Moravian Estates had their own Diet (upper house), although Moravia was a part of the Bohemian Kingdom.*

[9] *Wallenstein, Hellmut Diwald, p.157f (translated from German).*

Plat of Tržiště and Surroundings; detail from Prague Plan (1811), by Juettner.

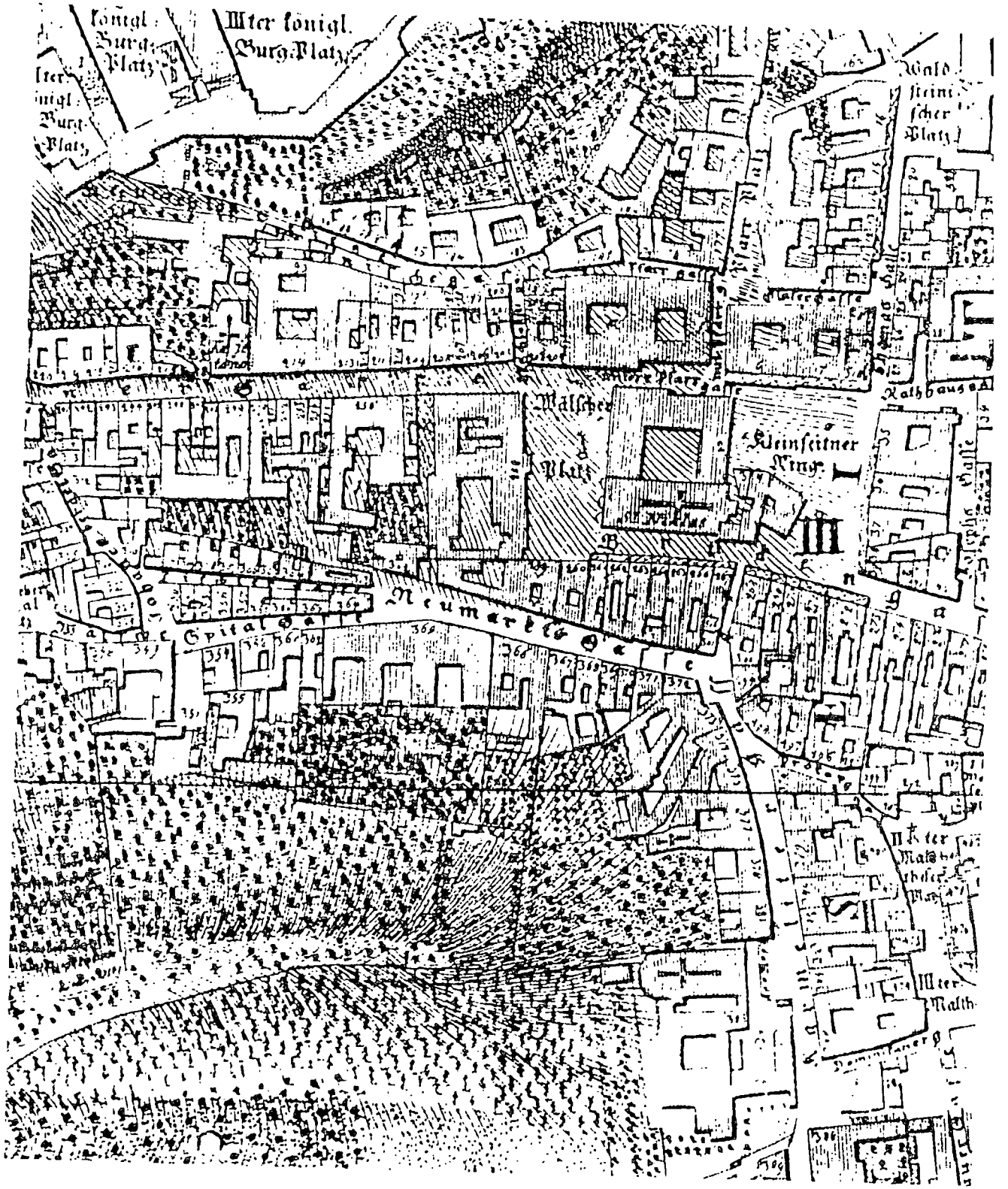
powerful official was able to exert on mere subjects. The earliest and the most famous example is the Valdštejn Palace. Some 26 houses and gardens, a whole city quarter in the limited boundaries of the time, were razed to make room for the gigantic project of the Emperor's star general.

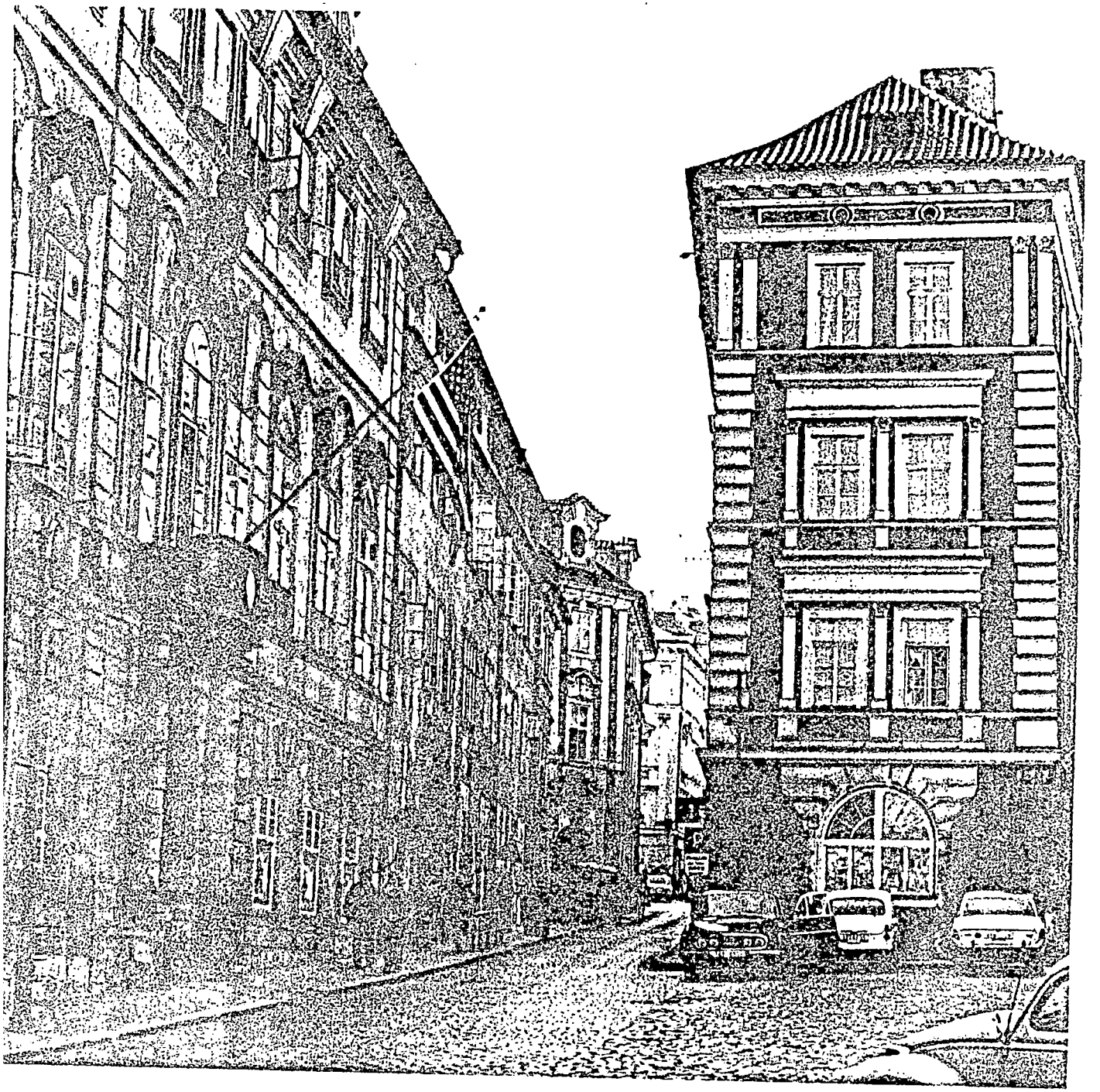
The aristocracy who had come to power after the Battle of White Mountain, but also the old Bohemian families who had survived the confiscations, asserted their new importance by competing for the most magnificent buildings. Karl Eusebius Liechtenstein (either the already mentioned or a close relative) wrote a work about architecture "in which he stressed the need of increasing the glory of noble families by the splendor of their palaces and castles."[10]

It was now that Liechtenstein, that owner of the Šmídovský and Henkel Houses for barely a year, sold them to Dietrichstein. Perhaps Liechtenstein had not acquired them for his personal use but rather as an agent of the Crown. Some sources claim that he rebuilt and connected them, but the time seems rather short for such an action. In any event, his successor, Cardinal Franz Dietrichstein, had much in common with Liechtenstein. Both belonged to the high aristocracy, and both were members of the Moravian estates. Dietrichstein was born in 1570 in Madrid. A Cardinal and Bishop of Olmouc when he was 39 years old, he was a great fighter for the Catholic cause. Even before the Battle of White Mountain dealt the final blow to Czech Protestantism he relieved all Protestants under his jurisdiction of their offices, and many left the country. He took part in three papal elections and almost became Pope himself in 1623. He also was an esteemed adviser to three Habsburg Emperors. In 1611, he crowned Matthias as Bohemian King and as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

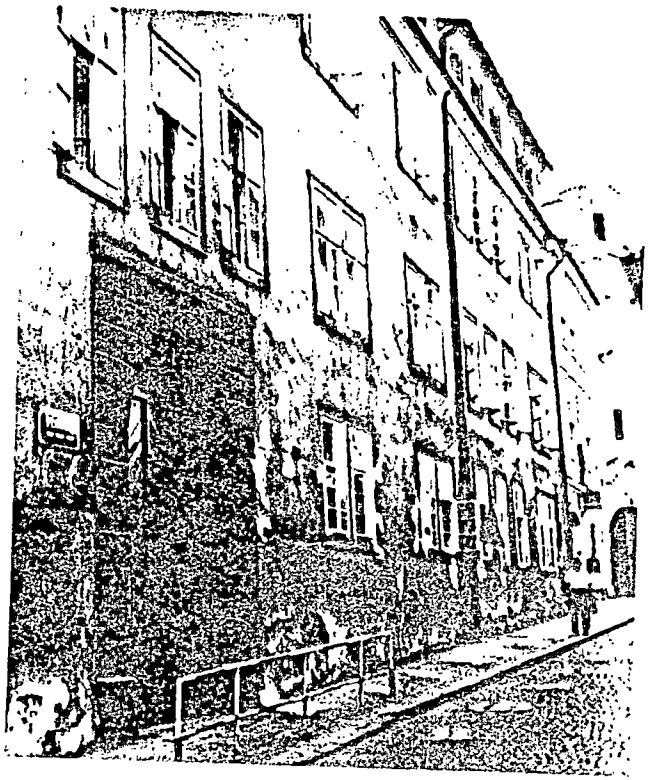
It might seem strange to the modern mind that a Cardinal was entrusted with an important military post in a time of crisis. In 1618, the Moravian Estates had even named Dietrichstein as Commander-in-Chief of all Moravian troops. In the context of history, however, such a move was only natural. There was no division between Church and State, in fact there was an ultimate mutual dependence, and "political" appointments in the Church were as common as bequeathing a rewarding prebend on important members of the aristocracy. No wonder that Dietrichstein's standing and well-known militant Catholicism put him on the most-wanted list of the Bohemian rebels. While attending a diet of the Bohemian and Moravian Estates in Brno, he was captured and put in jail. He was, among other things, made responsible for the money Wallenstein had taken (Wallenstein had been smart enough not to attend the diet), and he implored the Emperor to return it to the Estates in order to free him. It was the most

[10] *The Palaces of Prague, Kubíček, p.57.*

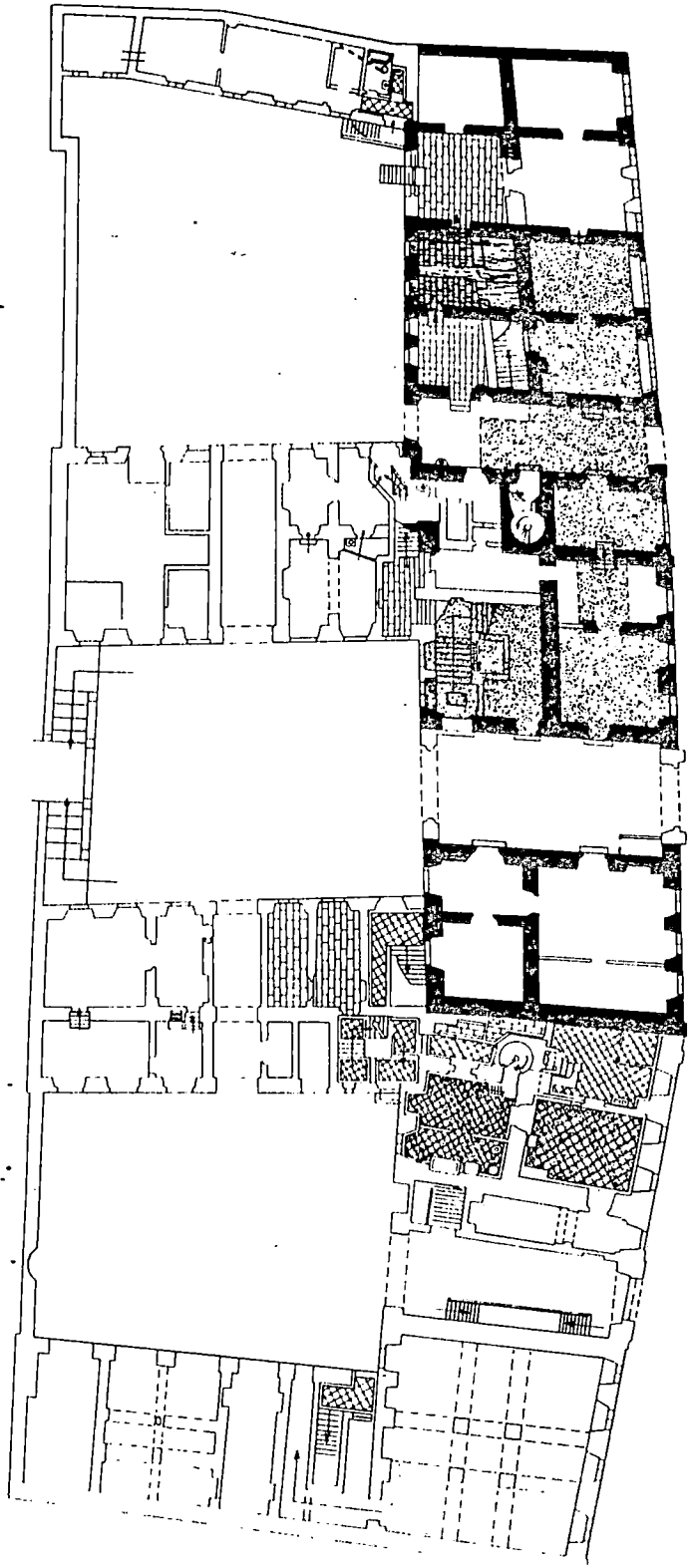

Ilter königl.
Burg-Platz
Rathhaus
Steinseitner
Ring
III
Neumarkt
Spital



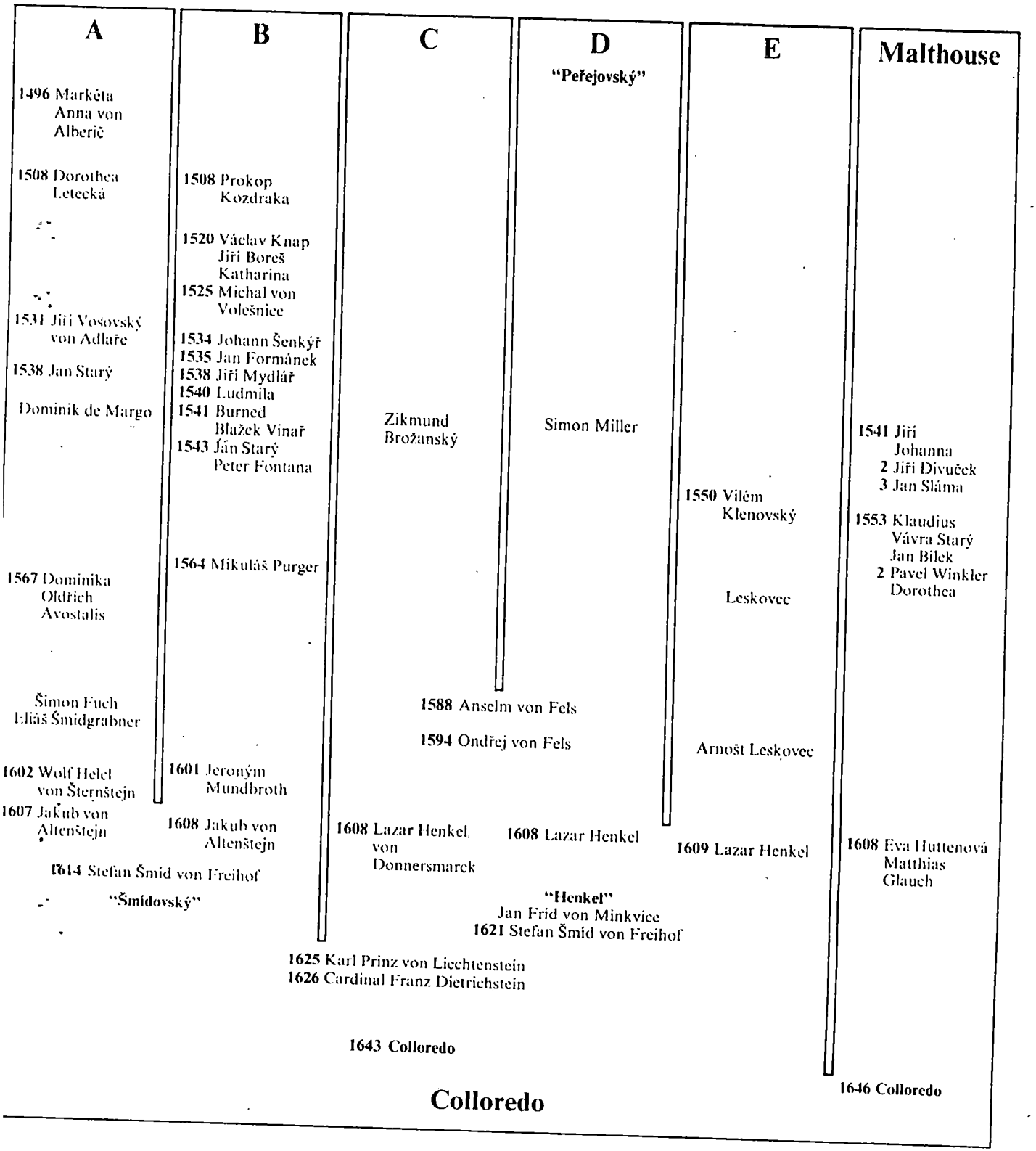
ront view of Palace



Façade of "Old Palace" with Renaissance portal.



Ground plan of the Palace. Black: Renaissance walls; gray: cellars and


A
1496 Markéta
Anna von
Alberič
1508 Dorothea
Letecká
1531 Jiří Vosovský
von Adlaře
1538 Jan Starý
Dominik de Margo
1567 Dominika
Oldřich
Avostalis
Šimon Fuch
Eliáš Šmidgrabner
1602 Wolf Helcl
von Šternštejn
1607 Jakub von
Altenštejn
1614 Stefan Šmid von Freihof
"Šmidovský"
B
1508 Prokop
Kozdraka
1520 Václav Knap
Jiří Boreš
Katharina
1525 Michal von
Volešnice
1534 Johann Šenkýř
1535 Jan Formánek
1538 Jiří Mydlář
1540 Ludmila
1541 Burned
Blažek Vinař
1543 Ján Starý
Peter Fontana
1564 Mikuláš Purger
1601 Jeroným
Mundbroth
1608 Jakub von
Altenštejn
C
Zikmund
Brožanský
1608 Lazar Henkel
von
Donnersmarck
D
"Peřejovský"
Simon Miller
1588 Anselm von Fels
1594 Ondřej von Fels
1608 Lazar Henkel
"Henkel"
Jan Frid von Minkvice
1621 Stefan Šmid von Freihof
E
1550 Vilém
Klenovský
Leskovec
Arnošt Leskovec
1609 Lazar Henkel
Malthouse
1541 Jiří
Johanna
2 Jiří Divuček
3 Jan Sláma
1553 Klaudius
Vávra Starý
Jan Bílek
2 Pavel Winkler
Dorothea
1608 Eva Huttenová
Matthias
Glauch
1625 Karl Prinz von Liechtenstein
1626 Cardinal Franz Dietrichstein
1643 Colloredo
1646 Colloredo
Colloredo

Schematic plan showing the changes of ownership of the original houses before 1646.

miserable time in Dietrichstein's life, and apparently he did not bear it like a Cardinal. He pleaded innocent, he cried, he offered to resign from all his offices and to leave the country. Finally, all his Moravian estates were confiscated, and he was banned "for eternity." He fled to Vienna, where "eternity" lasted little more than a year. In 1620, his enemies crushed on White Mountain, he returned, and became more powerful than ever. He was made Governor of Moravia and Highest Commissioner of Justice. In 1623, once more holding an influential position as one of the Emperor's advisers, he was awarded the dignity of a Prince by Ferdinand II. Such was the status and character of the third owner of both the Šmídovský and Henkel Houses.

The houses remained in Dietrichstein's possession until his death in 1636. His heir, Maximilian von Dietrichstein, sold both houses to the Emperor for 16,000 Guilders. The next, and one of the most important owners was Rudolph, Count of Colloredo-Wallsee. There is extant a document "given after the Sunday Exaudi, i.e. the twentieth of May, 1643":[11] "Such we sell in the name and acting for His Majesty the King as his designated Director and Chamberlaine ... to Herrn Colloredo, Count of Valse, both Houses situated in the Lesser Town of Prague, Italian Street (Vlašské), entered in the Estate Register, formerly known as the Henkel and Šmídovský Houses, lately known as the Prince Dietrichstein Houses, including Gardens, waterfalls (?? not legible), also other appurtenances, complete jurisdiction and rights ... as were owned and enjoyed by the Princes of Dietrichstein and the former possessors from ages past."

Colloredo belonged to the so-called "war-nobility" of Prague, which means that his name was virtually unknown in the Bohemian lands before the Battle of White Mountain. He was one of the generals from all over Europe fighting for the Emperor. After the victory, they were able to settle down in Prague and Bohemia — thanks to the Emperor's gratitude, substantiated by the extensive confiscated estates of the rebels. Colloredo, one of Ferdinand's most able generals, was by no means a *nouveau riche*. His family was originally Alemannian (South-West-German), but had later settled in the bishopric of Friuli, west of Trieste near Mols, where they built their castle (1302). The family split into several branches, one of them the Bohemian. Rudolph Colloredo (1585–1657), later called "the Lame," had either lost his leg or the use of it in the decisive battle of Lutzen in which Gustav Adolf, the leader of the Protestants and Swedish King, was killed. In 1648, when Prague became once more the (final) battlefield of the Thirty Years War, the veteran general, by then Grand Prior of the Order of the M[illegible]

[11] *DZ. 302, 246 26, translated from the German original.*

Knights and Commander of Prague, defended the Old and New Town successfully against the Swedes.

In his chronicle *Poselkyně starých příběhů českých (Messenger of Old Bohemian Events)* Bečkovský describes the circumstances dramatically: When the Swedes invaded Malá Strana, Count Colloredo, wearing nothing but a nightgown, escaped from his Palace on Nová ulice, fled through his gardens, crossed the river in a rowboat and proceeded to defend the Old Town.[12]

The Swedes were never able to cross the river; they retreated after the troops had located Malá Strana thoroughly.[13] One of the later owners of the Palace, Friedrich Graf Schoenborn, gave a lecture in Vienna in 1905, "A Walk Through Prague," in which he talked about the connection of his palace with European history: "I see myself in memory in the third floor of this building. From one window I saw the old part of the Hradčany and the monumental window from which the three Imperial emissaries were thrown on May 18, 1618. And when I, turning around, remembered where I was, I found myself in the house of the same general who ended the Thirty Years War honorably for our fatherland: It was Count Colloredo, Maltese Grand Prior, called 'the Lame'."

A likeness of the Count can be seen in the Church of our Lady Below the Chain (in Lázeňská ulice), then part of the fortified monastery of the Maltese Knights, on an upright tombstone in full armour.

[12] *His mysterious way of escape ties in nicely with a rumor which, unfortunately, cannot be verified anymore; that there existed an old underground tunnel leading from an entrance in the third garden all the way down to the river.*

[13] *Since that time, for example, the originals of the Adriaen de Vries statues in the Valdštejn gardens can be found in Drottningholm, Sweden.*

The Colloredo Palace (1643–1681)

Colloredo bought the houses from the Emperor for 20,000 Guilders (according to different sources he might have paid 16,000 or 40,000) in 1643. This date marks the beginning of the first great building period. After twenty years the sales records still mention two houses, which indicates that any connection before that date was more or less superficial. Now, though, all over Prague the "war-nobility" set out to prove and establish themselves among the older nobility, and the most efficient way to do this was to build a palace.[14]

The name of the first architect to give the Henkel and the Šmídovský Houses the features of a monumental palace is not known, but in all probability he was an Italian. The Italian craftsmen who had come to Prague during the Renaissance period continued to dominate Prague architecture until the end of the century.[15] We can imagine the Italian masons and their master builders coming down every morning from their colony on Vlašská ulice, busily removing "old-fashioned" Renaissance ornaments, relieving the famous (and

[14] *cf. p. 23 f.*

[15] *cf. p. 9 f.*

probably never finished) Henkel House of columns and attic, and quickly adapting the newly acquired malthouse[16] from a place of honest labor to the grandeur of a palace. They must have fulfilled a great deal of their task before 1660. An anonymous Strahov drawing from that time shows, indeed, a building of finished appearance.[17]

We can distinguish three parts: the western "old" part has only three floors whereas the two eastern parts had already risen to their present height. What distinguishes the plain rectangular building are the three square towers raised above the garden tract (i.e. behind the street tract facing the viewer). The one over the western part is clearly the same we see today — the one which existed in pre-Baroque time.[18] It was probably during this time that it acquired an additional top floor; the early Baroque flat diamond ornamentation is still in evidence. From the drawing we can deduce that the two other towers were fashioned after the earlier one. The arcades are not visible on the drawing, but it is possible that they were built as a connection between the three towers and ran the full length of the building.

The Early Baroque Garden

In order to understand the purpose of these open-air constructions, we have to remember that only now, during Colloredo's time, the huge garden behind the house became part of a great castle-garden unit. Neither in Renaissance nor in Baroque times were people much interested in "nature" as we conceive of it today. In order to be beautiful, nature had to be tended to, in fact look as "unnatural" as possible. Gardening was a mathematical as well as an artistic science. The ambitious general and Grand Prior Colloredo knew this, and his gardens became one of the landmarks of Prague. In order to see geometrical designs properly, you need a vantage point. This is the reason why sight-seeing towers and altans were so popular at the time. They were usually open, covered by canvas, and the stone arches offered an additional frame to see the tamed nature as a work of art.[19]

Up to Colloredo's time, the adjoining slope had not been connected with the houses on Nová ulice, with the exception of small lots and vineyards. Originally, the land had belonged to the Archbishop's vineyards after 1358 (according to the decree 'Majestate" by Charles IV). The Archbishop Jan von Jenstein donated these "difficult" vineyards to his notary and Mayor of Malá Strana Jindřich von Ansbach ("smithy") as a reward for long services. (The difficulties arose from the fact that vineyards on a north slope don't have a fair chance

[16] *cf. p. 13 f.*

[17] *Since this drawing is rather schematic and large-scale, the seeming regularity of the three Palace parts, especially of the lower western one, is probably deceiving.*

[18] *cf. p. 16 f.*

[19] *A view of the royal gardens through the arches of the Belvedere on Hradčany will give you a live example.*

"Smithy" did his best to improve the neglected lots. In due course, the heirs of the Archbishop re-confiscated them in 1421. Later in the fifteenth century they were finally restored to private ownership. After several changes of hand, they came into possession of the family von Proseč in 1557 who owned them for generations and then sold them to Colloredo.[20] Colloredo connected the vineyards to his acquired houses and adjoining garden lots on Nová ulice. He then proceeded with the help of his unknown architects to make his different properties into a greater unit.

The oldest part of this open-air project, at the same time the only remaining memory of the former vineyards, is, strange as it might seem, the belvedere or Gloriette at the top of the gardens. Like the malthouse, it served a very practical purpose before it was turned into a lofty Baroque sight-seeing temple. In his "Prospectus Aliquote Locorum in Diversis Provinciis" ("Prospect of Different Locations in Various Provinces") the renowned engraver Václav Hellar pictured it as it was in 1636: a wine-press, built in order to process the yields from the adjoining vineyards, a simple one-story gable roof building.

In the aforementioned Strahov drawing from about 1660, the wine-press is already adapted to its new function: a rectangular tower has been added to make it look like a miniature afterthought to the three-towered Palace down in the valley. Between these two architectural poles there is the sweep of a perfect Italian garden. It is divided into two levels by a huge supporting wall (corresponding to the one between the present second and third level). On the lower level, the garden is divided into two terraces, each of them divided by two crossways into six rectangular chess-pattern fields, edged by evergreen fences and containing rich floral arrangements. Above the dividing wall (which probably marks the old border between the Archbishop's vineyard and the private lots belonging to the houses) a narrow path, framed on both sides by hedges or carefully clipped trees, leads straight up to the Gloriette. The rest of the third garden still seems to be cultivated as a vineyard. On both the east and west part of the huge supporting wall we see three huge flower pots with trees clipped into perfect round shape. There is a document in the Prague City Archives (M 205/1) telling about a level quarrel Colloredo had with a neighbor widow about the erection of this wall. The outcome and the matter itself remain somewhat foggy, due to magnificent Baroque German handwirting. It is dated 28/29 April 1643: "Count Colloredo who recently acquired a house in the Italian Street, formerly called the Henklish House... intends to build on the Laurentii mountain (Petřín) in the vineyards, under the ones belonging to the Prelate of Strahov, water pipes (?), also, because of the unequal terrain of this garden, a wall which

[20] *cf. Birnbaumová, Některé zahrady...' in: Století Praha, p. 184 ff. Here as in other parts are contradictions to the "Passport." I simply took the newer and clearer version.*

would damage (the widow's property), because a fair part of the garden would be destroyed." Colloredo proved, it goes without saying, more powerful than the widow.[21]

Rudolph Colloredo died in 1657, having reached the venerable age of 72, but his successor Ferdinand Colloredo continued to build, and we can assume that the Early Baroque Palace was finished in 1681. This is the date of the Panorama of Prague, done by Folpertus van Ouden-Allen, a draughtsman of the renowned Dutch school. His Panorama is done in the "prospect manner," giving not only the ground-plan of the city but also an exact bird's-eye view from a certain angle. The legend for his Panorama is: "There are not only all public buildings, but the house of every citizen and inhabitant, which can be pointed out by the finger."[22]

In spite of the large scale, the Panorama shows the Colloredo Palace and adjoining garden very clearly. The garden wings have been added, partly with the help of the older towers, mainly the two middle wings. The western wing has a more accidental connection with the main Palace and was certainly not part of the overall architectural design. In all probability, it apparently then consisted of just one story which did not obscure the beautiful Early Baroque wall (dividing the Palace from N. 362) as it does today. The towers then had bell-shaped cupolas, a short-lived Baroque addition. The first level of the garden adjoins the second story of the garden wings. In order to achieve this, it must have been necessary to bring in large amounts of soil. The wall supporting this terrace was constructed from stone squares topped by a stone railing. The divided staircase leading up from the central courtyard was already completed; it probably had a roof made from light material, such as wood. According to a popular theory, the fact that these stairs are more for horses than for pedestrians is due to the lame Rudolph Colloredo, because they would have enabled him to reach his residence in the first story of his Palace on horseback rather than on foot. The trouble with this fetching explanation is that neither wings nor stairs existed before Rudolph Colloredo's death. Perhaps later owners simply wanted a possibility to take horseback rides on the lower terraces which were only accessible from the central courtyard.

Another entrance to the third garden existed farther up Vlašská Street, next to the house No. 358 "U Bílého lva" (White Lion). It was an old cobble-stone passage leading up to the still existing gardener's cottage and to the Colloredo riding school which was built around 1700. This passage was blocked by a new house in 1937. A schematic Strahov drawing from 1655 gives a rough picture of this area.

While the Early Baroque Palace itself was apparently rather plain and severe in its outlines, the early Colloredo

[21] *Perhaps this was the last straw which convinced the last malter's widow to sell the malthouse in 1646.*

[22] *Wirth, Prague..., p. 54.*

garden was one of the most admired landmarks of Prague. The terraces, supporting walls and crowning Gloriette formed an ideal stage for the formal "Italian" garden architecture with its clipped trees, geometrically designed flowerbeds, arcades and fountains. Unfortunately, the existing pictures give us only a very faint idea how it really looked — large-scale prospects or drawings cannot pay much attention to intricate details. Bohuslav Balbín in his "Miscellanies" (Part I, p. 142) mentions it with admiration, as do other anonymous contemporary travellers.[23]

It could be that the Colloredos invested too much in the garden, and too little in the Palace itself. A commission of three inspectors investigated the Palace and adjoining buildings on October 7, 1694, and their findings smacked of near disaster. The roof was in terrible condition; parts of the house had no roof at all. The wallwork had collapsed in several places. An underground passage with spiral staircase leading from the courtyard up to an arbor on the first terrace (today air-raid shelter?) was completely dilapidated, likewise the Gloriette, roof and pillars of the riding school, wine-press and stables[24] were ruinous. Ferdinand died in 1689. He did not live to see the disastrous report, but he must have seen the walls crack. His older son Hieronymus (the founder of the so-called Wallsee branch of the family, from 1763 Imperial Family Line) decided to do something about his dilapidated Palace.

The High Baroque Period (1715—1794)

The year 1715 marks the beginning of the second and most important building period. We know for certain that the renowned builder Bartoloměj Scotti (Palace of the Maltese Grand Prior in Prague) was in charge; he was, however, not the architect. Although written proof does not exist, experts agree that the architect was Giovanni Blasius Santin-Aichel, also known as Santini.

Santini stands next to Ignaz Kilian Dientzenhofer among the outstanding architects of Prague and Bohemian Baroque. Born in 1677, he was a descendant of an Italian mason family which immigrated to Prague during the 16th century. In the Baroque period, the important role of the Italian migrant builders (cf.p.9) had ceased and been taken over by South Bavarians. Santini's family had intermarried and been germanized for three generations. His mixed ancestry notwithstanding, Santini was one of the few architects who developed a truly Bohemian style.

[23] *cf. Birnbaumová, p. 158.*

[24] *The Colloredo buildings adjoining the passage to the third garden, cf. p. 35.*

His first great palace reconstruction in Prague had been the Morzín Palace (today the Romanian Embassy, 1714), his second the Thun-Hohenstein (Italian Embassy, 1710–20). During the work on the latter, he adapted the Colloredo Palace (1715–1718).

The fact that three important works of a major architect were reconstructions and adaptations rather than original designs is typical for Prague Baroque in general. The unique Prague version of Baroque, its subdued and intimate character which is distinctly different from the exuberance and monumentality elsewhere, has often puzzled and fascinated art historians. Wechsberg (*The Mystical City*) for example is inclined to blame a mysterious "genius loci" for the unique changes of this style in Prague, as if the architects had worked under a spell. One might just as well blame it on prosaic circumstances. Malá Strana had been a densely built city before the Battle of White Mountain, a confined area between two steep hills. Rather than erase the good solid foundations of Renaissance buildings (which, in turn, were often founded on Gothic walls), builders tended to reuse these for their own purposes. Instead of destroying the winding medieval streets, the new Baroque facades followed the old lines, bending where necessary. The architects learned to adapt a style most effective in open spaces to the intimacy of narrow lanes. In this way, more than being ruled by a given "genius loci," Prague Baroque architects contributed to its creation — simply by the economic utilization of given conditions.

The example of the Colloredo Palace is not the most typical, because it had enough space, being situated between a comparatively wide street and a mountain, and enormous breadth.[25]

Typical, however, is the gradual process which had already begun. Five Renaissance houses had been adapted to the creation of two houses, and now the two houses were again partly destroyed and partly integrated into a massive early Baroque palace building, which, in turn, swallowed a Renaissance malthouse.

The passage had been gradual, and old bends and incongruities were something Santini had to cope with. The general outlines, however, were grandiose: A run-down Palace with three garden wings, topped by a once famous garden and Gloriette.

According to the old bills of the Estates of Openo (1715–1718), Santini first took care of the things which had to be done, mainly the repair of mason works. The bill for "preparation" works and masonry in general amounted to 1893 Guilders (about Kčs 400,000) in the first year. One great task to be tackled was the main supporting wall which was too weak to withstand the huge pressure of soil from the third

[25] *some 100 m.*

garden. The intricately sculptured brick coat we see today is Santini's work. In 1716 the craftsmen took over: stuccateurs, carpenters, stone-masons and smiths. The garden terraces had to be levelled, trees were chopped down. The last year the work concentrated on carpenter work in the library, on the roof, and in the stables, mason works in the garden (including vases and sculptures), and finishing touches in the building. Five hundred and nine Guilders were paid, of this amount only 8.50 Guilders for hired labor. We can assume that the bulk of the unspecialized work was done by laborers from the Colloredo estates.

Santini razed the bell-shaped towers over the garden tracts and concentrated on the arrangement and articulation of the street facade, especially the center part. The west part was not touched, and the east part was not finished until later in the century.

We can assume that the Early Baroque facade on the street was rather plain and ungainly, except for two sculptured portals and magnificent wooden doors, probably similar to the still existent west facade. Santini adapted the floors above the first-floor-level, emphasizing the different height of the second and third level windows by different ornamentation. The main accents are set by the comparatively huge slanted keystones above the second floor windows, extending their height considerably and thereby shifting the attention from the dominating horizontal to the vertical. Santini's second important innovation was the different treatment of the area above the center portal, including three window axes. This section is framed by "lisenees"[26], and is slightly more prominent than the rest of the facade ("risalit"), rising above the top floor by one story (windows identical to the third level), crowned by a severe triangular gable. This whole roof construction, called tympanon, is framed by two round dormer windows. The exact center of the facade is again emphasized by a different window, crowned by a round ledge with a cartouche, carrying the two-tailed Bohemian lion, the lower part ornamented by a conical balustrade.

To understand the importance of Santini's work, it suffices to know about these changes: stretching the extreme length of the palace up to a vertical dimension, and emphasizing the center, thereby treating the whole unsymmetrical structure (including the old west and the still unfinished east) as a palace unit.

The garden front shows the same elements as the street facade, mainly the elaborate supraports, but here they appear more superimposed on the Early Baroque facade, without an all-over design. The garden wings afforded enough variation, and the function of the garden front became private rather than representational, after the towers and greater part of the

[26] *relief-type pillars without base or capital.*

arcades had been razed. The visitor entering the main gate was immediately distracted from the building by the view into the garden. The two atlants[27] are deliberately placed on both sides of the courtyard entrance to create the feeling of entering a new architectural unit. These monumental statues are often attributed to Matthias Braun (1684–1738), the best sculptor of Baroque Prague. But "only the idea is like his, and the execution is that of an unknown sculptor of no special ability and conservative plastic conception."[28]

It is not possible to determine how deeply the changes affected the interior of the Palace since we know nothing about the early Baroque interior. The most obvious Baroque addition was the main staircase which cut deeply into the original Renaissance structure of the west center Palace. It has an almost square ceiling with an inlaid "mirror," framed by a gracefully curved stucco ledge. This type of stucco work can be attributed to the Santini period, while the more intricate stucco ceilings of other rooms (putti, busts and foliage) are probably of late Baroque (Rococo) origin.

But back to the main staircase. The stairs themselves go up in four sections and have a right-hand stone railing with closely-spaced conical supports. Considering the size and importance of the Colloredo Palace, this is one of the less ostentatious Baroque staircases, functional rather than representative, more pleasant than impressive. This noble restraint, which is typical for the Palace in general, might have had economic reasons, just like the step-by-step completion, covering a period of more than 150 years.

The great Baroque palaces in Prague had a very important social and cultural function. The Great War had left the ordinary citizens impoverished: wealth and power were almost exclusively in the hands of the aristocracy.[29] Besides, culture had always been a privilege of the chosen few, and the social conditions assured them of this privilege for a century to come. There were no public theaters,[30] no concert halls, no art galleries. The houses of the nobility were designed to cope with their well-understood cultural task: they contained rooms where great art was displayed, ballrooms for music, theater and entertaining. Comfort came last, the strictly private rooms were often modest and secluded. In these centers of cultural life, people came in touch with each other, exchanged ideas and enjoyed refined pleasures which only much later became accessible to the masses. Politically, Prague had become a provincial city, and most of the nobility were employees of the imperial court in Vienna. The fact that there was no important business carried on in Prague created very favorable conditions for the arts. Also, more and more, common citizens were drawn into the huge bureaucratic machinery,[31] were made nobles in

[27] *They are often called caryatids, which is wrong, because that term applies only to female statues.*

[28] *Kubíček, The Palaces of Prague, p. 134.*

[29] *This was, of course, true for all the countries affected by the war.*

[30] *The "Theater of the Estates" (today Tyl) was build by Count Nostitz in 1781.*

[31] *The Holy Roman Empire had all but collapsed, and Austria-Hungary was on its way.*

due course, and thereby were able to enter the privileged circles of the aristocracy in Prague. In the end, the great palaces became tools on the way to Czech national resurrection, because they nourished and fostered a movement which was largely cultural in its origins, and only later in the 19th century became nationalistic and anti-German. The great Bohemian scholar, František Palacký, who delivered his famous and fateful denial of German nationality to the German Federal Diet in Frankfurt in 1848, spent his early years in the charming little house "U Ježíška" (No. 203), diagonally opposite the main gate of the Schoenborn Palace. He was possibly an occasional visitor to the Schoenborn "salon."

But back to the 18th century. In 1775, the Colloredos sold their Palace to a new owner: "Today ... between his Excellency the 'Hochgeborenen Herrn' Rudolph von und zu Colloredo, Count Wallsee of the Holy Roman Empire, Vice Count of Mels and Margrave of St. Sophia ... Colonel and Cup-Bearer in the Kingdom of Bohemia, Knight of the Golden Fleece, Secret Counselor of his k.u.k. (Royal and Imperial) Majesty ... as a seller ... and the equally 'hochgeborenen (noble-born) Herrn' Carl Friedrich, the Holy Roman Empire's Count Hatzfeld (follow other titles), Chamberlain and Imperial Representative in the Kingdom of Bohemia, as a buyer on the other hand ... the following sales contract: the ... houses partly entered into the Estate Register, partly registered in the Malá Strana and Strahoff Books, including gardens and other accessories, also the furniture in the houses and the trees ... in the garden ... in summa, everything as is."[32]

The agreed terms were these: the selling price was 40,000 Guilders; of this amount Hatzfeld had to make a down payment of 6,000 Guilders (the rest to follow within one year), and a "Schluesselgeld" (fee for handing over the keys) of 500 Ducats.

Carl Friedrich von Hatzfeld was an eminent member of the Austrian-Bohemian nobility. He had purchased the Bohemian estate of Dlažkovice in 1731 and became a Knight of the Golden Fleece (one of the highest orders of the Habsburg Empire). He was President of the Court of Appeals, and became in 1771, Grand Chancellor of Bohemia and Austrian Minister. His brother, Franz Philipp Adrian von Hatzfeld, had been awarded the dignity of a prince by King Frederic II of Prussia. This distinction was extended by Francis I (husband of Maria Theresa), and Hatzfeld became Imperial Prince in 1748.[33] He was married to Bernardina, born Countess Schoenborn. When Carl Friedrich died without an heir, his estates, including the Palace, came to his nephew Friedrich Carl, Franz Philipp's and Bernardina's son.

The last important building period of the Palace took place during Carl Friedrich Hatzfeld's ownership. The eastern part of the Palace, including the former Henkel House and the

[32] *DZV 591 (translated from the German original).*

[33] *This strange juxtaposition of honors had something to do with the war between Prussia and Austria over the 'Pragmatic Sanction' (female succession to the Imperial throne). In 1748, Prussia had won possession of Silesia and recognized the Habsburg succession. The role Hatzfeld had played can only be guessed at. He probably had estates in Silesia, and Frederic II had wanted him on his side during the fight.*

malthouse, had been left unfinished. A drawing by F.B. Werner, executed between 1734 and 1752, shows an unproportioned segment including parts of high columns. The eastern gate is just a vaulted entrance, on its left a plain building without windows and with a triangular gable.[34]

An unknown architect undertook the belated task of adapting this part as a unit of a monumental palace. The Rococo period, a graceful child of the mighty Baroque, did not invent new forms, but it was very talented in variations on a great theme. The Hatzfeld architect did his best to step into Santini's shoes and succeeded beautifully. It is not impossible that he used Santini's plans. The only real difference from the center section is the treatment of the east center (entrance) part with the tympanon which shows a typical Rococo form: the "casula" window, so-called because of its similarity with the priest's chasuble. The "casula" theme is artfully repeated in the upper ledge of the tympanon. The two framing dormer windows correspond to the ones of the center section, but they have (again showing a beautiful sense of balance) a simpler frame.

The garden facade of the Colloredo-Hatzfeld Palace was definitely finished by 1769. This was the publication date of the famous Huber Panorama of Prague. Huber was a high Austrian officer, and his drawing is "scientifically constructed ... auxiliary sketches, composed on the foundation of an accurate plan of the town."[35] We have to remember that although the earlier Prague "veduta" are more valuable from an artistic point of view, they are much less reliable than this "invaluable topographic performance."[36] A copy of his work can be seen in the Municipal Museum of Prague, while the original is in the Vienna National Library. Again, the Colloredo Palace is only part of a greater panorama, and architectural details are not visible. But the changes depicted in the garden are interesting. It was "modernized" during the middle of the 18th century. The geometrical chessboard configuration had disappeared, and the strict patterns had given way to more varied landscape elements. Behind the first terrace balustrade appeared rectangular "salons de verdure," open-air rooms surrounded by hedge walls on three sides, open towards the palace, much in in the manner of doll houses, with the ground covered by carpets of grass.[37] Behind the hedge stood a row of citrus trees, carefully clipped and (considering the climate) probably nursed like babies. A row of wedge-shaped "salons de verdure" is situated behind the citrus trees, the open side facing the Palace. A third row of green obscures the view onto the high and intricately shaped retaining wall. In the third garden, vineyards have given way to a regular orchard, interrupted only by a rectangular, saddle-roofed building (game room? stable?) above the eastern part of the wall near the stair house.

[34] *This drawing, which, unfortunately, I was not able to see, seems to bear an amazing resemblance to 'The Assault of the Passau Troops' of 1611 (cf. p. 10), suggesting that no deep change had affected either the malthouse or the Henkel House since that time.*

[35] *Wirth, Prague in Pictures..., p. 55.*

[36] *Wirth*, ibid.

[37] *The description follows Birnbaumová, since available copies do not enable us to see single elements so clearly.*

Only Dietzler (1742) and Huber show this building, and it disappeared within the next two decades.[38]

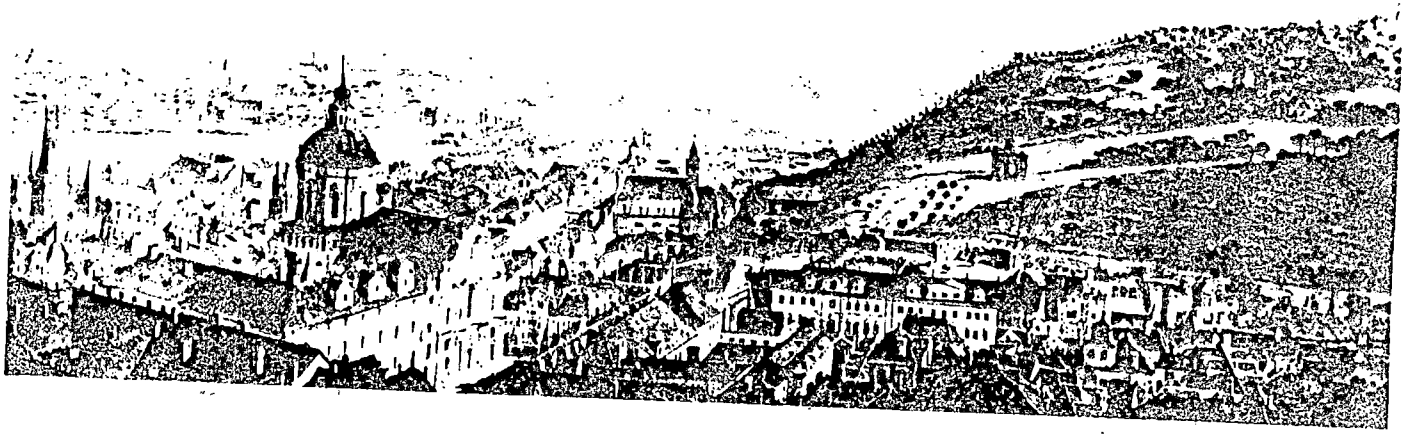
It is not easy to understand why this interesting garden never became quite as famous as its early Baroque predecessor. First of all, the competition became strong. During the middle of the century, the gardens between the Hradčany and Valdštejnská ulice (Fuerstenberg, Ledeburg) came into existence and surpassed the earlier garden as spectacular examples of late Baroque terrace garden landscaping. The neighboring Vrtba garden was superior in sculptures (real Matthias Braun), and the western neighbor (Lobkowitz) boasted a beautifully curved garden facade. The owners of the Colloredo Palace were not able to cope with the given conditions of the terrain any more, and tried to conceal, rather than take advantage of, the big supporting wall. This fault continued until the 20th century, and is still evident.

Friedrich Carl, Hatzfeld's nephew and heir, was either not willing or able to keep the Palace all for himself. In the Schoenborn Archives in Klatovy there is a lease contract between Count Hatzfeld and Baron Heinrich von Rotten-Hahn, "true Chamberlain of his Majesty the Emperor" given August 20th, 1771:[39] "His Excellency the Count von Hatzfeld lets his own house, situated on Vlašská Street, ... with the exception of the whole upper floor and the new barn, to ... Baron von Rotten-Hahn with all the rooms, storage-rooms, attic, cellars, and furniture (chairs, sofas, mirrors, and other equipment, except pillows, feather-beds, and bed-linen) ... for an annual rent of 1,200 Guilders, to be paid in semi-annual installments in cash, beginning August 20th, 1773 ... The landlord keeps the whole upper floor and the furniture and equipment belonging to it, as well as the so-called new barn, for his own use or disposal according to his own deliberation. The landlord bindingly promises to have the kitchen stove cleaned twice a month, and to have the other chimneys cleaned once a month during the winter, and to maintain the windows and doors in good order. The tenant has to maintain the rooms, utility rooms, cellars and attic, etc., in the present condition and hand them over as he got them. The garden is at the disposal of the tenant, the landlord will pay the gardener for its maintenance."

There are several interesting aspects of this contract. It indicates that there was only one kitchen stove in the rented part of the Palace, which illuminates somewhat the rather doubtful comforts of Baroque living. The number of chimneys is not mentioned, but we can still count them on the roof, and it is easy to imagine the winter cold on the stairs, the hallways, and the great number of unheatable rooms. But more significant than its details is the fact that such a contract existed at all. The great Baroque building period was definitely over, and the idea of renting a palace instead of

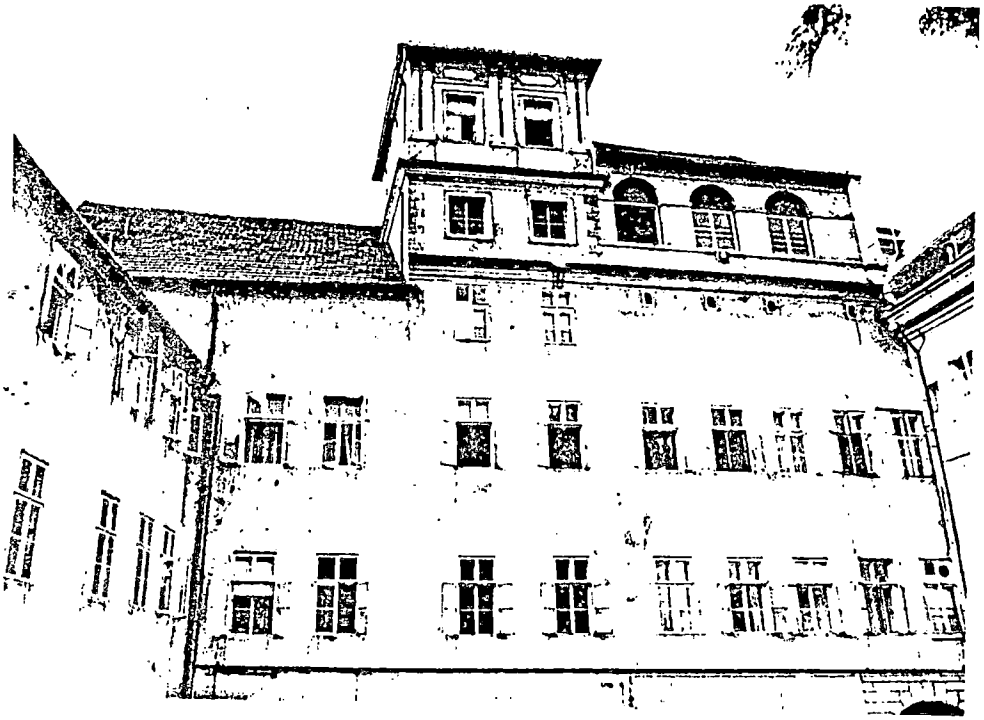
[38] *cf. Herget plan, 1791.*

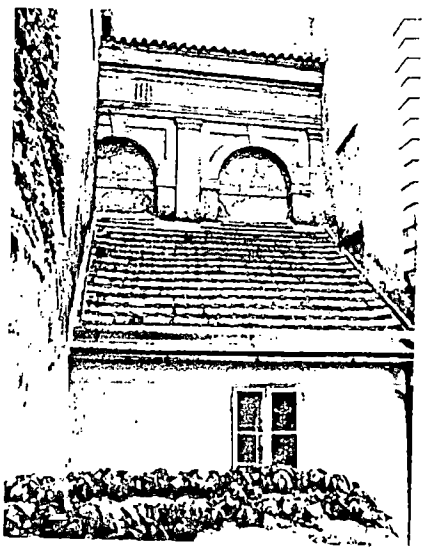
[39] *These Archives are not yet catalogued and not accessible. The text of the contract was furnished by a friendly student.*

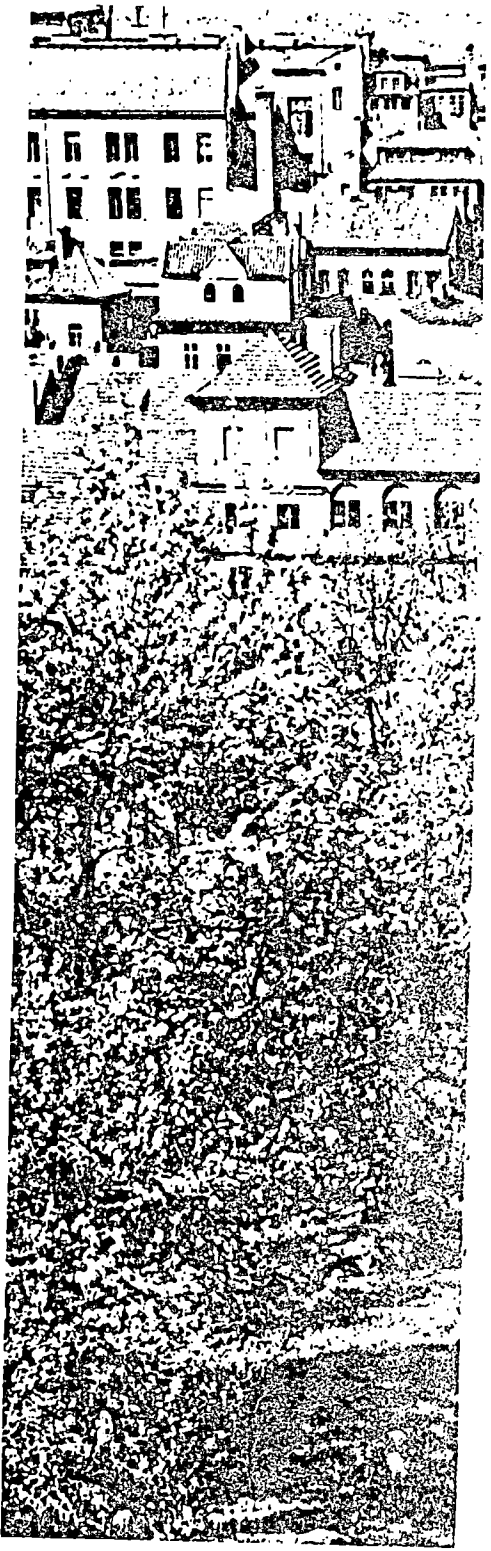


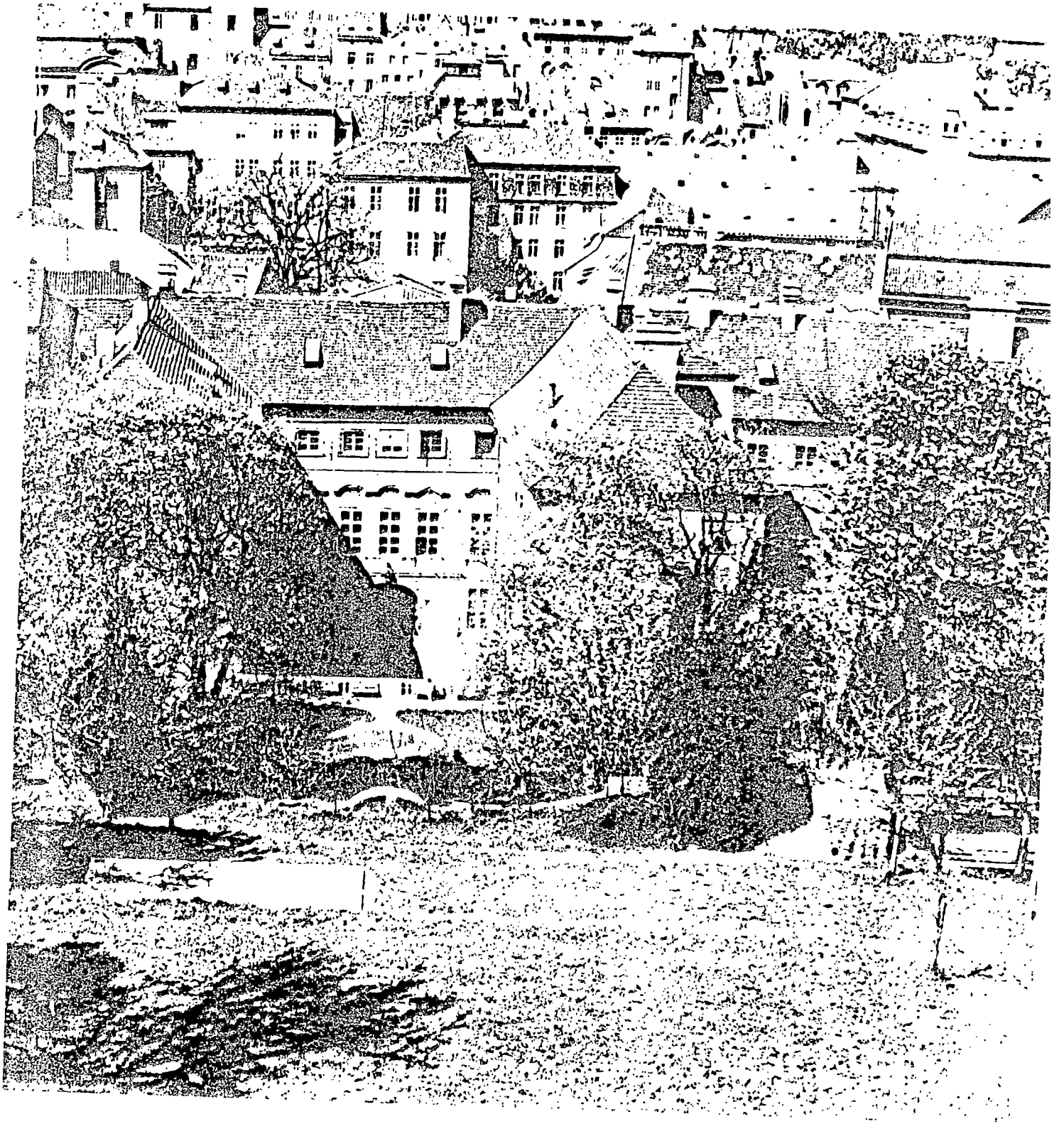
Malá Strana and Hradčany (circa 1830), by Vincent Morstadt.

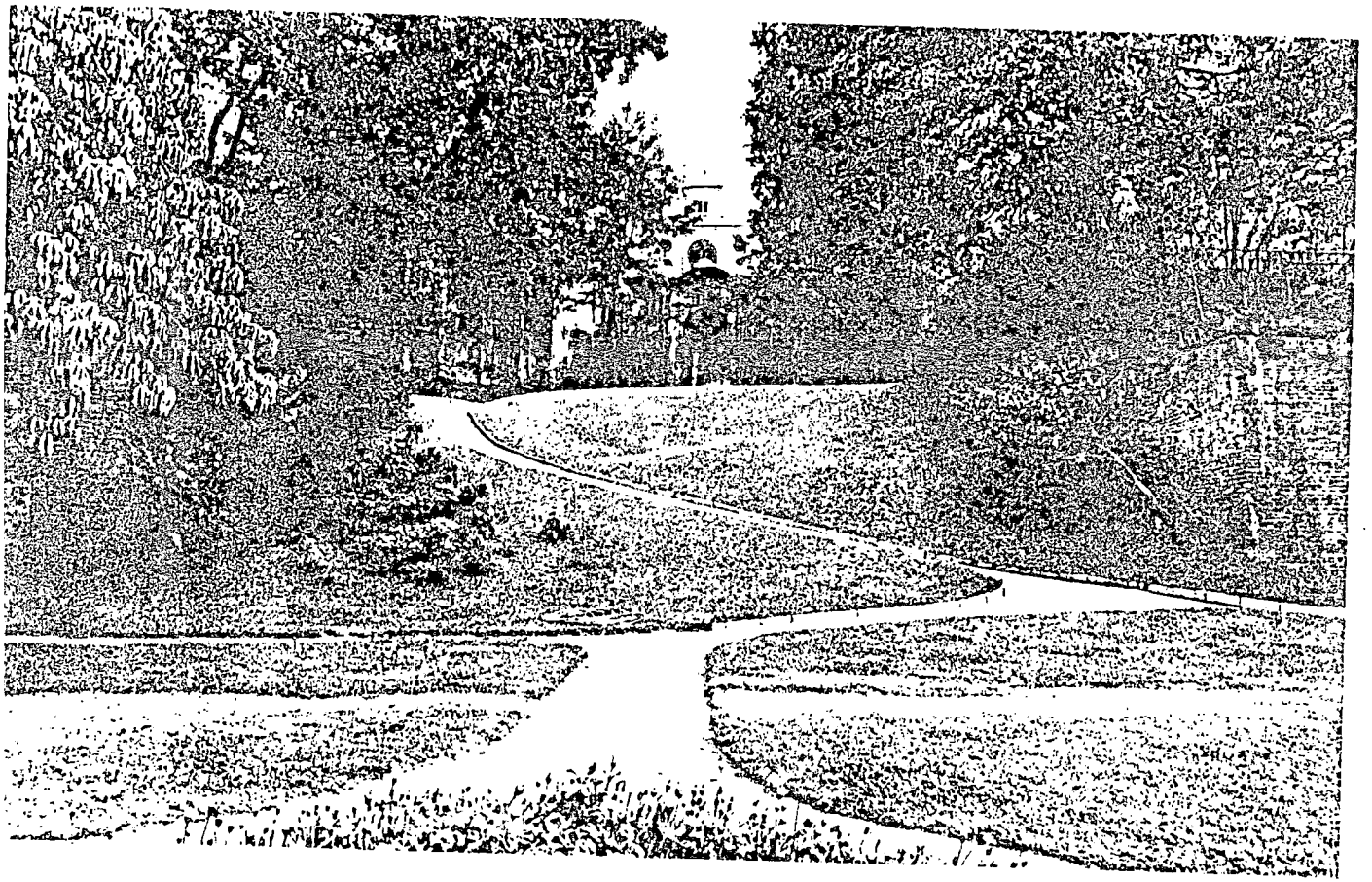
View of Malá Strana and Petřin from the Castle windows (1812); watercolor by J. Isabey.

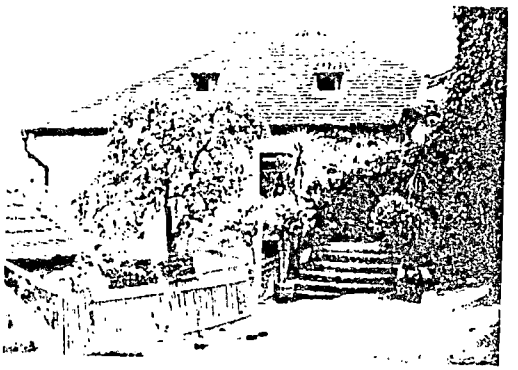












Gardener's cottage, circa 1910.

Franz Kafka and Felice Bauer, shortly after their second engagement (1917).

buying it became acceptable even for a high court official.[40] At the same time, a nobleman like Hatzfeld could retire from the world and lead a withdrawn life as a "Privatier." Baron Heinrich von Rotten-Hahn in his function as Lord High Burgrave was not only a high but the very highest administrative official. In the King's absence from Prague (which was virtually permanent) the Burgrave was his deputy,[41] a position reserved for members of the highest nobility.

After the reign of the enlightened Emperor and King Joseph II, Prague was treated to two splendid coronations within two years, Leopold II in 1790 and Francis II (as Bohemian King Francis I) in 1792. The Prague nobility competed among each other to entertain the new rulers, and on August 2nd, 1792, the Colloredo Palace had its own night of Imperial splendor.[42] The Burgrave Heinrich Rotten-Hahn gave a ball in the "Palace of Franz Philipp Prince von Hatzfeld and Trachenberg" (his landlord) in the honor of Francis I, who led the dance together with the Burgrave's second daughter. "The high guests dwelled for a long time at the windows to admire the illumination of the garden." The author expresses his doubts whether His Majesty agreed to climb up to the Gloriette for this purpose, because the celebrations had made him tired, and he and his entourage left the ball early to rest before another day of ceremonies and festivities.

Two years later, the Burgrave's days as a tenant ended. Carl Friedrich Hatzfeld died in 1794, and since he had no sons, his property passed to his uncle, Damian Hugo Ervin Schoenborn, a brother of Franz Philipp's wife, Bernardina.[43]

[40] *The first apartment building in Prague, the Platýz House on Národní třida, was constructed in 1817.*

[41] *An indication of the importance of this function was the position and size of the Old Burgrave's House on Hradčany (today House of Czechoslovak Children).*

[42] *Novotný, Jak život Pražhou šel, p. 198.*

[43] *cf. p. 26.*

The Schoenborn Palace (1794—1919)

The Schoenborns descended from an old German family in the Westerwald (Rhineland). Their political genius, combined with considerable fertility, made them one of the most far-flung and important South-German/Austrian noble families. It is almost impossible to list the titles and powers held by them: Electors and Archbishops in Mainz, Bishops in Wuerzburg, Bamberg, Speyer and Konstanz, Cardinals, Ministers. In 1710, the Bishop of Vienna-Neustadt awarded the Schoenborn family with the hereditary Electorate for Upper and Lower Austria.

Hugo Damian Ervin Schoenborn (1738—1817) was Imperial Chamberlain and Privy Councellor, Knight of the Order of St. Joseph and honorary Maltese Knight. He established himself in Bohemia with the purchase of the estate Přichovice near Klatovy in 1784, and ten years later, he inherited this Palace in Prague as well as the Hatzfeld estates Dolní Lukavice near Pilsen and Dlažkovice in Northern Bohemia.

During Hugo Damian's ownership, the Palace was visited by another building commission. The short report from 1816 gives us a general idea about the number and designation of the inhabitable rooms. The house is divided into two parts.

Part I:	Ground floor:	1 room, 1 kitchen, 2 vaulted rooms, 1 laundry room
	Second floor:	6 rooms, 1 chamber, 1 kitchen, 1 vaulted room
	Third floor:	5 rooms, 1 chamber, 1 vaulted room, 1 kitchen
Part II:	Ground floor:	8 rooms, 2 kitchens, 3 rooms for the coachman, stable for 15 horses, garden house with 1 room and 1 kitchen
	Second floor:	14 rooms, 1 kitchen
	Third floor:	18 rooms

It is difficult to determine into what kind of "parts" the Palace is divided; the most logical explanation is the still used division into "old" and "new" Palace, Part I being the old with very limited living space, the second being the new with the living quarters of the family. The mentioned stable for 15 horses was the one in the basement of the east wing. Puzzling is the reference to the garden house on the ground floor level. It was probably a lean-to structure in the east courtyard. All through the 19th century, such make-shift additions to the Palace existed: woodsheds, chicken houses, etc., and we can assume that their usefulness exceeded their beauty.

The total number of rooms listed is 69, some 31 less than the Palace has today. One reason for the smaller number was the later subdivisions of huge halls into smaller rooms.[44] After 1816, the facade of the "old" palace was finally adapted to the same roof level as the new; for this purpose, a new half-story was added. Isabey's "View from the Castle on the North Petřín Hill," 1812, is the only drawing which shows the former irregularity of the old facade. In order to get a clearer picture of the interior layout which remained more or less constant through the 19th century we have to consult another building report made out in 1881. The most important changes after 1817 took place in the west center wing, which had not been finished before.[45] In 1832, a spiral staircase was built to connect the second and third stories of this wing (these wooden stairs still existed in 1928). The new staircase behind the main stairs was built between 1853 and 1855, connecting the entrance of the main cellar with the attic. After 1817, a stable for six horses was established in the ground floor (garden end), and equipped with marble feeding troughs. The rest of the ground floor (adjoining the house) contained kitchen and pantries.

[44] *An example is the second floor of the west center wing which contained one big room. The adaptation of this wing was not finished before 1862.*

[45] *cf. footnote 44.*

In general, the ground floor of the Palace was used for utility rooms: about ten kitchens with adjoining pantries, laundry rooms (main laundry room — today commissary), one ironing room, stables (the old stable for 15 horses was later used for wood storage), archives, and a shed for carriages (today garage). The main kitchen (situated by the east courtyard, today men's dressing room) was connected to the underlying cellar by a spiral staircase. The cellar had an "ice" section for the cooling of food (one of three). Above the kitchen in the second floor, pantry and dining room were conveniently located. Some time later, a dumb-waiter was installed as a direct connection between kitchen and pantry above. Only three apartments were mentioned on the ground level: the coachman's next to the new stable, and left and right of the main gate the gate keeper's and the Palace manager's.

The mezzanine contained servants' quarters, and, in the east center wing, a special vaulted heating chamber. The situation of this chamber is not clear, and it is the only one mentioned. This forerunner of central heating probably served to take the chill out of the living room floors in the second (family) story.

The second story, especially of the "new" part, contained representational and living quarters. The main stairs of course, were reserved for the family members and their visitors. Adjoining the stairs on the street side were the library (today visa waiting room) and an anteroom (reception). The little hall and adjoining cubicle (today toilet) were connected to a speaking tube leading to the main entrance. On the street side above the main entrance was a "salon with balcony" and the ballroom (today consular offices), on the garden side the mentioned dining room, and in the east center wing the private rooms of the count: a study, a billiard room, small salon and the garden salon "with Italian fireplace and jalousies" (Ambassador's office). Appropriately, the west center wing contained the private quarters of the countess: a dressing room with adjoining cubicle which contained the entrance to the spiral staircase, bedroom and study, and two garden salons, the larger one with access to the garden.

It is not possible to determine the use of the other rooms. The east end of the street front contained more salons, a bedroom and a cabinet with an "Italian fireplace." The use of the top floor, which was in many parts not even finished (parquet floors, dividing walls, ceilings, etc.) can only be guessed. It probably contained nurseries, rooms for the "higher" servants (governess, tutors, housekeeper, etc.) and private quarters for the lesser members of the family. A palace of that size was hardly ever a one-family house.[46] It would be a mistake to assume that a large staff of servants

[46] *The Prague Address Book of 1859 lists three, the one of 1910 five different parties inhabiting the Palace, including two single ladies, either widows or unmarried. All parties, however, were Schoenborns.*

jurisprudence like Friedrich and became 'Landesgerichtsrat' (Council of the State Court). Like his brothers, he was a lifelong member of the Upper House in the Czech parliament.

By the turn of the century, the Prague nobility still held their high positions in the administration, and their huge estates secured them a handsome income. But the foundations of the Hungarian-Austrian Empire began to sway, and with them the official position of a class which was traditionally dependent on the crown. The Habsburg state was resented by the Czechs not only because it was foreign, but also because its basic feudal organization made it difficult for a normal citizen to partake in the government of his own state. "A Viennese citizen is a lot closer to my heart than 1000 aristocrats!" a Brno revolutionary had written in 1848. The immense proportion of land held by the nobility did not help to appease these feelings. Very often the nobility were not even able to take care of their estates properly. Depending on the land for their private income, the old families were not able to invest enough to make them truly profitable, let alone to make room for the industries which had become essential to feed the masses. If for no other reason, the traditional life of the aristocracy was doomed by the Industrial Revolution.

Even before the first land reforms of the new Czechoslovak Republic led to the confiscation of a large part of the aristocratic estates, thereby ending the socially important role of the nobility, many of the old families lacked the means as well as the incentive to maintain a huge palace all for themselves. After 1910, the Schoenborns took in paying tenants, members of their own impoverished class, but also (in the less representative parts of the house) a rather mixed lot of poor people. Many parts of Malá Strana became virtual slums in the early 20th century, a curious Prague mixture of rich and poor, noble and common, dirty and elegant — a breeding ground for originals as Neruda depicted them in his short stories.

Still, the Schoenborns held on to their own way of life. I would like to take you on a little excursion into the third garden of the Schoenborn Palace. The year was 1970, and I had met Paní B. for the first time. She is about 80 years old, and she had not seen this piece of land for more than 60 years. She was born in 1892 in the gardener's cottage not far from the gate leading into the Lobkowitz garden. "My father was the Schoenborn's head gardener," she told me in her fine and halting German (she had not spoken it for years and had difficulties finding the right word now and then): "He was taking care of the terrace gardens farther down, and in exchange he got a lease on this property up to the Gloriette. There were lots of flowers, and the way from our house to the workshed by the stairs was always framed by flowers." I could

After this excursion into building history, let us return to the Schoenborns. Damian Hugo Schoenborn died in 1817, and his Bohemian estates went to his third son, Friedrich Karl. Friedrich married a Princess Lobkowitz and such brought another vast estate, Nekmír, into the family. He died as "His k.u.k. Majesty's True Privy Councellor and Chamberlain" in 1849, one year after the first bourgeois "revolution" had shaken the foundations of the feudal order in Germany and Bohemia. Friedrich Karl was replaced by his son Ervin (1812 – 1881) as head of the Bohemian "Fideikommiss" (entail). Ervin was an active member of the Czech parliament from 1861 – 1867, supporting, of course, the conservative party. His estates included Lukavice, Klažkovice, Příchovice, Přeštice, Malešice, Kozolupy and Nekmír. His wife was born Bruehl and followed the Schoenborn tradition in bearing him eight children. Nothing is known about the oldest son, Karl Friedrich, except that he, like his grandfather, married a Lobkowitz, and after her early death another distinguished aristocratic lady, Zdeňka Carolina von Sternberg.

His younger brother Friedrich (born 1841 in Dlažkovice) was the one to carry on the family tradition as the heir of the entail. He studied law at Charles University and became a Dr. juris. In 1879, he was a candidate for the Austrian Imperial Council, and one year later he became a member of the State Court, and shortly after that Vice Regent of Moravia. On November 13, 1888, he was made Minister of Justice in the Taaf Cabinet (Hungary-Austria). In 1890, he published several decrees concerning the Main Regional Court in Prague which were considered anti-Czech.[50] After Taaf resigned as Minister President, Schoenborn joined the Windischgraetz Cabinet, but he fell along with the whole coalition. Shortly after, he became President of the Administrative Court in Prague.

Friedrich Schoenborn was an immensely learned man and published articles in literary magazines as well as in professional papers; moreover, he was an excellent speaker and the political leader of the aristocracy. His honorary distinctions were staggering. He was Imperial Chamberlain and Privy Counsellor, Knight of the Iron Cross 1st Class, Knight of the Great Cross of the Order of Leopold, Knight of the Great Cross of the Order of Franz Joseph I, Knight of the Russian Order of St. Anna 1st Class, Honorary Knight of the Order of the Johannites, and bearer of the Great Cross of the Legion d'Honneur.

Friedrich's younger brother Franz (1844 – 1899) entered, also true to family tradition, a career in the clergy. He took part in the Austrian-Prussian war of 1866, studied in Rome and Innsbruck, and was ordained in 1873. In 1885, he became Prince Archbishop in Prague and four years later Cardinal. Ervin's youngest son, Adalbert Joseph, studied

[50] *Czech language experts could learn more about this affair by reading "A Proposal for the Indictment of J.E. Count Bedřich Schoenborn, Minister of Justice, and Action taken about this Proposal in the Imperial Court" (title translated from Czech), University Library No. 54K 12.491.*

and plenty of space made life in such a palace very comfortable, let alone luxurious. Karl Anton Prince Rohan, who grew up in a classicistic palace on Karmelitská, writes in his Memoirs: "The return of the household to the city was an event which caused a week long commotion. A stable of horses, countless suitcases and trunks, the family members, governesses and tutors, coachmen, stable hands, servants, chamber maids, maids, cooks, kitchen hands, not counting the cleaning staff which had gone in advance to clean and prepare the house ... Such a description could make the impression as if we lived in 'Saus and Braus.' But the housekeeping was not out of proportion, because the houses we lived in were comparatively primitive. Hardly a bath, few water-flushed toilets, no central heating, ice cold hallways, no elevators. The heating of such a palace alone required several full-time servants for wood chopping, carrying of coals, cleaning of the ovens and fireplaces, and heating. Without exaggeration one could say that life in such a house, even with a large staff of servants, was not more comfortable, rather harder in many ways than the life of an upper-middle-class family in a modern, technically equipped apartment with one maid."[47]

The garden had changed again in the early 19th century.[48] This was the time when formal gardens went out of fashion. The romantic period discovered "real" nature, and the great "English" parks with their carefully distributed trees, winding trails and spacious lawns were composed. They mirrored "nature," but went to great troubles to eliminate natural faults. In fact, to nurture this illusion, the "English" gardens demanded about as much care as the formal ones had. The Schoenborns followed the new fashion without giving much thought to the fact that it was utterly unsuited to an artificially arranged terrace garden. From the beginning there had been a logical division between the two lower "formal" terraces and the utility garden above the big supporting wall (with just one formal strip through the center up to the Gloriette to please the eye). Now the lower two terraces were adapted to "nature," too. Winding trails destroyed the symmetrical layout of the former flower beds and hedges, which were replaced by irregular lawns and scattered trees. The sculptured supporting walls were disguised by exuberantly growing evergreen. In short, the garden was spoiled and never recovered from this operation.[49]

In addition to the living quarters of the gardener's helper adjoining the stairhouse in the third garden, and the head gardener's cottage near the Lobkowitz gate, the third garden contained a large greenhouse (by the stairs), a vaulted cellar for vegetable storage (opposite the stairs), and several glass-covered vegetable beds with an adjoining (underground?) heating chamber.

[47] *Herzogenberg, Prag, p. 142 f., freely translated from the German.*

[48] *cf. Juettner, Plan of Prague 1811 15.*

[49] *In fairness, it should be pointed out that, in the McNayr plans of 1928, there existed a detailed plan to restore the formal gardens. The plan had more similarity to a millionaire's dream than to the original Italian garden. The center of the first terrace would have featured a huge lily pond, and an abundance of marble stairs was to lead up to the second terrace.*

see that she was not impressed by what she saw now. "You know, before I was born, in his best days, he had a lot of people working under him. But then the Schoenborns were poor, and he was the only one. Painters used to come up and ask for permission to work up here, and in return we usually got a nice drawing or painting." There is an old photograph showing Paní B. as a stiff and lovely little girl in front of the Gloriette. "At one time, there was a whole family living in there, can you imagine?"[51]

I asked her what she remembered about the Schoenborns. "Well, we children were not allowed to go down. At that time, there was a little thruway leading from our house to Vlašská Street.[52] But now and then, we would sneak down anyway, and if we saw the Old Lady (probably Friedrich's wife, mother of Carl Johann) we would run up to her and kiss her hand." The way she said it, it didn't even sound degrading. When the Old Lady died, she was lying in state in her big garden salon, and all the employees, including the gate keeper in his magnificent uniform and great blue two-cornered hat, came to pay their last respects. The latter was usually defending the gate against intruders, or announcing visitors by pounding his long guilded staff. The visiting hours among the aristocracy were ruled by a very strict etiquette as to who could visit whom and when, although almost all of them were close relatives.

I asked Paní B. what it felt like to be "under the old aristocracy" and whether there was any resentment. She did not quite understand me. "Resentment? Why? Their life was not easier than ours, probably more difficult. They started their days very early to attend the six o'clock mass in the Theatiner Church in the Spornergasse (today Nerudova), only on Sundays in St. Thomas. The young Countess did not know where to get the money to buy new clothes for her children. She used to visit the Countess Lobkowitz (a relative, of course) and ask her for the things her children had outgrown. But not a single time were the Schoenborns late in paying their servants, and they always contributed to charities." The Count's children would constantly sneak up to the gardener's cottage to get a good hearty breakfast. The Old Lady (who, according to Paní B's references, ran the household) would insist — be it for economical reasons or to keep the children fashionably thin — that an apple for breakfast was enough. "There are also enough romantic stories for a novel, and one of 'them' wrote one: 'Under the Roofs of St. Nicholas'.[53] But don't believe everything it says. One of the Schoenborns fell madly in love with a Countess Lobkowitz — but they were both married. So the writer maintains he shot himself right here in the garden." Paní B. was very amused. "The truth is, he shot himself somewhere else."

[51] *I really could not, but became somewhat accustomed to the idea. In 1969, the Admin. Officer discovered traces of somebody spending his nights in the Gloriette, including a diary, which pointed to a romantic young poet.*

[52] *cf. p. 36.*

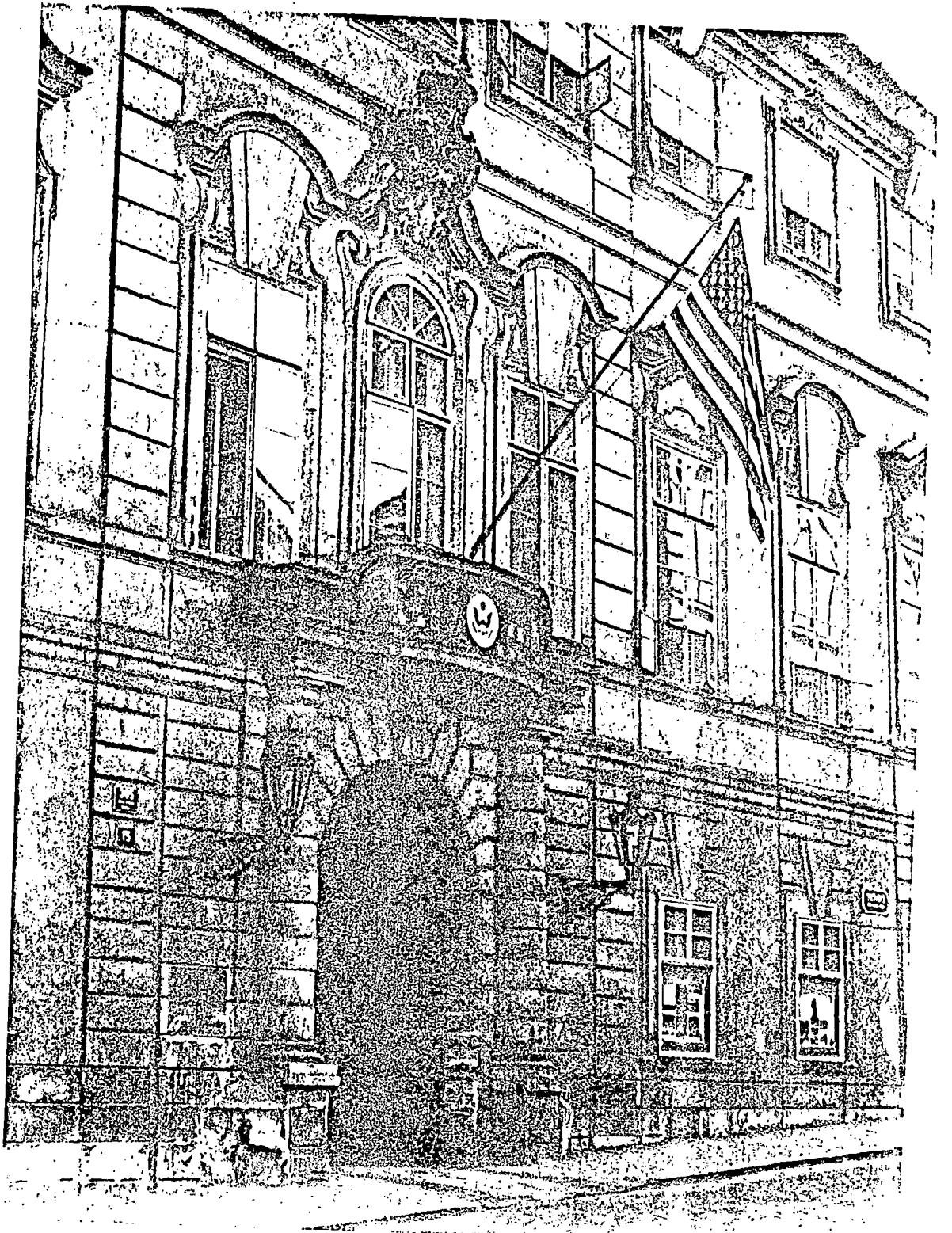
[53] *Unfortunately, I was not able to trace the author, let alone a copy. It might be worth looking for.*

The Schoenborn gardener was able to provide his daughter with a good education. He sent her to a nun's school in Malá Strana ("Englische Fraeulein") where she learned all the skills required of a young lady. When she was seventeen, her father got into a disagreement with the Palace manager and had to leave. That was in the same year in which the Great War had toppled the old world and the Czechoslovak Republic was proclaimed. "It's funny, I haven't been here since that time. It was my childhood, and that was over." Paní B. later married a high official in the Masaryk government and led quite an exciting life. "But for me, this is where my memories are, and they go back here more and more the older I become." This was my only real encounter with the Schoenborn Palace.

If the Palace had a ghost, Franz Kafka would be a very appropriate one. His characters are forever caught in the labyrinth of totalitarian bureaucracy, and much of his work seems today like an accurate prophecy of things to come. He occupied two rooms in the Schoenborn Palace for a few months in 1917, and wrote there (among other things) his short story "The Building of the Chinese Wall." This tale about a futile wall erected by convicts might have been inspired by the "Hunger Wall," the equally senseless fortification close by on the Petřín Hill, erected under Charles IV during a famine to keep unemployed workers from starving.

In a letter to his fiancee Felice Bauer, written early in 1917, Kafka tells about his worries finding a suitable place to live. "I went into a housing bureau, where, almost immediately, I was told about a flat in one of the most beautiful palaces. Two rooms, an anteroom, one half of which was outfitted as a bathroom. Six hundred crowns a year. It was like the fulfillment of a dream. I went there. Rooms high and beautiful, red and gold, almost like in Versailles.[54] Four windows overlooking a completely hidden quiet courtyard, one window onto the garden. What a garden! When you enter the gate of the Palace you can hardly believe what you see. Through the high arch of the second gate, flanked by caryatids, you see the garden sloping slowly and majestically from a beautifully divided branched stone stairway up to a Gloriette. But the flat had a little flaw. The former tenant, a young man living separated from his wife, had lived in it with his servant only for a few months, had then suddenly been transferred (he is a government employee), had to leave Prague, but had already invested so much in the flat during this short period that he did not want to give it up just like that. He kept it and looked for somebody who would at least partially compensate him (for introduction of electric light, furnishing of the bathroom, built-in closets, installation of a telephone, a large carpet hung on the wall) . I was not this somebody. He wanted (certainly not too much) six hundred and fifty crowns. It was

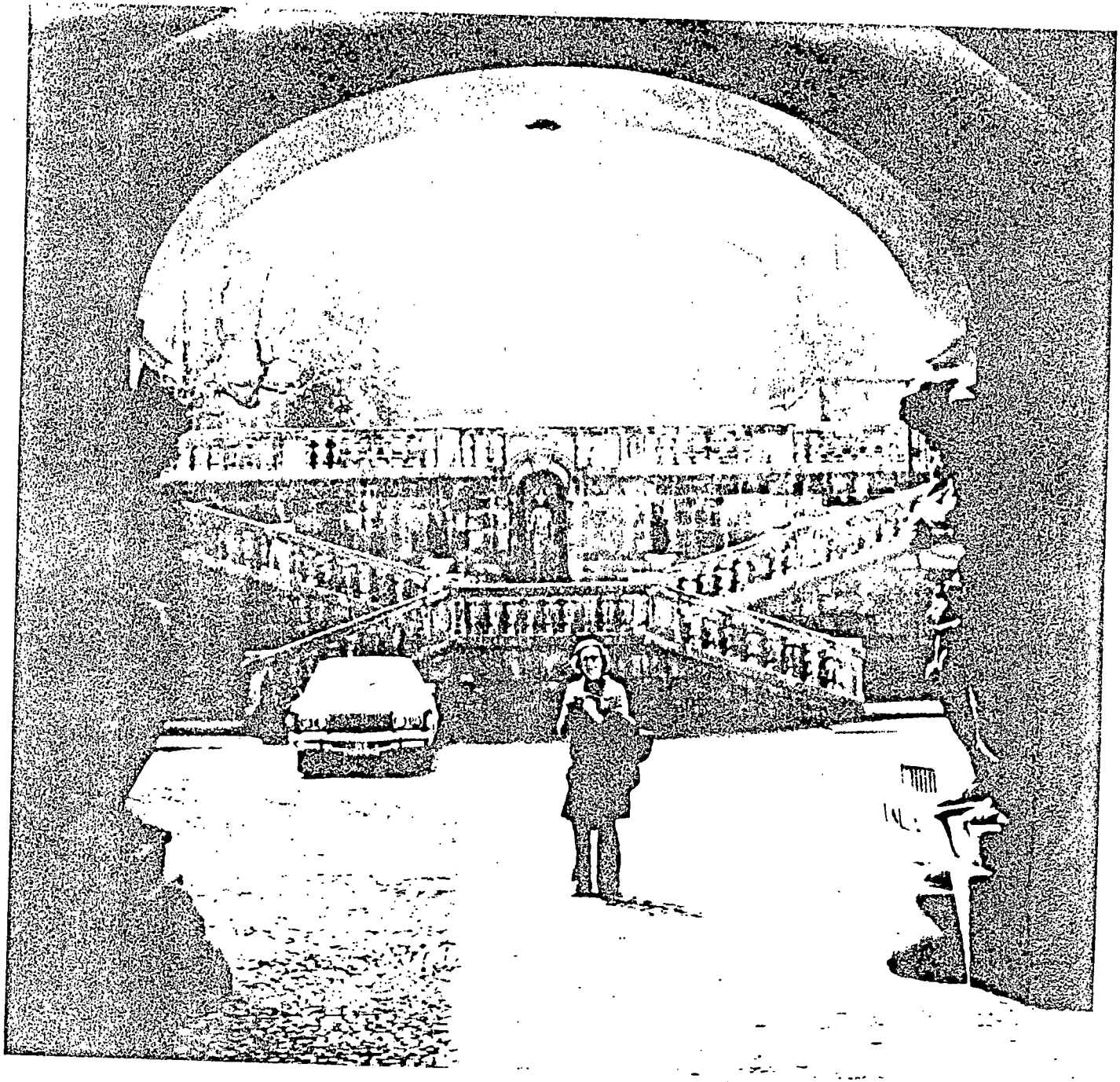
[54] *This was by no means an exaggeration. Most of the second floor rooms had their walls covered by damask. It was probably never renewed, faded, and was finally torn out.*



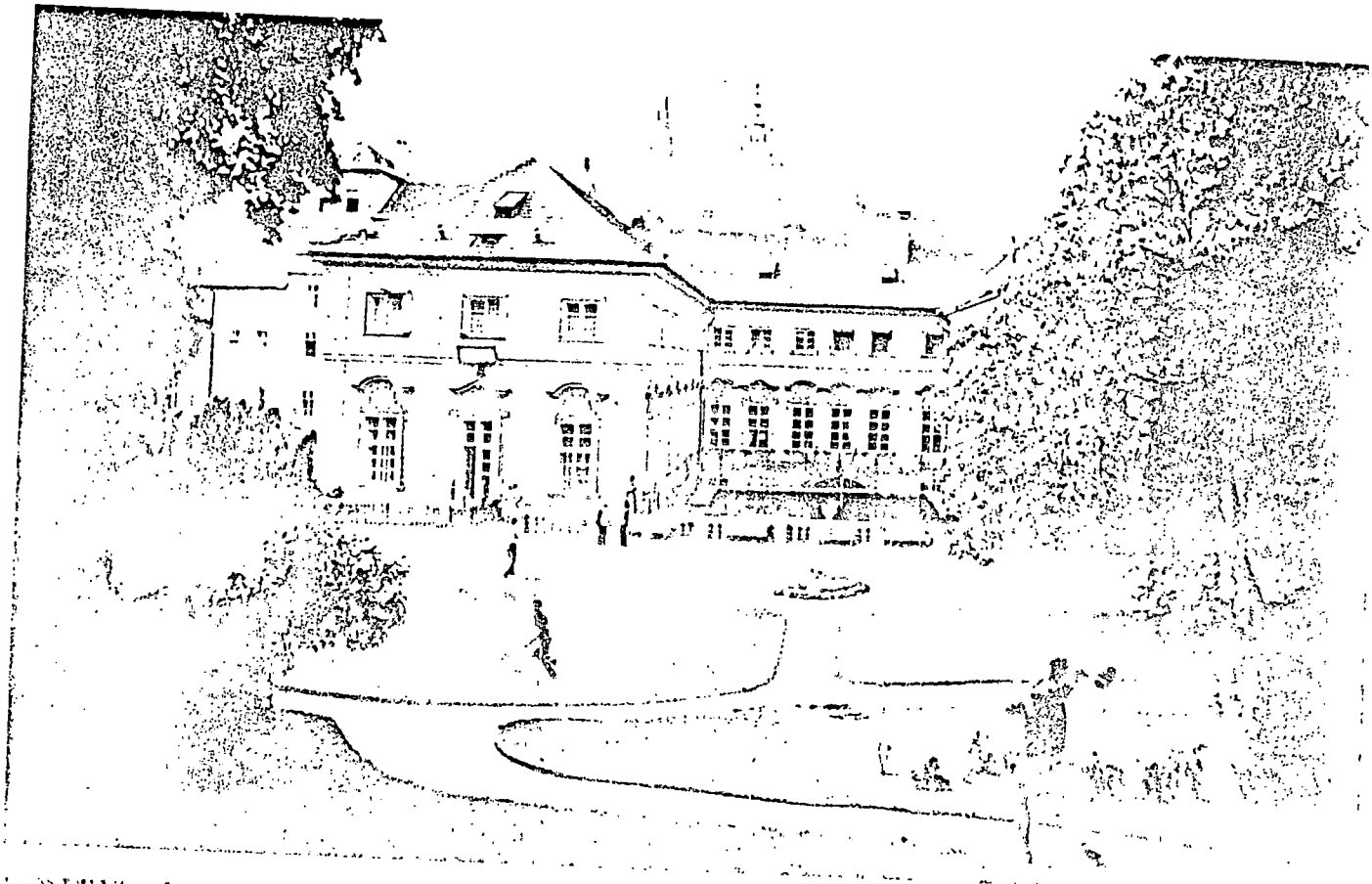
Main entrance

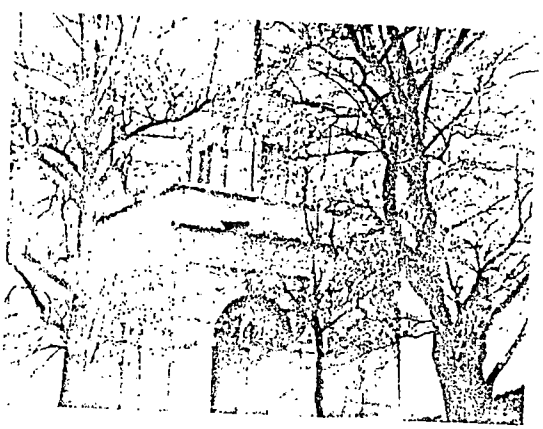
Garrison accompanied by a Marine Guard, climbed up and told them in fluent Russian: "These apples are American apples and you better leave them." One of the soldiers muttered an apology, and back they climbed over the wall.

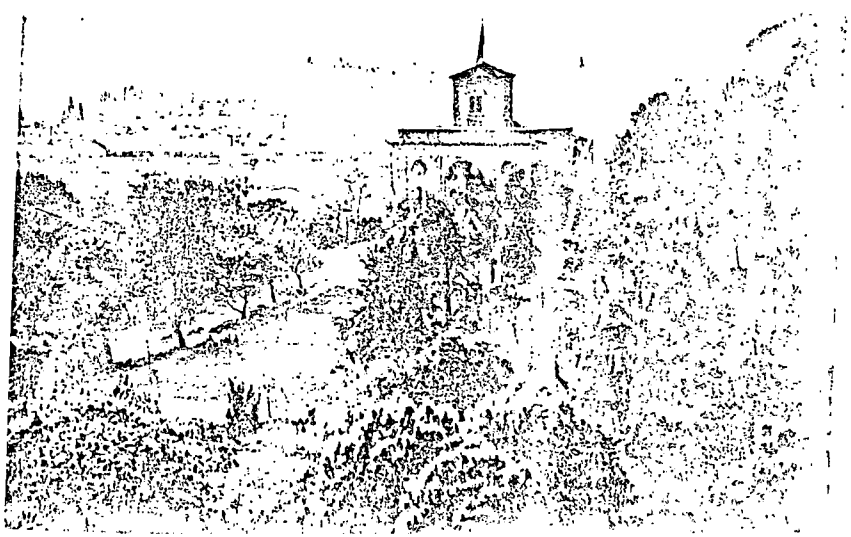
While the diplomats, after a few more symbolic actions, returned to their daily tasks, the administrators succeeded, slowly but steadily, in making the old Baroque palace once more a good and solid place to live and work in. There is a long way to go to the lily pond, but desuetude and cracked walls are things past. The most pleasant and visible sign is the renovated Gloriette, over which the American flag is raised every morning, a patch of stars and stripes in lonely isolation. Many friends of the Embassy have remarked how comforting it is to take in the magnificent view from Prague Castle and to see, every day, the American flag flying from its customary place. One likes to think that the flag symbolizes the nature of American-Czechoslovak friendship, which like the Schoenborn Palace itself goes through good times and bad, but always endures.

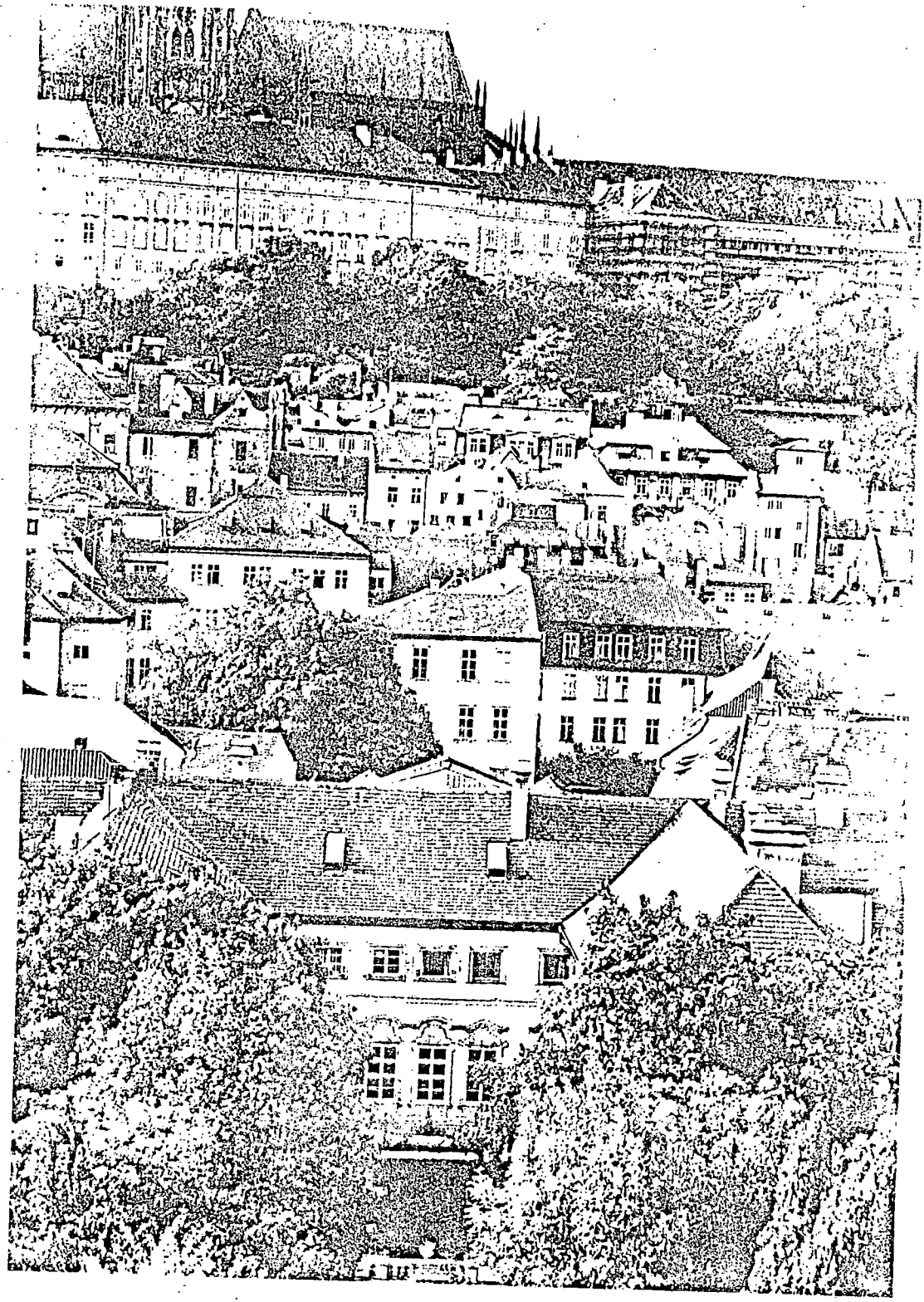


View of courtyard from entranceway.









too much for me, also the exaggeratedly high cold rooms were too luxurious for my taste; after all, I didn't have any furniture either. There were smaller considerations added to that. However, in the same castle there was another flat, to be rented directly from the palace management: in the third story, slightly lower ceilings, view onto a narrow street, the Hradčany close in front of the windows. Friendlier, more human, modestly furnished — a young countess had lived there as a guest, probably with fairly modest standards. The decor of period furniture, appropriate for a young girl, was still there. I was doubtful whether the apartment was still available. That made me desperate at the time."

Kafka then moved into a little house his favorite sister Ottla had rented for her own convenience in the Zlatá ulice (Golden Lane), a place he liked because of the complete privacy it offered, also because he had to walk home to his parents' home every night (in the Old Town), an exercise which helped to cure his insomnia. In the meantime, he kept pondering on the reasons for and against renting the palace apartment.

"Just now it is clear that the flat is available after all, the manager for whom I did a favor likes me. I get it for six hundred, but without the furniture I counted on. There are two rooms and an anteroom. Electric lights are installed, but no bathroom, no tub, well, I don't need that ... I would have to borrow furniture from my sister; for the one room which is huge I would only have a bed ... I would not have the nightly walk home, and it would be difficult to go for a walk at night because the (Palace) door can't be unlocked from the outside. On the other hand, I could walk around at night in the garden normally reserved for the noble family ... We two would have the best apartment I could imagine in Prague prepared for you, if only for a short time, and you would have to do without your own kitchen, even without a bathroom ... The indescribable park, let's say in spring, summer (the noble family is gone),[55] or fall. But if I don't secure the flat for myself right now, either by moving in or (an irrational waste surmounting any bureaucratic concept) just by paying one hundred and fifty crowns for a quarter year, I would lose it. Judge for yourself, and soon."[56]

This endless pondering on all possible solutions and objections was very typical for Kafka and rendered him all but helpless in his private affairs. He did move in, finally. The fact that his rooms could not be heated during the cold period probably speeded up his final and fatal ailment, tuberculosis. After the first hemorrhage occurred, he had to move out again, this time to a sanatorium. "And so I leave," he wrote his sister Ottla. "Closing the windows in the Palace for the last time, locking the door, how similar that must be to dying."[57] Kafka died seven years later, in 1924, in a sanatorium near Vienna.

[55] *Nobody in the nobility would stay in the city during the summer, of course, but retire to one of the country estates.*

[56] *Excerpts from Max Brod:* Kafka.

[57] "Kafka und Prag, *p. 144.*

Carl Johann Schoenborn, the last owner of the Palace before it became the American Legation, was Chief Administrator for the Kingdom of Bohemia. After the Republic had been proclaimed, he sold the Palace to Richard Crane, but he and his family kept a large part of the third floor for several years. He was a very pious man, and his family life was dictated by a rigid schedule.[58] He got up very early and visited the 6 o'clock mass alone, then again the 7 o'clock mass together with his children. Breakfast was served at 7:30, for the children "milk coffee with bread crumbed in and a little sugar." Butter was considered a luxury. The household included three servants, three maids, cooks and a tutor. At 8:30 Schoenborn went to his office and returned at 5:30 in the evening. After the children (twin boys, girls are not mentioned) outgrew private tutoring, they were sent to a Czech school. After the sixth grade, they changed to a German Gymnasium "to learn German." Every night, the children had to spend a certain time at their mother's desk to "search their souls." The Count himself would run up and down praying his rosary. Schoenborn mentions in his letter that the American Minister Einstein, having his salon under the Schoenborns, knowingly connected any wild swinging of the chandeliers with the Count's rosary.

Erwein, one of the twin brothers, later became one of the Prague originals. They called him the "Folding Count," because he walked the streets much in the manner of a folding umbrella. Being very tall and feeling rather unimportant, he would bend over excessively until he met somebody familiar — and rose out of his depth like a happy umbrella meeting the rain. According to a reliable source, he possessed six or seven umbrellas, all of them — he claimed — valuable, and all of them broken. Until 1968, he worked in an antiquariat on Karlová ulice. He knew a lot about books, but was not very interested in selling them. He refused to see any customers before 11 o'clock when he took his first Cinzano. The Count was very fond of tall stories. In his letter he rather gleefully reports that he made an American diplomat in Prague actually believe that 6,000,000 eggs were used to mix the mortar for the Palace.

[58] *The following information was supplied by Erwein Schoenborn who was kind enough to write me a long letter (April 2, 1972).*

The American Legation (1919–1939)

After the Republic of Czechoslovakia had been proclaimed, Prague became once more a capital of an independent state. The old noble families became normal citizens in a democratic society, deprived of the official functions they had held for centuries. The palaces of Malá Strana were ideally suited to house foreign legations, and most of the former owners were happy to rent or sell them. Ironically, in this way they regained the representative function they had already lost in the 19th century.

Richard Crane was well prepared for his job as the first Minister of the newly established American Legation in Prague. His father, the owner of the Crane Plumbing Manufacturing Co. in Chicago, was not only a millionaire but an active Slavophile. He had endowed the School of Slavonic Studies in Chicago, and was fond of the Czechs "at a time when this was so unusual as to be eccentric."[59] In 1902, he visited Prague and invited Professor T.G. Masaryk to give lectures in Chicago. In fact, Crane played an important role in the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic. He not only helped Masaryk to get in touch with the Slavic communities in the U.S. Midwest, but also gained him access to President Wilson in order to win the President's support for the new state. The Pittsburgh Treaty between the Czechs and the Slovaks laid the foundation for the Czechoslovak Republic.

It was only natural that the son of Masaryk's only close friend in America should become the first American Minister in Prague. The connection was even sealed by a marriage, short and unhappy as it was, between Richard's sister Frances Crane Leatherbee and Jan Masaryk, the President's son. Richard Crane had sufficient means to purchase the Schoenborn Palace from Carl Johann Schoenborn for the price of $117,000. This might seem like a fairy tale today, but in reality had many prosaic elements. The Palace was run down in all but the representational rooms. It had lots of tenants crowded together under not altogether sanitary conditions. Of the hundred-odd rooms of the Palace, about 80 were rented, 33 by members of the Schoenborn family.

After Richard Crane returned to Washington, he offered the Palace to the United States Government, which bought it for the Legation in 1924 for $125,000. Since, under the existing conditions, there was hardly enough room to house two employees, let alone an extensive office, the tenant problem became immediately one of the most urgent ones. Any diplomat coming to Prague should consider the reading of a records book entitled "Correspondence, Einstein, 1925"[60] as an absolute must, if only to destroy any illusions about the good old days. Einstein, the new Minister, was not only an able diplomat but a master of style as well. In a letter to Beneš, the Foreign Minister, he explained the difficulties:

[59] *Davenport*, Too Strong for Fantasy, *p.266.*

[60] *Available only on special request. Somebody with a good sense for historic value rescued this invaluable volume from destruction.*

"The United States ... is naturally desirous of utilizing to the fullest possible extent the resources of this property for official purposes, such, for instance, as the housing of the Consulate and Commercial Attache's offices and of the staffs of American government agencies in Prague. The presence of some 40 tenants, whose leases antedated the acquisition of the property by the United States has so far prevented (this)...; the eviction of these tenants is under present law exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, and my government, despite its purchase of the entire property finds itself unable to exercise the most important rights of possession over some two-thirds of the Legation building. The situation is unfortunately aggravated by the activities of certain of the tenants, one of whom maintains a stable beneath the Chancery while another lives, in a manner which I trust Your Excellency will permit me to characterize as primitive rather than decorous, beneath the apartment of the minister. The children of the tenants are under scant control; spirit lamps are in general use, and this, as well as the stable beneath the Chancery, cannot but constitute a fire risk to which I am reluctantly constrained to invite Your Excellency's attention..."

More outspoken in his letters to the Department of State, Einstein reports that, on hot days, "when the wind sits wrong," he has to smoke violently and keep the windows closed in order to escape the stench from the manure pit. Attempts to evict the livery stable on sanitary grounds were futile. An examiner dispatched by the City Medical Department found the stable well kept and clean, the manure pit only half full (however, with collapsing walls), and reached the academic decision that displeasure with such an establishment was understandable but merely a matter of private taste.

Einstein's ordeal was not only caused by the stable, but also by "two families of 'fiances' and their babies who reside in one room situated immediately under my own principal living room. The smoke from their cooking at times make the latter uninhabitable, while their taste of gramophone selections is not my own. But after more than three years' effort I have not yet succeeded in dispossessing them." At one point during this critical year, the American Legation came very close to having the Venezuelan flag and shield being raised on its premises. Mr. Faul, Crane's agent in Prague, had accepted an appointment as Venezuelan Consul while living in the Palace. He was tactful enough to inquire about the desirability of such an action, and this interesting complication was avoided, not without a heartfelt verbal shudder by Mr. Einstein.

There was an attractive plan to convert the "old" Palace into an American institute for Slavic studies, designed to give scholars the opportunity to conduct research in the

suitable atmosphere of an old Slavic capital. Like so many others, this brainchild was stillborn.

The records after 1925 are destroyed or in the National Archives in Washington, but according to the extensive plans for renovating the Palace in 1928, the tenant problem must have been solved earlier.[61] Many of the 1928 McNayr plans were never realised. They called for the total rebuilding of walls and roofs, landscaping of the gardens,[62] razing of the west wing obscuring an early Baroque wall, a concrete foundation under the courtyard cobblestones and complete reconstruction of the sagging terrace stairs, etc., including new furniture for the entire Legation. The total costs for this project amounted to $200,000, a sum not readily available out of the rather modest budget of the State Department at that time.[63] We can assume that there was relatively smooth sailing from then on. But the days of the Czechoslovak Republic were numbered, and with them the functioning of the American Legation. One of the last American diplomats assigned to Prague before World War II was another master of style, George F. Kennan. He arrived "by the last regular airplane ever to go from Paris to the 1918–1938 Czechoslovakia."[64] It was the day of the Munich Agreement. "In view of the blackout and the evacuation of dependents, I found all the male staff residing in the residence quarters of the Legation. Both Chancery and Residence were at that time installed in the Schoenborn Palace ... The Legation Chancery and the Residence quarters for the Minister occupied only a small portion of the building, the remainder being left in a state of desuetude. The residential quarters alone contained, in addition to several bedrooms, at least three, and I think four, huge salons."

Kennan recalls the story of that curious egg-shaped monument mercifully buried among bushes during the summer on the first terrace, not far from the Ambassador's office which, at that time, was the Minister's private salon: It was the top structure of a concrete air raid shelter, "As I recall it, the only shelter of this sort to be completed for any of our diplomatic missions in Europe before the outbreak of war. It is an eloquent commentary on the difficulty of foresight in international affairs that not only was this he first of our diplomatic premises to be abandoned — abandoned, in fact, before the war had really begun and long before any bombs began to fall — but that Prague itself was almost the only European Capital to escape any serious measure of aerial destruction." Kennan pays an eloquent tribute to Wilbur J. Carr, the last American Minister to pre-war Czechoslovakia: "Quiet, dignified, affable; thoroughly schooled in all the intricacies of governmental and diplomatic procedure; accustomed to the frustrations of governmental routine and

[61] *Only the eastern part of the second floor remained in the possession of Mr. Crane, who had a lease contract until 1945. His younger brother, John Oliver Crane, continued to live in the Schoenborn Palace during the twenties and thirties.*

[62] *cf. Footnote No. 49.*

[63] *Again, it is useful to refer to "Correspondence, Einstein." The total allowances for the Legation in 1925 amounted to $4,000. Consider the haggle over surplus rulers and scissors in that year in order to get the right perspective.*

[64] *This and the following quotes taken from:* George F. Kennan, Memoirs 1925–1950, *Atlantic, Little, Brown, 1967.*

skilled in the arts of patience and of quiet persuasion by which alone that routine could be successfully assailed, and yet astute in his treatment of junior personnel."

One of the most outstanding passages in Kennan's book deals with a special encounter with Mr. Carr: "...I waited long and vainly, in my bedroom, for the usual call to dinner from the butler. Finally, wondering what had happened, I ventured into the great salons. There, in the brightly lighted room, I came upon the Minister peacefully sleeping in an armchair. The servants stood respectfully behind the curtains of the dining room, not daring to wake him. The sight of the old gentleman, thus peacefully at rest in the solitary splendor of his heavily curtained salons while outside in the growing darkness a Europe seething with fear and hatred danced its death dance all around us, struck me as a symbolic enactment of the helplessness of all forces of order and decency, at that moment, in the face of the demonic powers that history had not unleashed."

Kennan also recalls an annoying and rather familiar incident. A powerful father had decided to send his son on a European fact-finding tour, including Czechoslovakia. "That busy people should have their time taken up arranging this tour struck us as outrageous. With that polite but weary punctiliousness that characterizes diplomatic officials required to busy themselves with pesky compatriots who insist on visiting places where they have no business to be, I arranged to get him through the German lines, had him escorted to Prague, saw to it that he was shown what he wanted to see, expedited his departure, then, with a feeling of 'that's that', washed my hands of him — as I thought." The young John F. Kennedy was one of the last official visitors the Legation had to worry about. When the Germans marched into Prague in early spring, 1939, the Legation was formally abolished.

American Embassy (1946—present)

The Germans never occupied the building, which stayed under care of the Swiss Legation. But, of course, this care did not include maintenance and the "desuetude" had reached formidable dimensions by the time the Americans returned after the war. Once more there was a lot of horse manure, left by temporarily stationed "guests," and the old part of the Palace was literally bursting at the seams. The building walls had to be pulled together by four giant steel scissors which gradually pulled the cracks together. The facade, which had turned pitchblack, got a thorough scrubbing, and the Gloriette was renovated. At that time, the building inspector

discovered a secret passageway in the main cellar. There were rumors that this tunnel actually led to the Hradčany, but it was too dangerous to be explored and was finally sealed off by a concrete wall.

Compared to the small pre-war staff of the Legation, the new American Embassy was an immensely inflated operation. There were more than one hundred Americans and countless local employees. Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt preferred to change his residence to the Petschek villa, first leased and then bought by the American Government. Marcia Davenport, recalling the last Fourth of July party before the Communists took over, takes a dim view of this choice: "It was unbearably hot. The party was held in the garden of the monstrously vulgar millionaire's villa, the Petschek house whose owners had fled at the time of Munich ... to me an incomprehensible preference over the noble beauty of the Schoenborn Palace which is the American Embassy's chancery."[65]

At that time, the Embassy was actually engaged in negotiations with the Foreign Ministry to change the chancery to an altogether different location. Jan Masaryk, a good friend of Steinhardt, had offered him a huge building site on the Letna Hill for a new chancery. When the Communists took over, the plan was, of course, dropped, and the staff was cut down by 75%. Finally only 12 Americans remained. Steinhardt, by nature a very practical man, had shared Masaryk's belief that it would be possible to hold Czechoslovakia in a "bridge" position between east and west. Masaryk survived his shattered dream only a few months.

During the next 20 years, while the diplomats tried to operate as normal as possible under cold war conditions, the administrative staff waged an equally intense struggle to keep the hundred-room Palace from crumbling away.

In 1968, during the Warsaw Pact occupation of Czechoslovakia, the Schoenborn Palace came very close to burning. While the night curfew was enforced by Russian tanks and nobody was allowed to leave or enter the Embassy, a fire broke out under the roof. Women and children huddled in a miserable group in the courtyard, watching the male staff fighting the blaze with pails of water. Finally and miraculously, after several hours, they succeeded. The inside 1968 story of the American Embassy is not yet written, and probably never will be. But since this story dealt with the Schoenborn Palace, the famous garden should not be forgotten in the last chapter.

A few Russian soldiers had climbed the wall behind the third garden and found the American apples very delicious. After all, this was the time when the Czechs refused them bread and water. Politely asked to leave, they refused. The situation became very tense until First Secretary Mark

[65] *Davenport, ibid, p. 333.*

Garrison accompanied by a Marine Guard, climbed up and told them in fluent Russian: "These apples are American apples and you better leave them." One of the soldiers muttered an apology, and back they climbed over the wall.

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