# The Iconology of the Main Altar by G. R. Donner in St. Martin's Cathedral in Bratislava in the Context of The Coronation Ritual

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**Abstract**
The sculptural group of St. Martin and the beggar by Georg Raphael Donner (1693 – 1741) was commissioned by Primate Emericus Esterházy (1664 – 1745) in 1733. It represents one of the most important works in the first half of the 18th century. Although several authors have repeatedly discussed the significance of this artwork, a comprehensive iconological analysis is lacking. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the altar from an iconological perspective in terms of its function as a coronation altar.

**Keywords:** St Martin's Altar, G. R. Donner, Emericus Esterházy, Charles VI, Maria Theresa, iconology, 18th century, St Martin's Cathedral, Bratislava

The sculptural group of St. Martin and the beggar by Georg Raphael Donner (1693 – 1741), once part of the eponymous altar in St. Martin's Cathedral in Bratislava, was commissioned by Primate Emericus Esterházy (1664 – 1745) in 1733. It represents one of the most important works in the first half of the 18th century.[1] Although several authors have repeatedly discussed the significance of this artwork, a comprehensive iconological analysis is lacking. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the altar from an iconological perspective in terms of its function as a coronation altar. I assert the following points: (1) Emericus Esterházy, the author of the conceptual design, created a complex framework of meaning within the works commissioned for the cathedral: altar itself (today preserved only by a photo taken before the regotisation and a few drawings and prints), the side altars of the Virgin Mary and St. Michael with a similar fate, the altar of St. John the Almsgiver with a statue of an adoring Emericus Esterházy, and busts from choir stalls. (2) Martin's statue on the main altar served as a communication medium during the coronation of the Hungarian King; it was also intended to legitimise the Habsburgs on the Hungarian throne before the attending European political elites. (3). The altar of St. Martin

[1] The main altar of St. Martin (1733 – 1735) is at the beginning of the baroquisation of the Gothic choir. In 1736, Esterházy hired Donner to make new choir stalls with 28 busts of saints. A year later, he commissioned side altars of the Virgin Mary and St. Michael. They were finished the following year and placed near the triumphal arch. During the regotisation in 1865 – 1867, all altars and choir stalls were removed. Only the sculpture of St. Martin and the beggar, the two adoring angels from the main altar, the 17th–century "miraculous" statue of Pieta from the side altar, and the 24 busts from the choir stalls survived. These busts are now in the National Gallery in Budapest with the adoring angels. Four busts have been lost. RUSINA, I.: Maliarstvo a sochárstvo. In: *Dóm sv. Martina v Bratislave*. Eds." ŽÁRY, J. – BAGIN, A. – RUSINA, I. – TORANOVÁ, E. Bratislava 1990, p. 102.

*Fig. 1: Georg Raphael Donner, Sculptural group of St. Martin and the beggar. 1734–1735. Alloy of lead and tin, 275 cm. St Martin's Cathedral, Bratislava. Source: Katarína Orviská.*

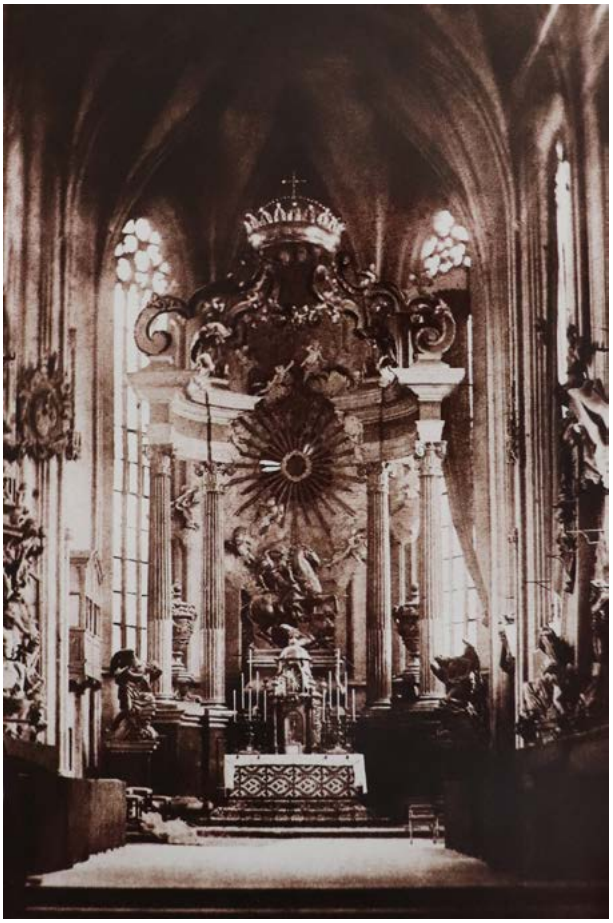

*Fig. 2: Georg Raphael Donner, Main altar of St. Martin in St Martin's Cathedral, Bratislava. 1733–1735, ca 18 m, preserved photograph from 1865. Source: HAĽKO, J. – KOMORNÝ, Š.: Dóm: Katedrála sv. Martina v Bratislave. Bratislava 2010.*

must be formally and iconologically analysed in the context of the imperial art of the Habsburgs at the Viennese court.

This text follows an article on the iconography of St. Martin's altar, which led to several new findings, especially the discovery of a probable iconographic model. It refutes previous assumptions about the meaning of individual "unusual" elements.[2]

## Visual representation of the Habsburgs as Hungarian kings from Maximilian II to Maria Theresa

The Habsburgs were depicted in official and coronation portraits in Hungarian noble attire to legitimise their rule over Hungary. They demonstrate that kings from foreign dynasty and country

[2] Because the topic of altar iconology is extensive, it can be divided into two articles. In the future article, I discuss the propagation of the Esterházy family by Emericus Esterházy, the main ideological creator of the altarpiece, its possible reflection in the artwork, and his anti-reformation efforts. A full understanding of the subject is gained only after reading all three articles. ORVISKÁ, K.: Iconography of the former main altar of St. Martin by Georg Raphael Donner in St. Martin's Cathedral in Bratislava. In: *ARS,* Vol. 56, 2023, No. 2, p. 209 – 221.

symbolically became Hungarian by wearing Hungarian clothing. The king's clothing thus became an important legitimising element—it symbolically declared territorial and cultural belonging to the country and represented sovereignty over its territory.[3] In the following pages, I briefly explain how this visual propaganda evolved and differed among various kings, from Maximilian II (1527 – 1576) to Maria Theresa, the first monarch crowned in front of the new high altar.

Maximilian II was crowned King of Hungary in August 1563. This was the first royal coronation in Bratislava and was accompanied by great expectations. Almost four decades had passed since the last coronation of a Hungarian king, and this coronation took place in Székesfehérvár (Stoličný Belehrad, Stuhlweißenburg) amidst political unrest. With this coronation, the Habsburg family was introduced to the public as the heir to the Kingdom of Hungary, and as reports from half of Europe attest, this Habsburg "Hungarian royal court" debut was grand and successful.[4]

Emperor Rudolf II (1552 – 1612), the King of Hungary, was at war with the Ottoman Empire, which was reflected in diplomatic relations. From then on, imperial envoys had to appear before the Sublime Porte in Hungarian dress. Emperor Rudolf's victories against the Ottomans were those of the Hungarian King. Paintings by Bartholomeus Spranger (1546 – 1611) and Hans von Aachen (1552 – 1615), a sculpture by Adrien de Vries (c. 1545 – 1626), and engravings by Aegidius Sadeler (1570 – 1629) celebrated Emperor Rudolf II as the victorious Hungarian commander of the Ottoman wars using the motif of ancient triumphal processions.[5]

Archduke Matthias (1557 – 1619) marched with an army to Prague against his brother Rudolf II in the spring of 1608. This army mainly comprised Hungarians who hoped that Matthias would bring peace to the country after the Fifteen-Year War with the Ottoman Empire (1593 – 1606), preserve the privileges of the Hungarian nobility, and bring religious freedom to the predominantly Protestant nobility. Rudolf transferred power over Hungary to his brother, with its symbol, the Hungarian crown, which was relocated from Prague to Bratislava. At the Diet held in Bratislava in September 1608, the members of the Hungarian nobility first imposed their demands on Matthias and crowned him as King of Hungary on 9 November under the name Matthias II. This title was his highest, as Rudolf retained the title of King of Bohemia until 1611 and the Holy Roman Emperor until he died in 1613. These circumstances deepened the Hungarian Crown's symbolic significance and coronation for Matthias.[6] For the first time, the Hungarian colours, red-white-green, were used on carpets during the coronation procession. The king was shown with the Hungarian crown on the coronation medal and in characteristic Hungarian attire on another medal and engraving.[7] He was the first Habsburg monarch to be portrayed in the coronation cloak of King Stephen, with St. Stephen's crown on his head and a Hungarian sceptre in his hand.[8] Matthias was also painted in Bohemian coronation attire (1611), and we know of a separate variant of Hungarian dress with Bohemian insignia, combining his two royal

[3] SERFŐZŐ, S.: A Magyar és az Erdélyi Udvari Kancellária bécsi palotájának Habsburg portrégalériái. In: *Reneszánsz és barokk Magyarországon. Művészettörténeti tanulmányok Galavics Géza tiszteletére*. Eds.: GULYÁS, B. – MIKÓ, Á. – UGRY, B., Budapest 2021, p. 241; BADA, M.: Niektoré formy a podoby komunikácie v ranonovovekej Bratislave s ohľadom na jej funkciu hlavného mesta. In: *Historické štúdie. Ročenka Historického ústavu Slovenskej akadémie vied*, Vol. 49, 2015, p. 118.

[4] GALAVICS, G.: Die Künstlerische Repräsentation der Habsburger-Könige in Ungarn bis 1848. In: *Kaiser und König: 1526 – 1918. Eine historische Reise. Österreich und Ungarn*. Ed. FAZEKAS, I. Wien 2001, p. 10 – 11.

[5] GALAVICS 2001 (see in note 4), p. 12.

[6] POLLEROß, F.: Austriacus Hungariae Rex. Zur Darstellung der Habsburger als ungarische Könige in der frühneuzeitlichen Graphik. In: *„Ez világ, mint egy kert…". Tanulmányok Galavics Géza tiszteletére*. Ed. BUBRYÁK, O. Budapest 2010, p. 65.

[7] POLLEROß 2010 (see in note 6), p. 65; GALAVICS 2001 (see in note 4), p. 12.

[8] Lucas Kilian, Portrait of Matthias II with Hungarian coronation insignia, print, 1608 – 1611, sign. App. M. 43, National Széchényi Library, Budapest.

titles into one painting. Hans von Aachen created both paintings.[9]

Portraits of the Habsburg monarch in Hungarian attire became common following the portraits of Matthias, and all depictions of the Habsburg monarchs in Hungarian attire (paintings, prints, or medals) were created according to this model. He was the first king to wear this dress for the coronation. He had requested many tailors from the city of Bratislava to make as many traditional Hungarian dresses as possible for him and his courtiers. By choosing ceremonial coronation attire different from his predecessors, Matthias publicly identified himself with the country, its traditions, and political elites while demonstrating his territorial sovereignty over the Kingdom of Hungary. Matthias' coronation set a trend regarding coronation attire and portraits that his successors continued. Ferdinand III, Ferdinand IV, Leopold I, and Joseph I were crowned and portrayed in traditional Hungarian attire.[10]

Matthias's successor, Ferdinand II (1578 – 1637), also had a portrait medal minted in Hungarian clothing, but it probably had a completely different meaning than his predecessor's. Ferdinand II was crowned King of Hungary in 1618 under changing political circumstances and had a very different education and attitude towards rule. He was educated in Jesuit schools as a staunch supporter of the Counter-Reformation, and his policy was directed towards extending absolutism. At the beginning of his reign, the Bohemian Estates tried to limit his power, and he was even dethroned. Ferdinand defeated his opponents at the Battle of the White Mountain (1620) and suppressed the rebellion through confiscation and executions.[11]

During the 17th century, the Habsburgs like Hungarian kings did not commission any notable works of art. Their artistic representations remained largely within the framework of royal coronations. Royal festivities were captured in prints and descriptions, with the most significant depiction being a portrait of the king in Hungarian attire. These images show the kings appearing in Hungarian attire during their coronation as friendly gestures to the Hungarian nobility, and their popularity is evidenced by numerous copies captured in various media. In this context, the coronation portrait of Ferdinand III (1608 – 1657) in Hungarian clothing by Justus Sustermans (1597 – 1681) is significant. It was painted for his coronation as King of Hungary in 1625, during the reign of his father, Ferdinand II. This coronation was important because the Spanish branch of the Habsburgs agreed to a planned marriage to ensure the union of the two branches (Ferdinand III was to marry Philip III's daughter, Infanta Maria Anna) but only on the condition that Ferdinand would first be crowned as the King of Hungary. Emperor's court painter Frans Luycx (1604 – 1668) painted half-length portraits of Ferdinand IV (1633 – 1654) and Leopold I (1640 – 1705) in Hungarian dress.[12]

Joseph I (1678 – 1711), the son of Emperor Leopold I, came to Bratislava in December 1687 for his coronation in Hungarian clothing. He is shown in this attire in many prints. It was the first coronation after the Hungarian nobility, grateful for regaining the former capital of Buda in 1686 and expelling the Ottomans from most of the territory, renouncing the free election of the king, and accepting the succession of the Habsburg family following the male line.[13]

[9] GALAVICS 2001 (see in note 4), p. 12.

[10] BADA, M.: Premeny ceremoniálnych aktivít a života v ranonovovekej Bratislave v súvislosti s jej funkciou hlavného mesta Uhorska. In: *Korunovácie a pohreby: mocenské rituály a ceremónie v ranom novoveku*. Eds.: LENGYELOVÁ, T. – PÁLFFY, G. Budapest 2016, p. 59; GALAVICS 2001 (see in note 4), p. 13.

[11] GALAVICS 2001 (see in note 4), p. 13.

[12] Ibidem, p. 13.

[13] Such artworks celebrated the triumph of Emperor Leopold I and his commanders. Few artworks were created directly on the initiative of the Viennese court and in the service of imperial representation, and even among them, we do not know of any commissioned by Leopold as King of Hungary for his subjects. The government regarded the country as a province conquered with arms in hand, and in this framework began to develop a new political, economic, and administrative system. This provoked such resentment in Hungary that in 1703, the Rákóczi's Uprising broke out. This period of antagonism ended with the Peace of Szatmár (Satu Mare, 1711). The victory of the monarchy, however, was followed by a compromise peace in which the Hungarian state structure remained intact. Ibidem, p. 14.

Charles VI and Maria Theresa were also captured in Hungarian clothing. The paintings of Maria Theresa after the coronation in Bratislava in 1741 show the Habsburg monarch in Hungarian coronation attire, whose sumptuous embroidery with pearls and precious stones modified the traditional lacing of men's clothing. This applies not only to the full-length state portrait by Daniel Schmidely (1705 – 1780) from 1742 for Bratislava Town Hall but also to the numerous half-portraits that follow the painting by Martin van Meytens (1695 – 1770). These portraits played an important role in representing Maria Theresa in the Kingdom of Hungary. More than 50 full- and half-figures of this type of portrait are available in the territory.[14]

During the coronation, the monarch symbolically became a member of the Hungarian political nation through his noble Hungarian attire, which enabled him to embody the image of a good monarch. Thus, Hungarian clothing was an important element in the symbolic legitimacy of the Habsburg monarchs as Hungarian kings. Maria Theresa's predecessors were crowned in noble male attire. Her coronation gown was modelled on a Hungarian noblewoman's dress, characterised by a wide skirt, long lace apron, white blouse with wide sleeves, and corset worn over the blouse. Maria Theresa's coronation gown contained these elements, but it was adapted as a ceremonial woman's dress; for example, the skirt was fitted with a train. There is no known similar case of a crowned queen wearing Hungarian attire prior to her time. In the descriptions of Hungarian royal coronations, women of the Habsburg family in the early modern period were always crowned in "German clothing", that is, in the usual court costume. Maria Theresa's coronation attire, modelled on Hungarian women's noble attire, was thus a novelty and considered an effective symbol of her Hungarian royal title. In addition, she wore a necklace studded with diamonds and pearls, a bow around her neck, and a slightly lower stylised chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece (*collane*). She became the Grand Master of the Order after her father's death.[15] However, she was not the only person wearing Hungarian attire during the coronation. All Austrian nobles holding Hungarian offices, and their wives and daughters were ordered to wear Hungarian dress.[16]


*Fig. 3: Johann Jakob Matern di Cilano, Portrait of emperor Charles VI as Hungarian king. 1728. Oil on canvas, 233 × 162 cm. Bratislava City Gallery. Source: Archive BCG.*

[14] POLLEROß 2010 (see in note 6), p. 67; SERFŐZŐ, S.: Themen und Formen der Repräsentation Maria Theresias in Ungarn. In: *Die Repräsentation Maria Theresias: Herrschaft und Bildpolitik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung.* Eds.: TELESKO, W. – LINSBOTH, S. – HERTEL, S. Wien 2020, p. 313; MATSCHE, F.: Maria Theresias Bild als Herrscherin in der Kunst ihrer Zeit. In: *Maria Theresias Kulturwelt: Geschichte, Religiosität, Literatur, Oper, Ballettkultur, Architektur, Malerei, Kunsttischlerei, Porzellan und Zuckerbäckerei im Zeitalter Maria Theresias. Band 2.* Eds.: BÉHAR, P. – MOUREY, M. – SCHNEIDER, H. Hildesheim 2011, p. 206.

[15] SERFŐZŐ 2020 (see in note 14), p. 311 – 313; SERFŐZŐ, S.: „Ihro Königliche Majestät in einem Hungerischen Habit". Die Habsburger als Könige von Ungarn im Zeremoniell und Porträt im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert. In: *Frühneuzeit-Info*, Vol. 35, 2024, p. 41.

[16] STOLLBERG-RILINGER, B.: *Maria Theresia: die Kaiserin in ihrer Zeit. Eine Biographie.* München 2017, p. 86.

## The coronation ritual in St. Martin's Cathedral in Bratislava

Coronation is a multilayered event that combines the elements of a symbolically expressed ritual act/ceremony. It demonstrated the authority of the ruler and legitimised the assumption of power by the incoming king. Through the visible public performance of traditional rituals, the prince legitimised his claim to rule and assumed symbolic and practical power. Hence, the coronation was also a rite of passage in which the prince assumed a new role and embodied a political concept. Simultaneously, the presence of foreign guests increased the splendour of the ceremony, the monarch's international prestige, and his legitimacy over the territory in which he ruled. Symbols of power, primarily the coronation insignia, play a dominant role in symbolic communication.[17]

Europe's most common coronation insignia were the crown, king's orb, and sceptre. In Hungary, a sumptuously decorated spear, later a sword, was considered a sign of royal power and a relic of the first Hungarian King, Stephen. The coronation mantle was also associated with this ruler.[18] The crown jewels were prepared on the altar during the coronation, from where they were served to the protagonists of the coronation. The monarch knelt and laid before the altar, and the coronating bishop turned towards it while reciting prayers.[19]

The ceremony consisted of two parts: ecclesiastical and secular. The ecclesiastical part of the coronation, derived from the episcopal consecration, was governed by the Roman Pontifical *Pontificale Romanum*, compiled at the end of the 13th century by the bishop of Mendoza, Guillaume Durand (c. 1230–1296).[20] On the day of the ceremony, the monarch was greeted with a respectful bow on his way to the chancel, accompanied by two bishops. The future king had to swear on his knees before the primate to preserve the law, justice, and peace of the Church and the people entrusted to him. After swearing the oath, the primate, facing the altar, together with the other bishops, implored God for the future ruler to have all the gifts of the Old Testament figures: Abraham's faithfulness, Moses's devotion, Joshua's courage, David's humility, and Solomon's wisdom. After this ceremony, the future king lays down, facing the left side of the kneeling primate. After the final supplications, the primate stands up and grasps the crozier, asking God to bless, sanctify, and initiate the future king, while the bishops and prelates bless him.[21]

The future king, kneeling among the bishops, received the anointing with the "oil of the cate-

[17] BADA 2015 (see in note 3), p. 112, p. 116; HERTEL, S.: Maria Theresia als ‚König von Ungarn' im Krönungszeremoniell in Preßburg (1741). In: *Frühneuzeit-Info*, Vol. 27, 2016, No. 3, p. 110; HERTEL, S.: Schicksalsjahre einer Königin (1740 – 1743). Die symbolische Festigung weiblicher Herrschaft. In: *Die Repräsentation Maria Theresias: Herrschaft und Bildpolitik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung.* Ed. TELESKO, W. – LINSBOTH, S. – HERTEL, S. Wien 2020, p. 50.

[18] HOLČÍK, Š.: *Korunovačné slávnosti. Bratislava 1563 – 1830*. Bratislava 2005, p. 11.

[19] *Pontificale Romanum Clementis VIII ac Urbani VIII Jussu editum et a Benedicto XIV recognitum et castigatum juxta recentiorem editionem Romanam ac demum in commodiorem formam redactum,* Parisiis 1859, p. 160; *Pontificale Romanum Clementis VIII ac Urbani VIII* was published in editions with identical text from the 16th century onwards. For comparison see *Pontificale romanum Clementis VIII primum; nunc denuo Urbani VIII. Auctoritate recognitum, ac demun ad plurium usum, in commodiorem formam redactum. Editio tertia,* Parisiis 1683, p. 200 – 218; HAĽKO, J. – KOMORNÝ, Š.: *Dóm: Katedrála sv. Martina v Bratislave*. Bratislava 2010, p. 177.

[20] Traditionally, the church ceremony consisted of the following steps: (1) candidates fasting; (2) the procession and entry to the temple; (3) the insignia placing; (4) election by acclamation; (5) the enumeration of the king's duties; (6) ecclesiastical oath of the king; (7) the consecration; (8) the anointing; (9) clothing into the vestment; (10) girding with a sword; (11) drawing of the sword; (12) the coronation; (13) giving of the sceptre and an apple; (14) the enthronement; and (15) Te Deum prayer and closing prayers. The secular section consisted of four parts: (1) the procession from the Coronation Church to the Franciscan Church, where the Knights of the Golden Spur were knighted; (2) the secular coronation oath; (3) the four swings of the sword in the four cardinal directions on the coronation hill on horseback; and (4) the festive banquet. BADA 2016 (see in note 10), p. 50; HENDE, F.: Die Liturgie der ungarischen Krönung von 1741 als politische Repräsentation. In: *Die Repräsentation Maria Theresias: Herrschaft und Bildpolitik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung.* Ed. TELESKO, W. – LINSBOTH, S. – HERTEL, S. Wien 2020, p. 340.

[21] Pontificale Romanum 1859 (see in note 19), p. 161 – 164; HAĽKO – KOMORNÝ 2010 (see in note 19), p. 180.

chumens", mediating divine help, strength, energy, and protection from the enemies of body and soul. In this context, the anointing received on the right wrist, forearm, and back between the shoulder blades was also meant to express protection from the power of Satan, the power to do good, and the grace of Christ. Another ceremony followed this ceremony. The future king's anointed hand was bandaged with a silk scarf. He then dressed in his full royal attire, including the coronation mantle, in the sacristy during a solemn chanting. Returning to the altar, he received his sword, crown, and sceptre and finally sat on the throne. With the words "Accept the sword, taken from the altar", the first prayer began, according to which he was to use this weapon as a vigilant ruler to defend and destroy—to defend the peace of the country, the Church and its faithful, orphans and widows, and to destroy the enemies of Christianity and to eliminate injustice. During the oration, the primate fastened the sword in the sheath on the king, saying, "You, most mighty, gird the sword upon your loins, and remember that the saints do not overcome kingdoms by the sword, but by faith". The king then drew his sword for the ceremonial swing, which he placed on his left shoulder for a moment.[22]

The climactic moment of the ritual was the placement of the crown on the king's head. It was passed from the altar to the hands of the bishops, from whom it was finally received by the chief crowning dignitary. The latter, after placing the crown, blessed the king in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit so that he might recognise in the crown a sign of divine power, honour, and glory lest he forget that he was also the protector of the Church. The monarch then took the sceptre while the primate reminded him of his new duties.[23] The final act was the ceremonial placement of the crowned king on the monarch's chair with repeated singing of *Alleluia*. He unsheathed his sword, carried in the ensuing procession, at the head of which he held a sceptre and the king's orb. The king was accompanied on the right by the primate and prelates and on the left by his entourage while he was ritually enthroned by one of the senior bishops. After the blessing and singing, the primate invoked God's name. After the final Trinitarian formula, those present responded "Amen", to which the entire episcopate greeted the king with the kiss of peace, while the king honoured the primate by kissing the ring. Ordinary masses followed this act.[24]

### Iconology of the altar of St. Martin

According to legend, St. Martin came from Sabaria in the Roman province of Pannonia, that is, from today's Hungarian town of Szombathely (Steinamanger, Kamenec). Following Baroque notions, he was perceived as a Hungarian saint in the Kingdom of Hungary,[25] even though he could be considered an international saint popular throughout Europe and a patron saint of many European noble families. The veneration of St. Martin was established in Hungary thanks to the Hungarian King Stephen and his father Gejza, who built a monastery and temple dedicated to him in Pannonhalma. In the struggle against the spread of paganism and Cupan (Kopáň, Koppány), Stephen asked for the intercession of St. Martin, who thus became the main patron saint of all Hungary and the House of Árpád. Stephen's wife, Gizela, also contributed to this veneration. She was aware of St. Martin's veneration in her native Bavaria. Bishop Gerhard, the tutor of Stephen's son St. Emeric, was also drawn to St. Martin's worship.

[22] Pontificale Romanum 1859 (see in note 19), p. 165 – 168; HAĽKO – KOMORNÝ 2010 (see in note 19), p. 181.

[23] Pontificale Romanum 1859 (see in note 19), p. 169 – 170; HAĽKO – KOMORNÝ 2010 (see in note 19), p. 182.

[24] The coronations of the early modern kings were based on this ritual, which was modified in 1687. From that year onwards, the rule was that the monarch would be crowned jointly by the Archbishop of Esztergom and, if elected, the Palatine. This rule was enforced by Palatine Paul Esterházy (1635 – 1713) and applied from the coronation of Joseph I (1687). Pontificale Romanum 1859 (see in note 19), p. 171 – 174; HAĽKO – KOMORNÝ 2010 (see in note 19), p. 184; HENDE, F.: Political representation at the coronations of Hungarian kings in the first half of the eighteenth century. In: *Eagles looking east and west: dynasty, ritual and representation in Habsburg Hungary and Spain*. Eds.: MARTÍ, T. – QUIRÓS ROSADO, R. Turnhout 2021, p. 172.

[25] PÖTZL-MALÍKOVÁ, M.: Georg Raphael Donner: Sv. Martin so žobrákom. In: *Pamiatky a múzeá*, 1992, No. 5 – 6, p. 28.

The role of St. Martin as patron saint of the country continued even after the Árpád dynasty died out. In 1427, King Sigismund of Luxembourg (1368 – 1437) named Martin as the most important patron saint of the country in a charter.[26]

St. Martin was considered a domestic saint; hence, the choice of clothing embodied a contemporary update of the scene.[27] We already know that the Habsburgs used the visual arts to demonstrate that they were the heirs of the Hungarian kings of the House of Árpád and that the Hungarian throne rightfully belonged to them. We can thus see a clear connection between the Habsburgs, who included the kings of House of Árpád among their ancestors, and St. Martin, their patron saint.

When Charles VI ascended the throne, the Hungarian crown was considered hereditary to the Habsburgs. However, as Charles VI had no male heirs, his descendants' rule was in danger. With the help of Emericus Esterházy, the king gained support for pragmatic sanction, based on which his daughter Maria Theresa succeeded him, followed by a male heir. Upon Esterházy's initiative, pragmatic sanction was first adopted by the Croatian Diet in 1712 and finally by the Hungarian Diet in 1722 – 1723.[28] However, there was still hope that a male heir would be born. In 1733, Charles VI was already 48, and his wife, Elisabeth Christine of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, was 42. The chances of giving birth to the desired male heir were already low. As such, it is not surprising that a decision was made to create a new coronation altar, which, in the presence of Europe's political elites and prominent Hungarian nobles, would symbolically legitimise Maria Theresa as Hungarian *king* (Maria Theresa was not crowned as regina—queen but as rex—king).

St. Martin, dressed in Hungarian clothing, sat on a rearing horse on a plinth directly above the place where the future Hungarian monarch would be crowned in Hungarian clothing. The entire scene was topped with a Hungarian crown floating on the volutes. Thus, we can see a clear symbolic link between the future Habsburg monarch, dressed in Hungarian clothes, and St. Martin as the patron saint of the country and the first ruling house, who "supervised" the coronation ceremony from above and simultaneously legitimised it with his presence. The future king of the "foreign" Habsburg family was thus not only responsible for keeping the coronation oath and his duties in the eyes of the "domestic" St. Martin but also symbolically and politically became the "domestic" ruler of Hungary. This status was also reinforced by the "domestic" coronation dignitaries – the Hungarian primate and palatine – as representatives of the highest ecclesiastical and secular office in Hungary.

In this context, the crown can be understood not only as a formal sign of coronation but also as an element of the sacralisation of the ceremony. Under the reign of Matthias II, the crown took on new significance – it became a symbol of political compromise between the Habsburg king and the Hungarian estates, as well as a symbol of the united *natio Hungarica* under Habsburg rule.[29] In this way, the crown on the altar served to legitimize the "foreign" dynasty on the Hungarian throne, similar to the statue of St. Martin, forming a single conceptual whole. Similarly, the adoring angels on separate plinths not only adored the host in the tabernacle but also bowed down before the future monarch.

St. Martin's sword was the second most crucial communication element during the coronation. As stated earlier, the first prayer began with the words, "Accept the sword taken from the altar", according to which the future ruler was to use this weapon as a vigilant ruler, both to defend and destroy. During

[26] In addition to St. Martin, St. George, St. Michael, and especially the Virgin Mary appeared in a similar role in the early period under St. Stephen. KOSZTA, L.: Szent Márton tiszteletének magyarországi kezdete. Megjegyzések az első magyar bencés monostor, Pannonhalma alapításához. In: *Annales Historici Prešoviensis*. Eds.: PEKÁR, M. – DERFIŇÁK, P. – ZMÁTLO, P. Prešov 2005, p. 71 – 74; PRAŽÁK, R.: *Legendy a kroniky Koruny uherské*. Praha 1988, p. 82, 84, 98, 351 – 352.

[27] Donner has removed St. Martin from history and presented him to a contemporary audience, possibly intending to emphasise the continued relevance of his message. HAĽKO – KOMORNÝ 2010 (see in note 19), p. 354.

[28] KOLTAI, A.: Császárhű, bőkezű, remete: Eszterházy Imre hercegprímás. In: *Limes*, 2005, No. 3, p. 8 – 9.

[29] TESZELSZKY, K.: *The Holy Crown and the Hungarian Estates: Constructing Early Modern Identity in the Kingdom of Hungary*. Göttingen 2023, p. 326.

the coronation, the primate girded the scabbard with a sword for the king. Next, the king drew his sword for the ceremonial swing. He then placed his sword against the left shoulder. During this act, another symbolic moment occurred when St. Martin's sword and the drawn sword of the future king had a reciprocal relationship. Just as St. Martin's sword, a weapon used to destroy enemies, was used as an act of mercy, so should the king use his sword for the good of his subjects and defend his kingdom in the event of a threat.[30] The sword represented the ruler's military and physical strength and power, and thus violence and aggression. At the same time, it symbolized the protection of the country by its ruler and his wise, just, and legitimate rule. The sword played a major role in symbolising Maria Theresa's reign in Hungary in depictions of the coronation ceremony.[31] In the coronation ceremony, the sword must also be understood as a symbol of the physical rule of the monarch, who must not forget the spiritual/ideological rule, as evidenced by the primate's formula recited during the girding of the sword: "You, most mighty, gird the sword upon your loins, and remember that the saints do not overcome kingdoms by the sword, but by faith". If we view the sword as binding the physical and spiritual worlds, a similar connection can be found in the altar: the beggar as a representative of the physical world, clouds with adoring angels on pedestals as representatives of the spiritual world, and St. Martin as the link between the two worlds.

In this regard, we must not forget St. Martin's cloak. While the sword, a destructive weapon, serves as an instrument of mercy, it is the cloak, half of which the saint gives to the beggar, that expresses his mercy. Like the sword, the cloak represents a coronation insignia and a symbol of power, ensuring the legitimacy of the future ruler. In this sense, it reinforces and supports the key significance of the sword. Thus, three references to the coronation insignia, which were crucial for Hungary, appeared on the coronation altar: the sword, the cloak, and the crown of St. Stephen.

A horse is another element that plays a role in the coronation.[32] Equestrian portraits played a major role in the Habsburgs' visual propaganda.[33] The most common (coronation) equestrian portraits were prints of Habsburgs seated on a rearing horse. Every Habsburg monarch, from Maximilian II to Maria Theresa—the period I examine—is depicted in this manner.[34] Within cabinet works at the

[30] This mutual relationship was first noticed by Jozef Hal'ko. HAĽKO – KOMORNÝ 2010 (see in note 19), p. 334.

[31] HERTEL 2016 (see in note 17), p. 115 – 116.

[32] In the article on iconography, I mentioned that the rearing horse embodies a rarity within St. Martin's iconography and that this may have been a formal decision. A close-up view (which only the person standing near the altar could see) revealed that the horse had only one front leg raised. The other was lowered behind the beggar's body to provide greater stability. Along with the hind legs in the crouch, there is an illusion that the horse is rearing both front legs in the air. This illusion is common in Baroque art. Moreover, the elevation of only one leg may be based on two paintings of St. Martin by Anthony van Dyck (in which the horse's hind legs in a crouch are absent). It is also certain that this conveyed symbolic significance was understandable to the elites of the time. PÖTZL-MALÍKOVÁ 1992 (see in note 25), p. 30.

[33] There is a widely accepted opinion that the Habsburgs did not allow themselves to be depicted on equestrian monuments in public spaces due to their emphasis on hereditary modesty, and therefore equestrian portraits are generally not found among them. This statement is only partially true. On the one hand, it is true that equestrian monuments in public spaces are rare among the Habsburgs, but the tradition of being depicted in equestrian portraits in various media and on various occasions has existed throughout the early modern period. POLLEROß, F.: „Theatro della Gloria Austriaca". Das Reiterporträt als Herrschaftszeichen der Casa de Austria. In: *Les Habsbourg en Europe. Circulations, échanges, regards croisés*. Eds.: MERLE, A. – LEROY DU CARDONNOY, É. Reims 2018, p. 83 – 84; MATSCHE, F.: *Die Kunst im Dienst der Staatsidee Kaiser Karls VI. Ikonographie, Ikonologie und Programmatik des „Kaiserstils"*. Berlin/New York 1981, p. 60 – 62.

[34] See Giovanni Britto, the equestrian portrait of Maximilian II, print, 1550 – 1560, inv. no. 1860,0414.153, The British Museum, London; Ägidius Sadeler after Adrien de Vries, equestrian portrait of Rudolf II, print, 1586 – 1629, no. 53.601.339(73), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Equestrian coronation portrait of Emperor Matthias, print, 1612, inv. no. N 42 769, Historisches Museum Frankfurt (a visually identical print, only with a transcription of the name; it also shows Ferdinand II); Equestrian coronation portrait of Ferdinand II, print, 1619, inv. no. C 7818, Historisches Museum Frankfurt; Wolfgang Kilian, equestrian portrait of Ferdinand III, print, 1653, inv. no. WKilian AB 3.61, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig; Johann Hoffmann (publisher),

Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Ferdinand II, Ferdinand III, Leopold I, Joseph I, and Charles VI are depicted as victorious warlords on rearing horses, the last three with a defeated enemy underfoot. Joseph I is repeatedly portrayed on a rearing horse on a coronation hill in Bratislava in the coronation prints, as is Maria Theresa.[35]

This motif also appears in the ephemeral architecture. On the thirty-third birthday of Charles VI, associated with the heir's expected birth, Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach created festive ephemeral architecture. The centrepiece was a statue of Charles VI on a rearing horse.[36] Thus, Donner was able to accept this motif from the milieu. In the context of the coronation ritual, St. Martin's horse can be viewed as a symbol of aristocratic power. The beauty, stature, strength, and elegance of the horse's body, its movement and speed, and its virtues (such as pride, nobility, courage, and horsemanship) are appropriate for characterising princely horsemen. Seemingly docile yet sternly led, the horse represents the obedience of people who submit to righteous strictness and goodness. In emblem studies, the horse denotes pride, determination, and incorruptibility in reference to Alexander the Great's stallion, Bucephalus, who would not allow anyone other than his master to mount him. These qualities should also characterise the monarch. The art of riding a horse is identified with the art of good government (there is a connection between riding a horse on the coronation hill). The rider on the rearing horse becomes a symbol of powerful rule over the people.[37]

The ancient metaphor, according to which a good ruler can lead his people as well as his horse, was formulated in 1623 by the lawyer Jéronimo de Cevallos (1560 – 1641) in his *treatise Arte real para del buen gobierno de los Reyes, y Principes, y de sus vasallos*, with reference to the Roman prosaist Valerius Maximus (1st century AD). For the Habsburgs, the symbolism of the horse was linked to an interest in hippology. Repeated commissions for equestrian portraits by both the Spanish and Austrian branches of the family were prompted by an interest in hippology and enthusiasm for the "Spanish riding school," known for its dressage. This was already evident in 1581 in the first illustrated "collection catalogue" of the Habsburgs: Juan de Austria (1547 – 1578), the illegitimate son of Charles V (1500 – 1558), commissioned Jan van der Straet (1523 – 1605) to produce a series of engravings of his most valuable horses. Another example is the portraits by Diego Velázquez (1599 – 1660) depicting Philip IV (1605 – 1665) and, above all, his son Baltasar Charles (1629 – 1646) in riding school, performing the so-called courbette or levade, which are extremely demanding riding tasks, as the rearing horse could only be guided with one hand. Similarly, Leopold I had himself portrayed several times on a rearing horse, presenting himself as both the heir to the virtues of his ancestors and the heir to a global empire.[38]

The Habsburg monarchs also used coronation paintings and prints to establish a relationship be-

equestrian portrait of Leopold I, print, 1655/1698, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig; Joseph I is the only one not portrayed in a conventional equestrian portrait as a print. The closest to it is the print of Joseph I on a rearing horse throwing coins during the coronation, 1690, inv. no. 4493, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg; Johann Christoph Hafner, equestrian portrait of Charles VI, print, 1690 – 1754, inv. no. JCHafner AB 2.2, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig; Johannes Esaias Nilson (engraver) and Gabriel Bodenehr (publisher), equestrian portrait of Maria Theresa, print, 1740 – 1780, inv. no. A 228, 2, S.102, Kupferstich-Kabinett Dresden.

[35] All prints are located in Bratislava City Gallery: Coronation of Joseph I, three prints from 1687, inv. no. C 1478, C 1493 and C 1510; Coronation of Joseph I in Bratislava, two prints from 1688, inv. no. C 1464 and C 1470; Coronation of Joseph I, c. 1687 – 1719, inv. no. C 25403; Maria Theresa on the coronation hill in Bratislava, print, 1741, inv. no. C 1508; Maria Theresa on the Coronation Hill, print, 1747, inv. no. C 1724.

[36] KREUL, A.: *Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach. Regie der Relation.* Salzburg 2006, p. 276.

[37] DITTRICH, S. – DITTRICH, L.: *Lexikon der Tiersymbole. Tiere als Sinnbilder in der Malerei des 14. – 17. Jahrhunderts*. Petersberg 2005, p. 361.

[38] I would like to add that the enormous interest in horses and their symbolism does not necessarily mean that Donner's horse was modeled after a "live" Habsburg court horse performing dressage or illustrated dressage manuals. Any attempt to find an (anatomical) model for the horse will probably be impossible to confirm or refute. POLLEROß 2018 (see in note 33), p. 81, 90 – 91.

tween the crowned king and St. Martin. All three Hungarian kings crowned in Bratislava following the erection of the new altar—Maria Theresa, Leopold II (1747 – 1792), and Ferdinand I (as Hungarian King Ferdinand V, 1793 – 1875)[39]—were captured during the act of coronation in such a way that the turning of their bodies and heads corresponded to the direction of St. Martin, thus being in harmony with each other. In this case, it was probably visual propaganda and individualisation of the monarchs since they were supposed to face the altar.[40]

### Kaiserstil at the court of Charles VI in the context of the iconology of the altar of St. Martin

In this section I discuss Kaiserstil ("emperor style") in the court of Charles VI and its possible expression on the high altar in Bratislava.[41] To date,

*Fig. 4: Franz Messmer and Wenzel Pohl, Coronation of Maria Theresa in Bratislava (1741). 1768. Oil on canvas, ca 250 × 140 cm. Hungarian Embassy in Vienna. Source: bratislavskerozkyy.sk.*

[39] Franz Messmer and Wenzel Pohl, Coronation of Maria Theresa in St. Martin's Cathedral, oil on canvas, 1768, today at the Hungarian Embassy in Vienna; Johann Hieronymus Löschenkohl, Coronation of Leopold II in St. Martin's Cathedral, 1790, inv. no. C 1450, Bratislava City Gallery; Sebastian Mansfeld, Carl Schütz, Coronation of Leopold II in St. Martin's Cathedral, 1790, inv. no. C 1442, Bratislava City Gallery; Sebastian Mansfeld, Carl Schütz, Coronation of Leopold II in St. Martin's Cathedral, 1790, Brown University Library, USA; Vincent Raimund Grüner, Coronation of Ferdinand V in St. Martin's Cathedral, 1830, inv. no. C 1504, Bratislava City Gallery.

[40] LINSBOTH, S.: Die Krönungsbilder in der Ungarischen Hofkanzlei in Wien. In: *Die Repräsentation Maria Theresias: Herrschaft und Bildpolitik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung.* Eds.: TELESKO, W. – LINSBOTH, S. – HERTEL, S. Wien 2020, p. 327.

[41] If interested in Habsburg visual representation, see: MATSCHE 1981 (see in note 33); POLLEROß, F.: *Die Repräsentation der Habsburger (1493 – 1806).* Petersberg 2023; LORENZ, H. – MADER-KRATKY, A.: *Die Wiener Hofburg 1705 – 1835. Die kaiserliche Residenz vom Barock bis zum Klassizismus.* Wien 2016; TELESKO, W. – LINSBOTH, S. – HERTEL, S.: *Die Repräsentation Maria Theresias: Herrschaft und Bildpolitik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung.* Wien 2020; POLLEROß, F.: „Monumenta Virtutis Austriacae". Addenda zur Kunstpolitik Kaiser Karls VI. In: *Kunst, Politik, Religion. Studien zur Kunst in Süddeutschland, Österreich, Tschechien und der Slowakei. Festschrift für Franz Matsche.* Eds.: HÖRSCH, M. – OY-MARRA, E. Petersberg 2000, p. 99 – 122; KOVÁCS, E.: Die Apotheose des Hauses Österreich. Repräsentation und politischer Anspruch. In: *Welt des Barock.* Ed. FEUCHTMÜLLER, R. – KOVÁCS, E. Linz 1986, p. 53 – 86.

no one has examined this possibility at any depth except Ingeborg Schemper-Sparholz, according to whom it was the most important altar in Kaiserstil during the reign of Charles VI as the Hungarian king. Similarly, she argued that the concept of the altar had to be approved by the centrally controlled Viennese court Building Authority before it could be built. However, she did not support these ideas in further arguments.[42]

The former main altar of the cathedral has received considerable attention in terms of possible models. For instance, it has been associated with altars in Jesuit churches in Vienna, Klagenfurt, and Mannheim[43] because they have four columns in a semicircle and a canopy on top. The inspiration for all the altars is believed to be Bernini's ciborium altar at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.[44] In addition to the large number of altars linked to the Bratislava altar, several artists are credited for designing its architecture, including Joseph Emanuel Fischer von Erlach (1693 – 1742), Giuseppe (1696 – 1757) and Antonio Galli-Bibiena (1700 – 1774), and Georg Raphael Donner.[45]

I maintain that the Bratislava altar belongs to the context of imperial commissions and that the probable models come from the work of Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656 – 1723), the imperial court architect, as his work could have been acquired by both Joseph Emanuel Fischer von Erlach[46] and Georg Raphael Donner. A more precise attribution is complicated because no preparatory work on the Bratislava altar has been preserved. Therefore, no comparison is possible. I discuss the elements common within the artworks commissioned by Charles VI, which also appear in the Bratislava altar and their probable iconography. In particular, the lion skin, instead of the saddle, the chain on the pelisse of St. Martin, clouds with angels and glory, the baldachin,

[42] SCHEMPER-SPARHOLZ, I.: Lovasszobor az oltáron: gondolatok Georg Raphael Donner pozsonyi fooltárárol, Josef Thaddäus Stammel gráci Szent Marton-oltárával összehasonlítva. In: *Művészettörténeti értesítő*, Vol. 45, 1996a, No. 3 – 4, p. 157.

[43] Comparing the Mannheim altar designed by Alessandro Galli-Bibiena (1687 – 1769) and created mainly by Peter Anton von Verschaffelt with the Bratislava altar is inaccurate. The Mannheim altar was created between 1757 and 1760, so it could not have served as a model for the Bratislava altar from 1733 – 1735. The very opposite was only possible. However, this is difficult to prove, as both artworks could have been inspired by another work, probably from the imperial milieu. Comparing the two altars is even more difficult because neither has been preserved. The Mannheim altar was completely destroyed during World War II. A copy was made after the war based on drawings and photographs. HOFMANN, E.: Peter Anton von Verschaffelt. Hofbildhauer des Kurfürsten Carl Theodor in Mannheim (Inaugural-Dissertation). Mannheim 1982, p. 54 – 55, p. 67 – 72.

[44] MALÍKOVÁ, M.: *Juraj Rafael Donner a Bratislava*. Bratislava 1993, p. 38; SCHEMPER-SPARHOLZ 1996 (see in note 42), p. 161; CHMELINOVÁ, K.: *Miesto zázrakov: premeny barokového oltára. 24. jún – 28. august 2005*. Bratislava 2005, p. 46.

[45] The authorship of J.E. Fischer von Erlach was considered, for example, by Ivan Rusina; the authorship of Giuseppe Galli-Bibiena was considered by Jiří Kostka; authorship of Antonio Galli-Bibiena by Mária Pötzl-Malíková; and authorship of G.R. Donner by Petr Fidler. RUSINA 1990 (see in note 1), p. 102; PÖTZL-MALÍKOVÁ, M.: Zu Leben und Werk von Georg Raphael Donner. In: *Georg Raphael Donner. 1693 – 1741. Katalog der Ausstellung: Unteres Belvedere 2. Juni bis 30. September 1993*. Ed. KRAPF, M. Wien 1993, p. 54; CHMELINOVÁ 2005 (see in note 44), p. 46; KOSTKA, J.: *Donner a jeho okruh na Slovensku*. Bratislava 1954, p. 29; FIDLER, P.: Georg Raphael Donner. Baudirektor und Architekt? In: *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, Band 92, 1996, p. 149 – 164.

[46] The assumption that Joseph Emanuel was the author of the altar is supported by his working relationship with his father. From 1722 onwards, Johann Bernhard could hardly work anymore. His son Joseph Emanuel assumed responsibility for his father's building sites before his death (1723) and independently continued to work on the most important projects of the "imperial style" (Karlskirche, Stallburg, Imperial Court Library, facade of Saint Michael's Church). Since Joseph Emanuel also took over his father's collection of drawings, and thus several plans and designs that are no longer available today, it is difficult to distinguish precisely between the father's concepts and those of his son. It seems likely that the father's ideas were taken up in the buildings that Joseph Emanuel continued (Imperial Court Library, Stallburg) as well as in the prospective design of the facade of the Saint Michael's Church. In addition, Joseph Emanuel may have used his father's preparatory works as an inspiration/model in his own later work. HELLMUT, L.: Gesamtplanungen zu Wiener Hofburg von Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach? In: *Die Wiener Hofburg 1705-1835. Die kaiserliche Residenz vom Barock bis zum Klassizismus*. Eds.: HELLMUT, L. – MADER-KRATKY, A. Wien 2016, p. 49 – 50.

*Fig. 5: Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, Main altar of Mariazell Basilica in Austria. Built in 1695–1704. Marble and silver. Source: wikipedia.de, CC BY-SA 3.*

*Fig. 6: Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, Draft of the main altar of Mariazell Basilica. 1692, Alte Galerie, Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz. Source: Archive Universalmuseum Joanneum.*

and columns were placed in a semicircle. First, I focus on comparing the works designed by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach and, second, with those commissioned by Charles VI.

The main altar of the pilgrimage church in Mariazell was designed by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach as early as 1692 but was only partially built between 1700 and 1702. This was completed with a gift from Charles VI in 1715 during his pilgrimage.[47] The architecture of the altar is simple: four double columns in a semicircle carry clouds with angels and glory. The central scene consists of an iconographic type of the Throne of Mercy: the crucified Christ is held by a god above whom a dove hovers in glory. This sculptural decoration is complemented by statues of the Virgin Mary, St. John, and two adoring angels on the plinths. A statue of a globe entwined with a serpent is placed between the plinths of the Virgin Mary and St. John directly below the Crucified. In particular, the clouds in the draft of the Mariazell altar correspond to those in the drawings and prints of the Bratislava altar.

The similarities between the architecture of the two altars are quite significant. Apart from the clouds with angels and glory, both altars have four columns

[47] KREUL 2006 (see in note 36), p. 154.

*Fig. 7: Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, Draft of the St. Joseph's Fountain (Vermählungsbrunnen) in Hoher Markt, Vienna. 1706. Source: MATSCHE, Franz. Die Kunst im Dienst der Staatsidee Kaiser Karls VI. Berlin / New York 1981.*

in a semicircle, a minimum (sculptural) decoration, and four statues on the pedestal (if we count the vases from the Bratislava altar). Adoring angels were also present. The statues of God and the Crucified are silver, while the altar has a rather sober colour scheme: a golden cloudy space, silver central statues together with statues on the plinth, and a light-brown altar architecture with dark brown cornices. The Bratislava altar has a similar colour scheme.[48] Both altars involve an interplay between colour, light, and glow. The silver statues from Mariazell might have inspired the choice of lead for the sculptural group of St. Martin and the beggar, adoring angels, and vases. The differences in the placement of the clouds were due to the different purposes of the altars: the high altar at Mariazell was in the pilgrimage church, and the altar at St. Martin was in the coronation church.

The motif of a cloudy space with glory appeared twice on the main altar of the Franciscan Church in Salzburg from 1708 to 1710. In the central part, there are clouds with glory, but in its centre, there is not a dove but the Virgin Mary. Above this scene is the second cloudy space, with God in the middle. Similar to the Bratislava altar, festoons are used as decoration. The clouds with angels topped by a holy trinity and glory are characteristic of the Plague Column in Graben Square in Vienna, commissioned by Leopold I. Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach was one of the artists. The canopy motif appears several times in Fischer von Erlach's work, for example, on the pulpit draft for St. John's Church in Salzburg, on the Wedding Fountain in the Hoher Markt in Vienna, and on the castrum doloris for Joseph I. Thus, the unique features of the architecture of the Bratislava altar also appear in Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach's work.

At the outset of comparing the imperial commissions with the Bratislava altar, it should be noted that Fischer von Erlach was a court architect, and the elements that appear in his work also appear extensively in the imperial commissions of Charles VI and his predecessors. In this case, it is particularly a canopy motif. One of Charles VI's greatest commissions was Karlskirche (1716 – 1737), designed by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach and completed by Joseph Emanuel Fischer von Erlach. The main altar (Design 1728, Construction 1729 – 1730), was designed and probably executed by the sculptor Ferdinand Maxmilian Brokoff (1688 – 1731).[49] Like

[48] The white columns on white plinths with a gilded base and capitals bear a white cornice with gilded volutes and a crown. White clouds with white angels are illuminated by golden glory. A sculptural group in a dark grey matte with vases and angels provides a contrast to this scheme.

[49] PUČALÍK, M.: Ihr sehet nehmlich einen Templ, desgleichen ihr vielleicht selten, oder vielleicht nemals gesehen: zur Ikonographie der Wiener Karlskirche. In: *Orbis artium: k jubileu Lubomíra Slavíčka.* Ed. KROUPA, J. Brno 2009, p. 557, 564; BLAŽÍČEK, O.: *Ferdinand Brokof*, Praha 1986, p. 146.

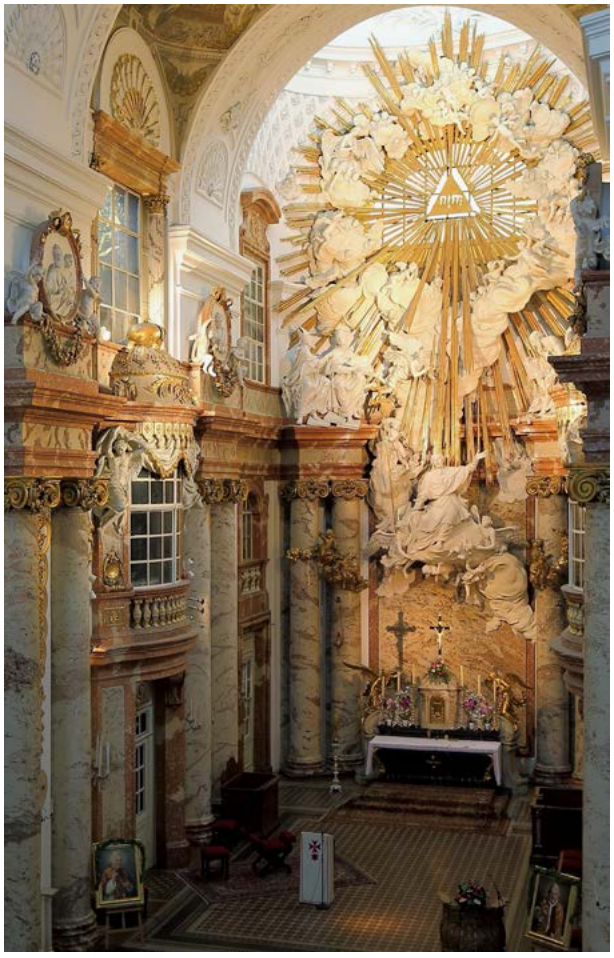

*Fig. 8: Ferdinand Maximilian Brokoff, Main altar of Apotheosis of Saint Charles Borromeo. 1728 (model), 1729–1730. Stucco, (artificial) marble, gilded wood. Karlskirche (St. Charles Church), Vienna. Source: C.Stadler/Bwag, CC-BY-SA-4.0.*


*Fig. 9: Martin Bernigeroth, Engraving of Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor. 1711–1733. 335 × 219 mm, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK, Abteilung Handschriften und Historische Drucke. Source: portraitindex.de/bilder/zoom/sbb-015470.*

the altars in Mariazell and Bratislava, it contains clouds with angels and glory, adoring angels with restrained use of colour, and is entirely sculptural. The central scene represents the Assumption of Charles Borromeo, with statues of the four Church Fathers placed on the cornice above him. Like the altar in Bratislava, it contains adoring angels that turn towards the tabernacle. The main difference is in the lower part of the altar, where the statues on the plinths are absent, but the tabernacles are similar. On the sides of the choir are identical bay windows with a canopy topped by a crown, a motif similar to that of the Bratislava altar.

The canopy motif also appears in the works commissioned by Charles VI. An example is the print of the allegory of Charles VI's reign in which a canopy topped with an archducal crown is placed above the emperor's portrait, with an eagle and lion on the sides. The canopy topped with a crown is also found on the castrum doloris of Joseph I and Charles VI and on the Wedding Fountain in Vienna. Let us not forget the coronations, where the canopies form the basis of the interior ephemeral decoration.

The Hercules motif plays a special role in imperial representation. Lion skin is often used as a refer-

ence.[50] Charles VI, the Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece, is commonly portrayed in portraits with the Order around his neck; he is also shown wearing a badge. We know Charles VI's portraits as the King of Spain, Holy Roman Emperor, King of Hungary, and King of Bohemia, with the Order of the Golden Fleece in appropriate attire.[51]

The Bratislava altar fits into the contemporary Viennese artistic environment. The fact that the commissioner was not the emperor but the Hungarian primate Emericus Esterházy does not contradict this but rather confirms it since Emericus Esterházy was a close collaborator of Charles VI and Maria Theresa and was instrumental in the approval of pragmatic sanction at the Hungarian and Croatian Diet.[52]

In the previous section, I highlighted certain elements of the Bratislava altar in works of art commissioned by the emperor and in the work of Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach. I now explain their probable iconography and the purpose of their use in the final artwork. Let us start with the least analysed element of the sculptural group: the lion skin on which St. Martin sits. In imperial art, lion skin denotes Hercules, with whom Charles VI is constantly identified in both spoken and written form for power symbolism. Hercules was seen as the conqueror of Spain and Gibraltar (Hercules Gades) and the leader of the Muses (Hercules Musagetes). He was considered a wise man and philosopher in whom the power of the body entered an ideal union with the power of the mind. As an exemplary embodiment of strength and wisdom, Hercules presented himself as the ideal model of a prince, equal to all tasks of the government, striving for virtue and wisdom and devoting himself especially to the arts and sciences. Hence, he could be considered a good ruler and leader of the muses. Thus, Charles VI wanted to be perceived as a prince of the arts and a ruler of peace. As shown by the concept of the fresco on the dome of the Imperial Court Library in Vienna (in which he is celebrated as Hercules Musagetes), this titulature is based on ancient ideas of the monarch, as both Roman and Greek nations believe that kingdoms were preserved through art and valour. At the same time, Charles VI entered ideological competition with other ruling houses, which claimed Hercules as their example, sometimes in a national manner, for example, "Hercules Gallicus, Bavaricus (Alemannus), Saxonicus" or "Svenske Herkules". In the Baroque period, Hercules could also be used in a Christian context as "Hercules Christianus", the defender of virtues against vices.[53]

The lion skin was a reference to Hercules as a model of the ideal prince and to Charles VI. According to Cesare Ripa, the belligerence and courage of the lion are attributes and symbols of the bravery—Fortitudo. Charles VI's motto was Constantia et Fortitudine.[54] This connection is confirmed by the decoration of the shield on the City Armoury in Vienna, Am Hof Square, where a globe in the clouds is held by allegories of Constantia with a crown

[50] Lion skin appears in many works of art: the print of an allegory of Charles VI's wife with medals for her Hungarian coronation (1714), a ceremonial cartouche with the medal of Charles VI's coronation as emperor (1711), and an allegory of Charles VI as the Spanish-Roman Hercules Musarum, where Hercules is clad in lion skin. The lion skin motif is also visible above the gate of the Chancellery Wing on Schauflergasse Street in Hofburg. At the same time, this motif commonly appears in prints depicting an allegory of the reign of Charles VI or prints with symbols and insignia of his reign. MATSCHE 1981 (see in note 33), pictures 16, 27, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 64, and 133 in the appendix.

[51] To mention just a few: Jacques Harrewyn, Charles III (VI) as King of Spain, print, 1703 – 1713, inv. no. A 25825, Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel; Charles III (VI) as King of Spain, print, 1703 – 1713, inv. no. IIAI, 683a Bl. 153, Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig; Martin Bernigeroth, Charles VI as Roman-German Emperor, King of Hungary and Bohemia, Archduke of Austria, print, 1711 – 1740, inv. no. A 4639, Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel; Georg Paul Busch, Charles VI as Roman-German Emperor, King of Hungary and Bohemia, Archduke of Austria, print, 1711 – 1740, inv. no. MP 3747, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

[52] ORVISKÁ, K.: Obraz Imricha Esterháziho v panegyrikách v kontexte jeho osobnosti a osobných ambícií. In: *Kapitulská: od minulosti po súčasnosť*. Ed. SLEPČAN, P. Bratislava 2025, p. 259 – 263.

[53] MATSCHE 1981 (see in note 33), p. 33, 213, 345, 364; POLLEROß, F.: From the „exemplum virtutis" to the Apotheosis. Hercules as an Identification Figure in Portraiture: an Example of the Adoption of Classical Forms of Representation. In: *Iconography, Propaganda, Legitimation*. Ed. ELLENIUS, A. Oxford/New York 1998, p. 37.

[54] MATSCHE 1981 (see in note 33), p. 245.

and broken column, as well as Fortitudo in ancient armour with a lion skin. The lion skin motif also appears in prints and coins with symbols of the reign of Charles VI—the (double-headed) eagle, two columns referring to his motto, the globe (in the clouds), the Order of the Golden Fleece, the archducal or imperial crown, the caduceus, the cornucopia, and the fasces, all of which do not necessarily appear in a single artwork from the same period.[55] The lion was also seen as a symbol of regal power as its strength, majestic stride, fearsome roar, and mane made the lion appear as the "king of the animals".[56]

The lion skin can be understood in two ways: as a reference to Charles VI and Hercules to symbolise power and as a symbol of courage and bravery. Hercules appears in artworks commissioned by the Habsburgs from Maximilian I to Joseph II.[57] As the Habsburgs used Hercules and lion skin motifs for generations, this refers to the entire house. Educated people in Viennese circles and their supporters understood this subtle reference. As the lion is seen as a symbol of power, it also fits the purpose of the coronation altar.[58]

In an article on iconography, I noted that the chain in St. Martin's pelisse is noble and resembles the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece, albeit without the pendant. During my iconographic analysis of St. Martin, I did not encounter any single sculpture with a similar chain. Cloaks were commonly joined by brooches, cords, or button(s) or draped over the shoulders without any attachment. The size of the chain is unusual in the case of St. Martin (Bratislava). We can see from a distance that this is quite rare in the Baroque sculptures of Central Europe. This was clearly intentional.

Charles VI was the Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece. He has often used this order in political battles. During the War of Spanish Succession, Charles VI claimed Burgundy as a counter to Louis XIV's (1638 – 1715) demands for Spain. He insisted that he had a claim to Burgundy's territory because it had once been administered by Charles the Bold (1433 – 1477), whose daughter married Maximilian I. The Burgundian inheritance was personified in the Order of the Golden Fleece.


*Fig. 10: Portrait of Nicolas Esterhazy. 1645. Oil on canvas, 215 × 129 cm. Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest.*

[55] Ibidem, especially pictures 16, 27, 33, 36, 37, 38, 64, and 153 in the appendix.

[56] DITTRICH – DITTRICH 2005 (see in note 37), p. 292.

[57] KOVÁCS 1986 (see in note 41), p. 62.

[58] The difference in purpose and the possibility of double reading is also evidenced by one inconspicuous detail – distance. While the nobles present at the Hungarian coronation were relatively close to the altar, where they could notice even minor details, the burghers were closest to the beginning of the choir during the Mass. From this distance from the altar, only the most sharp-eyed and attentive could notice the lion paws on either side of Martin's feet. This detail was apparently intended primarily for the audience during the coronation, and only secondarily for the burghers.

Charles VI considered it a great political success to restore the festivities of order in the Viennese court.[59] The pendant of the order was probably not used, as it did not fit iconographically into St. Martin's story, and it was a Hungarian coronation. At the same time, artwork in which the person is portrayed only with a collar has been preserved.[60] The chain may have evoked the Order of the Golden Fleece for those attending the coronation, thus creating a second reference for the House of the Habsburgs.

The schematic of the equipment for the coronation cathedral supports this interpretation.[61] Its purpose is to show the furniture arrangement explicitly designed for the coronation in the ground plan and indicate where the guests should be seated. Thanks to this, we know that Francis Stephen of Lorraine (as Emperor Francis I, 1708 – 1765), together with the archduchesses (probably Maria Anna of Austria, 1738 – 1789, Maria Anna of Austria, 1718 – 1744, and Maria Magdalena of Austria, 1689 – 1743) stood with his entourage on the tribune on the epistle side built behind the window of the sanctuary. There was a standing space for Emericus Esterházy below it. The second chair, on which he sat during the anointing and coronation of the queen, was located next to the altar. Gabriel Erdődy (1684 – 1744), as the archbishop's assistant, had a seat next to the altar on the epistle side. A bench was designated in this area for unspecified clergy. Cardinal Sigismund von Kollonitsch (1677 – 1751), papal nuncio Camillo Paolucci (1692 – 1763), and Venetian ambassador Pietro Andrea Capello (1700 – 1763) were seated at the canopy on the epistolary side. In the central zone of the choir opposite the altar sat unspecified "court and town ladies" (Hof- und Stadt- Dames). On the highest platforms on the sides of the choir sat unspecified bishops and prelates. Below them, in two rows on the gospel side, sat the Knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece. On the opposite platform, privy council members sat in one row. The last mention within the seating arrangements consists of six benches for unspecified ladies, courtiers, and ministers placed in the nave directly opposite the altar. This implies that participants from the Kingdom of Hungary were, at most, 1:1 in proportion to the invited guests from foreign countries, and many Knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece attended the coronation directly in the choir. Therefore, we can assume that guests from a German-speaking environment and foreign countries must have understood the messages in the form of the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece and the lion's skin.[62]

As for the motif of a canopy with a crown, this is a common motif in Charles VI's commissions. The canopy has been a symbol of heaven since ancient times. In Christian art, it has often been used in the sacred domain (especially in the Baroque period) in altars and monstrances where it overlays representations of the Trinity or God the Father. This can be traced several times as a symbol of Charles VI's majesty, which is related to the fact that the throne canopy was an essential part of the court ceremony. It often takes the shape of a tent found in sacred spaces.[63] We know from the coronation prints that during the coronation, the canopy was placed in front of the altar, under which the future king was crowned, thus creating a clear relationship. As previously mentioned, the canopy with the crown serves as an element of the sacralisation of the coronation ritual.

When the altar was destroyed, some of its meaning was lost. Namely, the motif that was in the middle of glory in a cloudy space. From the description of Albert Schnerich, who still had the opportunity to talk to the people who saw Donner's altar, it seems

[59] MATSCHE 1981 (see in note 33), p. 253.

[60] A good example is the portrait of Charles VI as Hungarian King, where the collane is placed on a pedestal in front of the Hungarian coat of arms, where it emerges from the eagle's beak. Johann Jakob Matern di Cilano, Portrait of Emperor Charles VI as Hungarian king. 1728. Oil on canvas, 233 × 162 cm. Bratislava City Gallery.

[61] This schematic was first published in an article by Alison Jayne Dunlop. DUNLOP, A. J.: Music and Musicians at the Pressburg Coronation of Maria Theresia (1741). In: *Musicologica Slovaca*, Vol. 3 (39), 2012, No. 1, p. 23 – 25.

[62] Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Krönung Maria Theresias zur Königin von Ungarn in Preßburg, 14. 05. 1741 – 25. 06. 1741, sign. AT-OeStA/HHStA OMeA ÄZA 40, fol. 189.

[63] MATSCHE 1981 (see in note 33), p. 94.

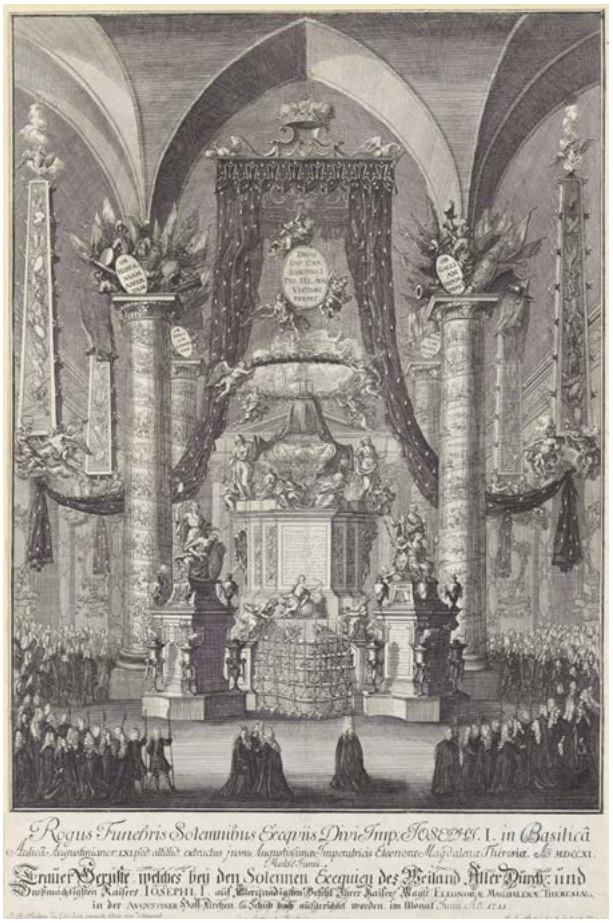

*Fig. 11: Johann Adam Delsenbach after Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, Castrum doloris for emperor Joseph I. 1711. Copper engraving. 64 × 49 cm. Albertina, Vienna. Source: Albertina Sammlungen Online.*

*Fig. 12: Josef and Andreas Schmutzer after Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach. Castrum doloris for emperor Charles VI. 1740. Copper engraving. 50,8 × 32,8 cm. Albertina, Vienna. Source: Albertina Sammlungen Online.*

that the sanctuary's interior was filled with stained glass, behind which was a window.[64] Coronation prints confirm that this space is often depicted as if immersed in light. However, two contradictory evidences have been reported previously. In the drawing from the coronation of Maria Theresa, the Hebrew inscription Jehovah is shown, and in the prints from the coronation of Leopold II, the triangle is portrayed as a symbol of the Trinity.[65] If we compare the Bratislava altar to other altars with cloudy spaces and glory, a dove may also have been there. All three motifs (especially the Trinity motif) are common to the Viennese artistic environment; however, their exact meanings cannot be reconstructed.

[64] SCHNERICH, A.: Uber Donners Martin-Altar zu Pressburg und Stammels Hochaltar in St. Martin bei Graz. In: *Der Kirchenschmuck*, Vol. 29, 1898, No. 3, p. 34.

[65] A drawing of the coronation of Maria Theresia in St. Martin's Cathedral, about 1741, Inv. No. NUM OC 81, Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris; Johann Hieronymus Löschenkohl, Coronation of Leopold II in St. Martin's Cathedral, 1790, Inv. No. C 1450, Bratislava City Gallery; Sebastian Mansfeld, Carl Schütz, Coronation of Leopold II in St. Martin's Cathedral, 1790, Inv. No. C 1442, Bratislava City Gallery; Sebastian Mansfeld, Carl Schütz, Coronation of Leopold II in St. Martin's Cathedral, 1790, Brown University Library, USA.

Thus, the Bratislava altar follows the imperial style both formally and iconographically. Thus, the noble elites of the time, familiar with Viennese art, could immediately recognise and classify individual elements. In this way, the Habsburgs indicated that, although the coronation took place in Hungary and a Hungarian king was being crowned, this king would be a member of the House of Habsburgs.

The correctness of the presented iconological analysis is also evidenced by the large-format etching (98.4 × 76 cm), the subject of which is a tribute of Hungary to Maria Theresa.[66] The artwork depicts the queen in Hungarian coronation attire on a throne with a sceptre in her hand. The back of the throne is decorated with a double-headed eagle with a sword and a sceptre in its talons and a medallion on its chest with Maria Theresa's motto "Iustitia et Clementia". On the right is a kneeling page in Hungarian clothing paying homage to the queen. On the cushion, he presents her with a Hungarian crown and the king's orb. In his left hand, he holds a sabre with the inscription: "Behold, the hand and sword of Hercules are ready" *(*"Brachium adhuc, et adhuc Herculis ensis adest"), referring to Hungary's military support of the queen in the War of the Austrian Succession. There is a Bible behind the queen on the pulpit, on the open page of which can be read a quote from the second book of Maccabees (2 Macc 15:16): "Take this holy sword as a gift from God, and with it you will destroy your enemies". Behind the Bible is a double cross with the inscription, "In hoc signo vinces", referring to Constantine's vision of the cross. On the left edge of the painting is the Austrian coat of arms with the archducal crown and a quote from the Book of Psalms (Ps 112:3), which praises the House of Habsburg: "Wealth and riches are in their houses, and their righteousness endures forever".[67] In this portrayal, the motif of the sword, the coronation insignia (the crown is important in this context), and Hungarian clothing are handled like the altar, which is an interesting demonstration of the connection between imperial visual representations and the Hungarian environment.

## Baroquisation of St. Martin's Cathedral in the context of the iconology of St. Martin's altar and the imperial style

The Baroque decoration of the choir was created in the imperial style by close allies of Charles VI and Maria Theresa, as evidenced by the tombs of Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz and Johann Pálffy, which were removed during regotisation and are not preserved. I discovered drawings of both tombs, making it possible to understand, to a large extent, the form and content of the artworks. The following analysis was performed on three drawings and one print of the finished works placed in the choir.[68] Moreover, Emericus Esterházy had a close relationship with Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz and Johann Pálffy, all three allies of Charles VI.[69]

Even before Donner arrived in Bratislava, new Baroque monuments had been created on the choir. Archbishop Esterházy was involved in this project. Although the construction of his predecessor's tomb, Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz, was commissioned by Emperor Charles VI, Emericus Esterházy sent the design to Bratislava by architect Joseph Emanuel Fischer von Erlach and gave chapter orders to carry out the work. We do not know the sculptor who

[66] Only known copy of this letter exists in the city museum in Villingen-Schwenningen, Germany. The letter was later repainted in oil and framed. The painting was probably done by the Augsburg engraver Gottfried Bernhard Götz since almost all motifs seen in this work appear in the three works signed by him from 1742 – 1743. SERFŐZŐ 2020 (see in note 14), p. 320.

[67] SERFŐZŐ 2020 (see in note 14), p. 320.

[68] Drawing of the tomb of Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz, 1728 – 1780, inv. no. C 6810, Bratislava City Gallery; drawing of the tomb of Johann Pálffy, 1752 – 1780, inv. no. C 6809, Bratislava City Gallery; Franz Alt, view into the choir of the tomb of Johann Pálffy, 1848, inv. no. GR 10, Liechtenstein Museum, Vienna; Franz Alt, view into the choir from the main altar, c. 1848, inv. no. 22726/1987, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

[69] For details on the relations of Charles VI, Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz, Emericus Esterházy, and Johann Pálffy, see: NAGY, J.: Esterházy Imre Prímás Alakja Az 1728 – 1729. Évi Országgyűlés Pasquillusaiban. In: *Fons (Forráskutatás és Történeti Segédtudományok)*, Vol. 19, 2012, No. 2, p. 203; HOLČÍK 2005 (see in note 18), p. 49; MALÍKOVÁ 1993 (see in note 44), p. 54; ORVISKÁ 2025 (see in note 52), p. 257 – 290.

*Fig. 13: Drawing of the monument of Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz. Between 1728–1780. Watercolour and pencil on paper, 55 × 34 cm. Bratislava City Gallery. Source: Archive BCG.*


*Fig. 14: Drawing of the monument of Johann Pálffy. Between 1752–1780. Watercolour and pencil on paper. 52 × 34 cm. Bratislava City Gallery. Source: Archive BCG.*

created this tomb between 1727 and 1728.[70] The central scene of the pyramidal tomb on the plinth is an allegory of the Abundance, with a putto holding a portrait of the primate Christian August in a medallion. Two winged skulls, apparently with a laurel wreath, were on either side of the plaque with text. A rich drapery wound around the pyramidal structure. At the centre of the tomb, the primate's coat of arms was topped with an urn. At first glance, we can see the similarity with Habsburg funerary architecture. Pyramidal columns, urns, allegories, portraits of the deceased in medallions, and drapery/canopy were common parts of the castrum doloris. I noted a similarity in the castrum doloris of Joseph I at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna in 1711:[71] Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach was the author of this architecture. Therefore, Joseph Emanuel may have been directly inspired by these drawings.[72]

[70] MALÍKOVÁ 1993 (see in note 44), p. 37.

[71] MATSCHE 1981 (see in note 33), see picture 60 in the appendix.

[72] These elements are also evident in another work by Johann Bernhard—the castrum doloris for the Augustinian church in Vienna as well as the castrum doloris for the Church of St. Michael, designed by Antonio Niccolò Beduzzi. They are preserved as prints in the Albertina in Vienna under inv. no. DG2018/200 and DG2018/201.

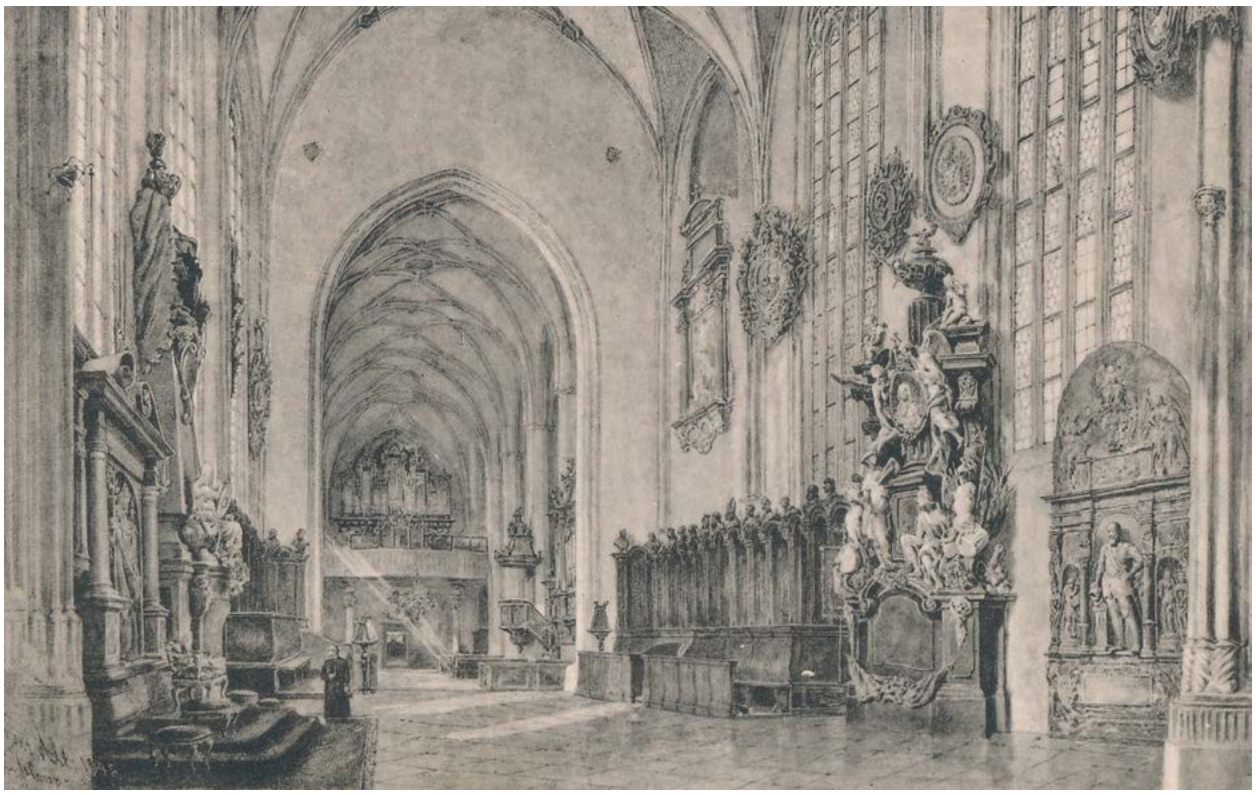

*Fig. 15: Franz Alt, View into the choir of St Martin's Cathedral from the main altar. About 1848. Engraving. 26,5 × 21,5 cm. Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, Budapest. Source: mandadb.hu, CC BY-NC-ND.*

Johann Pálffy's tomb in the chancel was commissioned by his widow, Maria Julia von Stubenberg, in 1752. Balthasar Ferdinand Moll was a supposed artist who had been a journeyman to Georg Raphael Donner in his youth.[73] The tomb was richly sculpted. Trophies with armour on the sides of the plinth and trophies with flags at the bottom of the plinth refer to Pálffy's military achievements. Next to the trophies on the left is an allegory of History, and on the right is probably that of the god Mars. There was a relief between them, the appearance of which was unpreserved. The family coat of arms is shown below. Above the relief, an angel with the allegory of Fame carries a medallion with the portrait of Johann Pálffy, who had an Order of the Golden Fleece around his neck. Behind them was a column topped with an urn, a laurel wreath, and a winged heart. This is a motif of apotheosis. Angels complement the volutes at the top. Similar to the tomb of Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz, we can see motifs of the urn, medallion with the deceased, and allegory. Military trophies and apotheotic motifs are common among the Habsburg castrum doloris.[74]

[73] During Heiller's regotisation, the tomb was dismantled, the architecture and decorative elements were lost, but the central part with the palatine's portrait was transferred and secondarily placed in the chapel of the former Pálffy Palace in Kráľová pri Senci (Királyfa, Königseiden). RUSINA 1990 (see in note 1), p. 106.

[74] For example, see Johannes Andreas Pfeffel, castrum doloris for Charles VI by Joseph Emmanuel Fischer von Erlach, print, 1740, inv. no. GS_GBU6598, Theatermuseum, Vienna; Gustav Adolf Müller, Castrum doloris for Charles VI by Franz Anton Danne, print, 1741, inv. no. GS_GBU6597, Theatermuseum, Vienna; Johann Peter Wurzer, castrum doloris for Charles VI in the Cathedral of St. Aegidius, Graz, print, 1741, inv. no. DG2020/5/68, Albertina, Vienna.

Many questions were raised by busts from the choir stalls made by Donner's workshop for Emericus Esterházy in 1736. Not only have attempts to determine their iconographic programme been unsuccessful, but it is also impossible to say unequivocally for whom the content was intended. They did not play a role in Maria Theresa's coronation. From the preserved drawings and paintings, we know that the choir stalls were covered with tapestries and that there were stands instead of choir stalls.[75]

Franz Alt's drawings show the original appearance and location of the stalls. According to this drawing, the stalls resembled those of the monastery church in Heiligenkreuz, created in Giovanni Giuliani's (1663 – 1744) workshop from 1707 to 1709, when Donner was his journeyman. Although the stalls in Bratislava lacked reliefs, 28 busts of various saints and church dignitaries were placed on top of them like Giuliani's. All busts were made of dark-stained oak wood, both life-sized and slightly larger than life. Apart from the iconography, we do not know their original order. However, the individual busts have Roman numerals incised on the back of the bust cut-out, which probably served to mark their locations. According to Mária Pötzl-Malíková, busts were not created by just one or two artists but by six or seven sculptors. The expressive range of the busts is very broad, ranging from pathetic, strongly modelled, old-style heads to softly rendered, rather conventional, busts of saints to plain, anticising heads with stiff expressions. Donner's influence was not equally evident in any of the busts. He probably created only small bozettos and gave his collaborators free rein in the final execution.[76]

It is possible to distinguish whether the person depicted is a priest or a monk based on their clothes, but not individuals. However, the busts of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, John the Almsgiver and Paul the First Hermit are distinguishable. Women's attributes are absent. Mária Pötzl-Malíková concluded that they are sibyls but may also be saints or nuns.[77] Based on these characteristics, several interpretations have been proposed. According to Mária Aggházy, there are three iconographic groups: (1) domestic saints and images of saints of the respective monastic order; (2) representatives of the social classes arranged according to their professions: popes, bishops, monks, kings, soldiers, poets, and scholars; and (3) apostles, prophets, and sibyls.[78] Ivan Rusina reported a similar structure.[79] Anna Jávor concluded that busts represent the local relations of the programme, which relate to a patron's personality. They depict 12 apostles: John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, St. Emeric, St. Paul the Hermit, St. John the Almsgiver, a Franciscan monk, a Jesuit priest, and a Pauline monk, who was to bear the rejuvenated features of Emericus Esterházy. According to Jávor, female figures embody the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, and three holy nuns (St. Clare of Assisi, St. Margaret of Hungary, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary), or the three nuns referring to the Prussian order of the Virgin Mary.[80]

The busts' purpose differed from that of the main altar; they played only a supplementary role. This confirms that the work was largely performed by journeymen and that the busts could not be precisely identified. Looking at the busts in the Hungarian National Gallery, I noticed an interesting feature: all the busts had their heads turned either to the left or right at an approximate 50:50 ratio. This means that either the busts were arranged so that they all turned their heads towards the altar or formed pairs interacting with each other. The latter is suggested by Franz Alt's drawing in which some of the busts lean their heads towards each other. As choir stalls serve the clergy, meaning must be sought in the context of clerics. This is evidenced by the fact that

[75] Franz Messmer and Wenzel Pohl, Coronation of Maria Theresa in St. Martin's Cathedral, oil on canvas, 1768, today at the Hungarian Embassy in Vienna; Coronation of Maria Theresa in St. Martin's Cathedral, drawing, 1741, inv. no. NUM OC 81, Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Paris.

[76] MALÍKOVÁ 1993 (see in note 44), p. 47 – 48.

[77] PÖTZL-MALÍKOVÁ 1992 (see in note 25), p. 40.

[78] AGGHÁZY, M.: Neu entdeckte Werke G. R. Donners und seines kreises aus der Gegend von Pressburg. In: *Acta hictoriae atrium*, 1954, No. 1 – 2, p. 76 – 77.

[79] RUSINA, I.: *Renesančná a baroková plastika v Bratislave*. Bratislava 1983, p. 96.

[80] JÁVOR, A.: Donner als Unternehmer. Kollektive Monumental-werke und Werkstattarbeiten. In: *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, Band 92, 1996, p. 142.

*Fig. 16: Matthias Kern, Drawing of the interior of St Martin's Cathedral, Bratislava. 1837. Watercolour. 26,7 × 31,2 cm. Albertina, Vienna. Source: Albertina Sammlungen Online.*

church attendees seated in the nave could not see the details of the busts (the closest they got to the busts was during the Holy Communion) and could not identify them iconographically. In the context of the high altar, it seems that these busts served as an altar supplement, a "procession of saints/ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries", thus creating a "background" for the central scene of the main saint—St. Martin.

St. Michael and the Virgin Mary's side altars beside the triumphal arch illustrate the relationship between purpose, style, and meaning. These are Donner's last major works at the Cathedral for Emericus Esterházy. Both altars were destroyed during regotisation. Only the 17th-century "miraculous" statue of the Pieta, forming the central scene of one of them, remains, which now stands on the neo-Gothic side altar on the church's nave. According to the 20 October 1737 contract, Donner undertook the creation of these altars according to a design approved by the primate in a soft but good stone. On one, he was to place a "miraculous" pieta; on the other, he was to create a stucco relief of the Archangel Michael. In the oval upper parts of the altars, the stucco reliefs depict an angel with an inscription from Christ's Cross on Golgotha and a blessing of Christ with a book. The sides of the upper part were supposed to sit on the plaster putti with Passion attributes. In addition to his work, Donner aimed to provide and pay for the "marbling" and gilding of the altars. Both


*Fig. 17: Joseph Dorneck, Engraving of side altar of Piety. 1835. 199 × 123 mm. St Martin's Cathedral, Bratislava. Bratislava City Gallery. Source: Archive BCG.*

*Fig. 18: Drawing of the coronation of Maria Theresia in St Martin's Cathedral. About 1741. Pen and wash. 52 × 35 cm. Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris. Source: bibliotheque-numerique.inha.fr.*

were presumed to be accessories for the main altar. Donner likely designed the architecture of the altars, which remained conventional. An older venerated statue dominated the Pieta altar, whereas the other sculptural decorations were limited to small putti. According to this agreement, Donner depicts St. Michael defeating Satan on the second altar. The work was completed in 1738.[81] During my research, I discovered a drawing from Maria Theresa's coronation taken from the nave, in which the altar is half-visible.[82] This proves the previous assumption that the altars had identical architecture; likewise, the final work corresponds to the agreed-upon iconography in the contract.

What I find fascinating about the decorations commissioned by Emericus Esterházy is that the style of the artwork changes depending on its purpose and content. The main altar, used for the coronation of the Habsburgs as kings of Hungary, stylistically matched the imperial commissions. The

[81] MALÍKOVÁ 1993 (see in note 44), p. 53; PROKOPP, G.: Levéltári adatok Georg Raphael Donner pozsonyi éveihez. In: *Ars Hungarica*, Vol. 6, 1978, No. 2, p. 334 – 335; RUSINA 1990 (see in note 1), p. 102.

[82] Drawing of the coronation of Maria Theresia in St. Martin's Cathedral, about 1741, Inv. No. NUM OC 81, Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris.

altar of St. John of Almsgiver, with the statue of the adoring Emericus Esterházy from the chapel of the same name, and the tombs of Primate Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz and Johann Pálffy, the allies of the Imperial Court, were also made in this style. In contrast, the side altars of the Virgin Mary and St. Michael the Archangel (where church attendees celebrated occasional masses) do not contain imperial symbolism. They probably served as accessories to the main altar, similar to the busts in the stalls. The motif of Pieta and St. Michael the Archangel defeating Satan, can also be understood in the context of the Counter-Reformation.

## Conclusion

This study provides a new perspective on the iconology of St. Martin's former main altar in Bratislava. St. Martin, who drew a sword on a rearing horse, corresponded to different parts of the coronation ritual and served as an element of communication. St. Martin, dressed in Hungarian attire, was seated on a rearing horse on a plinth directly above where the future king of the House of Habsburgs would be crowned in Hungarian attire. The entire scene was topped with a Hungarian crown floating on the volutes. We can see a clear symbolic link between the future Habsburg king (dressed in Hungarian attire) and St. Martin as the country's patron saint and the first ruling house, who both "supervised" the coronation process from above and legitimised it with his presence. The future king of the "foreign" Habsburg family was thus not only responsible for keeping the coronation oath and his duties to the "domestic" St. Martin but also symbolically and politically became the "domestic" ruler of Hungary. This is evidenced by official portraits in which the Habsburgs were routinely depicted in Hungarian noble attire to legitimise their rule over Hungary.

It should have been apparent from the altar that not only was the coronation of a Hungarian king taking place in Hungary but that this king was a member of the House of the Habsburgs. Therefore, several symbolic references to the ruling family—the lion's skin and the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece—are included in the artwork. These references also highlight the regal virtues of the Habsburgs. The style of the altar's architecture points to imperial orders. The artworks associated with the Habsburgs—the coronation altar, the tombs of Christian Augustus of Saxe-Zeitz and Johann Pálffy, and the altar of St. John the Almsgiver with the adoring Emericus Esterházy from his burial chapel, which were made for the three great Hungarian allies of the Habsburgs—were made in the style of imperial commissions.

Conversely, the works intended for "local needs" —the side altars of the Pieta and St. Michael the Archangel and the busts from the stalls—do not fit this style. The final novelty is the dual purpose of the former high altar. It was used not only for coronations but also for the regular celebrations of mass. This is why most of the elements have a double character and two interpretations, especially for educated classes attending the coronation and for the civic population.

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## Ikonológia hlavného oltára od G. R. Donnera v Katedrále sv. Martina v Bratislave v kontexte korunovačného rituálu

*Resumé*

Štúdia prináša nový pohľad na ikonológiu bývalého hlavného oltára sv. Martina. Motív sv. Martina v uhorskom odeve s vytaseným mečom na vzpínajúcom sa koni pretínajúceho plášť odpovedal jednotlivým častiam korunovačného rituálu a slúžil ako prvok komunikácie. Sv. Martin, oblečený v uhorskom odeve, sedel na vzpínajúcom sa koni na sokli priamo nad miestom, kde bol korunovaný budúci uhorský panovník z rodu Habsburg v uhorskom odeve. Celý tento výjav zakončovala na volutách sa vznášajúca uhorská koruna. Môžeme vidieť jasné symbolické prepojenie medzi budúcim habsburským panovníkom oblečeným po uhorsky a sv. Martinom ako patrónom krajiny a prvého vládnuceho rodu, ktorý z výšky „dohliadal" na korunovačný proces a zároveň ho svojou prítomnosťou legitimizoval. Budúci kráľ z „cudzieho" rodu Habsburgovcov sa tak nielenže zodpovedal za dodržanie korunovačnej prísahy a svojich povinností pred „domácim" sv. Martinom, ale aj sa symbolicky i politicky stával „domácim" uhorským panovníkom. To dokladajú oficiálne portréty, na ktorých sa Habsburgovci bežne zachytávali v uhorskom šľachtickom odeve, aby legitimizovali svoju vládu nad Uhorskom.

Z oltára malo byť jasné, že prebieha nielen korunovácia uhorského panovníka v Uhorsku, ale týmto panovníkom je príslušník rodu Habsburg. Z tohto dôvodu tiež nechal diela vložiť niekoľko symbolických odkazov na vládnuci rod – leviu kožu a reťaz rádu zlatého rúna. Tieto odkazy zároveň poukazovali na vladárske cnosti Habsburgovcov. Tu sa oplatí zdôrazniť, že samotný štýl architektúry oltára poukazoval na cisárske objednávky. Diela súvisiace s Habsburgovcami – korunovačný oltár, náhrobky Kristiána Augusta Saského a Jána Pálffyho, oltár sv. Jána Almužníka s adorujúcim Imrichom Esterházim z jeho pohrebnej kaplnky, ktoré boli vyhotovené pre troch veľkých uhorských spojencov Habsburgovcov – sú vyhotovené v štýle cisárskych objednávok. A naopak, diela určené pre „lokálne potreby" – bočné oltáre Piety a sv. Michala Archanjela spolu s bustami zo stallumov – do tohto štýlu nezapadajú. Poslednou novinkou je poukázanie na dvojaký účel bývalého hlavného oltára. Slúžil nielen na korunovácie, ale aj na pravidelné vysluhovanie omší. Práve preto má väčšina prvkov dvojaký charakter a dve interpretácie zvlášť pre vzdelané vrstvy účastné na korunovácii, a zvlášť pre bežnú meštiansku populáciu.

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