

## Abstract

This thesis deals with wall paintings of Italian character in Bučovice Chateau in Moravia, Czech Republic. The unique wall paintings were created on impulse of Moravian aristocrat and owner of the castle – Jan Šembera Černohorský of Boskovice – in the last twenty years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This time represents a golden age of wall painting in the Czech lands; however, it rather reflects Italian Mannerism than the Renaissance. The paintings are situated in five rooms in the ground floor of the castle; they should refer to the level of education, nobility and wealth of the donator, Jan Šembera.

Thanks to a connection of paintings, statues and stuccos the decoration of all five rooms created a unique complex. This demonstrates Šembera's ambitions – he wanted to own a richly decorated representative castle. Jacopo Strada, once an imperial Antiquarian, stayed in the Bučovice Chateau; the stay might have been connected with his mercantile activity. He probably enabled Šembera to achieve that goal - he could have provided the Šembera's artists with Italian models and created the decoration system of five rooms. Strada made a concept of the room decoration performing various epitomes. The concept of Strada reflected the artworks of Venetian painter Paolo Veronese, the artworks of Giulio Romano and his circle in Mantova, studies of antique sculpture in Rome and the decoration systems of Bavarian aristocrats or emperors seats.

The Imperial room was no exception at aristocratic seats, since the Emperor theme was quite popular in the 16th century. There is a statue depicting "Emperor Charles V defeats the Turk". As a model for it, the sculptor used an engraving "The Liberation of Vienna, 1529" from the series "The Triumphs of Charles V" by Maarten van Heemskerck. The composition and details of the figures are identical. The concept of this room was based on the celebration of aristocratic virtues: bravery, wisdom and loyalty.

Following Imperial room, the visitor enters the Venus room. Its ceiling is covered with five scenes. The central field depicts Venus preventing Adonis from leaving. This scene copies the painting of the same theme by Paolo Veronese (now in Augsburg). For the remaining four ceiling paintings served as models the chiaroscuro drawings of allegories by Paolo Veronese. They strictly copy them. The drawing "The Triumph of Virtue over Vice" by Paolo Veronese from Louvre was used for depiction of another field with Virtue. All paintings are true copies of his drawings; they were only turned into color. As models for Bučovice paintings

"Allegory of Power" and "Allegory of Force" were used another Veronese's chiaroscuro drawing – "Beauty of Empire" (Stockholm) and the drawing attributed to Veronese's "Minerva" (Louvre). As well as in the Bučovice castle the wall paintings from villas in Veneto prove that these chiaroscuro drawings inspired painters in different places. But in Bučovice there was probably no Italian painter from the workshop of Veronese. Therefore we have to ask who gave the drawings to painters of Bučovice. The link between the collecting activity of Jacopo Strada and these wall paintings is quite obvious. He was in contact with Paolo Veronese and he may have obtained the drawings directly from Veronese or may have had them copied and mediate them to painters of Šembera.

Third room in Castle Bučovice is the Hares' room. Thematically it is connected with passion for hunting. Šembera was known to be a great hunter and lover of horses. The Hares' room represents a meeting point of three ideas: the joy at hunting, the joy of exchanging roles of people and hares, and, finally, the admiration of the so called Hare house in Kärtnerstrasse in Vienna. An interesting detail is a vertical oval field showing a hare that is painting a portrait of an aristocrat. Although we do not know any Šembera's portrait, we cannot exclude the possibility that it is a Šembera's portrait. This theory might be supported by the coat of arms of Šembera father's wife, which is depicted in the second oval field.

Next room, the Birds' room, can be entered from the entrance hall. There are four terracotta statues; two of them are illusively painted and the other two are three-dimensional sculptural works representing "Zeus" and "Leda with the swan". The room ceiling presents allegory of love – it shows an Amor with a bow and arrows in the centre of a pergola. There are also grotesques, still popular in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, painted on the abstract white background. Unfortunately, they are badly preserved and thus are hardly to be recognized.

From the Bird room, one can continue into the Room of five senses. As suggested by its name, the ceiling contains five fields depicting all five senses. These scenes copy engravings by Rafael I Sadeler, who was inspired by drawings of Maarten de Vos. Next scenes, executed in chiaroscuro technique, are "The Rape of the Sabine Women" and "Mucius Scaevola before Porsenna". They imitate a decoration of the Palazzo Ricci in Rome, which was accomplished by Polidoro da Caravaggio and Maturino da Firenze in the first third of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The facade of the palace was extensively copied and drawn by artists; therefore, it cannot be determined as a direct model for Bučovice. "The Rape of the Sabine Women" may have been inspired by an engraving by Cherubino Alberti from 1570, since the scene in Bučovice ends

exactly on a place, where two persons are shaded. The model for "Mucius Scaevola before Porsenna" is more difficult to find, since two scenes were combined. Probably, the model drawing derived from the copies recording the facade which were put together. Jacopo Strada is known to have palace facades recorded, maybe also had copies of the Palazzo Ricci decoration, and therefore he may have provided Jan Šembera with some of those.

The decoration of the Bučovice castle can be understood as a proof of Šembera's priorities, since he spent all his funds to build and decorate the castle in the spectacular manner.