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Structures and transformations of aristocratic self-presentation in northwestern Bohemia in the Pre- and Post-White Mountain period. The example of newly arrived upper nobility¹

Abstract: *Structures and transformations of aristocratic self-presentation in northwestern Bohemia in the Pre- and Post-White Mountain period. The example of newly arrived upper nobility.*

Autorzy w swoim artykule odnoszą się do przemian obrazu arystokracji z północno-zachodnich Czech w dobie przed bitwą pod Białą Górą (1620) i po bitwie.

Keywords: nobility; Bohemian; transformation of social conditions; Thirty Year's War

Słowa kluczowe: szlachta; Czechy; zmiana warunków społecznych; wojna trzydziestoletnia

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The transformation of social conditions at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries in Bohemia has become a topic reflected not only by Czech historians². Based mainly on archival research, the presented contribution will introduce the readers to the settlement and establishment of the so-called new nobility in selected regions of Bohemia and Moravia during and after the Thirty Years' War. This study highlights some aspects through which individuals representing the Bohemian and Moravian nobility of the modern age defined and identified themselves. The emphasis is placed mainly on newly arrived individuals who had to establish themselves in northwestern Bohemia. The authors mainly follow the processes and forms which enabled the *new* noblemen to become *Bohemian* aristocrats. This is not a complete list of all individual obligations, nor is it a description of symbolic actions in the form of oaths and the like. This study aims to investigate and approach the process of the transformation of the early modern nobility in north-western Bohemia in the form of a pilot study. The main reflected aspects include 1) social, as a result of which an individual becomes a real landowner; 2) cultural, influencing the environment with a person's arrival; 3) identification, with which the individual presents and represents his/her family³.

„Identity of a Nobleman in the Early Modern Period (16th–18th centuries). Structures and Changes of Aristocratic Self-presentation in north-western Bohemia”.

² The work of Josef Polišenský and his team can be considered a call for new research into Central European society and beyond, specifically, J. Polišenský, *Der Krieg und die Gesellschaft in Europa 1618–1648* (= Documenta Bohemica bellum tricennale illustrantia, Tomus I), Praha 1971. The shaping of early modern society based on the consequences of the Thirty Years' War is, however, a more general theme reflected in contemporary foreign literature as well: E. Olzacka, *Wojna a kultura. Nowożytna rewolucja militarna w Europie Zachodniej i Rosji*, Kraków 2016; S. Haude, *Coping with life during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648)* (= Studies in Central European Histories, vol. 69), Leiden–Boston 2021. The Kingdom of Sweden, for example, underwent a fundamental transformation at that time, where the share of the nobility in governing the state increased significantly during the reign of Queen Kristina. Cf. S.A. Nilsson, *The Era of the Great Wars. Sweden as a Military State and its Agrarian Society* (= Studia Historica Upsaliensia 161), Uppsala 1990, specifically 273 et seq. Current Czech literature is presented below in the notes section.

³ Czech historiography has been researching this issue for a long time; especially for the Pre-White Mountain period in the area of southern Bohemia, it has recorded significant progress. Specifically: V. Bůžek, *Frühneuzeitliche Adelsgeschichte in der tschechischen Geschichtsschreibung*, [in:] *Adel in Südwestdeutschland und Böhmen 1450–1850*, Stuttgart 2013, pp. 261–288; idem, *Nižší šlechta v politickém systému a kultuře předbělohorských Čech*, Praha 1996. A comprehensive overview has been recently provided by M.Š. Koldinská, *Raně novověká*

The environment of northwestern Bohemia was, and to some extent still is, a specific region in many respects. This part of the Bohemian Crown, delimited by the Ore Mountains and further by the Ohře and Labe rivers, was located within the borders of two historical regions, Litoměřice and Žatec, with the property holdings of the studied families centred in the first of the two above-named regions. In the context of the nobility in the late Middle Ages and Early Modern Times, this statement becomes all the more valid. Unlike in other regions, northwestern Bohemia has a fairly numerous representation of royal cities, a dense network of which did not allow the nobility, especially the upper nobility, to create larger estates as it was the case in southern Bohemia or Moravia. The landed property in the region was thus rather fragmented and split up between lower nobility and the royal cities, especially rich burghers who took advantage of the circumstances at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries and, thanks to royal nobility, entered the ranks of lower nobility⁴. In connection with the principle of the estates newly asserting themselves in society, it is imperative to mention the importance of the Hussite period, when ideas about the function of the highly developed medieval state collapsed. The supreme position of the monarch was undermined, chaos reigned in the country for some time while cities were gaining self-confidence and sovereignty. The subsequent development in the second half of the 15th century was marked by several social upheavals that could be described as crises. Whether it was several dual governments or the absence of the monarch that disrupted the stability of the monarch's power, the temporary division of the lands of the Bohemian Crown, created a religious conflict and social-power disputes regarding the codification of municipal law⁵.

šlechta, [in:] M.Š. Koldinská, I. Cerman et al., *Základní problémy studia raného novověku*, Praha 2013, pp. 145–194. For the Post-White Mountain period until the end of the 17th century, Czech historiography is only just discovering the possibilities of research, not only of the newly arrived nobility. In this respect the following publications are essential: V. Prchal, *Společenstvo hrdinů. Válka a reprezentační strategie českomoravské aristokracie 1550–1750*, Praha 2015; J. Hrbek, *Barokní Valdštejnové v Čechách. 1640–1740*, Praha 2013, etc. It is only a selection of literature, which contains itself detailed historiographical overviews. An in-depth analysis thereof is beyond the scope of this study.

⁴ M. Neudertová, *Život předbělohorské šlechty na Lounsku z pohledu pramenů městské provenience*, *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Philosophia et Historica* 1 (1992), p. 65; M. Hrubá, *Možnosti výzkumu měšťanských elit v prostředí královských měst severozápadních Čech*, [in:] *Pražské měšťské elity středověku a raného novověku – jejich proměny zázemí a kulturní profil*, ed. O. Fejtová, J. Pešek, V. Ledvinka, Praha 2004, p. 193.

⁵ J. Válka, *Stavovství a krize českého státu ve druhé polovině 15. století*, *Folia Historica Bohemica* 6, Praha 1984, pp. 67–77; F. Šmahel, *Nástin proměn stavovské skladby českého*

In the mentioned period, the process of formally defining and concluding the estate of the nobility and that of the knighthood was also at play. Upper nobility at first distinguished themselves against the lower nobles. However, later in an attempt to codify the municipal law, the two noble estates of the realm had to join forces to face the urban estate and its quest for an equal share in the governance of the land. In the context of the lands of the Bohemian Crown, the term “noble” expresses, specifically, a sum of extraordinary and inherited characteristics that brought its bearer a superior position and exclusivity in society. The main factor distinguishing nobility from the rest of the population was power, property and, above all, noble descent. It was the ability to produce proof and heredity of ancient descent that was the main feature of nobility, although, in itself, it was not always a guarantee of that extraordinary status⁶.

Property played an important role in the case of nobility together with the possibility of representing the family to . The constant maintenance and cultivation of the legacy of ancestral antiquity through a certain lifestyle and a system of specific symbols was imperative for the preservation of values associated with nobility and the noble descent as such, and the legitimization of the privileged position in society. Nobility’s representation and lifestyle was purposeful and period-specific symbolic communication. Without it, neither nobility nor wealth or power could have created that exclusivity⁷. The transformation of society in the first half of the 17th century laid the foundations for the development of the lands in the Czech Crown for approximately two hundred years. One of the indicators of the change in conditions in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, was *the arrival of the so-called new nobility*. Military service was a specific route to social promotion in the early mod-

království od konce 14. do počátku 16. století, [in:] *Vladislavské zřízení zemské a počátky ústavního zřízení v českých zemích (1500–1619)*, edd. K. Malý, J. Pánek, Praha 2001, p. 78; J. Pánek, *Český stát a stavovská společnost na prahu novověku ve světle zemských zřízení*, [in:] *Vladislavské zřízení zemské a počátky ústavního zřízení v českých zemích (1500–1619)*, edd. K. Malý, J. Pánek, Praha 2001, p. 14.

⁶ On the collective designation of a group of the noble and powerful as nobility and the origin of the word: J. Mezník, *Česká a moravská šlechta ve 14. a 15. století*, *Sborník historický* 37 (1990), pp. 7–36; J. Macek, *Česká středověká šlechta*, Praha 1997, pp. 9–14; V. Bůžek et al., *Věk urozených. Šlechta v českých zemích na prahu novověku*, Praha–Litomyšl 2002, p. 41.

⁷ On the representation of the nobility lifestyle, for instance P. Maťa, *Svět české aristokracie (1500–1700)*, Praha 2004, pp. 108–229; N. Maslowski, B. Šalanda ed., *Jak studovat aktéra a sociální změnu z perspektivy historické sociologie*, Praha 2017, pp. 79–80.

ern period in Bohemia. The Renewed Land Ordinance (1627 in Bohemia, 1628 in Moravia) was the legal norm determining the form and conditions of acceptance of applicants for nobility in the lands of the Czech Crown⁸. After its release and acceptance, promotion between estates of the realm took place through direct intercession with the emperor, for whom promoting an individual to the nobility estate was part of the country's internal politics. As Václav Bůžek, a leading expert on the Pre-White Mountain period, stated, the antiquity „of the noble family was replaced by the merits of the individual, and above all by his loyalty to the ruling dynasty”⁹. Within a few years, the newly arrived nobility became the predominant landowners, and only approximately 20 families owned more than half of the subjects and land in Bohemia. Without an agenda, this new element of society kept away from the local traditions of provincial patriotism and focused more on the interests of the Habsburg monarchy¹⁰.

According to the principles of the Renewed Land Ordinance, several important imperial generals and colonels settled down in Bohemia. Without a doubt, this was a milestone in their career once they had consolidated their position in the army and had begun to accumulate their land holdings. Specifically, in northwestern Bohemia, this was done at the expense of the lower and upper nobility. In the Ore Mountains area, Protestantism played a privileged and even a prevailing role in the religious beliefs of the Pre-White Mountain aristocracy. According to the Post-White Mountain confiscation protocols, approximately 90% of the local nobility took part in the uprising (e.g., in the Žatec region, there were 116 representatives of this social group), and a large part of them left the country for religious reasons after the uprising was suppressed¹¹. This phenomenon manifested itself locally in the first half of the 16th century, during the spread of Martin Luther's ideas from Saxony, penetrating Bohemia through mutual trade along the Elbe, and the settlement of the Saxon nobility along this river. Thus the families of von Sallhausen and von Büнау significantly

⁸ *Obnovené právo a Zřízení zemské dědičného království Českého*, ed. Hermenegild Jireček, Praha 1888 (Further referred to as the „OZZ”).

⁹ V. Bůžek, F. Koreš, P. Mareš, M. Žitný, *Rytíři renesančních Čech ve válkách*, Praha 2016, pp. 18–19.

¹⁰ J. Pánek, *Czechy a Polska na progu czasów nowożytnych*, Toruń 2014, pp. 236.

¹¹ P. Marková, *Šlechta Žateckého kraje v letech 1615–1655*, a diploma thesis submitted at the Faculty of Arts of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, Ústí nad Labem 1992. Among other contributors there is, in particular, L. Bobková, *Cizí šlechta v severních Čechách do poloviny 17. století*, [in:] L. Bobková, *Život na šlechtickém sídle v 16.–18. století*, *Studia historica* 1 (1992), pp. 99–113.

stimulated the inclination of the local society towards the Reformation. The inhabitants of northwestern Bohemia found an easy way to the new confession because there had been a strong base of Utraquists maintaining the tradition of John Huss' ideas since the Hussite Wars¹². As a result of the publication of the Renewed Land Ordinance, which established, among other things, that the only tolerated religion was Catholicism, the local estates were released to the emigrating Protestant nobility. They were partially taken over by the existing Catholic or newly arrived foreign aristocrats.

Aristocratic identity was transformed during the 16th to 18th centuries as a result of necessary reactions to several processes and developments. However, these processes were very slow; continuity and stability were the pillars of aristocratic identity. The changes were related to the transformation of the religious and political situation, with foreign influences accepted by the noblemen, mainly related to architecture, fashion, as well as technical and economic innovations¹³. In the first place, however, noble property and a noble residence (a manor) inherited from noble ancestors still played a major role, along with a different lifestyle, conduct, education and upbringing, holiday rituals and, last but not least, the ability to create and preserve ancestral memory¹⁴. The mansion – the most visible manifestation of the lavish representation – also rekindled family memory, as it remained in the possession of the family for several generations. Of course, aristocratic residences had also other functions, mainly connected with the running of large estates – administrative and economic, while the defensive function disappeared after the Thirty Years' War. In the aristocratic Baroque mentality, the family residence remained a proof of longevity and family memory. Karl Eusebius von Lichtenstein commented on it in the following way:

a visible and living sign and monument because they bear the coat of arms and the name of the builder, they announce to everyone that so many hundreds of years ago there was a noble and powerful person in that family, who by his high

¹² Possible free confession not only of Catholicism, but also of Utraquism was introduced with the Treaty of Kutná Hora of 1485. Cf. F. Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce, díl 4: Epilog bouřlivého věku*, Praha 1996. The last contribution to religious realia of northwestern Bohemia in the 16th century comes from a team of authors, *Sola fide – Pouhou vírou. Luterská šlechta na Ústecku a Děčínsku a její kulturní dědictví*, Ústí nad Labem – Dolní Břežany, 2019.

¹³ V. Bůžek et al., *Společnost českých zemí v raném novověku. Struktury, identity, konflikty*, Praha 2010, p. 296.

¹⁴ V. Bůžek, *Společnost*, p. 224.

and deep intellect and through great power and wealth conceived, established, and caused to be built such noble work and structure¹⁵.

The cultural boom of the early modern noblemen coincided with the economic prosperity of their large, landed property¹⁶. In the early 17th century, noblemen became increasingly active agents in their economic affairs. As opposed to previous times, when they emphasized the necessity of securing themselves through the collection of permanent financial annuities from their subjects, they gradually began to develop a taste for a modern way of farming, which put into practice a system of long-term leases and an interest in the internal market. Thanks to this active approach, they could regularly increase profits from individual production branches and thus maximize benefits. In the long term, this approach became a stimulus for future economic prosperity and further modernization in agriculture¹⁷.

Careers of new families: the example of the Aldringens and the Thun-Hohensteins

As already outlined in the previous section, from the end of the Middle Ages (after the Hussite Wars) to the Thirty Years' War, land in northwestern Bohemia was fragmented into smaller units under the ownership of larger or smaller families. It was only after the massive confiscation of the property of the Protestant nobility that the individual islands were consolidated into larger units, which later became fideicommissum estates as the main ancestral livelihood. As part of the presented study, two model examples of the newly established nobility have been chosen which succeeded in the whirlwind of the Thirty Years' War and founded a long-lasting dynasty in Bohemia.

The older family that replaced the von Bünaus in Děčín and the surrounding area following the first wave of confiscations after the defeat of the Bohemian estates uprising, were the Thun-Hohensteins¹⁸. From 1628, Christoph Simon Thun-Ho-

¹⁵ K.E. von Liechtenstein, *Werk von der Architektur*, written around the year 1675. This theoretical work was published in: V. Fleischer, *Karl Eusebius von Liechtenstein als Bauherr und Kunstsammler*, Wien–Leipzig 1910.

¹⁶ More on the subject in: J. Válka, *Hospodářská politika feudálního velkostatku na předbělohorské Moravě*, Praha 1962.

¹⁷ M. Vařeka, *Režijní velkostatek na předbělohorské Moravě*, Prostějov 2018, pp. 98–99; J. Topolski, *The Manorial Economy in Early-Modern East-Central Europe: Origins, Development and consequences*, Aldershot 1994, pp. 341–352.

¹⁸ At the time of their arrival in Bohemia, they were still using the form von Thun.

henstein focused mainly purchasing property in northwestern Bohemia. The origin of this family apparently goes back to the 11th century when it was already a widely branched family with a land base in Tyrol. In contrast, the noble Aldringen family was only coming to existence, as its founder Johann von Aldringen had to earn the status through military service under the leadership of Albrecht Wenzel von Wallenstein¹⁹. It was after his death that he symbolically acquired the Teplice estate, former property of Wilhelm Kinsky von Wchynitz. Christoph Simon also served this warlord, bringing the two individuals' paths together.

Using the model example of the Thun-Hohenstein family, the authors' intention is to bring the reader closer to the cultural and social ties of the newly arrived aristocracy in their building up of the image within northwestern Bohemia. Building construction associated with today's important architectural works and also with the establishment of cultural and educational institutions, became a symbol of the family residing at Děčín Castle. The Aldringens, on the other hand, can be presented as an example of the newly settled nobility promoted thanks to its representative's successful military service.

During and immediately after the Thirty Years' War, military service offered the most common chance for promotion. As it has been proved, for instance, by Ivana Austová, in several cases, social advancement followed also loyalty during a siege of a city or even bureaucratic service²⁰. Individual waves of the arrival of foreign nobility can even be traced, as Jiří Brňovják, a leading expert on early modern nobility, by referring to Irish families²¹. Czech historiography is only just discovering the settling down of the so-called military nobility in the Bohemian Crown territory. At the same time, research on the so-called military aristocracy can lead to a better understanding of the transformation processes of Bohemian early modern society.

A case in point is Johann von Aldringen, born in 1588 in Luxembourg²². He came from a large family of humble birth; his parents Leonard and Margaret had many

¹⁹ His full name was Albrecht Wenzel Eusebius von Wallenstein. The authors have chosen to use the German way of writing names because that is how the actors signed.

²⁰ I. Austová, *Býti šlechticem. Šlechtické nobilitace v letech 1627–1657 v českých a rakouských dědičných zemích*, České Budějovice 2016.

²¹ J. Brňovják, *The Integration of Irish Aristocratic Émigré Families in the Czech Lands, c. 1650–1945*, [in:] *Ireland and the Czech Lands. 1 Contacts and Comparisons in History and Culture*, ed. by G. Power, O. Pilný Oxford 2014, p. 55–83.

²² The most extensive biography of Johann von Aldringen was written by H. Hallwich, *Johann Aldringen. Ein Bruchstück aus seinem Leben als Beitrag zur Geschichte Wallenstein*, Leipzig 1885.

children: in addition to Johann, also daughters Susanne, Barbara, Anna and Catharina, and sons Paul and Johann Marcus²³. The later imperial general received good education in his youth. As his biographer noted, Aldringen was a young Catholic from a Spanish province, he studied in Italy and Paris, where he learned excellent French. After completing his studies, he briefly worked as a typist, making use of all his education and experience. The turning point in a promising career in civil administration came sometime around 1606 when he was approximately 17.

The elevation of Aldringen to the status of the lord (*Reichs alten freyherrn Standt*) in 1628, by virtue of an imperial decree, gives some insight into his career progress. At that time, he was already colonel in charge of two infantry regiments in Albrecht von Wallenstein's army. He also held the position of *general muster und quartier comissar*²⁴. The path to this social position began in the first decade of the 17th century. The first traceable mention of his function in the army comes from 1612 when Aldringen was released from a rifle regiment in Trident with a recommendation. Colonel Hans Gaudenz von Madruz released him with the rank of *hauptman*, a lower officer position²⁵. Perhaps also based on this recommendation, Don Inicus Velet de Guevara accepted him into his service and, in late 1620 (December 29, to be exact) made him *governor of the company*. He justified his decision in the appointing decree *by his faith in the qualities and authority used by Johann von Aldringen*²⁶. Aldringen did not experience actual social and official advancement before he was in the service of Albrecht von Wallenstein, Duke of Frydlant, for whom he became one of the most important men. In proportion to this, the monthly earnings associated with the performance of various functions also started to rise. Thus, for example, the promotion to the position of colonel field armourer (*Obrist Feldzeugmeister*) in 1631 was associated with a monthly salary of 1,400 florins, paid from December 15 of that year²⁷.

At that time, he was already at the top of the military hierarchy. He represented Wallenstein together with another influential general, Matthias von Gallas²⁸. In addition to the two being commanders-in-chief, they were linked by a bond of kinship. During

²³ Ibidem, p. 6. The name Johann was apparently popular in the family, as the first recorded bearer, Johann Aldringen the elder, was the grandfather of the later general.

²⁴ ÖESTA, AVA FHKa Familie-akten, sign. A-60 Aldringen, fol. 40.

²⁵ Litoměřice State Regional Archives, Děčín-Podmokly Branch, Teplice Clary-Aldringen Archives (further referred to as Aldringen Archives), inv. no. 92.

²⁶ Aldringen Archives, inv. no. 95.

²⁷ Aldringen Archives, inv. no. 61–62.

²⁸ In full title the Count Mathias von Galla zum Schloss Campo. To this topic, in particular R. Rebitsch, *Matyáš Gallas (1588–1647). Císařský generál a Valdštejnův dědic*, Praha 2013.

a mission to north Italian Mantua, where the last representative of the ruling Gonzaga family died in the late 1720s, he acted as commander of the expeditionary imperial army²⁹. At the turn of 1629 and 1630, there he married Livia d'Arco, the daughter of Count Sigismund and Margareta von Trapp³⁰. The interest in the region of northern and central Italy completely resonated with the family policy of the Habsburgs. In 1626, the brother of Emperor Ferdinand II, bishop of Passau, Leopold V, married Claudia di Medici, a widow, thereby establishing further family relations with the old families there. Aldringen also played his role in this process because it was to him that Claudia di Medici pledged the estate with castles and châteaux in Kaldiff and Enn³¹. In a document from 1633, Claudia stated that it was a pledge of an estate worth 100 thousand florins and obliged the new owner to *observe the freedoms, old rights and obligations and good customs*³². In the same year, he also became the owner of a house in Augsburg³³.

Although Aldringen devoted a significant part of his life to the service of Albrecht Wenzel von Wallenstein, for whom he performed many a task in the military, and served him in property and ownership matters³⁴, he became one of the conspirators against the Duke of Frýdlant at the turn of 1633 and 1634. The Cheb murder had far-reaching consequences not only in the command of the imperial army; it significantly impacted the events in northwestern Bohemia. The confiscated estates of Wilhelm Kinsky von Wchinitz were handed over to Johann von Aldringen, after the so-called Vienna Conference in the spring of 1634. However, this was not the first time he had dealt with land ownership in the area. As early as the beginning of the 1630s, he carried on correspondence with Colonel Alexander Regniers von Bleyleben, the owner of estates near Ústí nad Labem. In 1631, he even issued a reverse recorded in the land register about Bleyleben's possession of several villages³⁵. The

²⁹ More on the so-called War of the Mantuan Succession: *The Mantuan Succession 1627–1631: A Sovereignty Dispute in Early Modern Europe*, *The English Historical Review* 112 (1997), Issue 445, pp. 20–65.

³⁰ ÖESTA, AVA FHKA Familie-akten, sign. A-60 Aldringen, fol. 21–24; *Ibidem*, fol. 40; R. Rebitsch, *Matyáš Gallas*, p. 215.

³¹ At present the autonomous province of Bolzen – Südtirol, approximately midway between the cities of Bolzano and Trento.

³² Aldringen Archives, car. 43, inv. no. 105.

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ R. Rebitsch, *Valdštejn. Životopis mocnáře*, České Budějovice 2014, pp. 128–131.

³⁵ Aldringen Archives, car. 43, inv. no. 105. They also corresponded in French about, among other things, the developments in Teplice. Cf. J. Kilián, *Plukovník, rebel a zbožná vdova. Bleylebenové v Čechách v 17. století*, Praha 2020, pp. 42–43. The correspondence is stored in the fund cited above.

Czech environment, however, continued to be foreign to the native of Luxembourg, who looked for affinity in Italy, with the Medici family. In 1633, it even looked like he would own other estates in Bavaria, as Elector Maximilian I promised him an unspecified estate (*Graffenschaf*, a county) as a deceased person's fief³⁶.

We can conclude that there were attempts to monopolize production and sales there, as well as on other estates in the Pre-White Mountain period, which led to the creation of the Dominican market³⁷. In contrast, the Aldringen family came to Podkrušnohoří (located at the foot of the Ore Mountains) under apparently much more favourable conditions. Their predecessor, Wilhelm Kinsky von Wchinitz, had experience with managing a large estate in the vicinity of the spa town of Teplice³⁸. However, before he could symbolically take over his domain in the lands of the Bohemian Crown, Johann von Aldringen passed away. He fell during the siege of Landshut in the spring of 1634. The report of his death was given by his secretary Hans Georg von Stieffenberger³⁹. Thus, Johann could not intervene in any way with the restoration of Teplice, extensively damaged by the imperial army in early 1634 after the assassination of Wilhelm Kinski von Wchinitz in Cheb⁴⁰. Nevertheless, a systematic process of taking over the land began, as evidenced by the carefully compiled inventory of the castle⁴¹, Or, a year later, Emperor Ferdinand II's donation received by his follower Paul von Aldringen which confirmed the family's possession⁴².

Paul von Aldringen was the brother of the Johann who chose the ecclesiastical path. Around 1620, he worked at a Jesuit college in today's Molshaim, France, where he became a Doctor of Theology. In his career as a church dignitary, he was signifi-

³⁶ Aldringen Archives, car. 43, inv. no. 105, number 25.

³⁷ According to V. Ledvinka, this was the most common way of distributing products. Cf. V. Ledvinka, *Rozmach feudálních i o velkostatku, jeho strukturální proměny a role v ekonomice českých zemí v předbělohorském období*, [in:] *Documenta Pragensia Supplementa VII*, K. Jíšová (ed.), Praha–Ústí nad Labem–Dolní Břežany 2016, p. 142.

³⁸ On the subject, specifically M. Hrubá, *Prominentní emigrant Vilém Vchynský (Kinský) a jeho majetek v severozápadních Čechách*, [in:] *Víra nebo vlast? Exil v českých dějinách raného novověku*, Ústí nad Labem 2001, pp. 210–221.

³⁹ Aldringen Archives, inv. no. 112, car. 44., inv. no. 112, car. 44. Interestingly, at that time Aldringen worked alongside other important men of the Bavarian army.

⁴⁰ More on the subject in Lukáš Sláma, *Doubravská hora a teplické panství v kritickém roce 1634*, *Ústecký sborník historický* 2016, 2, pp. 51–65.

⁴¹ NA Praha (further referred to as NA Praha), Old handling, sign. C 215 K 18–K 19, car. 415.

⁴² Aldringen Archives, inv. no. 113, car. 45.

cantly supported by Archduke Leopold I Wilhelm, who made him titular bishop of Tripoli and imperial supreme chaplain⁴³. According to all indications, even this owner did not make major changes to his ancestral estates in Bohemia, either during the Thirty Years' War or immediately after it. Later members of the Clary-Aldringen family made more significant interventions in the estate, with Franz Karl Clary-Aldringen in the lead who, at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, expanded the economic potential of the family property, especially by purchasing the mining town of Krupka. For the purpose of diplomatic negotiations, especially for representatives of the Saxon Electoral Court, the main ancestral seat of Teplice was transformed into baroque scenery of hunting areas and small secular and sacral /religious buildings, illustrating the uniqueness of the inherited property⁴⁴.

However, it was far from being the rule of the time that a newly settled owner from the military nobility ensured favourable conditions for his successors. One of the well-known examples is Johann de La Croon, who, like Aldringen, came from today's Luxembourg and Belgium⁴⁵. After a brilliant career topped by serving in the Court War Council, and the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, during which he acquired Zahořany estate near Litoměřice, he died without a male descendant who would continue the creation of family identity.

Nevertheless, the nobility (representatives of the imperial generals) newly arrived during and after the end of the Thirty Years' War made an effort to secure the acquired property and restore the large estates. Their subsequent transfer to further generations, in some cases already born in the Bohemian Crown, became an elementary subject, for example, of a last will⁴⁶. A case in point is Walter Leslie's will from 1663, drawn up just before he left for a diplomatic mission in the Ottoman Empire⁴⁷. In his will, he obliged his nephew Jacob von Leslie to take over the estate of Nové

⁴³ Arno Duch, *Aldringen, Johann von*, [w:] *Neue Deutsche Biographie* [online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz19343.html> [cit. 2022.04.28].

⁴⁴ More on the subject in J. Kilián et. al., *Teplice*, Praha 2015.

⁴⁵ More about Johann de La Croon, specifically J. Pátek et al., *Zahořany. Cesta časem a prostorem*, Ústí nad Labem 2020.

⁴⁶ More on the subject in R. Šimůnek, *Český šlechtický testament pozdního středověku – reálné badatelské téma? (Prologomena k výzkumnému záměru)*, [in:] *Pozdně středověké testamenty v českých městech: prameny, metodologie a formy využití*, Praha 2006, pp. 95–115.

⁴⁷ State Regional Archives in Zámorsk, The Leslies Regional Archives, Nové město nad Metují, inv. no. 88, car. 3. This was his second testament. The first date is 1647 and it was written the day before his wedding to Anna Francesca von Dietrichstein. Cf. *ibidem*, inv. no. 84, car. 3.

Město nad Metují and manage it in the form of a fideikomis: a real estate investment trust⁴⁸. Similarly, another important imperial colonel of Irish origin, Walter Richard Buttler, who, as a reward for his help in assassinating Albrecht von Wallenstein, acquired the estates of Doksy (in German Hirschberg), Berštejn (Berstein) and Deštnou (Törschen) in northern Bohemia⁴⁹.

The Clary-Aldringen family also made an effort though only in the subsequent generations. In addition to Franz Karl, in the 17th century Johann Georg Clary-Aldringen considered the creation of a family seat in Teplice one of the most important missions in life. This is evidenced, for example, by the contract with architect Giovanni Domenico Orsi for the construction of an ancestral chapel in Bohosudov (Mariashein) pilgrimage route⁵⁰ or the construction of a tomb in the Franciscan Church of Our Lady of the Snows in Prague on the Lesser Town Square in 1676⁵¹. We can therefore assume that the first generation of the so-called new nobility, settled in the lands of the Bohemian Crown, emphasized the continuity of their possessions. At the same time, it laid the foundation for the creation of the family's identity, subsequently reflected in self-presentation⁵².

One of the families that managed to build their identity, imprinted on their domains in northwestern Bohemia, were the Thun-Hohensteins, originating from South Tyrol⁵³. In the early 16th century, the family split into three lines: Castel Thun, Castel Caldes and Calstel Brughier⁵⁴. The arrival of the Thuns in Bohemia is associated with Christoph Simon von Thun (1582–1635), grandson of the founder of the Castel Brughier family line⁵⁵. Christoph Simon was the highest court master

⁴⁸ State Regional Archives in Zámorsk, The Leslie Family Regional Archives, Nové město nad Metují, inv. no. 88, car. 3, fol. 2.

⁴⁹ NA Praha, Old handling, inv. no. 212, sign. B 30/1, car. 122, The Butlers.

⁵⁰ Aldringen Archives, inv. no. 145, car. 61.

⁵¹ Aldringen Archives, inv. no. 146, car. 61.

⁵² More on the subject, specifically J. Hrbek, *Proměny valdštejské reprezentace. Symbolické sítě valdštejského rodu v 17. a 18. století*, Praha 2015.

⁵³ In addition to lands in the Thun region, Castel Visone and Castel Brughier in the Non Valley, they acquired the estate of Königsberg in the Adige Valley, the estate of Castel Caldes in the Val di Sole and Castelfondo in the Non Valley. *Thun-Hohenstein family archives, Klášterec nad Ohří, 1459–1816, Provisional inventory list*, Děčín 2002.

⁵⁴ F. Stellner, J. Županič, M. Fiala, *Encyklopedie knížecích rodů zemí Koruny české*, Praha 2001, p. 257.

⁵⁵ Czech historiography still misses a work describing the older history of the Thun family and the arrival of one of their branches from South Tyrol to Bohemia. An essential and practically the only work summarizing the history of the Thun family is A.A. Le-

of Ferdinand II And, during the Thirty Years' War, he fought in the imperial army against the Protestants. Following the Post-White Mountain confiscations, he multiplied his property and eventually sided with the biggest landowners of the time: the Wallensteins, the Černíns and the Martinices. The purchased estates formed the basis for family property in future years, as illustrated by the most important ones: Klášterec nad Ohří, Felixburk, Choltice and Svojšice, Děčín and Jílové. For its services to the monarch, the family was elevated to the status of imperial counts in 1629. A year earlier, Emperor Ferdinand II pledged Christoph Simon the county of Hohenstein, thus the Thuns topped their name with "of Hohenstein" although they never actually held the county during the war, and it fell to Brandenburg after the Peace of Westphalia. Christoph Simon died as a celibate Knight of Malta without descendants. He designated his brother Johann Cipriano as heir to his possessions in Bohemia⁵⁶, and Johann Cipriano designated his son Johann Sigmund as his heir⁵⁷.

Johann Sigmund (1594–1646) became lord in Děčín, Klášterec, Choltice, Castelfond, and Sarnthal. He held the office of chamberlain to the Privy Council, he became a governor in Bohemia⁵⁸. During his lifetime, he entered into three marriages, from which several exceptional figures of the family emerged and lived to adulthood: Guidobald, Wencel, Michael Oswald, Maximilian, Franz Sigmund, Romedius, Johann Ernst and Rudolf. This third generation of the Thuns in Bohemia strongly supported the cultural representation of the family. Six brothers from this generation, with their similar artistic and architectural passions, went down in the history of 17th-century art in Central Europe. It was a cultural family interaction taking place between Salzburg, Regensburg, Passau, Klášterec, Děčín, Prague and Choltice⁵⁹. During their lifetime,

gis-Glücklichselig, *Denkwürdigkeiten des Grafrnhauses Thun-Hohenstein. Festgabe zu dem achtzigsten Geburtstage Seiner Excellenz des Hochgebornen Herrn Herrn Franz Grafen von Thun-Hohenstein*, Prag 1866. To the family tree and ancestral ties: Jaroslav Thun und Hohenstein, *Beiträge zu unserer Familien-geschichte*, Tetschen 1925. The following work is essential and basically the only one summarizing the third generation of the Thuns, especially the Church representatives and their artistic commissions: *Erzbischof Guidobald Graf von Thun 1654–1668. Ein Bauherr für die Zukunft*, hg. v. R. Juffinger, Ch. Brandhuber, W. Schlegel, I. Walderdorff, Salzburg 2008.

⁵⁶ C. von Wurzbach, *Thun-Hohenstein, Christoph Simon Reichsgraf*, [in:] *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*. 45. Theil. Kaiserlich-königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, Wien 1882, p. 19 and the subsequent pages.

⁵⁷ The estates in Tyrol were given to the descendants of another brother, Georg Sigmund. C. von Wurzbach, *Thun-Hohenstein*, p. 24 and the subsequent pages.

⁵⁸ C. von Wurzbach, *Thun-Hohenstein*, p. 29 and the subsequent pages.

⁵⁹ Jakub Pátek, *Umělecké objednávky Michaela Osvalda Thuna jako nedílná součást repre-*

conditions stabilized after the Thirty Years' War; the previous period was not very conducive to construction activities. The sources indicate that the estates of the Thun family (Kláštorec nad Ohří and Choltice) were damaged by the passing troops, sometimes repeatedly, and burdened with war retribution⁶⁰. For these reasons, construction projects on the estates belonging to the Thuns started with a delay.

Michael Oswald (1631–1694) was the most famous of all the brothers as a significant patron of the arts; he ranked among the greatest builders in Bohemia after the White Mountain events. His most important projects include the reconstruction of the castle in Kláštorec nad Ohří, the local parish church and the castle garden. The monastery and the adjacent estates were damaged by the passing troops during the Thirty Years' War. The castle became the main country residence of Michael Oswald; it underwent a reconstruction during which, however, a significant part of its original Renaissance form was retained. The authorship of the plans is attributed to Carlo Lurago, the builder was Rossi di Lucca (Domenico Rossi)⁶¹. Both Italian masters took part in most of the construction projects in Kláštorec, apart from the castle. Their other major project is the Church of the Holy Trinity. Lurago was also asked to modify the Palace of Michael Oswald in Prague. The reconstruction of the chateau is connected with the modification of the castle garden, turning the monastery castle into a real Baroque residence. Due to further reconstructions, its appearance has not been preserved to this day. The image of the pair of vistas in the summer castle in Ledec gives an idea of the residence (see below). The integral parts of the garden: the *salla terrena*, summer house, loggia, fountains, ponds, forming a carefully designed complex with a castle, were also located there⁶². Another example of a Baroque garden associated with the Thun family is the Rose Garden in the Thun Castle in Děčín from the 1770s⁶³.

zentace českého aristokrata ve 2. polovině 17. století, Dissertation thesis at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague, Praha 2013, p. 5.

⁶⁰ State Regional Archives in Zámorsk, the Thun family Regional Archives in Choltice, car. 1, inv. no. 9. Schleinitz's letters about the state and events on the Choltice estate in 1630–1635.

⁶¹ J. Pátek, *Umělecké objednávky*, pp. 149–150.

⁶² More on the Baroque style in Bohemia in: Z. Kalista, *České baroko: studie, texty, poznámky*, Praha 1941; M. Horyna, *Architektura baroka v Čechách*, [in:] *Sláva barokní Čechie: stati o umění, kultuře a společnosti 17. a 18. století*, Praha 2001, pp. 78–131.

⁶³ J. Synecký, *Architektura a urbanismus 17. století v Děčíně*, *Děčínské vlastivědné zprávy* 3 (1992), 2, p. 20.

Other construction works took place in Ledec nad Sázavou and Žehušice. Žehušice is in central Bohemia, about 80 km east of Prague a part of this estate was an older fortress and a game enclosure. The reasons for buying this manor are quite clear: organizing social events connected with own hunting grounds was the next step towards consolidating one's social status, representation and establishing social contacts. Michael Oswald had a modern Baroque villa inspired by Italian designs⁶⁴. Michael Oswald purchased Ledec nad Sázavou in 1677; the estate administration was in the Renaissance-style medieval castle standing on a promontory above the river⁶⁵. Here, his name is primarily associated with the construction of a summer house in the former castle garden, with valuable interior decoration in the hall, more precisely twelve „vedute” (pl. of veduta) decorating walls or depicting buildings owned or initiated by Michael Oswald. They represent a unique source for learning about these constructions, as the paintings' countless details depict buildings that often have not survived. We can therefore interpret the vedute paintings from Ledec as an important expression of aristocratic representation, drawing attention to one of the most important elements of aristocratic identity – aristocratic residences.

The modern age saw a gradual transformation of the residence, which moved to the vicinity of cities, but for the politically engaged nobles, the construction of a city palace was also a necessity. The process of urbanization of the Bohemian aristocracy intensified after 1620, which related to new demands on land dignitaries and constitutional changes during the Thirty Years' War when the Czech nobles were more involved in the society of the Habsburg court in Vienna⁶⁶. In the aristocratic mentality, ownership of a palace in a provincial city or Vienna was a prerequisite for court service and, above all, a matter of prestige. The most important noble families had their city palaces built in Prague: the Černín Palace in Hradčany, the Gallas Palace in the Old Town. The Thuns were no exception⁶⁷. In 1689–1691, Michael Oswald had the so-called Tuscan Palace built on Hradčany square. The building was supposed to reinforce the owner's social status among the elite Czech aristocracy. The facade was embellished with rich decorations as designed by both masters, Jan Brokoff and

⁶⁴ J. Beránek, P. Macek, *Raně barokní vila v Žehušicích*, [in:] *Karel Škréta a malířství 17. století v Čechách a v Evropě*, ed. L. Stolárová, Prague 2011, pp. 175–184.

⁶⁵ I. Ebelová, L. Svoboda, *Hradní areál v Ledči nad Sázavou*, *Castellologica Bohemica* 3 (1993), p. 73–94.

⁶⁶ V. Bůžek, *Společnost*, p. 230.

⁶⁷ O. Fejtová, V. Ledvinka, J. Pešek, *Život pražských paláců: šlechtické paláce jako součást městského organismu od středověku na práh moderní doby*, *Documenta Pragensia* 28 (2009), pp. 11–24.

Ottavio Mosto⁶⁸. In addition, Michael Oswald acquired another Prague palace from his brother Guidobald⁶⁹.

The interior decoration with heraldic motifs, wall paintings, sculptures, portrait galleries, etc. was also a reminder of ancestral memory. Here, the emphasis was on tradition, although the building itself conformed to fashionable architectural styles. In the Czech environment, the memory of the family was reflected by a family portrait gallery rather than by a hall of ancestors and a family apotheosis, the latter being an exception (for example, the Wallenstein Hall of Ancestors in Duchcov).

Another important element in the decoration of noble residences were collections of paintings, graphics and books, art galleries and armouries. The construction and collecting activities in future years were undoubtedly greatly influenced by the cavalier's trips, during which the young noblemen studied architecture, saw many monuments from the past and present, and viewed collections of curiosities and important galleries⁷⁰. The the cavalier journeys often sparked off the first signs of collecting activity, the purchases of the first books, paintings, and graphic sheets⁷¹. The motivation for their creation could be gender representation, but also simple joy and pleasure derived from it, a genuine interest in art and science, or intellectual satisfaction⁷². The composition of the collections changed according to the owner's intellectual orientation and the fashion of the time. Severing ties with the collecting tradition of the 16th century took place in the Baroque when (instead of Renaissance „art chambers” focused encyclopaedically, and cabinets of curiosities, collecting diverse things and representing different materials and periods, which have only their exceptionality and uniqueness in common) a more comprehensive collection focused on quality works of visual and sculptural art won recognition⁷³. The collec-

⁶⁸ J. Pátek, *Umělecké objednávky*, p. 207.

⁶⁹ A. Kubíček, *Thunovský palác na Hradčanech*, *Umění* 4 (1956), pp. 66–71; L. Urešová, *Nové poznatky k činnosti stavitele Carla Luraga*, [in:] *Umění věků, věnováno k sedmdesátým narozeninám profesora Dr. Josefa Cibulky*, Praha 1956, pp. 209–213; *Toskánský palác v Praze. Historie a rekonstrukce stavby*, M. Horyna, J (ed.). T. Kotalík, Praha 2004.

⁷⁰ J. Pátek, *Umělecké objednávky*, p. 216. More about cavalier journeys: J. Kubeš, *Národně dospívání urozených. Kavalírské cesty české a rakouské šlechty (1620–1750)*, Pelhřimov 2013.

⁷¹ L. Slaviček, *Sobě, umění, přátelům. Kapitoly z dějin sběratelství v Čechách a na Moravě 1650–1939*, Brno 2007, pp. 15–16.

⁷² L. Slaviček, *Artium liberatum fautori. Thunové mezi mecenátem a sběratelstvím*, [in:] idem, *„Sobě, umění, přátelům”*. Kapitoly z dějin sběratelství v Čechách a na Moravě 1650–1939, Brno 2007, pp. 81–94.

⁷³ L. Slaviček, *Sobě, umění, přátelům*, p. 20.

tions were in the representative rooms of the castles, reflecting the political and religious orientation of the family, flaunted its wealth and merits, and again preserved the family memory and actions of specific family members.

The Thuns in Bohemia had contacts with artists who worked for their brothers' episcopal courts. This enabled them to systematically build up art collections (for example, Archbishop Johann Ernst recommended the painter Rottmayr to his brother Maximilian)⁷⁴. In the case of the Thun family, the picture collections are attributed to Michael Oswald and then his brother Maximilian. However, neither in Klášterec nor in Děčín did a classic family gallery emerge, the sources testify to a very diverse composition of paintings in the genre, which are also distributed throughout the castle, not grouped in spaces prepared for this purpose. In Klášterec, we have documented 93 paintings from 1701, of which 12 are portraits of members of the Thun family. In addition, 16 large portraits of monarchs are recorded⁷⁵. The Děčín castle inventory from 1702 records 300 paintings in representative spaces⁷⁶. At the same time, 104 paintings have been recorded in Žehušice⁷⁷. Until 1720, neither the number of paintings nor the location of the castle underwent major changes. In most cases, however, we do not record more valuable paintings in the inventories (only paintings by Rottmayr were more valuable). Above all, the distribution of the collected works of art testifies to the fact that they were only used for the demanding but simple adornment of the castles, as interior decoration. Therefore, it was not a question of amassing artistic genealogical collections,⁷⁸ as we know them, for example, from the Czernins, the Wallensteins, and the Nosticiz families, and some indi-

⁷⁴ H. Ramisch, *Drei Fürstbischöfe aus dem Hause Thun-Hohenstein als Mäzene barocker Kunst. Guidobald, Erzbischof von Salzburg (1654–1668), Wenzeslaus, Bischof von Passau (1664–1674) und Johann Ernst, Erzbischof von Salzburg (1687–1709)*, *Barockberichte. Informationsblätter des Salzburger Barockmuseums zur bildenen Kunst des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* 31 (2001), p. 40.

⁷⁵ Litoměřice – Děčín State Regional Archives of the Central Administration Fund of the Klášterec Wing of the Thun Family (further referred to as to Thun Archives), car. 90, inv. no. 385. An older inventory from 1694 records about 80 paintings, NA Praha, the Fideikommiss Fund, sign. FDK VII–E/11, car. 448.

⁷⁶ Thun Archives, car. 91, inv. no. 386.

⁷⁷ NA Praha the Fideikommiss Fund, sign. FDK VII–E/11, car. 488.

⁷⁸ However, Michael Oswald planned a picture gallery in his Prague palace on Hradčanské náměstí. In the future, a collection of paintings was to be located there; unfortunately we do not know if it was to be filled with existing paintings from other residences, or if new paintings were planned to be purchased. In: J. Pátek, *Umělecké objednávky*, p. 220.

viduals⁷⁹. This approach to art collections is certainly not unique. Another example of a landowner's attempt to live up to this noble representation, bereft of personal interest, was Prince Johann Adolf of Schwarzenberg⁸⁰. The change in the concept of the Thun collections only occurred around 1720 and is associated with Johann Franz Thun, a genuine picture collector: he grouped the more valuable works scattered around his castle in one place and had new inventories created⁸¹.

Libraries are an integral part of noble collections and, in the 16th century, they reflected a widespread passion for collecting, during and after the Thirty Years' War. As a result of purchasing confiscated libraries, huge collections of books were combined, which makes it difficult or even impossible to identify the owners' focus or hobbies⁸². Their representative and symbolic role is evidenced by the owners' insistence on preserving the integrity of the library and its connection with the main residence to add prestige to the family. Sources show that Maxmilián Thun built up a book collection in the Děčín castle⁸³. It mainly contains works required by a high court official: legal, historical and economic books. Religious literature, topography, travel books and guides, handbooks and dictionaries, books on architecture, mathematics and astronomy are also widely represented⁸⁴. The collection's composition does not deviate in any way from the typical aristocratic castle libraries of the time⁸⁵.

The turn of the 17th and 18th centuries in Bohemia was a time of unprecedented flourishing of construction activity, art patronage and collecting, primarily due to

⁷⁹ L. Slavíček, *Artium liberatium fautori*, p. 81.

⁸⁰ L. Slavíček, *Sobě, umění, přátelům*, p. 14.

⁸¹ Partial inventory of the paintings in the State Regional Archives in Litoměřice – Děčín, the Central Administration Fund of the Klášterec Wing of the Thun family, car. 91, inv. no. 388.

⁸² J. Kašparová, *Bibliofilství české šlechty raného novověku – sebereflexe nebo sebezprezentace?*, [in:] *Šlechta raného novověku pohledem českých, francouzských a španělských historiků*, ed. V. Bůžek, České Budějovice 2009, pp. 23–40; L. Veselá, *Rytíř a intelektuál: Hieronym Beck z Leopoldsdorfu (1525–1596) a jeho knihovna*, Praha 2016.

⁸³ Thun Archives, car. 91, inv. no. 386.

⁸⁴ L. Slavíček, *Artium liberatium fautori*, pp. 83–84. More about the contents of the Thun Library in: L. Slavíček, *Der rechte Splendor der Einrichtung. Das Palais Graf Maximilian Thuns auf der Prager Kleinseite und seine Ausstattung zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts*, [in:] *Barock in Mitteleuropa. Werke Phänomene – Analysen. Hellmut Lorenz zum 65. Geburtstag*, Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte 54 (2007), pp. 197–199.

⁸⁵ On the further development of the Thun library see H. Polívková, *Provenienční průzkum zámecké knihovny Jílové*, Acta Musei Nationalis Pragae – Historia litterarum 66 (2021), No. 1–2, pp. 44–55; H. Ledínská, *Děčínská zámecká knihovna (Příspěvek k dějinám)*, [in:] *Z minulosti Děčína II*. Děčín: ONV, 1974, pp. 194–214.

representatives of the high court aristocracy⁸⁶. Michael Oswald Thun made attempts to be included. The third generation of the Thun-Hohenstein family in Bohemia made a significant impact on all the components of the aristocratic representation. After the conditions in the country got stable, the family began to build their country residences, city palaces and villas, clearly showing their social status among the top of the Czech aristocracy. Their residences, surrounded by Baroque gardens, created an elaborate complex, often connected with sacral buildings in the location. Other places of ancestral memory were included, like final resting places, by building family tombs in Klášterec and Děčín. Although the Thuns were not ranked among the nobles building up comprehensive art collections from the end of the 17th century, their activity in the field of art patronage and art commissions created a suitable environment and laid the foundation for the future activities of their descendants.

Conclusion

The establishment of a new early modern nobility in Bohemia was a complex process for more than one generation of the family representatives. On several levels, the nobility had to overcome the established division of society into the estates and the emphasis on the antiquity of *the long-established representatives* of the aristocracy. Northwestern Bohemia, however, was in several respects a convenient region for the application of one of the essential points of the new Land Code of *the Renewed Land Ordinance*, within which promotion was from then on exclusively a matter of the Emperor not the Parliament. Since its publication, there was a large-scale exodus of the local small Protestant nobility, especially to Saxony⁸⁷.

Another milestone was marked in 1634 when Albrecht von Wallenstein and Wilhelm Kinsky von Wchinitz were murdered in Cheb. Johann von Aldringen thus acquired extensive holdings at the foot of the Ore Mountains. Using his example, we have outlined the social network created by this imperial officer. In the early 1630s, he owned a range of rather insignificant estates in the vicinity of today's Bolzano, Italy, handed over to him by Claudia de Medici. Thus, it is more than evident that

⁸⁶ Adam II. von Martinitz, Johann Wenzel von Gallas, Franz Anton Berka von Dubá and others are among the greatest patrons of Děčín.

⁸⁷ The renewed provincial constitution forbade any religion other than Catholic. Exceptions were not so frequent; a case in point was Wilhelm Kinsky von Wchinitz, who, thanks to his extraordinary position within Wallenstein's political circle, could stay in the country almost without restrictions.

he enjoyed the favour of the Archduchess of Tyrol and, through her husband Leopold V, also the favour of Emperor Ferdinand II himself. Johann's marriage to Livia d'Arco in the late 1620s/ early 1630s certainly confirms his inclination towards the northern Italian milieu. Being incorporated into the Czech nobility certainly was a step in social prestige. However, at least in the first generations, the family did not make attempts at connecting dynastically with the original landed nobility. The social network of Johann von Aldringen and his successor Paul von Aldringen was oriented toward Austria (Passau) and Italy (Bolzano, Florence, and Mantua).

The cultural marks and patterns, transferred to the new environment, are in some ways still evident today in the surviving material heritage. The monastery and the Děčín branches of the von Thun family raised their main country residences in northwestern Bohemia. The newly arrived nobility was also politically involved. High positions occupied in provincial and court offices exerted more pressure related to architectural representation (building city mansions in Prague), and cultural representation (assembling art collections and building ancestral memory). Members of the family, who held important positions in the church hierarchy, contributed to the cultural exchange between Salzburg, Passau, and northwestern Bohemia.

Northwest Bohemia in the middle of the 17th century can be described as one of the leading places of a significant cultural and social exchange. The processes, started by the publication of the Renewed Land Ordinance, had real effects in social, cultural, and economic terms. The newly arrived nobility identified themselves as Czechs in the subsequent generations. A case in point was Prince Franz Wenzel von Clary-Aldringen, who held the highest regional and central offices, although he was also vice-chancellor of the Bohemian Court Chancery (in German called *Böhmische Hochkanzlei*)⁸⁸. His father, Franz Karl von Clary-Aldringen, used his native Teplice as a location for diplomatic negotiations, especially with the Elector of Saxony⁸⁹.

The two presented families made a significant impact on the cultural and social environment of northwestern Bohemia. They were hardly the only ones but they serve as illustrative examples of the so-called new Post-White Mountain nobility,

⁸⁸ More about this topic, for instance, in M. Scheutz, *Die Elite der hochadeligen Elite. Sozialgeschichtliche Rahmenbedingungen der obersten Hofämter am Wiener Kaiserhof im 18. Jahrhundert*, [online]. Available at https://homepage.univie.ac.at/martin.scheutz/website/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/138_Elite_Scheutz.pdf [retrieved 2022.05.23].

⁸⁹ H. Slavičková, *Barokní kaple sv. Eustacha ve Mstišově (1707–2007), Otisk rodové zbožnosti, reprezentace a lovecké vášně Františka Karla Clary-Aldringena*, *Porta Bohemica* 4 (2007), pp. 181–200.

which continuously resided in the area since the Thirty Years' War and formed the basis of the country's patriotism in the 19th century.

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