



# Santini

## and Italy

Pavel Kalina  
Augusto Roca De Amicis (eds.)



Palacký University Olomouc

# Santini and Italy

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Accademia Nazionale di San Luca – Palazzo Carpegna,  
6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Pavel Kalina  
Augusto Roca De Amicis (eds)

Olomouc 2024

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# Greetings

## **ANTONELLA POLIMENI**

Magnifica Rettrice, Sapienza Università di Roma

E' con vero piacere che porgo il mio saluto a questo convegno, la cui importanza è testimoniata anche dalle autorità qui venute a rappresentare la Repubblica ceca, a cominciare da S.E. l'ambasciatore Jan Kohout e dal collega Martin Procházka, Rettore dell'Università Palacký di Olomouc.

Saluto gli ideatori del Convegno, il professor Kalina del Politecnico di Praga e il professor Roca De Amicis della Sapienza che, coadiuvati dalla Dott. Březáčková, Direttrice del Centro ceco di Roma, hanno saputo individuare un tema che traccia un ponte tra culture e apre problemi storiografici di ampia portata.

Jan Blažej Santini-Aichel, di cui ricorre il terzo centenario della morte, è nato a Praga ma da una famiglia italiana giunta alla terza generazione. Santini testimonia il ruolo determinante degli artisti, soprattutto architetti, di origine italiana attivi in Boemia e in Moravia. E gli studi sembrano confermare che Santini era un interlocutore apprezzato da una nuova generazione di colti abati di importanti complessi monastici, che figurano tra i suoi maggiori committenti.

Santini è stato in grado di padroneggiare e ricapitolare i più aggiornati modelli del Barocco italiano, da Borromini a Guarini, ma al tempo stesso li pone a confronto con una tradizione locale che trova nel Gotico una forma di rappresentazione ancora viva. Gli originalissimi risultati, sempre più apprezzati dalla ricerca storica, conferiscono un ruolo unico all'architettura ceca e allo stesso tempo testimoniano plasticamente la capacità di accostare tradizioni e identità anche lontane in nuove forme. Un'integrazione che non si traduce in uniformità ma al contrario apre al nuovo, a una diversità che non solo è un ponte tra la cultura italiana e quella ceca, ma è un modello, e una lezione, per un'Europa in cui l'integrazione è sempre stata fondamentale, ma senza mai disconoscere la pluralità delle voci che la costituiscono.

E' in questo spirito che rivolgo i miei auguri per il buon esito di questo convegno e il mio saluto agli studiosi cechi, italiani, tedeschi e americani che animeranno questo importante dibattito.

## **ANTONELLA POLIMENI**

Magnifica Rettrice, Sapienza Università di Roma

It is with great pleasure that I welcome this conference, whose importance is also demonstrated by the authorities who have come here to represent the Czech Republic, starting with H.E. Ambassador Jan Kohout and my colleague Martin Procházka, Rector of the Palacký University in Olomouc.

I greet the organisers of the conference, Professor Kalina of the Prague Polytechnic and Professor Roca De Amicis of the Sapienza University of Rome, who, assisted by Dr Březáčková, Director of the Czech Centre in Rome, were able to identify a theme that bridges cultures and opens up far-reaching historiographical problems.

Jan Blažej Santini-Aichel, whose third centenary of death falls, was born in Prague but to an Italian family now in its third generation. Santini testifies to the decisive role of artists, especially architects, of Italian origin active in Bohemia and Moravia. And studies seem to confirm that Santini was an appreciated interlocutor of a new generation of cultured abbots of important monastic complexes, who were among his major patrons.

Santini was able to master and recapitulate the most up-to-date models of the Italian Baroque, from Borromini to Guarini, while at the same time confronting them with a local tradition that finds a form of representation still alive in the Gothic. The highly original results, which are increasingly appreciated by historical research, give Czech architecture a unique role and at the same time testify plastically to the ability to combine even distant traditions and identities in new forms. An integration that does not translate into uniformity but, on the contrary, opens up to the new, to a diversity that is not only a bridge between Italian and Czech culture, but is a model, and a lesson, for a Europe in which integration has always been fundamental, but without ever disregarding the plurality of voices that constitute it.

It is in this spirit that I extend my best wishes for the success of this conference and my greetings to the Czech, Italian, German and American scholars who will animate this important debate.



## **MARTIN PROCHÁZKA**

Rektor Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci

Vážení organizátoři, Národní akademie San Luca, delegáti a hosté mezinárodní konference Santini a Itálie, dámy a pánové. Jsem rád, že se na organizaci této velké akce můžeme podílet i my na Univerzitě Palackého. Vždyť město Olomouc, jehož je naše univerzita již 450 let součástí, je právem nazýváno barokní perlou. Jan Blažej Santini-Aichel byl jedním z nejvýznamnějších barokních architektů působících v českých zemích. Jeho originální díla, mezi nimiž jsou ne méně než dvě památky světového kulturního dědictví, zanechala v naší střeoevropské krajině trvalou stopu. Nadále obdivujeme jeho odkaz, který pomáhá zkrášlovat naši zemi. Osobně považuji za příhodné, že se tato konference koná v Římě, který je samozřejmě kolébkou baroka a který se stal pro českého architekta s italskými kořeny v jeho počátcích velkou inspirací. Přeji vám příjemné chvíle v dobré společnosti Santiniho a obdivovatelů jeho skvělého díla.

## **MARTIN PROCHÁZKA**

Rector of the Palacký University Olomouc

Dear organizers, members of the Accademia Nazionale de San Luca, delegates and guests of the International Conference on Santini and Italy, ladies and gentlemen. I am pleased that we at Palacký University can participate in the organization of this great event. Indeed, the city of Olomouc, of which our university has been a part for 450 years, is rightly called a Baroque pearl. Jan Blažej Santini-Aichel was one of the most significant Baroque architects active in the Czech lands. His original works, which include no fewer than two World Heritage Sites, have left a lasting imprint upon our Central European landscape. We continue to marvel at his legacy that helps to beautify our country. I personally find it fitting that this conference is being held in Rome, which is, of course, the cradle of the Baroque, and which became a great inspiration for the Czech architect with Italian roots in his early days. I wish you a pleasant time in the good company of Santini and admirers of his splendid work.



# Introduction

**PAVEL KALINA**, Czech Technical University, Prague

**AUGUSTO ROCA DE AMICIS**, Università La Sapienza, Rome

Santini's architectural opus is one of the key works for understanding so-called Baroque or pre-modern culture. It is impossible to imagine this work without its great Italian predecessors. At the same time, Santini was closely linked to local tradition of the Czech lands, to medieval architecture. He was bound to tradition, but worked in a specific way. Thus, the most important contradictions of pre-modern architecture intersect in Santini's personality. And the research of his work in the 20<sup>th</sup> century also embodied some contradictions of the science of this century. This publication brings together papers presented at the International Symposium on Santini and Italy, held in Rome on 5–6 June 2023. The symposium, held in the *Accademia di San Luca* in Rome that was so important for the history of arts and architecture and especially for the development of global architecture in the seventeenth century, brought new and updated perspectives on Santini's work, often with a completely different methodological focus. It can only be hoped that Santini's picture has thus become more complete than it was before.

Santini was born at a time when the Czech lands were part of the Habsburg superstate in Central Europe. During his lifetime, this superstate also conquered the Italian possessions of the Spanish branch of the Habsburgs – Milan and Naples.<sup>1</sup> At the time of Santini's birth, the Bohemian lands, with the exception of Silesia, were religiously united; all inhabitants were Catholic, spoke Czech or German in daily life, but used Latin as the language of science. Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia had their own Diet and self-governing bodies, and the free royal cities also had considerable powers. This society was highly hierarchical: the nobility concentrated the decisive power in its own hands, but had to take into account the constant strengthening of the state, whose central authorities were based in Vienna. Contrary to

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1 Mario Rizzo, 'Sticks, Carrots and all the Rest: Lombardy and the Spanish strategy in Northern Italy between Europe and the Mediterranean', *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* LXXI, 2005, pp. 145–184. – Stefano D'Amico, *Spanish Milan: A City Within an Empire, 1535–1706*, New York 2012.

popular belief, the Church did not play an important role in this period. The Re-Catholicization that took place after the Battle of Bílá Hora and the subsequent publication of the Renewed Land Ordinance in 1626 was a reality.<sup>2</sup> However, it did not involve any political role for the leaders of the Church. All power was held by the nobility and the growing state. This entirely pragmatic position of the Viennese government was already fully manifested in Italy at the time when the Czech nobleman George Adam II of Martinitz (Martinice) was the imperial ambassador to the papal court, i.e. in the last years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Martinitz's arrogant behaviour, insulting the Pope, was probably not only due to a personal predisposition, but was a targeted instrument of pressure on the Pontiff in an attempt to strengthen the Habsburg position on the Apennine peninsula.<sup>3</sup>

Santini's most famous buildings were commissioned by the abbots of the great monasteries of the traditional monastic orders and canons founded in the Middle Ages. However, Santini also worked for noble patrons. Nobles were the godfathers of his children and our architect contracted his second marriage to a girl from a noble family. This is entirely consistent with the efforts of the leading bourgeois families to align themselves with the nobility and the social rise of the clerical nobility, which would accelerate with the Teresian reforms. After all, it was the nobility, and more specifically the members of the wealthier elite, who were able to gain a better insight

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- 2 Alessandro Catalano, 'Juan Caramuel Lobkowitz (1606-1682) e la riconquista delle coscienze in Boemia', *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* XLIV, 2002, pp. 339–392. Idem, *La Boemia e la riconquista delle coscienze. Ernst Adalbert von Harrach e la controriforma in Europa centrale (1620–1667)*, Roma 2005. – Jiří Mikulec, 31. 7. 1627. *Rekatolizace šlechty v Čechách: Čí je země, toho je i náboženství*, Praha 2005. Ivana Čornejová (ed), *Úloha církevních řádů při pobělohorské rekatolizaci: Sborník příspěvků z pracovního semináře konaného ve Vranově u Brna ve dnech 4.–5. 6. 2003*, Praha 2003. – Howard Louthan, *Converting Bohemia: Force and Persuasion in the Catholic Reformation*, New York 2009. – Marek Ďurčanský, 'Rekatolizace v českých královských městech v prvním pobělohorském desetiletí. Pokus o srovnání', *Documenta Pragensia* XXXIII, 2014, pp. 45–57. Ladislav Nekvapil, 'Confessional politics and secret non-Catholicism in the Czech Lands in the 18th century', *Historia Slavorum Occidentis* XVIII, 2018, no. 3, pp. 64–73.
- 3 Pavel Kalina, 'Carlo Fontana, Domenico Martinelli, and Georg Adam II of Martinitz: Architectural Design, Architectural Collaboration and Aristocratic Representation Around 1700', *Umění* LXIII, 2015, no. 1–2, pp. 34–54.

into the architecture of the time, not only thanks to an increasingly important formal education, but also through direct experience during a Grand Tour or knightly journeys that included detailed visits to the most important buildings.<sup>4</sup>

The beginnings of modern scientific research on Santini's work, on the other hand, lie at the end of the 19th century, a time that we imagine as a period of modernization, characterized by industrialization, democratization, and general progress.<sup>5</sup> In principle, this is certainly the case. But it would probably be a mistake to think that the century between the publication of Gurlitt's *History of Baroque, Rococo and Classical Architecture* in 1889<sup>6</sup> and the watershed year of 1989 is somehow a different version of our contemporary world. Not so. The origins of Santini's research go back to a time when there were no specialized public libraries. When photography was just beginning to establish itself as a technically and economically viable medium for illustrating printed books, which were still relatively few in number. Politically, this was a time when the Czech lands were part of the so-called Cisleithania and national tensions were rising between the Czech and German speaking inhabitants of the kingdom, who now identified themselves on the basis of language. The first modern work on Santini was written in Czech, by a historian who felt himself to be Czech and no doubt reflected his view of history in his assessment of Santini and his architecture.

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- 4 Cf. esp. Jiří Kubeš, *Náročné dospívání urozených. Kavalířské cesty české a rakouské šlechty (1620–1750)*, Pelhřimov 2013. – Zdeněk Hojda, Eva Chodějovská, Heřman Jakub Černín *na cestě za Alpy a Pyreneje I. Kavalířská cesta českého šlechtice do německých zemí, Itálie, Francie, Španělska a Portugalska*, Praha 2014. – Zdeněk Hojda (ed), *Výjezd šťastný – Cestovní deníky z kavalířské cesty Václava Vojtěcha, Jana Norberta a Ignáce Karla ze Šternberka z let 1662–1664*, Praha 2023.
- 5 Jaroslav Purš, *The industrial revolution in the Czech lands*, Praha 1960. – Pavla Horiská-Vrbová, *Kapitalistická industrializace a středoevropská společnost. Příspěvek ke studiu formování tzv. průmyslové společnosti*, Praha 1970. – Pavel Kladiwa, Aleš Zářický (eds), *Město a městská společnost v procesu modernizace 1740–1918*, Ostrava 2009. – Milan Hlavačka et al., *České země v 19. století. Proměny společnosti v moderní době*, Praha 2016. – Jiří Štaif, *Modernizace na pokračování. Společnost v českých zemích (1770–1918)*, Praha 2020.
- 6 Cornelius Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles, des Rococo und des Klassicismus in Deutschland*, Stuttgart 1889.

Closer to our times was the period of the Czechoslovak First Republic, when the Czech element was asserting itself, women were gaining the right to vote and the country was becoming increasingly involved in the global economy (fig. 1). In fact, even then education was only available to a relatively small part of the population, and art history or architecture were hardly common professions. In 1939, Prague was occupied by the German army. In the new Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Czech universities were closed and, on the contrary, scientific and educational institutions adopting Nazi ideology were strengthened.<sup>7</sup> The pressure of ideology intensified further after 1948, when the Communist Party took power.<sup>8</sup> When

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- 7 Andreas Wiedemann, *Reinhard-Heydrich-Stiftung (1942–1945)*, Dresden 2000. – Monika Glettler, Alena Míšková (eds), *Prager Professoren 1938–1948. Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik*, Essen 2001. – Alena Míšková, *Německá (Karlova) univerzita od Mnichova k 9. květnu 1945 (vedení univerzity a obměna profesorského sboru)*, Praha 2002. – Alena Míšková, *Josef Pfitzner (1901–1945): prameny k životu a dílu sudetoněmeckého historika a politika*, Praha 2011. – Detlef Brandes, *Vom Osteuropa-Lehrstuhl ins Prager Rathaus. Josef Pfitzner 1901–1945*, Praha – Essen 2013.
- 8 Generally cf. Blanka Zilynská, Petr Svobodný (eds), *Věda v Československu v letech 1945–1953. Sborník z konference*, Praha 1999. – Antonín Kostlán, Helena Barvíková (eds), *Věda v Československu v letech 1953–1963*, Praha 2000. – Blanka Zilynská, Petr Svobodný (eds), *Česká věda a Pražské jaro (1963–1970). Sborník z konference*, Praha 2001. – Antonín Kostlán (ed), *Věda v Československu v období normalizace (1970–1975). Sborník z konference, (Praha, 21.–22. listopadu 2001)*, Praha 2002. – Markéta Devátá, Doubravka Olšáková, Vítězslav Sommer, Peter Dinuš, *Vědní koncepce KSČ a její institucionalizace po roce 1948*, Praha 2010. The most significant, though by no means the only institutional change, was the establishment of the Academy of Sciences as a centralised institution bringing together research institutes independent of universities. This institution exists even today. Cf. Martin Franc and Věra Dvořáčková et alii, *Dějiny Československé akademie věd. I, 1952–1962*, Praha 2019. Since 2009, the Archive of the Academy of Sciences publishes the journal *Práce z dějin Akademie věd*, publishing texts dealing with the history of Academy and of sciences since its foundation. For historical sciences cf. e. g. Adam Schaff, *Objektivní charakter historických zákonů*, Praha 1957. – *Úkoly československé historiografie. Soubor příspěvků z celost. věd. semináře historiků-komunistů z 10.–11. 11. 1972*, Praha 1973. – Josef Hanzal, *Cesty české historiografie 1945–1989*, Praha 1999. – František Kavka, *Moje ohlédnutí a povaha českého marxistického dějepiscetví v letech 1950–1989, Jihočeský sborník historický LXXII*, 2003,

reading period texts, however, it is important to bear in mind that many of them were the result of hidden resistance to the official discourse. Even in this era, we can see how scientists may not have had access to information, which may have been true on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In the same way, one cannot fail to see that even in the West there were scholars who adapted their optics to the political situation of the time. I will never forget, for example, that as a student I first opened Wolfgang Braunfels' seminal work on monastic architecture in the West (*Abendland*) and found there a map showing that the West ended on the border of Czechoslovakia.<sup>9</sup>

Only today are we approaching the situation of universally accessible knowledge dreamt of by Comenius in the seventeenth century. However, even today's research is not exempt from ideological pressures and changing fashions. In this situation, Santini can be what he probably always was: a challenge to find new paths of research and, at the same time, to fight for freedom from prejudices and curtains. Baroque Gothic, which characterizes a substantial part of his work, was both a pan-European phenomenon and an expression of his extraordinary ability to appropriate the heritage of the past and use it to create a completely new architectural language. Our conference could, in fact, bring only partial clues to its knowledge.

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This conference would probably not even have been conceived if back in 1958 Paolo Portoghesi had not written an essay with the far-sighted title: *Borromini nella cultura europea*.<sup>10</sup> It was under this sign that was conceived our meeting, which Portoghesi was, literally until his last day, happy to join, and which, after his death, was also a way of remembering this great scholar. And it was under this sign that it seemed appropriate to outline a brief

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pp. 95–107. – Bohumil Jiroušek et alii, *Proměny diskursu české marxistické historiografie (Kapitoly z historiografie 20. století)*, České Budějovice 2008. – Vítězslav Sommer, *Angažované dějepisectví. Stranická historiografie mezi stalinismem a reformním komunismem (1950–1970)*, Praha 2011.

9 Wolfgang Braunfels, *Abendländische Klosterbaukunst*, Köln am Rhein 1969. Wolfgang Braunfels (1911–1987) was nephew of German theorist Adolf von Hildebrand. He was appointed professor of art history at the RWTH Aachen in 1953 and later in Munich, where he succeeded Hans Sedlmayr. His book on West European monasteries became a standard manual and was translated in English as *Monasteries of Western Europe: the Architecture of the Orders* in 1972.

10 Paolo Portoghesi, *Borromini nella cultura europea*, Bari 1982.

European panorama within which to set Santini and the questions that this figure raises: why multiple architectural languages? And why Gothic?

If we place ourselves in a broader perspective, the Gothic appears not so much as a phenomenon confined to the past, but as an alter ego that remains in the shadows and yet in some cases is still ready to come into the limelight. The Italian Renaissance had placed itself in a clear alternative position and the strongly negative judgement on Gothic continued to exert its weight even in this period, which with all its novelties had never made open ruptures with Renaissance theories; hence the difficulty of finding clear statements when that language resurfaced.

Certainly, there is now a more detached attitude towards Gothic, beyond generic statements of condemnation: in his 1678 treatise Juan Caramuel, the Spanish clergyman who had theorized on oblique architecture, and who had been in Prague for a long time, adds a Gothic order;<sup>11</sup> Bernini's judgement of some contemporary Gothic projects for the façade of Milan Cathedral started from classical, Vitruvian precepts, as if their validity was so universal as to encompass even completely different languages;<sup>12</sup> and Guarini's remarks on Gothic cathedrals show an innovative appreciation for the static boldness of those constructions, which stood upright as if by a miracle.<sup>13</sup> But here it is clear that Guarini turns to Gothic thinking, after all, of himself, ignoring the underlying rationality of that language. One has to wait for the writings of Michel de Frémin (1702) and especially of Abbot Jean-Louis de Cordemoy (1704) for a judgement on Gothic that fully appreciates its constructive logic, and indeed compares its punctiform static system to the Greek-style columnar system.<sup>14</sup> And also in this period a renewed encyclopaedism, uniting figures as distant from each other as Christopher Wren and Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, turned to remote epochs and countries, beginning to lay the foundations for an idea of world architecture.

But there is also another, less visible change that acts in depth. From the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the academic sphere, architects were

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11 Juan Caramuel Lobkowitz, *Arquitectura civil recta y obliqua*, (reprint) Madrid 1984.

12 Rudolf Wittkower, *Gothic versus Classic*, London 1974, pp. 49–64.

13 Paolo Marconi, 'Guarino Guarini ed il Gotico', in *Guarino Guarini e l'internazionalità del Barocco*, I, Torino 1970, pp. 613–624.

14 Robin Middleton, 'The Abbé de Cordemoy and the Greco-Gothic Ideal: a prelude to romantic Classicism', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XXV, 1962, pp. 278–320; XXVI, 1963, pp. 90–123.



faced with a substantially new situation, since they had two expressive registers at their disposal: the cinquecentismo, elevated to a common training ground; and the legacy of the Baroque masters. The models assiduously drawn in the training of the pupils of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome concerned these two ways, certainly connected as parts of the same story, but at the same time distinguishable and generating varied combinations, and which were now chasing each other across the European scene, introducing a latent principle of relativism. This unprecedented duplicity came to be stabilized by assigning to these registers the genres deemed most compatible, and the academy of San Luca appeared to be the primary place where the “generification” of styles was elaborated. And so it will be more likely that for a church one will be oriented towards the Baroque register, while for civil architecture the choices will be predominantly about 16<sup>th</sup>-century settings. This confirms what Michail Bachtin theorized when he stated that there is no point in talking about “styles” if they are not hinged to a genre.<sup>15</sup> It is therefore important, in my opinion, to think in terms of genre; that is, of a system of conventions that certainly originated in a historical moment but can always be put into operation in the present. And even in the seventeenth and eighteenth century sources, Gothic is defined first and foremost as a mode. This is why we must be very cautious when speaking in this regard of historicism, which, unlike genre, implies something structurally bound to an era. Moreover, this type of genre evaluation can also be found in other areas of Baroque culture. The musical revolution introduced at the beginning of the seventeenth century by Claudio Monteverdi was referred to as a “seconda prattica” in order to distinguish it from a “prima prattica” linked to Renaissance counterpoint.<sup>16</sup> But no one, even in the controversy over it, thought that the “seconda prattica” was destined to replace an obsolete the “prima prattica”, but rather to stand alongside it as a new way of conceiving the relationship between word and music; and Monteverdi in some sections of his sacred compositions, even mature ones, still makes abundant use of the “prima prattica”. The new is also a genre. Now, a latent problem in European culture was the following: could Gothic become a third genre alongside the Cinquecento-Baroque polarity that animated the international scene?

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15 Michail Bachtin, ‘Il problema dei generi del discorso’, in Idem, *L'autore e l'eroe. Teoria letteraria e scienze umane*, Torino 1988, pp. 245–290.

16 Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, Torino 1985, pp. 48–65.

During the Renaissance, subtler strategies had also been developed to deal with a monumental heritage that could not be ignored. Thus, when a work from that era had to be completed, it was sometimes done according to the principle of *decorum*, i.e. appropriateness, convenience, adopting a language in keeping with a “style” rejected at a programmatic level. Hence, to give just one example, some projects freely inspired by the Gothic style of Baldassarre Peruzzi, Giulio Romano, Vignola, for the façade of the 14th-century civic temple of San Petronio in Bologna.<sup>17</sup> Several times Wren acts according to this principle: in completing the Tom Tower, at the entrance to the court leading to Christ Church in Oxford, he states that the form chosen “ought to be Gothick to agree with the Founders worke”; and in proposing the restoration of Westminster Abbey he states that “to deviate from the old Form, would be to run into a disagreeable Mixture”.<sup>18</sup>

But an entirely different tendency emerges after the Counter-Reformation: early Christian and mediaeval sacred architecture begins to be valued for its symbolic and testimonial implications; it is no longer a model that must be completed, but a relic, not susceptible to reprise but only to be preserved in its material consistency. Therefore, when Cardinal Francesco Barberini restored in 1625 a 9<sup>th</sup> century monument in Rome, the Triclinium Leonianum, the new arrangement that framed it must be distinguishable and not intrusive, so as not to diminish the value of the ancient testimony: “ne vetustatis maiestas novitate minueretur”.<sup>19</sup> Thirty years later, Borromini was also called upon to arrange the medieval sculptural fragments of the ancient basilica in the aisles of the renovated San Giovanni in Laterano, but if the aims are similar, we now witness a complete reversal of the approach: the ancient inserts are arranged in function of the frame, which assumes an overbearing autonomy; the heterogeneity of the components is radicalized, but precisely in this way the two languages face each other openly for a result of superior complexity.<sup>20</sup> The conditions are thus created for the

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17 Erwin Panofsky, ‘La prima pagina del „Libro“ di Giorgio Vasari’, in Idem, *Il significato delle arti visive*, Torino 1962, pp. 169–216.

18 Kerry Downes, *The Architecture of Wren*, New York 1982, pp. 17 and 89–90.

19 Nicolò Alemanni, *De Lateranensibus parietinis ab Illustriss. & Reverendiss Domino D. Francisco Card. Barberino restitutis dissertatio historica*, Roma 1625, p. 2.

20 Augusto Roca De Amicis, ‘Borromini e l’alterità del passato’, in Idem, *Intentio operis. Studi di storia nell’architettura*, Roma 2015, pp. 35–56.

Baroque to dialogue with the Middle Ages by acknowledging its otherness, without mimetic mediation.

Thus we find a number of impressive realizations hitherto little considered by a historiography uneasy about works that are the result of a plurality of languages and epochs, such as, for example, the modernization of Santa Restituta, Naples' first cathedral, in 1688, where pointed archways and Baroque decorations coexist. As never before, the inclusiveness of the Baroque is able to weave a vital counterpoint with that which is other than itself. This character is also shown when the new language steals the scene from pre-existing structures but feeds on them: such as the high altar by Giuseppe Pozzo, Andrea's brother, in the Bolzano cathedral (1710), which adheres like a glove to the Gothic ambulatory and transforms its characters into new visual relationships. For the late Gothic church of the Teutonic Order in Vienna, loaded with historical memories and testimonial values, the poetics of framing and the distinction of languages in the façade in which it is set are instead followed; while the interior is reshaped following the language of antiquity: the intervention strategies begin to become composite.<sup>21</sup>

But Gothic can still be proposed as a direct continuation: religious customs, identity marks of ecclesiastical communities, erudite references to a glorious past constitute the premises. In France, this line of continuity seems to be favored in the sphere of Benedictine abbeys; especially those governed by Benedictines of the Congregation of St. Maur, whose members followed a strict observance of the Rule and were devoted to historical studies relating to the Middle Ages.<sup>22</sup> Operations not far from those that Santini would tackle, but with the radical difference between a language that seems to ossify itself through subtraction and the creative contaminations of Santini. We witness another type of confrontation between ancient and modern when in some French churches the static system of a Gothic organism is adopted but transforming the pillars into slender Classical columns. In churches such as Saint-Clement in Metz (from 1680) or Saint-Mihiel en Meuse (from 1689), Cordemoy's Greco-Gothic ideal was thus concretized. And we shall see how this juxtaposition of systems turns into a dramatic interpenetration in Santini.

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21 See on this topic Augusto Roca De Amicis, Claudio Varagnoli (eds), *Alla moderna: antiche chiese e rifacimenti barocchi: una prospettiva europea*, Roma 2015.

22 Joan Evans, *Monastic architecture in France: from the Renaissance to the revolution*, New York 1981.

Generally speaking, we may think that Gothic, in countries strongly marked by that language, could flank the neo-Cinquecento and post-Baroque genres as a third genre, characterizing a sacred architecture rooted in tradition and in institutions of secular permanence; and yet the still enduring Renaissance condemnation prevented it from achieving that status, causing Gothic to stop, so to speak, at the threshold of a full recognition. But all the fragmentary modalities traced here seem to converge and find an ideal *raison d'être* in Santini-Aichel's work. Thus, for cultural and historical reasons that are dealt with in this volume, that hesitant, uncertain collocation of the third genre finds a creative response. From this point of view Bohemia and Moravia should not only not be considered peripheral realities but occupy an absolutely central role in European culture; a role that this conference can help us to consider better.

We do not want to get into the subject, but we will stop at its gates, in the literal sense of the term. At the entrance to the Sedlec abbey, Santini places two ramparts on each side. Both start as bare volumes; but after a diagonal cut, as if grafting plants, from the inarticulate blocks rises, on the front side, a pillar with a soft Baroque cyma supporting a sculpture; while behind it, a textbook Gothic spire develops (fig. 2). The inert matter takes shape passing either through the "seconda prattica" or the "prima prattica". A theme here only enunciated, but with programmatic awareness, and destined for developments of extraordinary combinatory skill and suggestive force, as the essays of the scholars who participated in this conference can testify.



Fig. 1 The tearing down of the Marian Column in Prague's Old Town Square (1650) on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1918 was supposed to be an expression of a radical break with the past. Photo: Prague City Archives, inventory number IX 2591.



Fig. 2 The western porch of the Sedlec Abbey church. Photo: Augusto Roca De Amicis.

# Santini-Aichel: The Architect and His Image in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

PAVEL KALINA

## ABSTRACT

The article deals with the development of research on Santini's work, especially in the Czech lands. It mentions in particular the changing approaches to Santini's legacy in the works of Z. Wirth, A. Píffl, H. G. Franz, V. Richter, J. Neumann, M. Horyna, P. Zahradník, M. Pavlík, and other authors. In doing so, it emphasises both Santini's relationship to Italy and the possibility of interpreting his architecture on the basis of occult doctrines. The article draws attention to the new possibilities of interpreting Santini's Baroque Gothic, especially by referring to its relation to the architecture of Benedict Ried, which in fact was created at the end of the "Gothic" era. The article also points to the still unresolved relationship of Santini's work to the group of "radically Baroque" churches in Bohemia.

**Keywords:** Santini; Baroque; radical Baroque; Baroque Gothic; history of art history

Johann Santini-Aichel is one of the most famous architects in the Czech republic. He is the only architect born in this country whose life became the subject of a novel, film, theatrical play, and even symphony, not to mention numerous articles, lectures and other publications. Many of them were based on the idea of Santini's architecture as something mysterious, filled with complex symbolism and out of the ordinary. This notion was not just the imagination of its creators, but was to some extent grounded in serious research. In my paper, therefore, I will attempt to sketch the development of knowledge of Santini's work as it has evolved in his homeland over the past century. In doing so, I will focus on three aspects: in addition to Santini's relationship to Italy, which is the subject of this conference, these will be Santini's relationship to the Middle Ages and the problem of the very canon of Santini's oeuvre itself – that is, the relationship of the buildings securely attributed to Santini to the group of buildings of the so-called Radical Baroque in Bohemia. Given the limited scope of my contribution, I will focus

mainly on the most important texts published by Czech authors, especially those that could possibly be read by a wider public.

The study of Santini's work begun with modern research on Baroque architecture as such, which can be linked to the work of Cornelius Gurlitt.<sup>1</sup> Already Gurlitt's short passage devoted to *Gothik* architecture in Bohemia was distinguished by the interpretation of these works as something specific to the local building culture. The foundation stones for real research on Santini were, however, laid by Zdeněk Wirth in his memorable study on Baroque Gothic.<sup>2</sup> Wirth then summarised the set of buildings attributed to Santini: the Baroque-Gothic churches in Sedlec, Želiv and Kladruby and the pilgrimage church at Zelená Hora, as well as the chapel in Panenské Břežany and the monastery church in Rajhrad (fig. 1). Wirth was well aware of the pan-European context of the return to Gothic, but he emphasised Santini's uniqueness: especially in Kladruby, Santini "*presents himself, his sensibility as a modern Baroque architect, under a foreign guise*".<sup>3</sup>

Oldřich Stefan, an outstanding historian of Baroque architecture, compared the chapel of Panenské Břežany with Guarini's chapel of the Holy Shroud (fig. 2). According to Stefan, "*we see the same intrusion of separate spatial units in the corners into the central space, which is thus convexly cut out*".<sup>4</sup> Otherwise, however, he associated Guarini's influence with a group of bravely analysed "radically Baroque" buildings in Bohemia, namely the Church of St Nicholas in Prague, the Church of St Margaret in Břevnov, the churches in Obořiště and Nová Paka, and the Church of St Clare in Cheb. He did not attribute these buildings to Santini, nor did he identify their creator with Christoph Dientzenhofer, as was already happening at the time, but left

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- 1 Cornelius Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles, des Rococo und des Klassicismus in Deutschland*, Stuttgart 1889, pp. 207–208. – Cf. Bernhard Grueber, 'Charakteristik der Baudenkmale Böhmens', *Mittheilungen der k. k. Central-Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmale* I, 1856, No. 12, p. 245.
  - 2 Zdeněk Wirth, 'Barokní gotika v Čechách v XVIII. a v 1. polovici XIX. století', *Památky archeologické a místopisné* XXIII, 1908, cols. 121–158, 201–220.
  - 3 Ibidem, col. 147.
  - 4 Oldřich Stefan, 'Příspěvky k dějinám české barokní architektury', *Památky archeologické* XXXV, 1927, No. 3–4, p. 527. – Cf. Idem, 'Šternberská kapele ve Smiřicích a její význam v dějinách české barokní architektury', in *Sborník k sedmdesátým narozeninám Karla B. Mádl, Praha 1929*, pp. 128–142.