

# The Border as a Space of Exchange in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

## Commissioners' Networks and Joseph Hueber's Architectural Workshop in Croatia and Slovenia

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Izvleček

**Meja kot prostor izmenjave v 18. stoletju**

**Naročniške mreže in stavbarska delavnica Jožefa Hueberja na Hrvaškem in v Sloveniji**

1.01 Pregledni znanstveni članek

V srednji Evropi meje niso trdne ovire, ampak so precej fluidne. Gre za tesno povezan kulturni prostor intenzivne izmenjave, v katerem umetniško ustvarjanje oblikujejo gosto prepleteni medsebojni stiki in vplivi med posameznimi državami in regijami. To je še posebej vidno v dejavnostih velikih arhitekturnih, slikarskih in kiparskih delavnic v 18. stoletju, ki so imele široko mrežo sodelavcev po celotnem območju. Ključno vlogo pri hitrem in daljnosežnem prenosu umetniških rešitev so imeli tako cerkveni kot posvetni naročniki umetniških del, ki so bili močno povezani z gosto mrežo stikov, ki se je pletla tudi preko (danes nacionalnih) meja. V članku so na primeru arhitekturne delavnice Jožefa Hueberja iz Gradca (1715–1787), ki je delovala na območju dežele Štajerske v današnji Avstriji in Sloveniji ter v severozahodni Hrvaški, raziskane metode mreženja in obseg dela delavnice, kar je omogočilo rekonstrukcijo stikov med naročniki iz vrst štajerskega, madžarskega in hrvaškega plemstva.

Ključne besede: srednja Evropa, Štajerska, Slovenija, Hrvaška, baročna arhitektura, meje, stavbarske delavnice, Jožef Hueber, umetnostni naročniki, plemstvo

Abstract

**The Border as a Space of Exchange in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

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1.01 Review scientific article

In Central Europe, borders are not solid barriers but are rather fluid. Central Europe is a deeply connected cultural space of intensive exchange (M. Csáky) in which artistic production is shaped by densely intertwined mutual contacts and influences between individual countries and regions. This is particularly visible in the activities of large architectural, painting and sculptural workshops in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which had a wide network of collaborators throughout the area. A key role in the rapid and far-reaching transfer of artistic solutions was played by the commissioners of artworks, both ecclesiastical and secular, strongly connected by a dense network of contacts that did not stop at (today's national) borders. This paper studies the example of the activities of the architectural workshop of Joseph Hueber from Graz (1715–1787) in historical Styria, present-day Austria, and Lower Styria (present-day Slovenia) and northwestern Croatia to explore the method and scope of the workshop's work, as well as the reconstruction of contacts between commissioners from the ranks of the Styrian, Hungarian and Croatian nobility.

Keywords: Central Europe, Styria, Slovenia, Croatia, Baroque architecture, borders, building workshops, Joseph Hueber, art patronage, the nobility

In researching the art of the Central European region, one cannot avoid touching upon the topic of borders, not in the least because of the very fact that they have changed throughout history and the current political map of this part of Europe differs significantly from the period that is the subject of this paper, the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Today's Croatia and Slovenia were part of the Habsburg Monarchy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, of the Austrian Monarchy from 1806 until 1867, and from then on, of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until its dissolution in 1918. The Monarchy was divided into the Habsburg hereditary lands, one of the largest of which was historical Styria, the southern part of which belonged after 1918 to Slovenia and the northern part to Austria and the Hungarian Kingdom, which included Banska Hrvatska (Central and Northwestern Croatia). A significant part of the border between Slovenia and Croatia was and remains the river Sutla (Croatian) or Sotla (Slovene), which did not change during the centuries of turbulence and the redrawing of borders in Europe. The artistic and cultural development of Central European countries did not stop at the borders within the Monarchy. On the contrary, an artistic and cultural circle was formed that crossed borders and, as the historian of Central Europe Moritz Csáky has noted, it was a closely interconnected cultural space of intensive exchange.<sup>1</sup> Artistic production was shaped by the densely intertwined mutual contacts and influences between individual countries and regions. In recent scholarship on this space, the focus has been on the intertwined relationships and influences as well as cross-border connections.

Strongly connected artistic production in the southeastern part of Central Europe also took place in the late Middle Ages. It was then that this kind of artistic development reached its peak, which was then disrupted and stopped by the Reformation, religious wars and Ottoman incursions. These connections were never completely severed, though their intensity decreased due to reduced artistic production. They were re-established in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when there was a remarkable increase in all fields of artistic activity, a period of *Bauboom* and *Aufbruchsstimmung*, as described by the Austrian historian Harald Heppner, after the great territorial expansion of the Monarchy and the movement of its external border further east into former Ottoman territory.<sup>2</sup> In the cross-border rich artistic production of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, an important role was played by the commissioners, who often contributed to the development and diffusion of stylistic and design solutions throughout the region. Foremost among the commissioners were the church orders, whose provinces did not coincide with state borders. The orders often engaged their "own" artists for commissions, which were realized in different places, thus creating a network of influence and diffusion of design solutions.<sup>3</sup> Secular commissioners also played a major role, especially the high nobility, who had estates in all parts of the Monarchy and were strongly interconnected through family and professional ties and contacts. Noble families often engaged the same artists to carry out commissions in various parts of Central Europe. This was the case, for example, with the architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, who was responsible for the construction (1687–1695) of the castle in Vranov nad Dyjí (German: *Frain*) in the present-day Czech Republic for the Counts of Althann (1687–1695). His son Joseph Emmanuel Fischer von Erlach also executed a project for the family's Vienna palace (1732). The best-known example of this practice is the works of the architect Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt

<sup>1</sup> Csáky, *Das Gedächtnis*, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Heppner, "'Bauboom' und 'Aufbruchsstimmung,'" 7–8.

<sup>3</sup> An example of this practice is the work of the Franciscan sculpture workshop in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with artists Dionizije Hoffer and Ivo Schweiger, whose works are in Croatia and Carniola (Slovenia). See Baričević, "Barokno kiparstvo," 226–27.

for Prince Eugene of Savoy. Hildebrandt designed several palaces and manors for the prince, not only in Vienna, where he was architect of the Belvedere palace (Lower Belvedere 1714–1716, Upper Belvedere 1721–1723) and *Winterpalais* in Himmelpfortgasse 8 (1695–1698), but also Schloss Hof (1729) in Lower Austria and Savoy Castle in Ráckeve, Hungary (1701–1722). The widespread practice of engaging architects and builders for commissions in what were once very distant places significantly shaped architectural development and contributed to the creation of a densely intertwined network of influences, representing one of the most important models for the spreading of stylistic elements of the Central European Baroque. Another example of this phenomenon in southeastern Central Europe is the work of the architectural workshop of Joseph Hueber from Graz.

Before analysing the activities of Hueber's workshop, it is necessary to look briefly at the history of research on this topic. Recent scholarship on Central European cultural history has emphasized the similarities that connect this heterogeneous, pluricultural area instead of emphasizing the differences. As was established by the writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, borders between countries are not obstacles, but are fluid, *fließende Grenzen*, where national identities do not play a key role.<sup>4</sup> However, art historical research in this area has tended to go in the opposite direction. From the very beginnings of the discipline of art history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the focus of research has been on establishing a corpus of national works of art, as was the case in the beginnings of Croatian art history.<sup>5</sup> The establishment of a corpus of national art was also one of the key factors in the nation-building processes that took place during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Central Europe. The establishment of differences and demarcations from other nations, particularly from neighbouring and similar ones, was strongly present in all spheres of activity in this part of Europe,<sup>6</sup> both in the political domain and in scholarly discourse, especially in the humanities. This process did not take place only at the time of the founding of new states after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy but was a defining factor throughout almost the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Cold War division of Europe reinforced the importance of borders and demarcations, and the Iron Curtain between the two worlds was drawn precisely through Central Europe. Such social and political circumstances to a certain extent forced the development of humanities and social sciences into pre-determined national boundaries. In the historical sciences, the issue of nationhood remained both present and prominent; art history was focused on national artists and *domaći majstori* (local masters) formed a dominant narrative in Croatian art history throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

Within this framework of art historical research, the artistic production of large workshops in painting, sculpture and architecture, such as those that operated in Central Europe, has remained only partially explored and their importance has largely been unrecognized. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the social and political context changed and so did the direction of art-historical research. With the end of the Cold War divisions, a political context somewhat comparable to earlier periods

<sup>4</sup> Feichtinger and Uhl, "Stichwort Habsburg Zentraleuropa," 15.

<sup>5</sup> "Razumijevajući kulturu i znanost kao društvene sektore od nacionalnog značaja odnosno važna ideološka sredstva u oblikovanju nacionalne svijesti, Kukuljević je vlastitim organizacijskim i znanstvenim radom postavio institucionalne temelje historiografskih znanosti u cjelini, uključujući i sferu interesa koji se podudara s područjem moderne discipline povijesti umjetnosti." Cited after Mance, *Zèrcalo naroda*, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Born, Janatková, and Labuda, *Die Kunsthistoriographien*, 12.

<sup>7</sup> Domestic masters, or artists with Slavic surnames, were established as an important topic by Cvito Fisković in his book *Naši graditelji i kipari XV. i XVI. stoljeća u Dubrovniku* (1947), and its influence and emphasis on the importance of the work of domestic artists remained influential in the following decades.

was reestablished. The fall of the Berlin Wall gave a new lease of life to Central Europe, which had been divided during the Cold War, and sparked a (new) wave of research interest in the region. This is reflected in numerous cross-border projects and initiatives, among which we can highlight a series of exhibitions held in 1993, which was declared the Year of the Central European Baroque by the Central European Initiative.<sup>8</sup> The exhibition *From Everyday Life to Holidays: Baroque in Croatia* was held at the Zagreb Museum of Arts and Crafts, and a catalogue with the same title was also published.<sup>9</sup> In the same year, the *Kunsthistorisches Jahrbuch Graz* was dedicated to the theme “Baroque – regional, international.”<sup>10</sup> The newly awakened interest in the themes of the Central European Baroque and mutual connections and influences was focused primarily on the area of present-day Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as was the case, for example, with the edited volume in honour of the great researcher of Baroque architecture Hellmut Lorenz, *Barock in Mitteleuropa*.<sup>11</sup> The southeastern part of Central Europe has only recently become a focus of interest in the context of mutual influences, intertwined connections and cross-border activities. For example, an international research and exhibition project on the activities of the various Straub family members and their workshop of sculptors in a large area from Bavaria to Croatia has recently been completed.<sup>12</sup> There has also been a new interest in artistic centres and their role as *Umschlagplätze*, places of contact and exchange. Not only capitals and major cities, but also regional centres such as Graz are increasingly being explored. Several works have been published on the role of Graz as an artistic centre for the entire southeastern Central Europe. Among them, the edited volume *Wie südosteuropäisch ist Graz*<sup>13</sup> and the paper by Gottfried Biedermann on artists’ mobility in this area stand out.<sup>14</sup>

### Building workshops in the southeastern part of Central Europe: Joseph Hueber’s workshop in Graz

As previously noted, neither the present nor the historical borders in this area were an impassable barrier but in fact represented a space of permanent mutual exchange on both sides.<sup>15</sup> This is especially true for the activities of large art workshops that were engaged primarily in architectural and sculptural work. The organization of work and the division of tasks in the workshops enabled them to be active over a large area. They had a large number of collaborators who were extremely mobile and, depending on the commissions, worked throughout the entire area of southeastern Central Europe. An example of this particular practice will be discussed below in the case of the architectural workshop of Joseph Hueber from Graz. Therefore, the approach to researching the art of this

<sup>8</sup> At the instigation of the Central European Initiative, eleven exhibitions on Baroque art were organized during 1993 and held in Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. See Šulc, “Nagrada grada Zagreba,” 112.

<sup>9</sup> Maleković, *Od svagdana do blagdana*.

<sup>10</sup> Pochat and Wagner, *Barock – regional, international*.

<sup>11</sup> See the introduction in Weigl and Engel, *Barock in Mitteleuropa*, 13: “Mit dem Ende des Kalten Krieges sind jedenfalls die entscheidenden Voraussetzungen geschaffen, daß der im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert so wichtige Kunst- und Kulturtransfer nun in einem überregionalen Forschungstransfer seinen Niederschlag finden kann.”

<sup>12</sup> See *TrArS – Tracing the Art*.

<sup>13</sup> Tischler-Hofer, *Wie südosteuropäisch ist Graz*.

<sup>14</sup> Biedermann, “Mobilität von Künstlern,” 17–37.

<sup>15</sup> Bhabha, *Die Verortung der Kultur*.

area must necessarily go beyond the boundaries of national narratives and national art history and focus on the broader context.

Large building workshops have been operating in Central Europe since the late Middle Ages, when builders from northern Italy began to arrive. This process intensified particularly during the construction of fortresses in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when northern Italian builders were in great demand and worked in areas exposed to Ottoman attacks, including Banska Hrvatska.<sup>16</sup> The military engineer Domenico dell'Allio (1515–1563) is the most widely known among them.<sup>17</sup> His oeuvre ranged from the construction of the Landhaus in Graz (from 1555) to the Old Town of Varaždin (after 1544) and the fortress in Koprivnica, where he in fact died. During the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century—particularly between 1564 and 1619, when Graz served as the *Residenzstadt* of Inner Austria—the city emerged as the most important artistic centre in the region, becoming a meeting point for artists, especially architects, from diverse backgrounds.<sup>18</sup> During the 18<sup>th</sup>-century building boom, there was a remarkable increase in construction activity due to the favourable conditions and shift of the border further east. As Graz maintained its role as an artistic centre, architectural production peaked between about 1735 and about 1760. This period is described in the literature as the *spätbarocke Blüte* or “late Baroque flourishing” in the case of Styrian architecture,<sup>19</sup> but it can also be applied to other countries. The key role in this process was played by large building workshops, which, due to high demand and thanks to their many collaborators, were able to realize commissions throughout the region. They often used workshop templates and drawings, which, along with the great mobility of builders, contributed to the rapid spread of individual motifs throughout the region and the creation of the region’s recognizable characteristic late Baroque architectural style. This is especially evident in the similar architectural designs and variations on window frames and decorative motifs.

During the heyday of late Baroque architecture, the most important building workshop in Graz was led by Joseph Hueber (1715–1787). Born in Vienna and having learned the trade at his father’s workshop and after *Wanderjahre* in Bohemia and Saxony, he came to Graz in 1739. He took over the well-established workshop of Joseph Carbone and married his widow. He quickly established himself as the leading builder in Graz and far surpassed the competing workshop of Stengga. As early as in April 1740, he became the *city builder*, soon also the *provincial builder* and, after the death of the head of another large workshop, that of Johann Georg Stengg in 1753, he also became the *Mauerermeister der k. k. Administration* and *Hofbaumeister* (Magistrate Architect and Court Architect) in Graz.<sup>20</sup> Hueber thus became the leading architect in Styria precisely at the time of the greatest boom in construction. In the record of his second marriage with Anna Maria Mennhardt on February 25, 1767, he is described as *der wohl Edl und Kunstreiche Herr Joseph Hoffbaumeister* (the most noble and skillfull Court Architect).<sup>21</sup> His status is also confirmed by the inventory of the house on the banks of the Mura River in Graz where he lived. From the number and functions of the rooms in his house, we can deduce that it was a small city palace and not an average town house:

<sup>16</sup> Heppner, “Die Steiermark,” 219–21.

<sup>17</sup> For more on architect, list and map of works, see “Domenico dell’Allio.”

<sup>18</sup> Biedermann, “Mobilität von Künstlern,” 18.

<sup>19</sup> Brucher, “Die barocke Baukunst,” 122.

<sup>20</sup> Kohlbach, *Steirische Baumeister*, 227–28.

<sup>21</sup> Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv, Graz (StLA), Neue Galerie am Joanneum, 12/35, K. 12, H. 35, Joseph Hueber Notizen, Stadtpfarrmatrikel.

*Zeichnungszimmer, Nebenzimmer, Großes Tafelzimmer, Saal im zweiten Stock, Schlafzimmer, Nebenzimmer, Küchen, Zimmer zur ebener Erde, Sohnes Zimmer, Muhrzimmer, Bad.*<sup>22</sup> Hueber's success is also evidenced by the extraordinary details in his will of the large sums he lent at interest to the nobility. Among his debtors who signed *Schuldbriefen*, *mit 4% Zinsen* (a promissory note with 4% interest) are listed the names of members of most prominent aristocratic families such as Attems (including Ferdinand Count Attems), Herberstein, Inzaghi and others.<sup>23</sup>

Hueber's work and biographical data have been thoroughly researched. In addition to Rochus Kohlbach's chapter in the seminal study *Steirische Baumeister: Tausendundeins Werkmann* (1961), his oeuvre has been explored in three doctoral dissertations: first by Hans Reuther (1946),<sup>24</sup> a couple of years later by Walter Koschatzky (1951)<sup>25</sup> and finally by Gunther Prisching (1994).<sup>26</sup> These authors provide numerous biographical data, lists and analyses of his works, but the focus of the former two dissertations is on the Austrian part of Styria, while the third and last one comprises, to a great extent, works from lower Styria, today's Slovenia. Slovenian art historians' research on this topic history is primarily focused on Hueber's activity for the Attems Family.<sup>27</sup>

Hueber's oeuvre is exceptionally rich. He created important works in sacral architecture, the most important of which include the facade of the Mariahilf church in Graz (1744) and the church of St. Veit in St. Veit in Vogau (from 1748). His church in Weizberg (from 1755) is considered the peak of the late Baroque period in Styria. He is also the builder of, amongst many others, the monumental library of the monastery in Admont (1764). The builder was especially sought after in the highest circles of the Styrian nobility. Thanks to the title "Hofbaumeister", doors and access to the most elite clients opened for him. He worked for the Prince of Eggenberg as well as the Counts Herberstein and Attems. By rebuilding Eggenberg Palace (Schloss Eggenberg, 1754),<sup>28</sup> he became associated with the two most important noble families of Styria: Eggenberg and Herberstein. In Graz, he designed the city palaces of Eggenberg-Herberstein (1754), Dietrichstein (1760s), Inzaghi (1770s), numerous city houses, the Knights' Hall in the Landhaus, the Theatre of the Styrian Estates (1774) and the library in the Jesuit complex (1778–1781).<sup>29</sup> In southern Styria, he worked on castles and manors in Slovenska Bistrica, Štatenberg,<sup>30</sup> Gornja Radgona, Hrastovec (from 1738, commissioned by the Herberstein family), Turnišče (1763), Novo Celje (1762)<sup>31</sup> and Gornja Radgona. One of the most significant commissions was the rebuilding of the manor in Dornava near Ptuj (1753–1755)

<sup>22</sup> StLA, Neue Galerie am Joanneum, 12/35, K. 12, H. 35, Joseph Hueber Notizen.

<sup>23</sup> Kohlbach, *Steirische Baumeister*, 234.

<sup>24</sup> Reuther, "Des steirischen Baumeisters."

<sup>25</sup> Koschatzky, "Leben, Werk und Stil."

<sup>26</sup> Prisching, "Joseph Hueber."

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Weigl, "Dvorec Dornava;" Komić Marn, "Pozabljena gradbena faza."

<sup>28</sup> The reconstruction began after the marriage of Maria Eleonora Eggenberg and Count Johann Leopold Herberstein. Hueber designed the monumental entrance and the chapel, as well as the garden pavilion. Koschatzky, "Leben, Werk und Stil," 121–28.

<sup>29</sup> Hueber built buildings and barracks for the military, as well as a library, a mill and farm buildings for the Admont monastery. For a complete list of his works see Kohlbach, *Steirische Baumeister*, 231–32; Prisching, "Joseph Hueber."

<sup>30</sup> Tischler-Hofer, "Steierischer Bauherr," 61–88.

<sup>31</sup> Hueber was entrusted with the design of the new portal at Novo Celje Manor for the Counts of Gaisruck. For the history of works at Novo Celje and other artists employed, see Weigl, "Zidava in opremljanje," 75–79; Vidmar, *Novo Celje*, 207, 209–10, 249–50.



1. Dornava, Attems Manor (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS; photo: Andrej Furlan)



2. Dornava, Attems Manor, garden façade (photo: Dubravka Botica)

for the Attems family (figs. 1–2).<sup>32</sup> Hueber is also documented to have worked in Croatia, where he rebuilt the castle in Ludbreg (1746–1749) for the Counts Batthyány.<sup>33</sup> In Varaždin, the influence of Hueber's workshop and the similarity of the city's architecture to his works have been recognized in the church of St. Nicholas<sup>34</sup> and the Petković Palace.<sup>35</sup> His influence is also visible in the mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century Zagreb churches in Dolac and Ksaver.<sup>36</sup> Recently, I have suggested that the most important Baroque palace in Zagreb, the palace of Count Vojković and today the Croatian Historical Museum, was also a product of his workshop.<sup>37</sup>

### Commissioners' networks

Hueber was a favourite architect of the nobility of southeastern Central Europe and his workshop's activity extended over the exceptionally large territory of historical Styrian and Banal Croatia. He was in demand because he skilfully adapted new solutions and current trends to the needs of his clients and because he knew how to adapt older residences to the new needs and lifestyle of the "gallant century" by designing new monumental staircases and portals. He decorated facades with a network of pilasters and cornices or beams and created focal points primarily with prominent portals and richly decorated window frames. In this way, he gave not only new but also, and especially, older buildings a contemporary look that matched the status and wishes of the commissioners.<sup>38</sup> The reasons for his engagement were certainly his good organizational skills and speed of project execution, which earned him wealth and reputation. A significant number of commissions, often over long distances, could be realized owing to the size of his workshop with its numerous collaborators. Hueber's workshop was, indeed, by far the largest in Graz. His competitors complained that in 1761 he received all the commissions and had more collaborators than the three other workshops combined.<sup>39</sup> In his reply, which came a few days later, Hueber confidently stated that he was more qualified than the others, that the clients were free to choose the architects themselves, and he was paid according to the size of the project. He added, most importantly, that he had gained the trust of his clientele, that is to say the commissioners.<sup>40</sup> His reputation and successfully executed projects for the highest circles opened doors for him as well as access to clients far beyond Graz. Some of Hueber's many collaborators were capable of independently executing projects. Following their

<sup>32</sup> For the list of works in Slovenia, see Weigl, "Dvorec Dornava," 41–58; Komić Marn, "Pozabljena gradbena faza," 61.

<sup>33</sup> A new wing was added, comprising a staircase, a chapel and ceremonial hall, and a new facade was constructed. Horvat-Levaj, "Utvrde i dvorci," 92–93.

<sup>34</sup> Botica and Domšić, "Župna crkva," 34–37.

<sup>35</sup> Puhmajer, *Barokne palače*, 171.

<sup>36</sup> Botica, "Župna crkva sv. Marije," 61–62.

<sup>37</sup> Botica, "Na ukras i diku grada." The attribution is based on comparative analysis and contacts of the commissioner. See below.

<sup>38</sup> Botica, "Josef Hueber," 96.

<sup>39</sup> "Auch wir drei übrigen Meister werden zu keiner derselben geholt, Mitmeister Hueber hat sie alle an sich gebracht. Er hat mehr Gesellen als wir alle drei zusammen." Cited after Prisching, "Joseph Hueber," 357.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Hueber's reply: "Hofkammer, K. K. Ministerial-Administration, Kriegsstellen, Landschaft und Magistrat wählen ihre Meister nach freier Willkür zur Fertigung der Risse und Gebäude. Auch ich werde 'condigne' und nach Proportion meiner Bemühungen besoldet. Hauptsache ist, daß man beim Publico Vertrauen findet. Ich habe mich eben vor anderen in meiner Profession qualifiziert." Cited after Prisching, "Joseph Hueber," 357–58.

collaboration with Hueber, these builders often adopted certain design elements in their subsequent works. This is particularly evident in buildings in Varaždin, Croatia, where the influence of Hueber's motifs suggests either direct consultation or the transmission of his stylistic vocabulary through former collaborators.

Another reason for the dissemination of characteristic elements of Hueber's architecture – such as façades with accentuated central projections, large centralized or domed bays and pillars with curved edges with richly articulated entablatures – may lie in his role as an adviser or as the author of initial design concepts. Hueber's degree of involvement in individual projects, many of which were traditionally attributed to him as the sole author in earlier scholarship, appears to have varied. This is exemplified by two projects executed by other architects in which Hueber was nonetheless involved during the planning phase: the church in Gornji Grad (Oberburg), Lower Styria, and the Palais Thinnfeld in Deutschfeistritz. In the case of Gornji Grad, documents confirm Hueber's involvement in the planning of a monumental new church commissioned by Count Prince-Bishop Ernest Amadeus Attems (Graz, 1694 – Vienna, 1757), brother of the owner of Dornava. After the renovation of the episcopal residence in 1752, construction of the new church commenced. In 1755, Attems referred to Hueber as the architect, although other documents cite Mathias Persky from Ljubljana as the builder of the church.<sup>41</sup> Recent research on Tinnfeld Castle in Deutschfeistritz has shed new light on its construction, which began in 1761 (or possibly 1762). Hueber was involved in the planning process, preparing cost estimates, a site plan between 1758 and 1760 and the initial floor plan. However, the patron was dissatisfied with the proposal, favouring his own ideas and taste, shaped by his own frequent travels and influenced in particular by the architecture of North Italian villas, which served as key models.<sup>42</sup>

Various practices and processes of architectural design in Hueber's oeuvre can be observed, ranging from consultation to full project leadership. This phenomenon helps explain the widespread presence of characteristic Hueber motifs across architectural works throughout the region. The engagement of foreign architects and their relationship to local builders' guilds was also an important factor in the process of architectural design and execution. This insufficiently researched topic was opened by Helena Seražin in her research on the Gorizia and Gradisca region.<sup>43</sup> While patrons often consulted individual architects during the design process, the actual execution was frequently carried out by local craftsmen and builders.

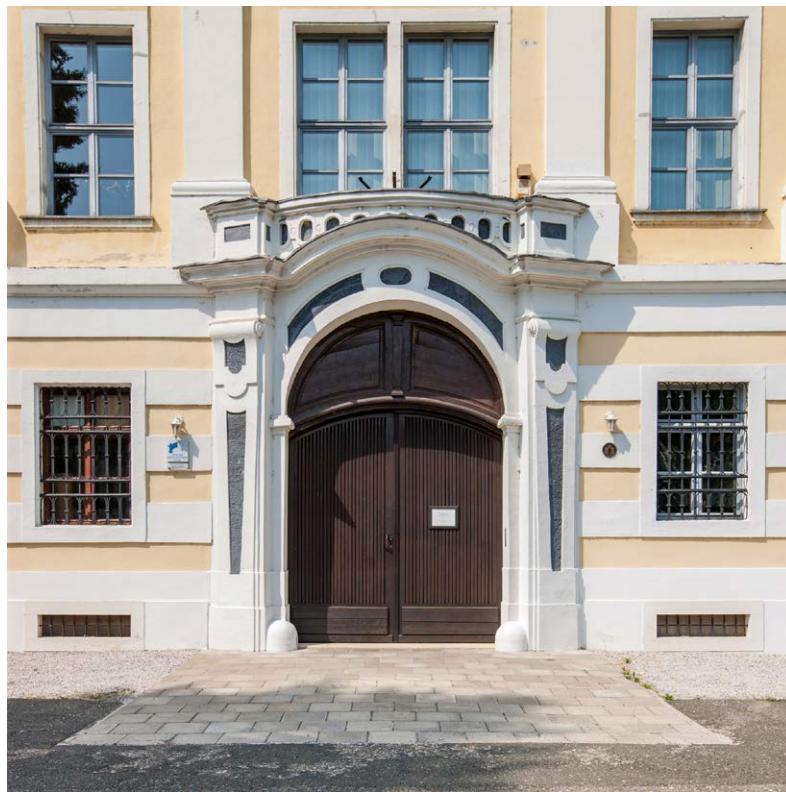
It is an interesting question how Hueber and his clients would come into contact over such great distances and in such different environments. The answers lie in the archives of noble families. Hueber himself points out that he gained *Vertrauen*, the trust of the client, through his work and expanded his circle of clients through recommendations. However, the state of research into family aristocratic archives varies greatly in the countries of Central Europe and is an obstacle to establishing

<sup>41</sup> Documents mention architect Mathias Persky as early as 1749; the episcopal residence was completed in 1751 and the church was constructed between 1752 and 1759. Cf. Lavrič, "Načrt graškega arhitekta," 151–66; Sapač, "Baročni arhitekti," 256–57. In 1755, Bishop Attems referred to Joseph Hueber in the context of the church's construction. Although Attems was Bishop of Ljubljana, Gornji Grad is located in Styria, where members of the Attems family had previously engaged Hueber, which is the likely reason for his consultation in the planning of the new church. Both architects, Persky and Hueber, are featured as architects involved in the church in Gornji grad in the recent exhibition *Baroque in Slovenia: Architecture and Applied Arts*, held at the National Museum of Slovenia, 12 June–9 November 2025.

<sup>42</sup> Brešer, "Das Hammerherrenhaus," 59–63.

<sup>43</sup> Seražin, "Goriške in Gradiščanske," 399–400.

Hueber's connections, as well as those of other large workshops in this period. The state of research into aristocratic archives in Croatia, especially in the continental part, is only in its beginnings. Until a few decades ago, the role of the client, especially the nobility, was a completely neglected topic in the art history of the early modern period in Croatia, as it was in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe. With the changes in social and political circumstances at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this topic has started to come to the fore, but family archives are still largely unexplored.<sup>44</sup> In the Austrian archives, material on the great noble families is well organised and researched. However, the emphasis is exclusively on the material relating to present-day Austrian territory or, often, only a specific region (e.g. Styria). Thus, Hueber's patrons from the ranks of the Styrian nobility have been studied in detail and his oeuvre in the Styrian region has been established. However, the research has not included a very important piece of information: his work for the Batthyány family, which has remained completely unknown in the Austrian literature, although information about it was published by Mária G. Aggházy in 1967 in German.<sup>45</sup> Based on archival letters from the Batthyány family in Burgenland, who were in close contact with the Herbersteins, Hueber's activities for this noble family can also be established, as payments to Hueber in 1744 for a new staircase and vaults to Zsigmond (Sigismund) Batthyány are mentioned.<sup>46</sup>



3. Ljubreg, Batthyány Manor, portal (© Institute of Art History, Zagreb; IPU-F-30183\_PM)

<sup>44</sup> On the problems and limitations of researching Baroque art during the communist era in Central and Eastern Europe, see the research project at Humboldt Universität Berlin, *Asymmetrische Kunstgeschichte? Erforschung und Vermittlung prekärer Denkmälerbestände im Kalten Krieg* (2013-2015), and the 2015 conference proceedings with the same title. Cf. *Asymmetrische Kunstgeschichte?*; Pluhařová-Grigienė, "Vorwort." For research on Baroque in Croatia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, see Botica, "Povijest istraživanja," 117–22.

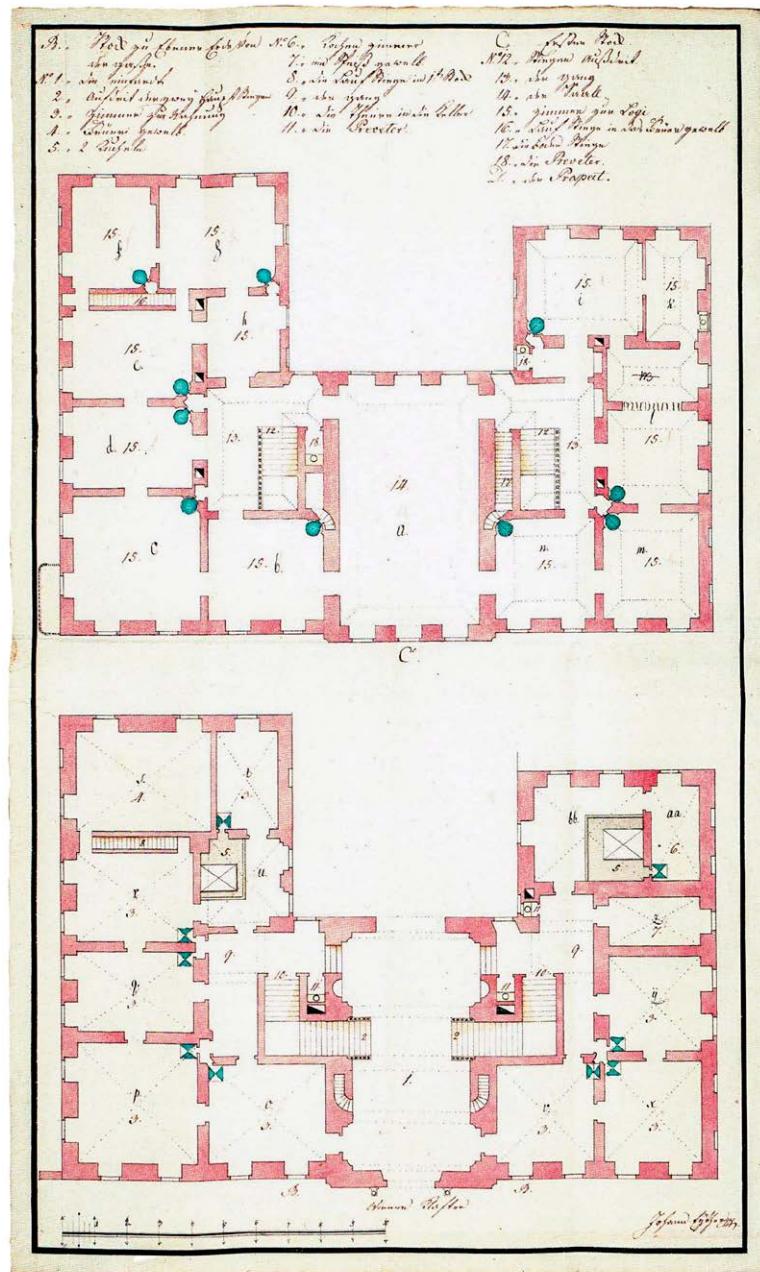
<sup>45</sup> Aggházy, "Steirische Beziehungen," 330–31.

<sup>46</sup> Mirković, "Graditeljstvo, slikarstvo i kiparstvo," 155–58.

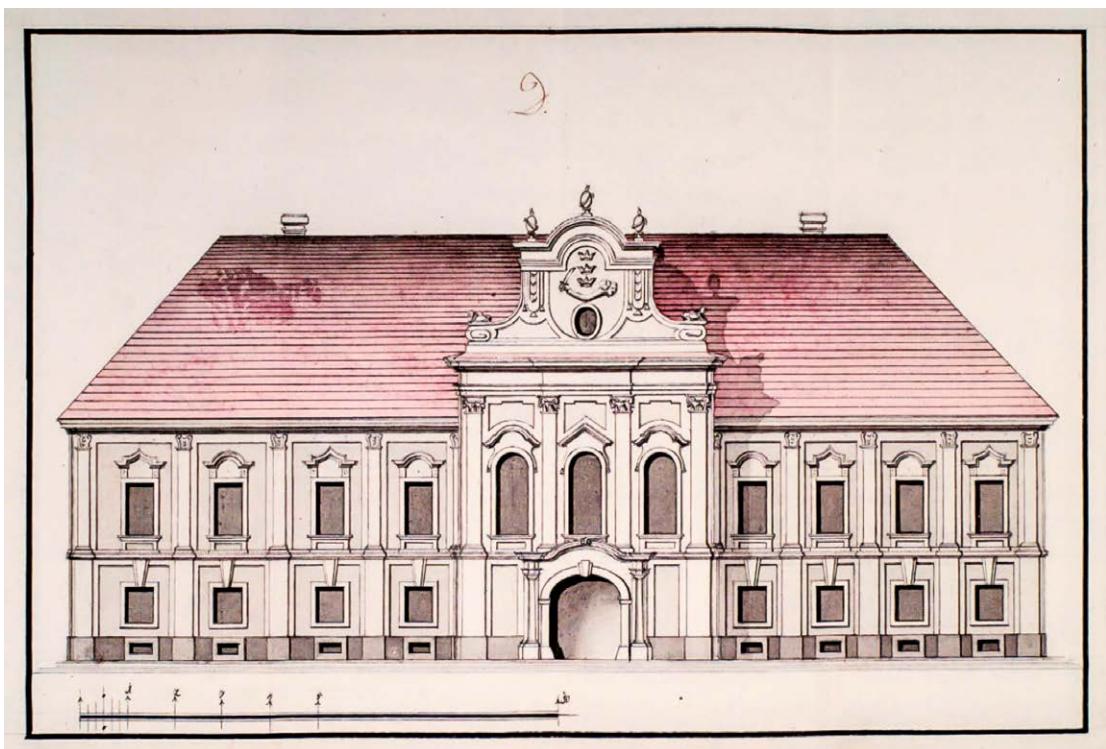


4. Vienna, Batthyány-Strattmann Palace, portal (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS; photo: Andrej Furlan)

Marija Mirković recognized Hueber's involvement in Ludbreg in this material, and she confirmed Hueber's hand in the rebuilding of castle in Ludbreg on the basis of a stylistic and comparative analysis and published her study in 1984. The commissioner of the conversion of the fortress into a castle was Countess Eleonora Batthyány-Strattmann together with her sons and heirs. When this project and other family properties are analysed comparatively, an interesting similarity can be discerned between the new portal in Ludbreg (fig. 3) and the portal of the Batthyány-Strattmann Palace in Bankgasse (Herrengasse) in Vienna (fig. 4). The Batthyány-Strattmann Palace is the work of Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach and was owned by Countess Eleonora Batthyány-Strattmann. The similarities in the composition, the shape of the pilasters and the balcony railing above the portal reflect the wishes of the commissioner and the visible emphasis of the connections between



5. Johann Eyther: Vojković Palace in Zagreb, plan, 1801 (source: Dobronić, "Palača," 24)



6. Johann Eyther: Vojković Palace in Zagreb, facade, 1801 (source: Dobronić, "Palača," 27)

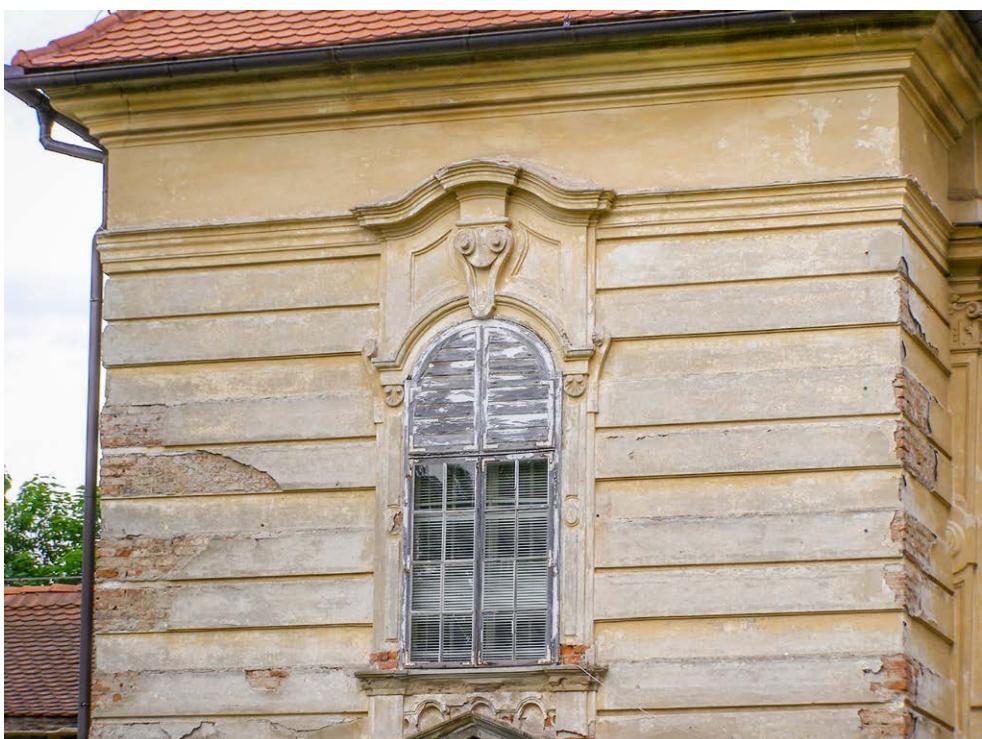
the family properties as a recognizable sign of ownership.<sup>47</sup> Such practices contributed to the rapid spread of design choices and decorative templates and created intertwined connections and influences in artistic production in Central Europe. The fact that Hueber worked for Batthyány changes Hueber's established image as the most important provincial architect. The area of his work and his clients were not only from Styria, but also from the Kingdom of Hungary, that is, Croatia. The imitation of a Viennese model also shows a good knowledge of contemporary architecture.

The above-outlined dense network of contacts among the nobility may also provide an answer to the question of whether Hueber, or rather his workshop, could have been engaged in the building of the Vojković Palace in Zagreb in 1764. (figs. 5–7) The commissioner of the most important Baroque palace in Zagreb, Count Sigismund Vojković, rose to great heights on the social ladder of his time. Through marriages and family ties, he was connected to the most important families in the country, such as the Rauch, Drašković, and Oršić families. He also established important contacts during his successful military career, during which he served as the commander of the guard in Petrinja in 1756 and lieutenant colonel of a cavalry regiment, and, in 1762, as a colonel. He distinguished himself in the Seven Years' War, and in May 1763, Empress Maria Theresa granted him the title of count, changing his name to *Illustrissimus dominus comes Sigismundus a Vojkffy*. After acquiring the title, he became a citizen of Zagreb and held important positions in civil administration bodies.

<sup>47</sup> Botica, "Josef Hueber," 99–100.



7. Zagreb, Vojković Palace (© Croatian History Museum; photo: Petar Puhmajer)



8. Dornava, Attems Manor, side wing, window (photo: Dubravka Botica)

He proclaimed his new position and his status in society by building a palace in the city in 1764.<sup>48</sup> In order to better understand the context in which this palace was commissioned and constructed, it is important to note that in 1750 Vojković served as a captain in the Ban's cavalry with Count Adam Venceslav Batthyány-Strattmann (1722–1787), who later served as the Ban's governor (1753–1756). As mentioned, the Batthyány-Strattmann family had engaged Hueber to remodel the castle in Ludbreg a decade earlier. We can assume that the newly minted Count Vojkffy turned to a well-known person with experience in building or remodelling castles and received a recommendation for an architect who knew and could design desirable contemporary residential architecture in a manner appropriate to the client's wishes and status. The engagement of a builder of such a rank also confirms the client's status. For Count Vojkffy, it was important to stand out in the city, the new centre of the aristocracy, as is clearly evidenced by the oversized sabre motif on his coat of arms on the gable of the central part of the palace. In a comparative analysis of the Vojkffy Palace and Hueber's works –particularly Dornava Manor – striking affinities become apparent. Most notable are the shared principles of spatial organization: a central vestibule articulated by symmetrically placed staircases, with corresponding balustrades and niches along the ascent. The treatment of the fenestration likewise reveals parallels, as the window frames of the lateral wings of Dornava Manor correspond to those on the façade of the Zagreb palace (figs. 7–8). The design of the portal further underscores this kinship. Even within the decorative vocabulary, the connection is unmistakable: the monumental vases flanking the entrance to Dornava Manor find their counterpart in those

<sup>48</sup> For biography of Count Vojković (Vojkffy) see Dobronić, "Palača Hrvatskog povijesnog muzeja," 4–10; Janković, "Plemićka obitelj," 89–134.

crowning the façade of the Zagreb palace. An interesting novelty in the Zagreb palace is the reference to an element of contemporary Viennese architecture, which we also encounter in the portal in Ludbreg. On the first floor of the central part of the Zagreb palace, we find Hildebrand's Herm pilasters with recessed lambrequins taken from the side gate of Lower Belvedere Manor and the facade of the Daun Kinsky Palace.

In the wider area of southeastern Central Europe, only a builder from the Hueber circle could have realized this commission, combining new modern spatial solutions, including a monumental staircase and emphasized plastic elements, as well as the references to contemporary Styrian and Viennese architecture. The Vojković Palace once again confirms that borders between countries were not an obstacle to the spreading of artistic innovations in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As I have outlined above, the relations between builders and the nobility were interconnected by a densely woven network of private and official relationships, which significantly contributed to this diffusion of artistic styles. These connections were one of the most important models of cultural and artistic transfer, a means of diffusion of new ideas and artistic innovations in the Central European space. In researching them, it is necessary to cross today's borders, as demonstrated by the analysis of the work of Joseph Hueber's architectural workshop.

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**Meja kot prostor izmenjave v 18. stoletju**  
**Naročniške mreže in stavbarska delavnica Jožefa Hueberja na Hrvaškem in v Sloveniji**

*Povzetek*

V srednjeevropskem prostoru in kulturnem krogu meje niso trdne ovire, temveč so fluidne, so *fließende Grenzen*, kot je na začetku 20. stoletja ugotovil pisatelj Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Meje predstavljajo močno povezan kulturni prostor intenzivne izmenjave (Moritz Csáky), v katerem umetnostno produkcijo oblikujejo gosto prepleteni medsebojni stiki in vplivi med posameznimi državami in regijami. To je še posebej vidno v intenzivni produkciji velikih arhitekturnih, slikarskih in kiparskih delavnic 18. stoletja na območju Štajerske in severozahodne Hrvaške v obdobju od tridesetih let 17. stoletja do okoli leta 1760, v času razcveta arhitekture. V članku je obravnavana dejavnost stavbarskih delavnic v regiji na primeru delavnice Jožefa Hueberja (1715–1787) iz Gradca. Razvejana mreža številnih sodelavcev je delavnici zagotovila prisotnost v celotnem jugovzhodnem delu srednje Evrope, na Štajerskem in v banski Hrvaški. To je še posebej vidno pri uporabi sorodnih tlorisnih tipov in okrasnih motivov ter okvirjev v arhitekturi tega prostora. Pri hitrem prenosu likovnih rešitev in velikem območju delovanja arhitekturnih delavnic so ključno vlogo odigrali naročniki, tako cerkveni kot plemiški, trdno povezani z gosto mrežo stikov, ki je (današnje) meje ne zamejujejo. V članku je analizirana mreža stikov med naročniki delavnice stavbnega mojstra Jožefa Hueberja, ki ga je štajersko, ogrsko in hrvaško plemstvo zelo cenilo kot graditelja reprezentativnih družinskih rezidenc. Primer vezi med družinama Batthyány in Herberstein na eni strani ter Batthyány-Strattmann in Vojković (Vojkffy) na drugi razkriva povezave med plemiškimi družinami, ki so naročale arhitekturna dela pri Hueberju in v njegovi delavnici ter tako prispevale k čezmejnemu širjenju območja njegovega delovanja.

