

SUMMARY

This thesis outlines the artistic work of the German extended Süssner family, which originated from Northwest Bohemia. In the work we find (as many as) eight members of the Süssner family, as many as five of whom were artistically active. The most significant figures within this family are Jeremias Süssner (1653-1690), the Brandenburg (Saxon) court sculptor from the West Bohemian town of Ostrov, who was active in Dresden and Berlin, and his brother Conrad Max Süssner (1665-after 1696). These artists worked predominantly within a German environment and their artistic contribution to the Czech scene was a "mere" import (six sculptures for the knights' church of St. Francis /kostel sv. Františka/ in Prague's Old Town in 1689 and 1691), assumed to be from the Dresden studio. The greater part of this thesis is devoted to both brothers, in which the more significant Jeremias Süssner is to a certain extent of regional importance. Unfortunately, due to the fragmented nature of the records, information about these artists is incomplete. Their work reflects both the classicist Flemish school, as well as radical Roman baroque, which was close to the works of Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini or Alessandro Algardi. The work of the Flemish school is connected to the master Johann Heinrich senior, of whom Jeremias Süssner was a pupil. We can link the work of radical Roman baroque with his assumed apprenticeship journey which he underwent in 1670 or shortly afterwards. We know barely anything about the apprenticeship years of Max Süssner, but we can assume that he also studied in studio of Johann Heinrich Böhm senior. Due to the impact of wars the predominant part of the work of these artists was not preserved. Of the preserved works the most important is the order produced by the Süssners at the turn of the 1680s for the Prague knights' church of St. Francis. Within the German environment only a small body of work is preserved (the most important are the statue of Victoria at Jüdenhof in Dresden and the pair of sculptures of Flora and Pomona in Charlottenburg in Berlin). For this reason their activity for the Knights of the Cross is the sole possible starting point for study of the work of the Süssners whatsoever.

The Czech environment is linked primarily with the work around the district of Ostrov nad Ohří (Schlackenwerth), within the region of Česká Lípa. Here we encounter (up to) three German artists named Süssner. We are firmly familiarised with the names of Johann Kaspar Süssner and Matheus Süssner, who share in the artistic works in Ostrov (White courtyard, Princely palace and French gardens), in Teplá monastery (four sculptures on the main access

rotes) and (perhaps also) in Zákupy (Reichstadt). Zákupy is linked to the work of Jeremias Süssner, the architect who was commissioned to produce the decoration for the French garden there (sculptural decoration of thirty two caryatids). Here it is necessary to be careful, because it may concern only a relative of the same name who was working in Northwest Bohemia. Here we have only fragmented information, and thus cannot be fully sure about the existence of this architect. It is not easy to provide an answer to the question of the familial relationship of these artists to the Dresden masters. We can seek a connection primarily in the reported apprenticeship journey of the young artist Jeremias Süssner, who was meant to work here as a "young and inexperienced" artist. The enumeration of the preserved works is a mere fraction of the original quantity, but even from the preserved examples we can form a picture (primarily of the work of the two Dresden brothers) of the importance and quality of the artistic work of the German Süssner family, working in a Central European environment.